

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background and Motivation

For most language learners, among the four skills of language, namely, listening, speaking, reading, and writing, reading seems to be the most essential skill (Carrell, 1988). Furthermore, the importance of reading ability has been widely and repeatedly acknowledged by many scholars (Day & Bamford, 2002; Grabe, 2004). Language is an important medium for people to receive knowledge and express thoughts. For EFL learners in Taiwan, reading ability is one of the crucial components for achieving successful academic performance.

Learning to read is the fundamental element for developing English ability (Paris, Wixson, & Palincsar, 1986). Besides, we all know that reading is not a simple and single-factor process. In the EFL learning context in Taiwan, although English education starts early in the third grade of the elementary education, many students still have problems in English reading. Based on the researcher's ten-year teaching experience, she found that the students have difficulties dealing with long and complicated articles. Many learners are taught to be passive readers. Due to the test-oriented learning environment, the students in junior high school might make every effort to memorize and recite the content in the textbook, rather than think about the content in the learning process. Reflecting on this circumstance, the researcher tried to encourage the students to interact with the texts and materials they are given; moreover, the researcher tried to help them better interact with the world around them and to be more self-aware and be reflective thinkers.

Many educators believe that skillful thinking is one of the most important goals of education (Davidson & Dunham, 1996; Day, 2003; Facione et al., 1995; Long, 2004). While Atkinson (1997) claimed that critical thinking is a social practice that embodies Western cultural values, there is a general belief that critical thinking can be influential in almost every discipline and academic domain. As Day (2003) observed in University of Hawaii, “he has found students from Taiwan, China, Korea, and Japan are receptive to instruction in critical thinking. Not only are they receptive, they have no difficulty in engaging in the process.” Moreover, critical thinking has been integrated into language teaching for decades. Anderson (1947) viewed developing critical thinking through instruction in English as one of the paramount objectives. Devine (1962) pointed out that many English teachers in the US had applied critical thinking instruction to their programs. Other scholars, like Commeyras (1993), in her research on promoting critical thinking through dialogical-thinking reading lessons, developed a teaching model D-TRL to engage students in reasonable reflective thinking. These examples demonstrate that learning to think critically takes place in the context of classroom language learning.

Reading comprehension is always the main focus in teaching. Many researchers in Taiwan highlight the importance of reading comprehension, conducting numerous studies to investigate how to improve students’ reading comprehension ability through different approaches and strategies. They adopted cooperative language learning (Lin, 2006), English novel reading (Tsou, 2006), language experience approach (Wang, 2003), to name a few. Nevertheless, critical thinking has not been studied in these studies and has not been considered a vehicle to improve students’ reading ability.

Furthermore, according to the curriculum guidelines proposed by the Ministry of Education, integrating critical thinking ability into curriculum is necessary for the

development of cognitive skills of students. For vocational high school students, whose English proficiency levels and motivation in English learning are lower than senior high school students, learning a foreign language can be an overwhelming task. To enhance students' interests and motivation in reading, the researcher intended to integrate critical thinking into reading activities by increasing interactions in class through discussion. In this way, the researcher could help students to understand the reading text in a vigorous way.





CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this action research study is to investigate the process of fostering the reading ability of EFL vocational high school students by incorporating a critical thinking strategy, being specific, “Questioning the Author”, into the English classes. This chapter includes four sections—critical thinking, the connection between critical thinking and language teaching, the “Questioning the Author” strategy, and reading comprehension.

2.1 Critical Thinking

The concept of critical thinking in learning dates back to the classical Greek philosopher, Socrates, who developed the Socratic Method about 2,500 years ago. It is a method which emphasizes asking a series of deep questions, seeking evidence, examining reasoning and assumptions, and analyzing basic concepts (Carroll, 2004). His belief has influenced many later philosophers, and composes the central ideas of critical thinking.

John Dewey, an American philosopher, psychologist, and educational reformer, is widely considered “the ‘father’ of the modern critical thinking tradition” (Fisher, 2001, p.2). He introduced the concept ‘reflective thinking’ and defined it as “active, persistent, and careful consideration of a belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds which support it and the further conclusion to which it tend” (Dewey, 1909, p.9). Dewey’s definition of critical thinking is based on the premise that thinking is an ‘active’ process, in which the learner should think through

questioning and find relevant evidence to reach the conclusion. This is totally different from the traditional 'passive' thinking process in which the learner receives the information without questioning or evaluating.

In the 1940s, Edward Glaser, an American psychologist and the co-author of the test of critical thinking, the Watson-Glaser Critical Thinking Appraisal, defined critical thinking as “a persistent effort to examine any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the evidence that supports or refutes it and the further conclusions to which it tends” (Glaser, 1941, p.5). It is obvious that this definition is based on Dewey’s one. Later in the 1960s, Robert H. Ennis first defined critical thinking as “the correct assessing of statements” (1962, p.83). He provided 12 aspects of critical thinking (e.g. grasping the meaning of a statement, judging whether a statement is specific enough, and judging whether an inductive conclusion is warranted), and divided the aspects into three dimensions—logical, criterial, and pragmatic. The objective of defining these aspects of critical thinking is to help the learner to evaluate the information correctly. Later in the 1980s, Ennis modified his definition, redefining critical thinking as “reasonable, reflective thinking that is focused on deciding what to believe or do (Norris & Ennis, 1989, p.3). According to Ennis, decision-making is an essential part of critical thinking. Furthermore, critical thinking can be taught as a general subject. That is to say, critical thinking can be learned independently of specific disciplines, and can be transferred from one domain to another (Thayer-Bacon, 2000).

On the other hand, John McPeck defined critical thinking as “the skill and propensity to engage in an activity with reflective skepticism” (1981, p.8). He also claimed that critical thinking can only be taught within a specific domain because it needs to be linked with specific areas of knowledge, such as critical thinking of

English literature or critical thinking of psychology. According to McPeck, critical thinking can be learned if one possesses knowledge and understanding of the context of a particular discipline (Thayer-Bacon, 2000).

Compared to the McPeck's definition of critical thinking, Ennis' definition includes creative elements. This is supported by Facione and Facione, who defined critical thinking as "reflective decision-making and thoughtful problem-solving about what to believe and do" (2007, p.44). Similarly, Elder and Paul addressed that critical thinking "is best understood as the ability of thinkers to take charge of their own thinking. This requires that they develop sound criteria and standards for analyzing and assessing their own thinking and routinely use those criteria and standards to improve its quality" (1994, p.34).

Although scholars provided various definitions of critical thinking, they all characterized critical thinking as a 'process'. Viewing from different perspectives, also some theorists also regarded critical thinking as a process of evaluation, a process of thinking, and a means to an end (D'Angelo, 1971; Ennis & Weir, 1985; Paul, 1992; cited in Long, 2004). These important elements of critical thinking are reflected in the definition offered by the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) Committee on Critical Thinking. It defines critical thinking as "a process which stresses an attitude of suspended judgment, incorporates logical inquiry and problem solving, and leads to an evaluative decision or action." In addition, these definitions display the nature of critical thinking is a set of skills rather than any single skills. Based on the study by Mayfield (2001), Long (2004) summarizes the process of critical thinking: (Long, 2004, p.231)

The ability to . . .

1. separate fact from opinions, inferences, and evaluations.

2. recognize own and other's assumptions
3. question the validity of evidence
4. prepare persuasive arguments using evidence
5. ask questions
6. verify information
7. listen and observe
8. resist jumping to conclusion
9. seek to understand multiple perspectives
10. seek 'truth' before being 'right'

Similar to Long's skills to the process of critical thinking, Facione explained critical thinking by providing a set of 'cognitive skills', including interpretation, analysis, evaluation, inference, explanation, and self-regulation (Facione, 2006). According to Halpern, critical thinking is "the use of those cognitive skills or strategies that increase the probability of a desirable outcome. It is used to describe thinking that is purposeful, reasoned and goal directed—the kind of thinking involved in solving problems, formulating inferences, calculating likelihoods, and making decisions when the thinker is using skills that are thoughtful and effective for the particular context and type of thinking task" (1997, p.5). As this study intends to explore the relationship between critical thinking and reading comprehension, critical thinking was defined as a set of cognitive skills or strategies for learners to evaluate the information from the reading texts, and meanwhile, to evaluate their own thought. Critical thinking was employed as a purposeful, reasoned and goal-directed tool in the reading process to facilitate the learners' reading comprehension.

2.2 Critical Thinking and Language Teaching

While Atkinson (1997) claimed that critical thinking is a social practice that embodies Western cultural values, there is a general belief that critical thinking can be influential in almost every discipline and academic domain. According to Huitt (1998), critical thinking is considered to be one of the important topics of schooling in this age of information. Moreover, Facione (2006) claimed that critical thinking is the fundamental component in a democratic society, stating that “without critical thinking, people would be more easily exploited not only politically but economically.”

In terms of the English learning context, Devine (1962) pointed out that many English teachers in the US had applied critical thinking instruction to their programs. They aimed to “induce their students to think ‘more clearly’ or ‘more effectively’, or simply, ‘critically’” (p.359). Other scholars, like Brock (1986), indicated that the use of questions can enhance learning and critical thinking. Commeyras (1993), in her research on promoting critical thinking through dialogical-thinking reading lessons, developed a teaching model D-TRL to engage students in reasonable reflective thinking. King (1994), in her experimental research on teaching children how to question and how to explain, concluded that asking questions can raise higher order thinking and engage students in more complex knowledge construction. These examples demonstrate that learning to think critically takes place in the context of classroom language learning. Critical thinking can be incorporated into teaching activities within the language classroom if students are provided with opportunities to develop critical thinking strategies. Therefore, it is important for language teachers to integrate critical thinking strategies such as asking questions into reading, listening, or speaking activities in language classrooms (Ishikawa et al., 2007).

2.3 A Critical Thinking Strategy— “Questioning the Author”

Questions play a significant role in the development of critical thinking. In learning context, teachers should use questioning strategies that encourage students to engage in analysis, problem-solving, and inquiry (Şeker & Kömür, 2008). Furthermore, Elder and Paul (2003) stated that thinking is not driven by answers but by asking questions. Questions define tasks, express problems, describe issues, and signal a full stop in thought (p.36). Besides, questions can be developed to open a dialogue by encouraging expressions of “understanding, interpretations, and elaborations” (Burbules, 1993, cited in Beck, Mckeown, Sandora, Kucan, & Worthy, 1996). Therefore, the queries used in “Questioning the Author” are designed to invite “understanding, interpretation, and elaboration” by having students explore what is written in the text they read (Beck, Mckeown, Sandora, Kucan, & Worthy, 1996). The “Questioning the Author” strategy is based on the constructivist view of learning in which “learners need to actively use information, rather than simply collect pieces of information” (Beck, Hamilton, Kucan, & Mckeown, 1997, p. 8). It is responsive to the text-processing demands, which focuses on readers’ interaction with the text while it is being read, establishes reader-text interaction in whole-class discussion, and encourages explanatory responses to questions about text. The strategy is a series of inquiries that have students “grapple with and reflect on what an author is trying to say” and encourage them to collaborate in constructing meaning of the text (Beck et al., 1996). Beck et al. (1997) identify specific steps for implementing the strategy as follows:

1. Select a passage that is both interesting and can spur a good conversation.
2. Decide appropriate stopping points where you think your students need to obtain a greater understanding.

3. Create queries or questions for each stopping point.
4. Model for the students how to think through the queries.
5. Ask students to read and work through the queries for their readings.

The standard format of “Questioning the Author” involves five questions as follows:

(Beck, McKeown, & Worthy, 1993)

1. What is the author trying to tell you?
2. Why is the author telling you that?
3. Does the author say it clearly?
4. How could the author have said things more clearly?
5. What would you say instead?

The purpose of the queries is to explore ideas, instead of using questions to check on students’ recall of text information. The discussion in class is cooperative and constructive; as a consequence, the students would see themselves as capable thinkers who have ideas worth sharing (Beck et al., 1996). A series of studies have conducted by incorporating the strategy into language teaching, (Baleghizadeh, 2011; Beck et al., 1996; Liu & Chu, 2008; McKeown et al., 2009; Sandora et al., 1999), the results of which show the positive effects of the strategy on the student talk, student-to-student interactions, as well as on the students’ better recall of the reading text and high-quality responses to interpretation questions. Despite these positive results, it is unknown whether the effect of the strategy is favorable to the improvement in the EFL vocational high school students’ reading comprehension.

2.4 Reading Comprehension

Reading comprehension is the construction of the meaning of a written or spoken communication through a reciprocal, holistic interchange of ideas between the

interpreter and the message (Harris & Hodges, 1995). Learning to read is one of fundamental elements for developing English ability (Palincsar, Paris & Wixson, 1986). As Elder and Paul pointed out “to learn well, one must read well” (2004), English learners are constantly exposed to different types of text that require themselves to be able to use reading as well as thinking skills simultaneously. However, we all know that reading is not always a simple and single-factor process. Traditionally, reading is called a passive skill because the reader does not produce any text or message as the speaker or writer does. However, it is rejected by the cognitivists and many scholars who believe that reading comprehension is a complex cognitive process which combines and integrates the text information with the prior knowledge of the reader, resulting in the elaboration of mental representation (Afflerbach, 1990; Anderson, & Pearson, 1984). That is, in the process of reading, the reader extracts meaning from the text and reconstructs it by combining the information from the text and the background knowledge. In this respect, comprehension is the main goal of reading. From a psycholinguistic point of view, this comprehension is the product of a complicated mental process in which the writer encodes the thought into the form of language and the reader decodes language into the thought (Carrell, Devine, & Eskey, 1988). Therefore, from this perspective, the reader plays the role of an “active information processor” (Carrell, Devine, & Eskey, 1988, P.3).

Skilled readers use strategies in comprehension, and comprehension itself calls for critical thinking (Norris & Phillips, 1987). The claim “that critical thinking is closely related to reading comprehension” seems to be very similar to the viewpoint that reasoning is an essential part of reading. The reading comprehension requires readers to use reasoning to evaluate possible interpretations to determine the meaning

of a text. Critical thinking, which involves reasoning, is a process the reader uses to determine which interpretations are consistent with textual evidence (Commeyras, 1989). In current teaching scenario in Taiwan, the approach to reading through word decoding, sentence structure analysis, translation and teacher-directed questioning may not be able to foster students' reading comprehension in an effective way. Therefore, the researcher attempts to find an alternative strategy that would facilitate students' active involvements in meaning construction through their reading process.

2.5 Research Questions

Over the past few decades, many researchers have tried to investigate how to incorporate critical thinking strategies into courses, hoping to shed some light on how to help students become critical thinker and successful language learners at the same time. Some studies focus not on reading comprehension but on teaching critical thinking skills instead (Darch & Kameenui, 1987; Emerson, 2013; Halvorsen, 2005; Malamitsa et al., 2008; Steele, 2001; Yen, 2011). Other studies are product-oriented, investigating the relationship between critical thinking and reading comprehension by quantitative, experimental research methods to evaluate participants' improvement in proficiency tests (Fahim & Sa'eepour 2011; Hosseini et al., 2012; Vaseghi & Barjesteh, 2012;).

In the EFL context of Taiwan, the studies investigating the relationship between critical thinking and reading comprehension mostly focus on senior high school students and college students, and most of the researchers adopt literary texts as a tool to teach critical thinking skills (Chen, 2009; Lai, 2011; Li, 2009; Lin, 2012; Tung & Chang, 2009). Scarcely have researchers paid attention to learners in vocational high schools. For vocational high school students whose English proficiency levels and

motivations in learning are relatively lower than those of senior high school students, learning a foreign language can be a daunting task. English reading ability for vocational high school students by the end of the third year, according to the curriculum guidelines proposed by the Ministry of Education, include being able to: (1) recognize the handwriting fonts of English letters; (2) understand notes, signs, and user manuals in English; (3) read short stories and know their summaries; (4) understand simple letters, and (5) read extra reading materials with the aid of dictionary or other tools. According to Lo (2000), not every vocational high school student could meet these criteria, despite that the goals are seemingly simple. Therefore, based on the reasons mentioned above, in this research, the researcher who was also the teacher of the class adopted an action research project to investigate the process of fostering the reading ability of EFL vocational high school students by incorporating a critical thinking strategy, “Questioning the Author”. Unlike other product-oriented studies mentioned above, the present study is process-oriented, aiming at observing students’ responses and making modifications in process immediately.

In this study, the researcher aimed to investigate the answers to the following questions:

1. How would the participants respond to the incorporation of “Questioning the Author” strategy into their reading process?
2. How would the teacher researcher respond to the incorporation of “Questioning the Author” strategy into reading teaching activities?
3. What difficulties or obstacles did the teacher researcher and the participants encounter in incorporating “Questioning the Author” into reading teaching activities? And, how would they overcome these difficulties?

4. How did the high and low achievers respond differently to the same instruction?





CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this action research project is to investigate the process of fostering the reading ability of EFL vocational high school students by incorporating a critical thinking strategy, being specific, “Questioning the Author”, into the English classes. This is a process-oriented study. This chapter is divided into three main sections. In the first section, the research design is presented, including the information of participants and setting, the reading materials, and the instruments. In the second section, the procedure and the teaching project of the study are introduced. Finally, in the third section, the data collection and analysis in this research will be well expressed.

3.1 Research Design

3.1.1 Participants and Setting

Participants of this study were thirty-eight commercial majoring 10th graders from a vocational high school in northern Taiwan. They took Comprehensive Assessment Program for Junior High School Students as the entrance exam, and they had studied English for at least three years to pursue their academic achievement. Based on the teacher researcher’s ten-year teaching experiences in this school, the participants would have difficulties dealing with the articles which are more complicated than those in the English textbooks in junior high. They need help and strategies to bridge the gap between these two levels.

The process-oriented research was designed to incorporate into the existing

curriculum. There were four periods in total for English class each week. The teacher researcher spent one period (50 minutes) per week conducting the research project and the other three periods performing the original teaching activities. The teacher researcher conducted the project from the 12th week of the first semester. The arrangement was for three reasons: one was that the teacher researcher needed some time to understand the overall proficiency level of the participants in order to design appropriate teaching activities; another was to have the participants well prepared for the new learning strategy, “Questioning the Author”; and the other was the polarization in participants’ proficiency level. The timeline for the study lasted for five weeks in two semesters, totally 200 minutes in class and 120 minutes for two focus group interviews; 60 minutes for each interview. In brief, Week 1 was designed for the students to take the English proficiency test; Week 2 to Week 4 were then arranged for the research project of incorporating “Questioning the Author” into reading teaching activities, and at the end of the project, the teacher researcher held two focus group interviews in Week 5.

3.1.2 Reading materials and the Instruments

The reading materials for the research were chosen from the Lungteng Vocational High School Reader Book I and Book II. This book is edited to correspond to the curriculum guidelines issued by the Ministry of Education. The topics of the chosen articles are related to the participants’ daily lives. The contents allowed the teacher researcher to ask questions of students that aided them to create meaning and reflect on the text while reading. That is, they were provided suitable vehicles for implementing “Questioning the Author” into their reading process. The chosen articles involved in this study are shown in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1 Reading Materials

	Unit	Title	Content
Week 2	6	Crazy Contest: Birdman Flying and Extreme Ironing	Introducing two interesting contests that are meant to be fun
Week 3	1	Eating Customs around the World	Introducing some special eating customs around the world
Week 4	5	Taiwanese Taboos	Introducing several Taiwanese taboos and explain why we should avoid breaking the taboos

The following instruments were employed in the study: (1) English reading proficiency test; (2) the Queries “Questioning the Author”; (3) teaching logs and learning surveys; (4) worksheets; (5) two focus group interviews for both high- and low- proficiency participants.

3.1.2.1 English Reading Proficiency Test

The English reading proficiency test is borrowed from the reading section of the intermediate level of General English Proficiency Test (GEPT). GEPT is developed by a private Taiwanese organization, Language Training and Testing Center (LTTC), whose aim is to measure English learners’ skills in reading, listening, speaking, and writing. According to LTTC, five levels of English proficiency test are included, which are basic, intermediate, high-intermediate, advanced, and superior levels.

Different levels of tests and their corresponding targets of language learners are shown in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2 Levels of GEPT and the corresponding target learners

Level	Equivalent English Proficiency
Elementary	Junior high school graduates
Intermediate	Senior high school graduates
High-Intermediate	College graduates who do not major in English
Advanced	College graduates who major in English
Superior	Similar to native speakers who have receive higher education

According to LTTC, test-takers who pass the intermediate level can use basic English to communicate about topics in daily life. As to reading ability, test-takers who pass this level are expected to be able to read stories and news articles on familiar or concrete topics. Though the participants of this study had not graduated from senior high school, in order to understand their overall English reading proficiency level, the teacher researcher adopted a test from the “intermediate” level. Based on the mock proficiency test, the participants were grouped into high or low achievers for the two focus group interviews at the end of the project, investigating how the two groups responded to the same instruction differently.

3.1.2.2 *The Queries “Questioning the Author”*

The teacher researcher implemented the Queries “Questioning the Author” to integrate critical thinking with text reading. It ties to the discussion, strategy instruction, and self-explanation. “Questioning the Author” is a series of inquiries that have students “grapple with and reflect on what an author is trying to say” and encourage students to explore the meaning of the text (Beck, McKeown, Sandora, Kucan, & Worthy, 1996). The standard format of “Questioning the Author” involves five questions as follow: (Beck, McKeown, & Worthy, 1993)

1. What is the author trying to tell you?
2. Why is the author telling you that?
3. Does the author say it clearly?
4. How could the author have said things more clearly?
5. What would you say instead?

“Questioning the Author” is suitable for this study because it focuses on readers’ interaction with the text as it is being read. Besides, it encourages explanatory

responses to the questions about the text and creates an atmosphere of whole-class discussion (Beck et al., 1996).

3.1.2.3 Teaching logs and learning surveys using Likert scale

The teacher researcher used a teaching log to keep record of the instruction of the teaching process, teacher's reflection, and the observation of participants' responses in class. It provided a vehicle for recording noteworthy examples of teaching and learning events as they occurred. In this action research study, it could also support planning and progress in the teaching process. Participants, on the other hand, were required to fill out the learning survey after the reading activities. The learning survey using Likert scale and open-ended questions was designed as a tool to probe into participants' ability in reflection and thinking and to understand the participants' learning development. Moreover, it could increase the participants' active involvement in learning. To fulfill the spirit of action research, the information collected from the teaching logs and learning surveys were used to modify and revise the incorporation of the strategy "Questioning the Author" in the next period in the teaching process repeatedly.

3.1.2.4 Worksheets

While participants discussed the Queries in class, worksheets provided an opportunity for them to write their opinions down. This could deepen participants' reflective thinking and enhance their ability in organizing their understanding of the reading text.

3.1.2.5 Focus group interview

A focus group is, according to Lederman, “a technique involving the use of in-depth group interviews in which participants are selected because they are a purposive, although not necessarily representative, sampling of a specific population, this group being ‘focused’ on a given topic” (Thomas et al., 1995). In this study, the focus group interview, instead of individual interview, was used to collect the participants’ collective response to the whole project and co-construct the perspective on applying “Questioning the Author” to the reading process. In this study, the teacher researcher arranged two focus group interviews to understand the participants’ perception and reaction to the teaching activities implementing the strategy. Based on the learning surveys and the scores of the proficiency test, the teacher researcher selected three representatives from the high proficiency level to form a focus group for interview. Similarly, the teacher researcher formed another focus group from the low proficiency level with three participants.

3.2 Procedure of the Study

The procedure of the study were five weeks in total, including an English proficiency test, implementing the critical thinking strategy “Questioning the Author”, and two focus group interviews. At the beginning of the study, the English proficiency test—GEPT intermediate level—was administered in one period of class. Scores of this test could let the teacher researcher understand participants’ reading proficiency level thoroughly. Besides, as scores of this test were taken as five percent of participants’ final grades in English, it was expected that the participants would do their best to take the proficiency test. Furthermore, based on the scores of this test, participants were grouped into high or low achievers for the two focus group interviews at the end of the project, which helps the researcher to investigate how the two groups responded to the same instruction.

In Week 2, the teacher researcher conducted the research project, applying the strategy “Questioning the Author” to the reading text Unit 6 in Book I. As mentioned before, the teaching project was administered in one period of class, and in the other periods the teacher researcher performed original teaching activities. During the class, the teacher researcher kept field notes of the instruction of the teaching process, teacher’s reflection, and the observation of participants’ responses in class. After class, the field notes were organized into the teaching log. Participants, on the other hand, were required to fill out the learning survey after class. The learning survey included a Likert scale on the Queries in “Questioning the Author” and open-ended questions. The use of Likert scale could help participants evaluate their comprehension of the reading text through the strategy “Questioning the Author”, and open-ended questions could increase participants’ reflection and thinking, recording their responses and perspectives to the project. After studying the teaching log and learning survey, the

teacher researcher made modifications based on the information collected from the log and the survey to the teaching activities in the next period of applying the strategy “Questioning the Author”.

In Week 3, the teacher researcher applied “Questioning the Author” to the reading text Unit 1 in Book II. Likewise, the teacher researcher kept field notes and the teaching log, and the participants fill out the learning survey after class. Then, based on the information collected from the two teaching logs and two learning surveys, the teacher researcher made modifications to the teaching activities in the next period in Week 4.

As expected, in Week 4 the teacher researcher applied “Questioning the Author” to the reading text Unit 5 in Book II. Similarly, the teacher researcher kept field notes and the teaching log and the participants fill out the learning survey after class. After studying the teaching log and learning survey, the teacher researcher gathered the collected information from all the logs and surveys, including previous ones, to select representative participants—three high achievers and three low achievers—to form the focus groups.

At the end of the project, in Week 5, the teacher researcher held two focus group interviews, one for the high achievers, and the other for the low achievers. Different from the learning surveys which presented the participants’ individual self-reported data and response, focus group interviews could deepen their reflection and had them discuss issues, co-constructing the perspective on applying “Questioning the Author” to the reading process. With focus group interviews, the teacher researcher collected the participants’ collective response to the whole project. Besides, the teacher researcher held the interviews for different proficiency levels to avoid interference from each other. Please see Figure 3.1 for a graphic presentation of the procedure of

this study.

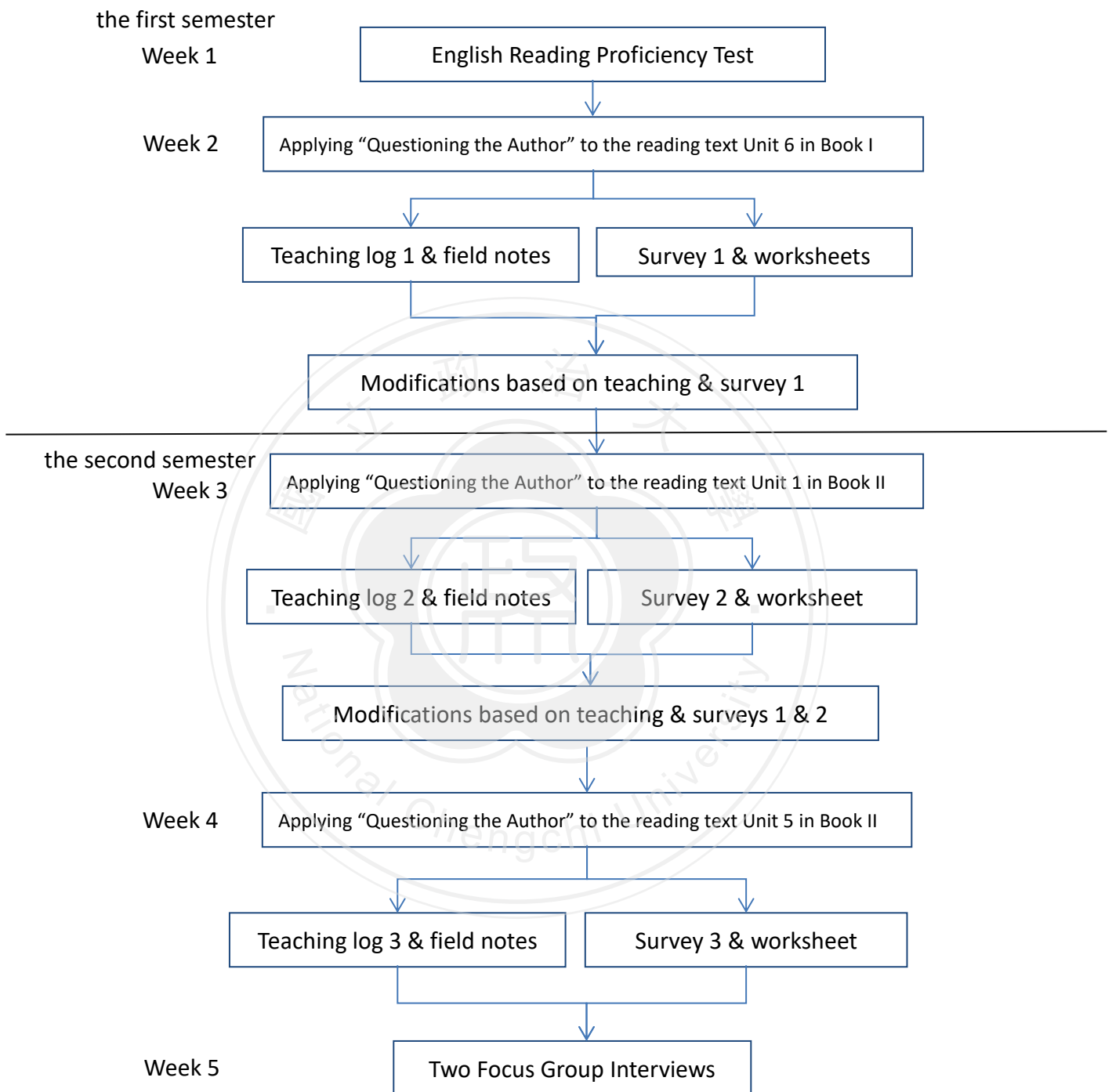


Figure 3.1 Procedure of the Study

3.3 Data Collection and Analysis

Data were collected over five weeks by the following means: English reading proficiency test, the three teaching logs and three learning surveys using Likert scale and open-ended questions, participants' worksheets, and the two focus group interviews.

First, data collection began with participants' scores in the English reading proficiency test. The scores were viewed as the baseline of their reading ability. The teacher researcher also used the scores to group the participants into high or low achievers for the focus group interviews at the end of the project. Second, the teacher researcher kept the field notes based on the observation of the noteworthy events in the teaching process, specifically, the implementation of "Questioning the Author" in the reading. The teacher researcher recorded participants' responses in the notes as well. After class, the field notes were organized into the teaching logs immediately for the sake of reliability. As for the students, during the class, the participants wrote down their personal opinions to the questions and issues discussed in class on the worksheets, which could display students' performance and reflect the improvement of students' reading ability. After the class, the learning surveys were distributed to the participants. The learning surveys provided participants' self-reported data mainly about the reaction to "Questioning the Author". Because this study was an action research project, the teacher researcher studied all the teaching logs and learning surveys to make modifications to the teaching activities in the next period. As this study included three reading texts (see Fig.3.1), three learning surveys and three teaching logs were collected. At the end of the project, the teacher researcher held two focus group interviews for both high and low achievers. The interviews were audio-recorded. By focus group interviews, the teacher researcher could collect

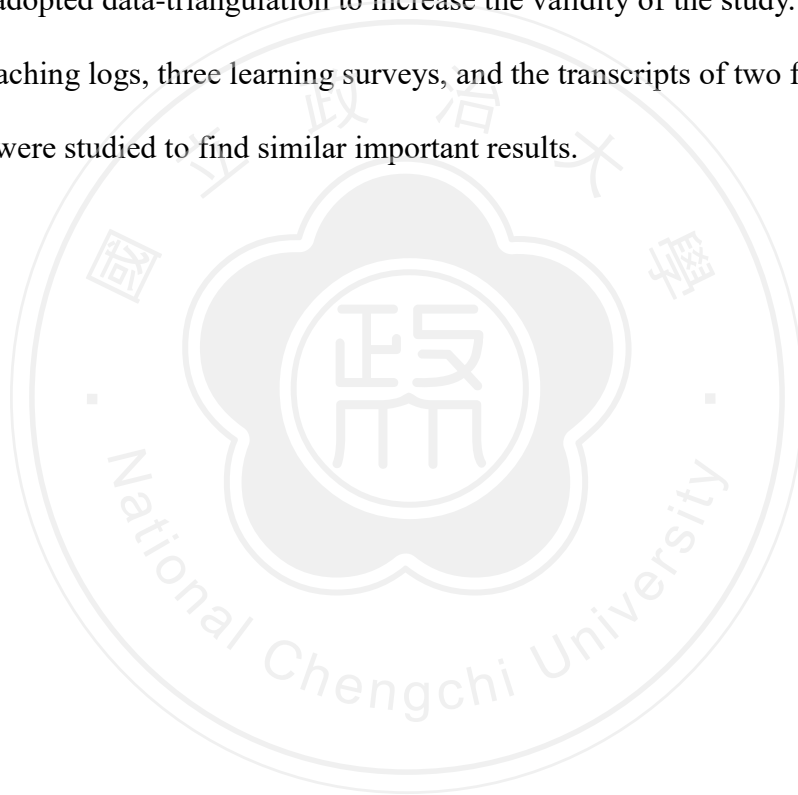
sufficient data from the high and low proficiency learners and have a holistic understanding of how the critical thinking strategy— “Questioning the Author”— helped them in reading comprehension.

As for data analysis, unlike quantitative analysis, qualitative analysis occurs concurrently with data collection (F. Rabiee, 2004). The study mainly utilized qualitative research method, except for the descriptive statistics to do analysis on the learning surveys. The teacher researcher conducted an inductive approach to examine, categorize, and interpret the collected data to search important themes.

To answer the first research question, first, the teacher researcher analyzed the learning survey with descriptive statistics. Then, the other open-ended questions were examined and interpreted, which involved the analysis of the content and context. In addition to the learning surveys, the teacher researcher studied the worksheets to see participants’ understanding. During the analysis process, the teacher researcher tried to select and categorize the critical points that were significant to the participants’ reading process. To answer the second research question, the researcher studied the teaching logs, selecting and categorizing the critical events that represent the teacher researcher’s perspective on incorporating “Questioning the Author” in class to foster students’ reading ability. At this stage, the analysis of teaching logs and learning surveys was served as a base for the design of focus group interview questions. To answer the third research question, first, the data from the two focus group interviews were transcribed verbatim. Then, the transcripts were examined, categorized, and interpreted as the teacher researcher did to the logs. Combined with the data from teaching logs and learning surveys, the important themes, difficulties and challenges to the participants emerged. To answer the fourth research question, first, the teacher researcher synthesized all the collected data from the teaching logs and learning

surveys. Then, the teacher researcher compared and contrasted the contents of two focus group interviews to find the differences between two proficiency levels.

To guard the trustworthiness, the teacher researcher took three measures. First, the teacher researcher invited a colleague with TESOL background to examine the transcripts and the interpretation of the interviews with the teacher researcher. Then, the teacher researcher adopted member checking, inviting the participants in the focus group interviews to contribute directly to the analysis. Moreover, the teacher researcher adopted data-triangulation to increase the validity of the study. In this study, the three teaching logs, three learning surveys, and the transcripts of two focus group interviews were studied to find similar important results.



CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

The present study aims to investigate the process of fostering reading ability of EFL vocational high school students by incorporating a critical thinking strategy, namely, “Questioning the Author” strategy, into the English classes. To illustrate this process-oriented study, this chapter presents the results and the analysis of the collected data in a chronological order, which involves five weeks of the whole project. In section 4.1, the result of the mock GEPT test in Week 1 is provided. Since the methods being adopted in this thesis—participants’ worksheets, learning surveys, the field notes and the teaching logs of the teacher researcher—may have interactive influences on teaching effect of the strategy “Questioning the Author”, from section 4.2 to 4.4, the data gathered by those methods along with the relevant results are displayed respectively from Week 2 to Week 4 in sequence. In section 4.5, the results of the two focus group interviews in Week 5, which are relevant to the final part of the research methods, are presented at the end of this chapter.

4.1 Proficiency Test in Week 1

At the beginning of the study, the English proficiency test—GEPT intermediate level—was administered in Week 1 for two purposes: one was to understand the participants’ proficiency, and the other was to define the high and low achievers for the focus group interviews at the end of the study. In Table 4.1, the result of the mock GEPT test for all subject students was shown below.

Table 4.1 GEPT Test Result and Grouping of the Participants

Category	Participant	Score	Ranking	Grouping
High Achievers	9	85	1	6
	23	82.5	2	1
	7	72.5	3	2
	33	70	4	3
	2	67.5	5	4
	4	65	6	7
	28	65	6	5
	6	60	8	6
	12	60	8	6
	25	60	8	1
Intermediate	18	57.5	11	4
	19	57.5	11	2
	29	55	13	3
	26	52.5	14	5
	40	50	15	7
	24	50	15	3
	15	45	17	7
	8	45	17	6
	38	45	17	4
	20	40	20	3
	42	37.5	21	6
	27	32.5	22	1
Low Achievers	13	30	23	7
	35	30	23	5
	16	30	23	4
	36	30	23	2
	30	30	23	1
	17	27.5	28	5
	34	27.5	28	5
	37	27.5	28	4
	11	25	31	7
	22	25	31	2
	5	22.5	33	6
	1	22.5	33	4
	32	22.5	33	1
	10	20	36	2
	39	18.5	37	5
14	15.5	38	3	

The result in Table 4.1 showed that only ten participants scored above 60 points, which meant most of the participants had difficulties in doing the reading comprehension test. It would be hard for them to read the article by themselves when

implementing “Questioning the Author” strategy on the article. Given this situation, the teacher researcher made a modification in grouping. Instead of grouping the participants randomly, the teacher researcher formed seven heterogeneous groups which consisted of participants with different proficiency levels. It is believed that such management may stimulate mutual help among the group members and thus make it easier for the participants to answer the questions of “Questioning the Author”, as well as to write their worksheets by discussing with their group members.

Therefore, the teacher researcher selected seven participants, who had a better performance on the test, to be the group leaders. Then, the other seven participants, who had the worst performance on the test, were arranged to each group. And those who performed in between could choose their group freely. Hence, the participants were divided into 7 groups, 4 groups with five participants and 3 groups with six ones. The arrangement of the groups was maintained for the whole project for its consistency.

Basically, each group consisted of participants with different proficiency levels, while group 5 and 6 both had two participants with the same grades in each of them. Noticing that situation, the teacher researcher decided not to rearrange the groups because the participants in group 5 were good friends and those two in group 6 came in the same situation. Since the teacher researcher expected participants to discuss with their group members before writing the worksheets, the management would promote the interaction and discussion in their reading process.

To divide participants into high- and low-achiever groups for the two focus group interviews, the participants with the grades above 60 points were classified as high achievers while the ones with the grades under 30 points were low achievers.

4.2 Week 2 for Implementing “Questioning the Author” Strategy

The teaching procedures of implementing the strategy “Questioning the Author” were as follows: (a) the teacher researcher introduced “Questioning the Author” and its queries to the participants; (b) the teacher researcher led class discussion and facilitated the participants to discuss about the questions on the worksheets in groups; and (c) the participants wrote down their own answers on the worksheets.

Before implementing the “Questioning the Author” strategy to the article, the teacher researcher introduced the strategy “Questioning the Author” and helped the participants understand the questions. It was different from conventional reading class because the participants had to think actively and critically while reading, instead of only receiving information from teachers’ lecturing. Then worksheets were passed on to the participants. On the worksheets, the article was divided into five parts, each part is accompanied with some questions in the queries of “Questioning the Author” (see Appendix 1 & 2). Then, the teacher researcher led the participants to read the article. After that, the teacher researcher explained the questions to the participants. For example, the first question “What is the author trying to tell you?” means they should try to write at least a sentence with key points in the paragraph. Then, the participants could discuss with his/her group members. During the discussion, the teacher researcher encouraged the participants to express their own opinions in the discussion, and promote polite and respectful interactions within the group and in the whole class. After the group discussion, the teacher researcher invited some participants to speak out their ideas in English in class. While some participants provided their answers to the question, the teacher researcher still asked all of them to write down their own answers on the worksheets, which provided them with opportunities for independent practice and recorded their understanding of the article.

In the following section, the presentation of the results is divided into three parts: data collected from worksheets 1 and 2, learning survey 1, and teaching log 1.

4.2.1 Worksheets 1 and 2

Worksheets 1 and 2 were organized with the queries of the strategy “Questioning the Author”. The queries are structured short answer questions which allow the participants to probe the article in depth, challenging the author in sequence (see Appendix 1 & 2). In order to have a clear and thorough understanding of the participants’ critical thinking process and their perception of the article, the teacher researcher encouraged them to try their best to put their thoughts into words. The data provided on the worksheets enabled the teacher researcher to judge whether the participants understood the strategy “Questioning the Author”. Particularly, the teacher researcher could discover whether the participants perform their critical thinking ability in answering the questions. After checking their worksheets, the teacher researcher found that some of the participants were a little confused by the queries since it was the first time for them to apply the strategy to reading. On the other hand, eleven out of thirty-eight participants had a better understanding of the strategy, exploring deeper into the article and trying to challenge the author. Some good examples extracted from these participants’ worksheets are as follows:

Excerpt 1

<i>Crazy Contests: Birdman Flying and Extreme Ironing</i>
<p>The first event is the International Birdman in England. It began in 1971. It is held in mid-August every year and attracts an audience of tens of thousands. In the event, people run along a platform, jump off over the sea, and try to fly.</p>
<p>Q2. What is the author talking about? <i>The history of (the) International Birdman contest. (S 7)</i> <i>The International Birdman competition. (S 35)</i></p>
<p>Q3. What do you think the author wants us to know here? <i>The author wants us to know the history of the event and the rule of the event (contest). (S 28)</i> <i>The author wants us to know how the International Birdman competition take(s) place. (S 29)</i></p>
<p>Q4. Does the author tell us why the event was held? Does the author say it clearly? <i>No. I think the reason why people hold it is for fun. If the author says more about the rules, (it) may (would) be better. (S 23)</i></p>
<p>Q5. How could the author have said things more clearly? <i>The author should tell us who creates the event and why he/she creates the event. (S 23)</i> <i>The author can add more origin, rules, and content in detail. (S 29)</i> <i>The author can say the development of the competition. (S 26)</i></p>

*Note. The words in parentheses are corrected or added by the teacher researcher.

Some participants had creative answers; however, they did not share with the classmates in class. Thus, the worksheets worked as the tool to let the teacher researcher know their personal and unique ideas to the questions.

Here are some more examples from the worksheet:

Excerpt 2

<i>Crazy Contests: Birdman Flying and Extreme Ironing</i>	
To win the first prize of 30,000 pounds, serious contestants make machines or hang-gliders to reach the 100-meter mark. However, some people join the event just for fun. They do not use anything except their own bodies. The point is not to “fly” the farthest, but to make the audience laugh.	
Q6. What is the important message in this section?	<i>Many contestants are (do) not have to win aim to win the game and they want to make audience laugh. (S 22)</i> <i>Some contestants attend the event for the prize, but some are just for fun and make the audience laugh. (S 4)</i>
Q7. Why do you think the author tells us that now?	<i>Because having a sense of humor in life is important. (S 23)</i> <i>The (main) point of the contest is not win or lose. (winning or losing the game.) Maybe the author wants to tell us (that) the result is not very (so) important to us, we should enjoy the game. (S 8)</i>
Q8. Does the author say it clearly?	<i>No.</i>
Q9. How could the author have said things more clearly?	<i>The author can say more about the rule, the limited (limitations) and the meaning of this game. (S 4)</i> <i>He can explain (describe) the stupid behavior of the contestants. (S 29)</i> <i>The author can explain why the event was (is) held (every year). (S 28)</i>
Q10. What would you say instead?	<i>I would say (something about) the rules of the competition. For example, (I can tell the readers) how the contestants reach the mark in the limited time and avoid to fall(ing) into the water. And some people may wear fancy clothes to join the competition. (S 28)</i> <i>The contestants always wear special clothes and funny expressions to make people laugh. (S 23)</i>

*Note. The words in parentheses are corrected or added by the teacher researcher.

These participants exerted their critical thinking ability to write the answers to the queries although they made some grammatical errors. Compared to these participants, some other participants might neither understand the queries nor think more about the article. For example, their answers to Q7 are as follows:

Some people join the event just for fun. (S 6)

Because the author wants us to know the game is interesting. (S 2)

The author lets us know different kind(s) of activities. (S 27)

And some of their answers to Q10 are:

(The contestants should) run faster before they jump off the ocean. (S 2)

We know the Olympic Game, and we can take part in the activity. (S 25)

I will say more events ~~besides~~ related to the hang-gliders. (S 36)

According to the results of worksheets 1 and 2, it could be concluded that only eleven participants, namely, only 28.95% of the participants had a clear understanding of the strategy “Questioning the Author” and knew how to apply it as a tool to the article. Other participants might need more time and practice to be familiar with the critical thinking strategy.

4.2.2 Learning Survey 1

Learning Survey 1 (see Appendix 5) was composed of structured questions using Likert scale and one open-ended question. The structured questions were categorized into three parts: the participants’ opinions on teaching procedures with “Questioning the Author”, opinions on the worksheets, and their self-evaluation of what they learned through the strategy “Questioning the Author”. In addition to using Likert scale to check the participants’ perception of the critical thinking strategy and self-evaluation, the teacher researcher also composed an open-ended question to induce the participants’ suggestions for how the teaching procedure and the worksheet could be improved.

Table 4.2 to Table 4.4 show the results of the participants’ learning survey in quantitative analysis. The tables display the participants’ opinions gathered by the

structured questions in the learning survey. With the form of Likert scale, the participants could put a check from strongly agree to strongly disagree to each statement. Table 4.5 shows the participants' suggestions and opinions derived from the open-ended question at the end of the learning survey.

Table 4.2 Opinions on Teaching Procedures with “Questioning the Author”

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Partially Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. I enjoy reading the article through the strategy “Questioning the Author”.	21.05%	†57.89%	15.79%	5.26%	0.00%
2. I think the strategy “Questioning the Author” makes reading more interesting than the traditional way.	34.21%	†47.37%	15.79%	2.63%	0.00%
3. I think the strategy “Questioning the Author” makes the studying atmosphere more relaxing.	†44.74%	36.84%	18.42%	0.00%	0.00%
4. I think the strategy “Questioning the Author” can help me understand the article more.	28.95%	†44.74%	21.05%	5.26%	0.00%
5. I think the strategy “Questioning the Author” can enhance my interest in reading.	23.68%	†36.84%	28.95%	10.53%	0.00%
6. I think questions the teacher proposes in class are moderate in difficulty.	18.42%	28.95%	†47.37%	5.26%	0.00%
7. I think group discussion can help me understand the questions in “Questioning the Author” and the article more.	28.95%	†44.74%	15.79%	10.53%	0.00%
8. I think teacher's guiding can help me understand the questions in “Questioning the Author” and the article more.	39.47%	†42.11%	18.42%	0.00%	0.00%
9. I think the strategy “Questioning the Author” can make the article interesting and meaningful to me.	23.68%	†44.74%	28.95%	2.63%	0.00%
10. I think the strategy “Questioning the Author” can prompt me to think while reading.	26.32%	†52.63%	18.42%	2.63%	0.00%

*Note. The figure with † means that the participants had the most consensus on the statement.

As shown in Table 4.2, most of the participants held a positive attitude toward the teaching activities with “Questioning the Author”. More than 70% of the

participants agreed that the activities, such as group discussion, could lessen the tension in class and make reading more interesting than those in the traditional way. Furthermore, they considered “Questioning the Author” a useful strategy for comprehending the article and enhancing their interests in reading. However, while most of the participants thought the teacher researcher’s guiding in the activities could help them understand the strategy and the article more, half of them (52.56%) had a little difficulty in understanding the questions asked by the teacher researcher in class. The result of Q6 shows that the percentage of participants who stated “partially agree” on this statement is equal to those for “strongly agree” and “agree” on it. Even so, nearly 80% of the participants agreed that the strategy “Questioning the Author” could prompt them to think while reading, which corresponds to the teacher researcher’s anticipation.

The next part is the result of participants’ opinions on the worksheet.

Table 4.3 Opinions on the Worksheets

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Partially Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. I think questions on the worksheet can help me understand the article more.	15.79%	†47.37%	26.32%	10.53%	0.00%
2. I think questions on the worksheet can help me clarify my thoughts.	18.42%	†39.47%	34.21%	7.89%	0.00%
3. I think questions on the worksheet can help me think more hidden questions.	21.05%	†44.74%	28.95%	5.26%	0.00%
4. I think questions on the worksheet are moderate in difficulty.	13.16%	28.95%	†52.63%	5.26%	0.00%
5. I think questions on the worksheet can enhance my interest in reading.	13.16%	†47.37%	26.32%	13.16%	0.00%

*Note. The figure with † means that the participants had the most consensus on the statement.

As the results shown in Table 4.3, about 65% of the participants agreed that the questions on worksheets 1 and 2 could assist them to understand the article, to think

more implied questions about the article, to clarify their thoughts, and most importantly, to enhance their interests in reading. Nevertheless, the result of Q4 shows that there were nearly 60% of the participants considering the questions on the worksheets to be too difficult for them to answer. Different from the traditional reading comprehension test, the questions on the worksheets were unfamiliar to the participants. This is identical to the result of Q6 in Table 4.2, which suggests that half of the participants may be highly motivated in the activities but encountered some obstacles when writing the worksheets.

The third part is the result of participants' self-evaluation of their acquisition in the activities through the strategy "Questioning the Author".

Table 4.4 Self-evaluation of What was Learned Through "Questioning the Author"

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Partially Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. I fully understand the questions discussed in class.	13.16%	†60.53%	18.42%	2.63%	5.26%
2. Through the strategy "Questioning the Author", I can find the ambiguous parts which the author doesn't express clearly.	18.42%	†42.11%	31.58%	2.63%	5.26%
3. Through the strategy "Questioning the Author", I can fully understand the ideas which the author tries to tell me.	18.42%	†44.74%	31.58%	0.00%	5.26%
4. In the group discussion, I can answer the questions actively rather than wait for other classmates' ideas.	21.05%	†39.47%	34.21%	0.00%	5.26%
5. In the group discussion, I can think of more questions and express my opinions voluntarily.	21.05%	†42.11%	31.58%	0.00%	5.26%
6. Through the strategy "Questioning the Author", I fully understand the content and the meaning of the article.	18.42%	†47.37%	28.95%	0.00%	5.26%
7. Through the strategy "Questioning the Author", I think I can alter the article to make it more comprehensible.	15.79%	34.21%	†36.84%	7.89%	5.26%

Table 4.4 (continued)

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Partially Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
8. Through the strategy “Questioning the Author”, I think I can challenge the author.	15.79%	†28.95%	†28.95%	18.42%	7.89%
9. Through the strategy “Questioning the Author”, I can have a sharper mind and flexible thinking.	21.05%	†44.74%	26.32%	2.63%	5.26%
10. Through the strategy “Questioning the Author”, I become more interested in reading.	13.16%	†60.53%	13.16%	7.89%	5.26%
11. Through the strategy “Questioning the Author”, my English reading ability is improved.	15.79%	†65.79%	7.89%	5.26%	5.26%
12. In general, the strategy “Questioning the Author” elevates my English proficiency.	15.79%	†52.63%	21.05%	5.26%	5.26%

*Note. The figure with † means that the participants had the most consensus on the statement.

As presented in Table 4.4, more than 60% of the participants were satisfied with their performance in the activities, understanding the strategy “Questioning the Author” and how to employ the strategy on the article. However, based on the results of Q7 and Q8, there were respectively 50% and 55% of the participants who had less confidence in altering the article by themselves as well as challenging the author. Noticeably, through the strategy “Questioning the Author”, up to 74% of the participants stated that they had become more interested in reading and 82% of the participants agreed that their reading ability had been improved.

The last part of the result, extracted from the open-ended question on the learning survey, presenting participants’ suggestions and opinions on the teaching procedures, the worksheets, and the application of the strategy as well.

Table 4.5 Suggestions and Opinions from the Open-ended Question

Suggestions and Opinions	Number of those giving the opinion	Percentage of those giving the opinion
I like this activity and hope the teacher can use it in class often in the future.	33	86.84%
I hope the questions on the worksheet can be easier.	20	52.63%
I like to discuss with my team members because it can improve my communication skills and our relationship.	19	50%
I like to discuss with my team members and I find it interesting to write the worksheet.	18	47.37%
I think the activity let me use my brain to think more about the article in class.	18	47.37%
I like to discuss with my team members but I have difficulties in writing the worksheet.	16	42.11%
I think the questions to each part of the article are the same. It is a little boring and bothering to me because I can't tell the difference between the questions.	10	26.32%
I like to write the worksheet because I can practice writing. Instead of coping what the teacher puts on the blackboard, I have to work harder to learn English.	7	18.42%
I prefer traditional way to this activity. I don't know what I can do in class because I hardly understand the worksheet is about.	2	5.26%

**Note.* In this research, there were 38 participants in total. The opinions were presented with the percentage from high to low.

Apparently, most of the participants enjoyed learning through the activities in this stage and discussing with their teammates. Interestingly, half of the participants thought that discussion in class not only helped to finish the worksheets but also improved their communication skills and the relationship with their classmates. Although twenty out of thirty-eight participants hoped that the questions on the worksheet could be easier, there were still eighteen of them considered it interesting to write the worksheets, which urges them to think more about the article. However,

there were sixteen of them had difficulty in writing the worksheets, which might be due to their misinterpretation of the questions. There were ten of them thought that the worksheets were boring and bothering because they could not tell the difference between the questions. What is more, two participants clearly stated that they preferred traditional teaching procedures because they did not know what to do in the activities in class neither understood the worksheets were about. It should be noted that seven of the participants mentioned that they practiced writing through the worksheets, which stimulated them to learn English harder.

4.2.3 Teaching Log 1

Basically, the notes taken in the teaching log were concluded into four aspects: (a) the participants' preparation for the activity; (b) the teaching procedures; (c) the teacher researcher's observation in class, and (d) modifications to the teaching procedures.

In the beginning, viewing the participants were unfamiliar with the strategy "Questioning the Author", the teacher researcher explained the questions in the queries of "Questioning the Author"; however, most of the participants could not figure out the meaning of the questions and needed more explanation in different ways. This might be owing to their prior learning experiences, which were passively receiving the information provided by the teacher instead of actively discovering the answers by themselves. Thus, the teacher researcher had to explain the questions in more details as well as more cautiously for the fear of interfering participants' creativity and imagination. Besides, the teacher researcher had to avoid speaking out her own thought to the questions.

During the class discussion, the teacher researcher found some participants had

good answers to the questions, but they were not willing to share with others. They just wrote the answers down on their worksheets. In contrast, some of the participants had difficulties in expressing their thoughts in English. The biggest hindrance for them to finish the worksheets is the lack of vocabulary and sentence patterns.

After the group discussion, the teacher researcher invited participants to share their answers with the classmates. At first, participants were too shy to provide their answers, so the teacher researcher picked one to two participants who already had answers on their worksheets to share with the classmates. Meanwhile, the teacher researcher complimented their answers in order to encourage the participants to be confident of their own opinions. After that, other participants would try to say something voluntarily. Although most of the participants took part in the activities eagerly, the teacher researcher found some participants might be apathetic to the group work, waiting for others' answers. Without doubt, these participants encountered some problems which inspired the teacher researcher to modify the teaching procedures and activities in the next stage.

In view of time limitation, the modifications included: (a) shortening the worksheet; and (b) allowing more time for whole class and group discussion. In Week 3, the teacher researcher condensed the worksheet on one piece of paper. That is, the teacher researcher divided the article into fewer parts, which enabled the participants to have a better understanding with a longer paragraph. The longer passage of the article could also provide more clues for the participants to answer the questions on the worksheet. In this way, instead of being distracted by the time limitation, the participants could spend more time on group discussion, which allowed the participants to think more while reading. Thus, the participants might have fewer difficulties in writing the worksheet. As for the teacher researcher, extending the time

for group discussion could prevent the class activities from being cut into pieces. With the modifications, it was expected that the teaching procedures would be smoother; the participants could have a better performance on the worksheet; and most important of all, they could apply the strategy “Questioning the Author” to the article more effectively.

4.3 Week 3 for Implementing “Questioning the Author” Strategy

With the modifications to the worksheet, the research was carried forward to Week 3. Concerned that the participants might have forgotten the strategy “Questioning the Author”, the teacher researcher still explained the strategy and the queries to the participants at the beginning of the class. Other teaching procedures were similar to what were adopted in Week 2. In the following section, the presentation of the results is divided into three parts: data collected from worksheet 3, learning survey 2, and teaching log 2.

4.3.1 *Worksheet 3*

Different from worksheets 1 and 2, the length of each passage was longer on worksheet 3 in order to provide more clues and longer time for the participants to answer the questions (see Appendix 3). Therefore, the saved time could be allotted to the whole class and group discussion, which enabled the participants to think deeper and more thoroughly while reading. Worksheet 3 was also organized with the queries of the strategy “Questioning the Author”. After checking the worksheets, the teacher researcher found that some of the participants made a great improvement, while some of them were still confused with the strategy. To be specific, fifteen out of thirty-eight participants had a better understanding of the strategy in this period, including the

eleven participants who had better performance on worksheets 1 and 2 and other four participants who made obvious progress on worksheet 3. Some good examples extracted from these participants' worksheets are as follows:

Excerpt 3

Eating Customs around the World
<p>In Taiwan, it is common for people to bring their pets into some restaurants. Some of these restaurants even serve food just for animals. But imagine you are having dinner in a fancy restaurant in an Arab country like Sudan. Should you bring your camel in with you? The answer is NO! This is just one example of different eating customs. There are more to be found around the world.</p>
<p>Q1. What is the author trying to tell you? <i>There are many different eating customs around the world. For example, in Taiwan, some restaurants can let the pets into pets can go into some restaurants but at (in) other countries they can't. (S 24)</i> <i>The eating customs are different from countries to countries, such as Taiwan and Sudan. (S 9, S 7)</i> <i>We need to know different restaurant eating customs and (show) respect. (S 10)</i></p>
<p>Perhaps many of you have had ramen before. Noodle dishes, such as ramen, are popular in Japan. If you walk into a local restaurant in Tokyo, you may hear a very special noise. The Japanese like to slurp their noodles as loudly as possible when they eat. Slurping noodles is a way of praising the chef. It means that you like your food very much, and that you can't wait to get it in your mouth!</p>
<p>Q2. What is the author trying to tell you in this paragraph? <i>(The author tries to tell us) an eating custom in Japan. The Japanese like to slurp their noodles when they eat. (S 28)</i> <i>In Japan, slurping noodles loudly is a way of praising the chef. (S 40)</i> <i>Different countries and different people have different way(s) to communicate with the chef. (to show their respect to the chef.) (S 4)</i></p>
<p>Q3. What does the author mean here? <i>When in Rome, do as the Romans do. (S 7, S 35, S26)</i> <i>In Taiwan, it is rude to make sounds when you are eating, but in other countries, it may be polite. (S 9)</i> <i>The author is trying to find some examples to tell us that there are many different eating customs in the world. (S 23)</i></p>

Excerpt 3 (continued)

Q4. Does the author tell us why the Japanese like to slurp their noodles?

Yes. Slurping noodles is a way of praising the chef in Japan. (S 27, S 4, S 10)

Does the author compare this eating custom with those in different places (e.g. in Taiwan)? *No.*

Q5. How could the author say it more clearly?

The author can say more about ~~slurping noodles' origin~~. (the origin of Japanese' slurping noodles custom.) (S 40)

The author can say more about the different customs ~~in~~ (of) eating noodles in different countries. (S 25, S 35, S33)

~~He~~ (The author) can ~~say~~ (provide) more examples of eating noodles in different countries and compare (them). (S 26)

Q6. Would you add anything else to this paragraph? What would you say instead?

In Taiwan, we usually eat noodles without making sound because it isn't ~~pleasure~~ (polite/graceful). (S 33)

In Taiwan, we eat noodles ~~that isn't have soup~~ (without soup), so we don't slurping. (S 27, P 29)

People who live in other countries don't slurp noodles. For example, we eat spaghettis with forks, and we don't slurp. (S 23)

**Note.* The words in parentheses are corrected or added by the teacher researcher.

Compared to these participants, some other participants might need more time and practice to be familiar with the critical thinking strategy. For example, their answers to Q5 are as follows:

Give us more examples ~~in~~ (of) Japanese eating noodles. (S 30, S 42, S 5)

He can ~~make~~ (give us) opposite examples. (S 19, S 37, S 16)

It is clearly. (S 32)

Some of these participants who provided the same answers were in the same group, for instance, S 42 and S 5, S 37 and S 16. Thus, the teacher researcher assumed that they might copy each other's answers or they have reached a consensus after discussion about the questions because they could not figure out what and how to

answer the queries individually. Nevertheless, 39.47% (15 out of 38) of the participants performed well on worksheet 3, which suggested that more participants understood the strategy “Questioning the Author” and they knew how to use their critical thinking ability while reading.

4.3.2 Learning Survey 2

Learning Survey 2 (see Appendix 6) was composed of structured questions using Likert scale and four open-ended questions. The structured questions were categorized into three parts: the participants’ opinions on teaching procedures with “Questioning the Author”, their self-evaluation of what they learned through the strategy, and the comparison of learning effects between Week 2 and Week 3. Different from learning survey 1 in which the participants’ opinions on the worksheets was put into an independent section, in learning survey 2, it was involved in the opinions on teaching procedures and the comparison of learning effects was added. In addition to using Likert scale to check the participants’ perception of the critical thinking strategy and self-evaluation, the teacher researcher also composed four open-ended questions to seek the participants’ suggestions for the teaching procedures and their reflection on the critical thinking activities.

Table 4.6 to Table 4.8 show the results of the participants’ learning survey in quantitative analysis. The tables display the participants’ opinions gathered by the structured questions in the learning survey. With the form of Likert scale, the participants could put a check from strongly agree to strongly disagree to each statement. Table 4.9 shows the participants’ opinions and self-reflection derived from the open-ended questions at the end of the learning survey.

Table 4.6 Opinions on Teaching Procedures of “Questioning the Author”

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Partially Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. In the activities of “Questioning the Author”, I am willing to answer the questions asked by the teacher actively.	12.82%	†43.59%	†43.59%	0.00%	0.00%
2. I think questions asked by the teacher in the activities are moderate in difficulty.	15.38%	25.64%	†53.85%	5.13%	0.00%
3. I think teacher's guiding can help me understand the questions on the worksheet.	28.21%	†43.59%	25.64%	2.56%	0.00%
4. I think questions on the worksheet are moderate in difficulty.	7.69%	†51.28%	38.46%	2.56%	0.00%
5. I think questions on the worksheet can help me understand the article more.	23.08%	†38.46%	35.90%	2.56%	0.00%
6. I think questions on the worksheet can help me think of more hidden questions.	28.21%	†38.46%	33.33%	0.00%	0.00%
7. I think questions on the worksheet can help me clarify my thoughts.	23.08%	25.64%	†43.59%	7.69%	0.00%
8. I think group discussion can help me understand and answer the questions on the worksheet.	23.08%	†43.59%	33.33%	0.00%	0.00%
9. In the group discussion, I can join the discussion actively rather than wait for other classmates' ideas.	31.58%	†50.00%	15.79%	2.63%	0.00%
10. Through the group discussion in the activities, I am stimulated to have more ideas.	25.64%	†38.46%	35.90%	0.00%	0.00%
11. I think the strategy "Questioning the Author" can prompt me to think while reading.	20.51%	†48.72%	30.77%	0.00%	0.00%

*Note. The figure with † means that the participants had the most consensus on the statement.

As shown in Table 4.6, most of the participants held a positive attitude toward the teaching activities with “Questioning the Author”. More than 80% of the participants agreed that they could join the discussion actively rather than wait for other classmates' ideas in the group discussion. What’s more, they were willing to

answer the questions raised by the teacher researcher actively in the activities. However, while most of the participants (71.8%) thought the teacher researcher's guiding in the activities could help them understand the strategy and the article more, half of them (58.98%) considered the questions asked by the teacher researcher in class were a little difficult for them. Besides, the results of Q5 and Q6 show that more than 60% of participants thought the questions on the worksheet could help them understand the article and think about more questions between the lines, and 58.97% of them thought the questions on the worksheet were not too difficult. These might be the reasons why the result of Q7 shows that only 48.72% of the participants thought the questions on the worksheet could help them clarify their thoughts. Even so, nearly 70% of the participants considered "Questioning the Author" a helpful strategy for stimulating them to think while reading.

The next part is the result of participants' self-evaluation of learning effects through "Questioning the Author".

Table 4.7 Self-evaluation of What was Learned Through "Questioning the Author"

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Partially Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. I fully understand the questions discussed in the activities of "Questioning the Author".	12.82%	†48.72%	35.90%	2.56%	0.00%
2. Through the strategy "Questioning the Author", I can fully understand the ideas which the author tries to tell me.	10.26%	†51.28%	33.33%	5.13%	0.00%
3. Through the strategy "Questioning the Author", I can clarify the author's point of view.	12.82%	30.77%	†51.28%	5.13%	0.00%
4. Through the strategy "Questioning the Author", I can find the ambiguous parts which the author doesn't express clearly.	20.51%	23.08%	†46.15%	10.26%	0.00%

Table 4.7 (continued)

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Partially Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
5. Through the strategy “Questioning the Author”, I think I can alter the article to make it more comprehensible.	12.82%	33.33%	†35.90%	15.38%	2.56%
6. Through the strategy “Questioning the Author”, I think I can challenge the author.	5.13%	17.95%	†51.28%	20.51%	5.13%
7. Through the strategy “Questioning the Author”, I can improve my critical thinking ability. (e.g. I can tell whether the author’s expression is clear or not.)	10.26%	†43.59%	38.46%	7.69%	0.00%
8. Through the strategy “Questioning the Author”, I can grasp the thread of ideas in the article.	17.95%	†41.03%	38.46%	2.56%	0.00%
9. Through the strategy “Questioning the Author”, I can have a sharper mind and flexible thinking.	15.38%	35.90%	†46.15%	2.56%	0.00%
10. In general, I like my teacher leads us to use the strategy “Questioning the Author” into reading.	25.64%	30.77%	†33.33%	10.26%	0.00%
11. Through the strategy “Questioning the Author”, my English reading ability is improved.	15.38%	†41.03%	35.90%	7.69%	0.00%
12. Through the strategy “Questioning the Author”, I become more interested in reading.	17.95%	†38.46%	30.77%	10.26%	2.56%

*Note. The figure with † means that the participants had the most consensus on the statement.

As presented in Table 4.7, more than 60% of the participants were satisfied with their performance in the activities, understanding the questions in discussions and the article. However, according to the results of Q3 and Q4, 56.41% of the participants had doubts in their ability to find the ambiguous parts which the author did not

express clearly and to clarify the author's point of view. Furthermore, 46.15% of the participants had confidence in altering the article to make it more comprehensible and remarkably, only 23.08 % of them considered themselves to have enough ability to challenge the author. Obviously, through the strategy "Questioning the Author", up to 56.41% of the participants stated that they had become more interested in reading and that their reading ability had been improved.

The next part is the result of learning effects comparison between Week 2 and Week 3.



Table 4.8 Comparison of Learning Effects

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Partially Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. Compared to the first activity, I can join the group discussion more actively and offer my ideas.	28.21%	†35.90%	28.21%	7.69%	0.00%
2. Compared to the first activity, I can answer the questions more actively, rather than wait for other classmates' answers.	28.21%	30.77%	†33.33%	5.13%	2.56%
3. Compared to the first activity, I think I realize the strategy of "Questioning the Author" more.	28.21%	25.64%	†46.15%	0.00%	0.00%
4. Compared to the first activity, I have great improvement in my critical thinking ability. (e.g. I can tell whether the author's expression is clear or not.)	25.64%	30.77%	†35.90%	7.69%	0.00%
5. Compared to the first activity, my reading ability is more improved.	20.51%	†38.46%	†38.46%	2.56%	0.00%
6. Compared to prior experience, in the activities of "Questioning the Author", I can think of more questions about the article and express my own opinions on it.	20.51%	28.21%	†51.28%	0.00%	0.00%
7. Compared to prior experience, I think the strategy "Questioning the Author" can make the article interesting and meaningful.	20.51%	†43.59%	28.21%	7.69%	0.00%
8. Compared to prior experience, I think the strategy "Questioning the Author" makes the studying atmosphere more relaxing.	28.21%	†33.33%	†33.33%	5.13%	0.00%
9. Compared to prior experience, the strategy "Questioning the Author" elevates my English proficiency.	23.08%	25.64%	†46.15%	5.13%	0.00%

*Note. The figure with † means that the participants had the most consensus on the statement.

As shown in Table 4.8, more than 60% of the participants considered that they had a better performance in the activities in Week 3. Close to 60% of the participants

thought they realized the strategy of “Questioning the Author” more and their reading ability was more improved. It is worth mentioning that based on the result of Q4, 56.41% of the participants believed that they had great improvement in critical thinking ability, which means that the strategy “Questioning the Author” inspired them to think while reading and they gained a sense of achievement in the activities. Although the result of Q9 shows that 46.15% of the participants stated “partially agree” to the question, there were 48.72% of them thought the strategy elevates their English proficiency. Generally speaking, more than 60% of the participants gave credit to the strategy “Questioning the Author” for making the article interesting and meaningful for them. In addition, compared to prior experience, they also felt the studying atmosphere in class was more relaxing by the activities.

The last part of the result, extracted from the four open-ended questions on the learning survey, presents participants suggestions and opinions on the teaching procedures and the activities, the worksheet, the application of the strategy, and their self-reflection as well.

Table 4.9 Suggestions and Opinions from the Open-ended Questions

Question 1. Do you have any suggestion for the teaching procedures and the activities? Please write it down in specific.		
Suggestions and Opinions	n	%
<i>I like the activities and hope the teacher can use it in class often in the future.</i>	30	78.94
<i>I like the activities because we can discuss with the classmates.</i>	25	65.78
<i>I don't have any special ideas. But I hope the questions on the worksheet can be easier.</i>	20	52.63
<i>I like the activities and it gives me a chance to use my imagination.</i>	12	31.57
<i>I like the activities but it is time-consuming.</i>	4	10.52
<i>I prefer traditional way to this activity. The worksheet is too difficult to for me.</i>	2	5.26

Table 4.9 (continued)

Question 2. Do you feel nervous when answering the questions orally? Do you like to answer the questions orally or write the worksheet? Why?		
Suggestions and Opinions	n	%
<i>I always feel nervous when answering the questions. But I like to answer orally instead of in writing because writing is difficult for me.</i>	18	47.36
<i>I feel nervous when answering the questions, so I hope the teacher doesn't pick me up. I prefer writing the worksheet.</i>	10	26.32
<i>I think answering the questions orally can help me practice my speaking, and writing the worksheet is also important because I can practice writing.</i>	8	21.05
<i>I like neither speaking nor writing. I hope the teacher can tell me the answers.</i>	2	5.26
Question 3. Do you think the worksheet is helpful or not? When writing the worksheet, what is your greatest achievement and what is the most challenging to you?		
Suggestions and Opinions	n	%
<i>The biggest challenge to me is that I don't know how to express my idea clearly and correctly.</i>	34	89.47
<i>The worksheet can help me think while reading the article.</i>	22	57.89
<i>The worksheet can help me improve my reading and writing ability.</i>	18	47.37
<i>The greatest achievement is that I can finish the worksheet on my own.</i>	18	47.37
<i>The worksheet let me know that my writing ability is poor.</i>	4	10.53
<i>No comment.</i>	1	2.63
Question 4. Do you think the teaching activities with "Questioning the Author" are helpful to you? Do you have a sense of achievement in the activities? Or what is the most challenging to you?		
Suggestions and Opinions	n	%
<i>The biggest challenge to me is that I don't know how to express my idea clearly and correctly.</i>	33	86.84
<i>The strategy helps me to think deeper about the article. And I think it makes me understand the article more easily.</i>	25	65.79
<i>The greatest achievement is that I have the chance to question the author.</i>	22	57.89

Table 4.9 (continued)

<i>The activities help me pay more attention to the class and discuss with my teammates. I feel less sleepy in class.</i>	12	31.58
<i>The greatest achievement is that I can find the ambiguous parts in the article.</i>	10	26.32
<i>The strategy forces me to use my brain.</i>	5	13.16
<i>The activities are too difficult and these questions are boring.</i>	2	5.26

*Note. In this research, there were 38 participants in total. The opinions were presented with the percentage from high to low.

Apparently, most of the participants held a positive attitude to the teaching procedures, the activities and the worksheet, and they enjoyed learning through the strategy “Questioning the Author” with their group members. Even twenty of the participants mentioned that they were willing to answer the questions orally, but in fact, they seldom volunteered to speak in class unless the teacher researcher invited him or her. Moreover, eight participants considered speaking and writing are both important. Interestingly, while up to thirty-four of the participants found the biggest challenge to them was to express their ideas clearly and correctly, they still gained a sense of achievement in finishing the worksheet and challenging the author. Ten of the participants stated that their greatest achievement is to find the ambiguous parts in the article. However, two participants, who had difficulties not only in writing the worksheet but also in joining the activities, clearly stated that they preferred traditional way of teaching, which might be due to their low motivation and frustrating experiences in learning English. It should be noted that in learning survey 1, seven of the participants mentioned that they practiced writing through the worksheets, and four out of the seven participants expressed their lack of confidence in their writing ability in learning survey 2. Nevertheless, most of the participants (78.94%) hoped the activities with the strategy “Questioning the Author” could be

implemented in class in the future.

4.3.3 Teaching Log 2

The notes taken in teaching log 2 were concluded into four aspects: (a) the participants' preparation for the activity; (b) the teaching procedures; (c) the teacher researcher's observation in class, and (d) modifications to the teaching procedures.

Since the results of the worksheets and leaning survey 1 in Week 2 showed that only eleven participants had a clear understanding of the strategy "Questioning the Author" and nearly 60% of them considered the queries too difficult to answer, at the beginning of this week, the teacher researcher reviewed the strategy in detail, trying to familiarize the participants with the queries. Thanks to their experiences in Week 2, most of the participants expressed their understanding and their interests in doing the activities.

Next, the teacher researcher passed on the worksheet to the participants and led the class discussion. During the class discussion, the teacher researcher encouraged some participants who had better performance on worksheets 1 and 2 to share their opinions in class, hoping they could set an example for the others who had creative ideas but were too shy to speak in public. After that, the participants could discuss with their group members about the questions on worksheet 3 and wrote their own answers down. In the meantime, the teacher researcher assisted the participants who had difficulties in writing the worksheet, advising them to use simple vocabulary and sentences to express their ideas. Since worksheet 3 was reduced to fewer passages, the participants were allowed to have longer time to discuss and to finish the worksheet. Nevertheless, some of them still felt frustrated at expressing their thoughts in English.

After the group discussion, the teacher researcher invited participants to share

their answers with the classmates. Unlike the situation in Week 2, some participants, especially the ones who had average performances in prior classes, were confident of their own opinions. They would be complimented as long as they tried to say something voluntarily. It is believed that the students who engaged in analysis and problem-solving can acquire better critical thinking ability. While most of the participants cooperated with their group members enthusiastically, the teacher researcher found that two or three of them were uninterested in discussions, waiting for others' answers like outsiders. It is supposed that even the teaching procedures and the worksheet were modified, they still encountered some obstacles in the activities.

Given the situations, the modifications included: (a) changing the sequence of whole class and group discussion; (b) putting the key words and good examples of the answers provided by the participants on the blackboard, and (c) allowing some specific participants to use Chinese in writing the worksheet. Since thirty-four of the participants stated that the major challenge to them was to express their ideas clearly and correctly in English, the activities in Week 4 were modified to enhance the participants' confidence in reading as well as in writing. Thus, before holding the group and whole class discussion, the teacher researcher would lead the participants to read the article and asked some of them to find out the key words in each passage. Then, the key words were put on the blackboard. Different from the teaching procedures in Week 2 and Week 3, in Week 4 the participants would discuss in group first to figure out the answers, and after a while, the teacher researcher would invite them to share their answers with other classmates. Besides, the provided answers were also put on the blackboard for reference, helping some participants, especially the low achievers, to complete their worksheets. Apart from this adjustment, the specific participants would be allowed to use Chinese due to their lack of vocabulary and

sentence patterns. During the activities, they might have interests in the article, but writing the worksheet was a daunting task to them. Therefore, with such modifications, it was expected that the teaching procedures would be smoother; the participants could perform better on the worksheet and improve their self-confidence in learning English; and most importantly, they could be acquainted with the strategy “Questioning the Author” and develop their critical thinking ability through the activities.

4.4 Week 4 for Implementing “Questioning the Author” Strategy

With the modifications to teaching procedures, the research was carried forward to Week 4. To facilitate the participants to learn the critical thinking ability through the strategy “Questioning the Author” unconsciously along with enhancing their confidence in learning English, the teaching procedures were adjusted to provide more supports—key words and possible clues about the questions—to the participants. Similar to Week 3, the teacher researcher still explained the strategy “Questioning the Author” and the queries at the beginning of the class to renew the participants’ prior experience. Then, the teacher researcher led the participants to read the article and ask them to find out the key words, which were put on the blackboard afterwards. With this modification, some participants found it easier to write the worksheet. Besides, the participants discussed with their group members first and then were invited to share their answers in the whole class discussion, which enabled some low achievers to figure out the answers to the questions. In the following section, the presentation of the results is divided into three parts: data collected from worksheet 4, learning survey 3, and teaching log 3.

4.4.1 Worksheet 4

Similar to worksheet 3, the length of each passage was longer in order to provide more clues for the participants, but questions on worksheet 4 (see Appendix 4) were added to ten questions rather than six ones on worksheet 3. This was because the participants were assumed to be familiar with the queries of the strategy. Thus, worksheet 4 was designed to make the participants practice more in implementing the strategy on the article. After checking the worksheets, the teacher researcher found that most of the participants made a remarkable progress, particularly some low achievers who were confused with the strategy in Week 2 and Week 3. To be specific, twenty-five out of the thirty-eight participants had a better understanding of the strategy in this period, including the fifteen participants who had better performance on worksheet 3. Some good examples extracted from these participants' worksheets are as follows:

Excerpt 4

Taiwanese Taboos
<p>We all have different beliefs about what to do and what not to do. The things that we are not supposed to do are called taboos. In Taiwan, there are some taboos regarding words, special days, and eating habits. We believe we should avoid breaking these taboos because it might offend others or bring us bad luck.</p>
<p>Q1. What is the author trying to tell you?</p> <p><i>There are many taboos in Taiwan, we should avoid breaking these taboos. (S 12, S16)</i></p> <p><i>The author explain(s) the meaning of the taboos (what the taboos are) in Taiwan and tell(s) us not to break the taboos. (S 23)</i></p> <p><i>We have to respect the taboos in Taiwan. (S 10)</i></p> <p><i>The author explains the taboos in Taiwan and we are supposed to avoid breaking (not to break) them. (S 9, S 7)</i></p> <p><i>We should avoid breaking the taboos or you (we) might offend others or bring (about) bad luck. (S 4)</i></p>

Excerpt 4 (continued)

There are also taboos regarding certain periods of the year. For example, we believe that the Lunar New Year brings us good luck. As a result, we do not sweep the floor on the first day of the Lunar New Year because this would take away the good fortune. Another belief is about the seventh month of the lunar calendar, a month that is also called “Ghost Month.” During this summer month, Taiwanese parents warn their children not to go to the beach. This is because we believe that ghosts may take us away if we go near the water.

Q2. What is the author trying to tell you in this paragraph?

The author gives us some example(s) of taboos about specific holidays. (S 22)

The author gives us some examples of the taboos on (Chinese) New Year and (in) Ghost Month. (S 19, S 15)

We believe in the taboos (about specific holidays) and we ~~won't do something~~ (do in something unusual to protect ourselves) in certain period. (S 7, S 12)

Q3. Does the author tell you the origins of these taboos? Do you know the origins of them?

No.

Q4. Do you find something unclear in this paragraph? Can you point it out?

The author doesn't tell us the origin(s) of the taboos, like (why we can't go to the beach during) the “Ghost Month”. (S 9, S 12, S 7, S 8)

The author doesn't tell us the origins of these taboos about the Lunar New Year and Ghost Month. (S 28, S 22, S 15)

The author doesn't tell us the origins of these taboos and why the seventh lunar month of the year is called “Ghost Month”. (S 40)

The author ~~doesn't~~ (neither) tell us the reason why (the) ghosts may take us away if we go near the water in Ghost Month ~~and~~ (nor) why we ~~will~~ sweep the good luck away on the first day of the year? (.) (S 35, S 26, S 33)

Q5. Would you add anything else to this paragraph? What would you say instead?

I would add the examples of ~~some~~ accidents in the “Ghost Month”, like ~~there are~~ many people ~~dead~~ (lose their life) in the river or sea during this month. (S 4)

The examples of the accidents happened in the “Ghost Month”. Sometimes it cannot be explained by science. (S 9, S 7, S 8)

I will try to explain where the taboos comes from to persuade ~~people~~ the readers. (S 24, S 22, S 17)

We can't put a pair of shoes in front of the door because the ghosts could wear them on and come into the house. (S 33)

Excerpt 4 (continued)

When it comes to taboos about eating, there are certain rules to follow. First, we don't stick our chopsticks straight up into a bowl of rice. Chopsticks which are stuck this way would look like the incense sticks that are used to honor the dead. Second, we have to eat up every grain of rice. Otherwise we might marry a person with many pockmarks on the face.

Q6. What is the author trying to tell you in this paragraph?

The author explains the taboos about eating and gives us some examples. We should not waste food or play with the chopsticks. (S 4)

The examples of eating taboos and the meaning of/behind them. (S 24, S 40, S 15)

The author tells us the taboos about eating, and if we do not follow them, we ~~might~~ (will) get something bad. (S 19, S 22)

Q7. Does the author tell you the origins of these taboos? Can you guess the origins of them?

The author tells us the origin of not sticking our chopsticks straight up into a bowl of rice because it looks like the incense sticks that are used to honor the dead, but he/she doesn't tell us ~~the origin of~~ why we have to eat up every grain of rice. (S 23)

The author doesn't tell us why we should to eat up every grain of rice. I guess it is because the (Chinese) parents always ask their child(ren) to cherish the food. (S 9)

Q8. Do you find something unclear in this paragraph? Can you point them out?

The author doesn't tell us the origin of eating up every grain of rice. (S 24, S 33, S 35, S 26, S 6)

Yes, the author doesn't tell us why these ~~rules~~ taboos ~~was~~ (were) created and when ~~did~~ ~~it start~~ they came into being. (S 4)

The author doesn't tell us why we might marry a person with many pockmarks on the face if ~~why not we~~ (we don't) eat up every grain of rice. (S 15)

Q9. Would you add anything else to this paragraph? What would you say instead?

I would add some ~~explain~~ (explanations) to the taboos. ~~Straightening up~~ (Straitening) the incense sticks is to show respect for our ancestor(s), so we should not put the chopsticks ~~like that~~ (in this way). (S 35)

I will ~~say~~ (offer) the reasons of the taboos. For example, if we don't eat up every grain of rice, it is a waste of food. (S 26, S 33)

~~You can't~~ (Don't) strike the bowl when you are eating, ~~it means to~~ (or you will) be a beggar. (S 19, S 22)

*Note. The words in parentheses are corrected or added by the teacher researcher.

Compared to the results of worksheet 3, most of the participants made significant improvement not only in utilizing the strategy but also in writing the sentences

grammatically. It was suggested that the key words and possible clues provided by some of the participants were helpful to most of them. Some of these participants who provided the same answers were in the same group; for instance, S 19 and S 22, S 9, S 7 and S 8. Thus, the teacher researcher assumed that they might have different opinions on the questions, but they have reached a consensus after the discussion about the worksheet. As a whole, 65.79% (25 out of 38) of the participants performed well on worksheet 4, which suggested that more than half of the participants understood the strategy “Questioning the Author” and they knew how to use their critical thinking ability while reading through these activities over the last three weeks.

4.4.2 Learning Survey 3

Learning Survey 3 (see Appendix 7) was composed of structured questions with Likert scale and eleven open-ended questions. The structured questions in learning survey 3 were the same as those in learning survey 2, categorized into three parts: the participants’ opinions on teaching procedures with “Questioning the Author”, their self-evaluation of what they learned through the strategy, and the comparison of learning effects between Week 4 and Week 3. Apart from using Likert scale to check the participants’ perception of the critical thinking strategy and self-evaluation, the teacher researcher also composed eleven open-ended questions to seek the participants’ reflection on the critical thinking activities and their suggestions for further application. The open-ended questions would be elaborated into the questions for focus group interviews in the next stage.

Table 4.10 to Table 4.12 show the results of the participants’ learning survey in quantitative analysis. The tables display the participants’ opinions gathered by the

structured questions in the learning survey. With the form of Likert scale, the participants could put a check from strongly agree to strongly disagree to each statement. Table 4.13 shows the participants' opinions and self-reflection derived from the open-ended questions at the end of the learning survey.

Table 4.10 Opinions on Teaching Procedures of "Questioning the Author"

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Partially Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. In the activities of "Questioning the Author", I am willing to answer the questions proposed by the teacher actively.	21.62%	†40.54%	35.14%	2.70%	0.00%
2. I think questions proposed by the teacher in the activities are moderate in difficulty.	13.16%	†47.37%	36.84%	2.63%	0.00%
3. I think teacher's guiding can help me understand the questions on the worksheet.	23.68%	†55.26%	18.42%	2.63%	0.00%
4. I think questions on the worksheet are moderate in difficulty.	13.16%	†47.37%	39.47%	0.00%	0.00%
5. I think questions on the worksheet can help me understand the article more.	28.95%	†39.47%	28.95%	2.63%	0.00%
6. I think questions on the worksheet can help me think more hidden questions.	28.95%	†42.11%	26.32%	2.63%	0.00%
7. I think questions on the worksheet can help me clarify my thoughts.	26.32%	†44.74%	23.68%	5.26%	0.00%
8. I think group discussion can help me understand and answer the questions on the worksheet.	28.95%	†39.47%	28.95%	2.63%	0.00%
9. In the group discussion, I can join the discussion actively rather than wait for other classmates' ideas.	34.21%	†39.47%	23.68%	2.63%	0.00%
10. Through the group discussion in the activities, I am stimulated to have more ideas.	34.21%	†39.47%	23.68%	2.63%	0.00%
11. I think the strategy "Questioning the Author" can prompt me to think while reading.	†34.21%	31.58%	28.95%	5.26%	0.00%

*Note. The figure with † means that the participants had the most consensus on the statement.

As shown in Table 4.10, more than 60% of the participants held a positive attitude toward the teaching procedures in "Questioning the Author". Up to 73.68% of

the participants agreed that they could join the discussion actively rather than wait for other classmates' ideas in the group discussion. What's more, they were willing to answer the questions raised by the teacher researcher actively in the activities. Compared to the result in Table 4.6, nearly 60% of the participants considered the questions asked by the teacher researcher in class were a little difficult for them, while the result of Q2 in this table showed that about 60% of them considered the questions were adequate in difficulty. Besides, the results of Q5 and Q6 show that approximately 70% of participants thought the questions on the worksheet could help them understand the article and think of more questions between the lines, and 60.53% of them thought the questions on the worksheet were not too difficult. These give rise to the result of Q7, in which 71.06% of the participants thought the questions on the worksheet could help them clarify their thoughts, while only 47.72% of them held the same attitude to this question in learning survey 2 (see Table 4.6). Moreover, 73.68% of the participants stated that the group discussion could stimulate them to have more ideas, and 65.79% of them considered "Questioning the Author" a useful strategy for encouraging them to think while reading.

The next part is the result of participants' self-evaluation of learning effects through "Questioning the Author".

Table 4.11 Self-evaluation of What was Learned Through “Questioning the Author”

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Partially Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. I fully understand the questions discussed in the activities of “Questioning the Author”.	10.53%	†60.53%	23.68%	5.26%	0.00%
2. Through the strategy “Questioning the Author”, I can fully understand the ideas which the author tries to tell me.	15.79%	†47.37%	31.58%	5.26%	0.00%
3. Through the strategy “Questioning the Author”, I can clarify the author’s point of view.	23.68%	†42.11%	34.21%	0.00%	0.00%
4. Through the strategy “Questioning the Author”, I can find the ambiguous parts which the author doesn't express clearly.	21.05%	†39.47%	36.84%	2.63%	0.00%
5. Through the strategy “Questioning the Author”, I think I can alter the article to make it more comprehensible.	15.79%	31.58%	†44.74%	7.89%	0.00%
6. Through the strategy “Questioning the Author”, I think I can challenge the author.	10.53%	31.58%	†42.11%	15.79%	0.00%
7. Through the strategy “Questioning the Author”, I can improve my critical thinking ability. (e.g. I can tell whether the author’s expression is clear or not.)	15.79%	†50.00%	26.32%	7.89%	0.00%
8. Through the strategy “Questioning the Author”, I can grasp the thread of ideas in the article.	21.05%	†52.63%	21.05%	5.26%	0.00%
9. Through the strategy “Questioning the Author”, I can have a sharper mind and flexible thinking.	†39.47%	31.58%	26.32%	2.63%	0.00%
10. In general, I like my teacher leads us to use the strategy “Questioning the Author” into reading.	21.05%	†47.37%	26.32%	2.63%	2.63%
11. Through the strategy “Questioning the Author”, my English reading ability is improved.	23.68%	†42.11%	31.58%	0.00%	2.63%
12. Through the strategy “Questioning the Author”, I become more interested in reading.	21.05%	†47.37%	26.32%	2.63%	2.63%

*Note. The figure with † means that the participants had the most consensus on the statement.

As presented in Table 4.11, more than 70% of the participants were satisfied with their performance in the activities, understanding the questions in discussions and the article. In addition, the results of Q3 and Q4 show that more than 60% of the participants were confident of their abilities to find the ambiguous parts which the author did not express clearly and to clarify the author’s point of view. Accordingly, 47.37% of the participants had confidence in altering the article to make it more comprehensible and what’s more, 42.11% of them considered themselves to have enough abilities to challenge the author, which indicates a significant improvement in the participants’ self-perception and confidence from Week 3 to Week 4. Obviously, through the strategy “Questioning the Author”, more than 65% of the participants stated that they had become more interested in reading and that their reading ability had been improved.

The next part is the result of learning effects comparison between Week 4 and Week 3.

Table 4.12 Comparison of Learning Effects

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Partially Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. Compared to the prior activities, I can join the group discussion more actively and offer my ideas.	†31.58%	†31.58%	26.32%	7.89%	2.63%
2. Compared to the prior activities, I can answer the questions more actively, rather than wait for other classmates’ answers.	31.58%	†34.21%	23.68%	7.89%	2.63%
3. Compared to the prior activities, I think I realize the strategy of “Questioning the Author” more.	18.42%	†55.26%	23.68%	2.63%	0.00%
4. Compared to the prior activities, I have great improvement in my critical thinking ability. (e.g. I can tell whether the author’s expression is clear or not.)	26.32%	†44.74%	21.05%	7.89%	0.00%

Table 4.12 (continued)

5. Compared to the prior activities, my reading ability is more improved.	26.32%	†42.11%	26.32%	2.63%	2.63%
6. Compared to prior experience, in the activities of “Questioning the Author”, I can think of more questions about the articles and express my own opinions on it.	26.32%	31.58%	†36.84%	2.63%	2.63%
7. Compared to prior experience, I think the strategy “Questioning the Author” can make the article interesting and meaningful.	†36.84%	34.21%	23.68%	2.63%	2.63%
8. Compared to prior experience, I think the strategy “Questioning the Author” makes the studying atmosphere more relaxing.	†50.00%	23.68%	21.05%	5.26%	0.00%
9. Compared to prior experience, the strategy “Questioning the Author” elevates my English proficiency.	28.95%	†42.11%	23.68%	5.26%	0.00%

*Note. The figure with † means that the participants had the most consensus on the statement.

As shown in Table 4.12, more than 70% of the participants considered that they had a better performance in the activities in Week 4. 73.68% of the participants thought they realized the strategy of “Questioning the Author” more as well as 68.43% of them considered their reading ability was more improved. Something particularly noteworthy is that in the result of Q4, 71.06% of the participants believed that they had great improvement in critical thinking ability, which is much higher than the result of the same question in learning survey 2. Furthermore, the result of Q9 shows that 71.06% of the participants thought the strategy elevates their English proficiency. Generally speaking, more than 70% of the participants gave credit to the strategy “Questioning the Author” for making the article interesting and meaningful for them; meanwhile, they also felt the studying atmosphere in class was more relaxing by the activities.

The last part of the result, extracted from the eleven open-ended questions on the learning survey, presents participants suggestions and opinions on the teaching procedures and the activities, the worksheet, the application of the strategy, and their self-reflection as well.

Table 4.13 Suggestions and Opinions from the Open-ended Questions

Question 1. After the activities for three weeks, what is the key point of the strategy “Questioning the author”?		
Suggestions and Opinions	n	%
<i>It lets us think while reading, and we can try to express our own opinions of the article.</i>	18	47.36
<i>It helps us understand the content and the main idea of the article.</i>	10	26.32
<i>It provides many questions for us to discuss with our group members, and we try to find the answers to the questions.</i>	10	26.32
Question 2. Do you have any suggestion for the teaching activities through the strategy? Please write it down in detail.		
Suggestions and Opinions	n	%
<i>I think the activities are perfect and I hope to have more activities like this in the future.</i>	13	34.21
<i>I hope the questions can be easier.</i>	12	31.58
<i>In addition to the key words on the blackboard, I hope the teacher can offer translation in Chinese, or allow us to use Chinese.</i>	10	26.32
<i>The time for discussion can be shorter. I need more time to think and write the worksheet by myself.</i>	1	2.63
<i>I don't know. I don't like the activities.</i>	1	2.63
<i>The teacher can choose other articles rather than the one in textbook.</i>	1	2.63
Question 3. Compared to prior activities, do you have a sense of achievement in the activities this time? Please write it down in detail.		
Suggestions and Opinions	n	%
<i>I can understand the article and answers the questions.</i>	28	73.68
<i>I can challenge the author and clarify my own opinions.</i>	9	23.68
<i>No comment.</i>	1	2.63

Table 4.13 (continued)

Question 4. Compared to prior activities, what is the most challenging to you in the activities this time?		
Suggestions and Opinions	n	%
<i>The biggest challenge to me is that I don't know how to express my idea clearly and correctly.</i>	25	65.79
<i>I can't find something unclear in this paragraph. I think I can't be better than the author.</i>	8	21.05
<i>Some questions are too difficult.</i>	4	10.53
<i>The activities are too difficult and these questions are boring.</i>	1	2.63
Question 5. After the activities for three weeks, do you have the ability to challenge the author? Please write it down in detail.		
Suggestions and Opinions	n	%
<i>No, I don't think I can challenge the author because my English is not good enough. I can't express myself in English clearly because the vocabulary I know is too little.</i>	18	47.36
<i>No, I don't think I can challenge the author because I can't write an article by myself as the author does.</i>	9	23.68
<i>I think I can challenge the author because I have my own ideas to supplement the article.</i>	8	21.05
<i>I think I can challenge the author through the cooperation with my group members.</i>	3	7.89
Question 6. When you are asked to rewrite or add anything else to this paragraph on the worksheet, do you have confidence in your own answers? Please write it down in detail.		
Suggestions and Opinions	n	%
<i>I don't have confidence in my answers because my English is not good enough and I always have to discuss with the group members to find out the answers.</i>	13	34.21
<i>Yes, I have confidence in my answers because I can add some sentences and ideas to the article to make it complete.</i>	12	31.58
<i>I don't have confidence in my answers because I am not sure if my answer is correct.</i>	11	28.95
<i>Yes, I have confidence in my answers because they are creative ideas and the teacher says there is no correct answer.</i>	2	5.26

Table 4.13 (continued)

Question 7. Compared to conventional teaching methods, does the strategy “Questioning the Author” make you more interested in learning English? Please give at least one example and explain it.		
Suggestions and Opinions	n	%
<i>I think the strategy makes me more interested in reading because I have to find out the answers to the questions.</i>	12	31.58
<i>I think the strategy makes me more interested in reading and writing because I find my English writing ability is not good enough when doing the worksheet.</i>	12	31.58
<i>I think the strategy makes me more interested in reading and speaking because I have to discuss with my group members. It is more interesting than the traditional way.</i>	11	28.95
<i>No comment.</i>	3	7.89
Question 8. Compared to prior experience, does the strategy “Questioning the Author” make it easy for you to read the article? Is it a helpful strategy? Please give at least one example and explain it.		
Suggestions and Opinions	n	%
<i>I think the strategy is helpful because I can understand the article deeper through the questions and group discussion.</i>	19	50
<i>I think the strategy makes reading more interesting and easier because I can use my brain to think more questions.</i>	8	21.05
<i>I think the strategy is helpful in reading, and it gives me a chance to practice writing.</i>	7	18.42
<i>No comment.</i>	4	10.53
Question 9. After the activities for three weeks, what are your major changes and improvements in learning English? Please give at least one example and explain it.		
Suggestions and Opinions	n	%
<i>I can think more questions about the article while reading, instead of just writing down what the teacher says in class.</i>	16	42.11
<i>I find that I can express myself in English, although sometimes I make some mistakes.</i>	10	26.32
<i>I think I can understand the article better.</i>	8	21.05
<i>I can use my imagination and creativity in answering the questions.</i>	2	5.26
<i>I don't think I have any improvement.</i>	2	5.26

Table 4.13 (continued)

Question 10. Do you like the teaching activities with the strategy “Questioning the Author”? Why or why not?		
Suggestions and Opinions	n	%
<i>Yes, I like the activities because I can think about the questions and understand the article deeper.</i>	16	42.11
<i>Yes, I like the activities because I can discuss with my teammates.</i>	8	21.05
<i>Yes, I like the activities because I can practice writing and reading at the same time.</i>	8	21.05
<i>I don't like the activities because the questions are boring.</i>	4	10.53
<i>It is hard to say. I like the activities because I can think while reading the article; however, I don't like it because I think it is difficult to express my ideas in English clearly and correctly.</i>	2	5.26
Question 11. Beside the English class, have you ever tried to apply the strategy to other reading materials? Please write it down in detail.		
Suggestions and Opinions	n	%
<i>No. It is too difficult.</i>	29	76.32
<i>Yes, I use it when reading the news on the Internet.</i>	5	13.16
<i>Yes, I use it when reading the articles in Chinese class.</i>	2	5.26
<i>Yes, I use it when reading the novels.</i>	2	5.26

*Note. In this research, there were 38 participants in total. The opinions were presented with the percentage from high to low.

Compared to the results gathered by the structured questions with Likert scale, the answers to the open-ended questions provide the panorama of the participants' perspective and their self-reflection to the teaching activities with the strategy “Questioning the Author”. Undoubtedly, most of the participants held a positive attitude to the teaching procedures, the activities and the worksheet, and they enjoyed learning through the strategy “Questioning the Author” with their group members. Through the strategy, close to 75% of the participants stated that they could exert their abilities to think while reading, which was different from their prior experiences in learning English and thus resulted in a substantial improvement in their English

proficiency. Moreover, seven participants considered writing and reading are both important. It should also be noted that in learning survey 2, four participants revealed their lack of self-assurance in their writing ability, but they expressed their confidence in challenging the author for they could supplement the article with their creative ideas. Interestingly, while up to twenty-seven of the participants considered themselves unable to challenge the author, twenty-eight of them thought they gained a great sense of achievement in understanding the article and answering the questions. Besides, other nine participants stated that they could challenge the author by clarifying their own opinions. Nevertheless, it is a pity that there were still two participants, who had difficulties not only in writing the worksheet but also in joining the activities, clearly stated that they lacked of interests and motivation in these activities even though the teacher researcher had modified the teaching procedures and allowed them to use Chinese instead. In general, according to their self-reflection, most of the participants (89.47%) like the activities with the strategy “Questioning the Author” because the activities provide a chance for them to play a critical role in their own leaning process.

4.4.3 Teaching Log 3

The notes taken in teaching log 3 were concluded into four aspects: (a) the teaching procedures; (b) the teacher researcher’s observation in class; (c) the participants’ reaction to the activities, and (d) preparation for the focus group interviews.

Based on the results of learning survey 2, since thirty-four of the participants stated that the major challenge to them was to express their opinions clearly and correctly in English, the purpose of the teaching activities in this week, therefore, was

to facilitate the participants to write their worksheets and raise their confidence in reading as well as in writing. Thus, after passing on worksheet 4 to the participants, the teacher researcher led them to read the article together and then asked them to find the key words in the passages. Several participants who had average performance and surprisingly, three of the low achievers (S 10, S 1, and S 5) were willing to share their ideas voluntarily. Then the provided key words were put on the blackboard for reference. Next, the participants discussed with their group members about the questions on worksheet 4. Since the key words were provided, it was easier for them to come up with the answers to the questions on the worksheet. Some participants were seen writing their answers down during the discussion. After group discussion, the teacher researcher led the whole class discussion, inviting the participants who already had some ideas to share their answers with other participants. Similar to the situation in Week 3, not only the high achievers but also the average ones were confident of their own answers and were willing to share, which was a great improvement of them from Week 2 to Week 4. It indicates that most of the participants were accustomed to the teaching activities and more importantly, they learnt critical thinking ability better through the strategy “Questioning the Author”. After the class discussion, some of the provided answers were put on the blackboard, and the participants were allowed to have a little time to complete the worksheet. If they still felt confused with the questions, they could adopt the provided answers as theirs on the worksheet.

As for the specific participants who were allowed to use Chinese in writing the worksheet, at last only one of them took the suggestion. The other three of them preferred to consult the teacher researcher about how to express their ideas in English. It is supposed that using Chinese on the worksheet differentiated themselves from

other classmates, which might lead them to feel embarrassed during the activities. Therefore, even though they were aided with more supports—key words, provided answers, teacher researcher’s help, and being allowed using Chinese instead— they still encountered some obstacles and felt discouraged about the activities. It was approved by their answers to the open-ended questions in learning survey 3, where the four participants stated “no comment” to Q8 and thought the questions on the worksheet were too difficult.

According to the aforementioned results from Week 2 to Week 4, the teacher researcher selected representative participants to conduct the two focus group interviews. To get a holistic overview of the participants’ reaction and perception to the strategy “Questioning the Author”, three participants from the high proficiency level and three from the low proficiency level were chosen to form a focus group respectively. Furthermore, the two focus group interviews would be used to triangulate the data collected from the learning surveys using Likert scale, in which the participants expressed their opinions individually. It is believed that the focus group interviews can elicit collective response of the participants to the whole project, which reflects the value as well as the limitation of this study.

4.5 Focus Group Interviews

At the end of the study, two focus group interviews, one high- and one low-achiever group, were held to complement the results collected from the learning surveys. The selected participants had some traits in common: (a) despite their English proficiency, they all held a positive attitude to the teaching activities with the strategy “Questioning the Author; (b) they all put in a great deal of effort on the worksheets and the learning surveys, from which their improvements were more

salient than others’, and (c) although they seemed to perform well during the activities, according to their learning surveys, they were still confronted with some difficulties and challenges.

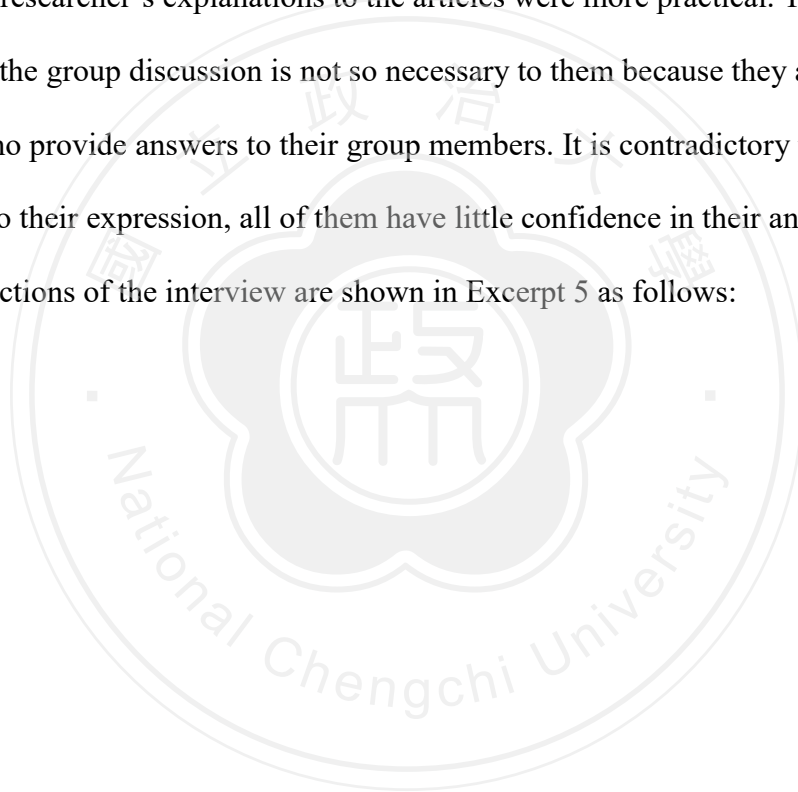
To avoid the interference between the two focus groups, the interviews were held separately, each of them lasted 60 minutes in length. The questions for focus group interviews mostly correspond to the open-ended questions in learning survey 3, and others are extended questions to explore the interviewees’ perspectives about the teaching activities and the strategy “Questioning the Author” in depth.

To guard the trustworthiness of the focus group interviews, the data were transcribed verbatim immediately after the interviews. Then the teacher researcher invited a colleague with TESOL background to examine the transcripts and the interpretation of the interviews with the teacher researcher. Besides, the teacher researcher adopted member checking, inviting the participants who were in the focus groups to contribute directly to the analysis. The contents of the two focus group interviews are transcribed and summarized into four aspects: (a) opinions on teaching procedures of “Questioning the Author”; (b) self-evaluation of their performances and achievements, or discouragements, through the strategy; (c) the comparison of learning effects between the conventional teaching methods and the strategy “Questioning the Author”, and (d) suggestions for further implementation with the strategy.

4.5.1 Focus Group Interview with High Achievers

The teacher researcher selected S 4, S 23, and S 33, who belonged to different groups during the activities to form the focus group. At the beginning of the interview, the interviewees were given a list of the questions in Chinese and were told to read the

questions first. Thus, they could generate a rough idea about the questions before the interview, not being so nervous when being asked. At first, the teacher researcher invited the interviewees to express their opinions on the teaching activities for the last three weeks. They gave recognition to the strategy “Questioning the Author” for helping them to think deeper about the articles and stimulating them to think actively rather than only passively receiving what the teacher said in class. In addition, they thought the worksheets provide guidance in thinking about the questions; however, the teacher researcher’s explanations to the articles were more practical. They also considered the group discussion is not so necessary to them because they are usually the ones who provide answers to their group members. It is contradictory that according to their expression, all of them have little confidence in their answers. The referring sections of the interview are shown in Excerpt 5 as follows:



Excerpt 5

Interviewer: After the activities for three weeks, do you think what is the key point of the strategy “Questioning the author”? You can give me your answers by your personal experiences during the activities.

S 33: Well, I think the strategy forces me to use my brain in class, instead of just writing down what the teacher says without thinking about it. The activities let me think more about what I don't understand and what the author doesn't tell me clearly in the article.

S 4: I think the strategy helps me to find out the incompleteness of the article.

Interviewer: So, how do you find out the incomplete parts of the article?

S 23: The activities let me think more questions about the article, but without any instruction, it is hard for me to figure out the answers.

Interviewer: Do you think the worksheets are helpful for you? Or?

S 23: I think the questions asked by the teacher are more helpful.

S 33, S 4: I think the worksheets provide guidance for me, but teacher's explanation and instruction are more helpful for answering the questions and realizing the article.

Interviewer: Since you mention the worksheets, when you are asked to rewrite or add anything else to this paragraph on the worksheet, why don't you have confidence in your own answers? I find all of you answer “No” to this questions in learning survey 3.

S 4: I usually have the feeling that my answers are wrong.

Interviewer: But I have said there is no correct answer in this activity.

S 23: Yeah, I know there is no correct answer to the question, but I just feel unsure about my answers, and I think my answers are not special at all. Besides, I always worry about making grammatical mistakes.

S 33: I have the same feeling with her. I am not sure whether my answers stand for my ideas in mind clearly enough in English.

Interviewer: So, does the group discussion offer some helps to you? Do you like it?

S 4: I think it doesn't matter to me because I usually figure out the answers by myself.

S 33: I think sometimes it is helpful, sometimes I work it out on my own.

S 23: Because I usually provide my answers to my group members, I think the group discussion is helpful for them.

Interviewer: It seems that the group discussion is not so important in the activities.

S 33: But I think the group discussion can decrease the pressure of finding out the answers. It is helpful if the group members can cooperate well.

Then, the teacher researcher focused on the self-evaluation of what the interviewees had learned during the activities. It was divided into two aspects: one was to investigate their learning process through the strategy “Questioning the Author”; the other was to understand the self-evaluation of their performance on applying the strategy to the article. The referring sections of the interview are shown in Excerpts 6 and 7 respectively as follows:

Excerpt 6

Interviewer: Do you think the strategy “Questioning the Author” is helpful for you?
You can take your personal experiences for example.

S 4: I think it is helpful because I tried to read a novel with the strategy after the activity in the first week. It can help me to make inference in reading the novel.

Interviewer: Is it a detective novel?

S 4: Well, it is an adventurous story about the Bible. But I forget the title of it.

S 33: Yes, I think the strategy is helpful because it makes me realize and remember the article deeper. Besides, the worksheets can improve my writing ability. I think I am willing to practice writing more after the activities.

Interviewer: Why do you think so?

S 33: When writing the worksheets, I usually have some ideas in mind but I am afraid that I can't express them clearly in English. It reminds me that I should practice writing more.

S 23: I have the same feeling with her. With the explanation, I want to challenge the author by adding some sentences to the article, or even rewrite it by myself. But I think my writing ability is not good enough to support me.

Interviewer: Well, I am glad that you have practiced not only reading but also writing in the activities. Can you tell me how do you clarify the author's opinions through the strategy? How do you find out the ambiguous parts in the article?

S 4: I usually use the five-WH questions to read the article. Then I can catch the main points of the article.

S 23: I need teacher's guidance and explanation to understand the article in the first week, but after that, I can do it by myself through the questions on the worksheet. I read the article first, and I ask myself, "If I were the author, what would I say?" Then, I read the article again to find out what the author doesn't talk about in the article.

Excerpt 6 (continued)

Interviewer: And how do you realize what the author wants to tell you? Have you ever thought about why the author says so?

S 23: No, I usually think about what I want to say instead and what I need to add into the article.

S 4: I agree with her. I use the same way to find out what the author should tell us in the article but he/she doesn't.

Interviewer: Are my explanations to the article and the questions on the worksheets disturbing to you? Do I interrupt your thinking?

S 23, S 4: Not at all. The explanations can help me think in different ways.

S 33: Sometimes I translate the article into Chinese first to grasp the main idea of it. I would draw a simple outline of the article and try to find out what the author doesn't tell us. And then I would try to add something to that part.

Interviewer: Since you all read the article first to get the main point, I am wondering how you comprehend the article in process? Try to describe it in detail.

S 33: I would find the words I know and use the words to infer the meaning of the whole passage. Then I may guess the meaning of the new words in context.

S 4: I circle the new words and look them up in the dictionary.

S 23: If I know the words, it won't be difficult for me to realize the article.

Interviewer: Well, do you use some methods or strategies to comprehend the article? For example, do the questions on the worksheet offer some helps in reading the article?

S 33: Yes, the questions help me to read the article step by step and stimulate me to think more questions about the article.

S 4: Well, I think the worksheets make me practice writing.

S 23: I have the same feeling with him.

The interviewees consider the strategy of great assistance for them in reading the article step by step, and with the questions on the worksheet as guidance, they can exert their critical thinking ability to challenge the author. When reading the article, they all suppose themselves as the author who has the ability to compose an article. Moreover, they mention that doing the worksheets excites them to practice writing in the future.

Excerpt 7

Interviewer: For the last three weeks, what is your achievement in the activities?

You can take your personal experiences for example.

S 23: The activities give me a chance to think while reading in class, which is helpful for understanding the article much better. I think the realizing the strategy is my greatest achievement.

S 4: I can express my different opinions freely on the worksheets, and I also can communicate with the teacher directly and frankly through the learning surveys.

(Interviewer: Wow, you can talk to me face to face directly.)

S 33: The activities simulate my imagination and inspire my creativity. I am not a creative person in fact.

Interviewer: Besides, what is the greatest challenge to you in the activities?

S 23: The biggest challenge to me is writing the worksheets. It is hard for me to figure out the answers because I am not sure whether my answers are correct not.

S 33: I have a similar feeling to her. I have some ideas to the questions but I am not sure about how to express them clearly and correctly in English. I always worry about making mistakes.

S 4: I think the greatest challenge is to discuss with my group members. I prefer writing the worksheets on my own.

According to the interview, the interviewees gain a sense of achievement in applying the strategy “Questioning the Author” since they can understand the article and think the questions actively during the activities. However, their greatest challenge lies in their lack of self-confidence in their writing ability since they used to get good grades by finding the correct answers to every question.

In the following, the teacher researcher put emphasis on the comparison of learning effects between the conventional teaching methods and the strategy “Questioning the Author”. The interviewees indicated that they had little improvement in reading although they gave credit to the strategy with which they were simulated to use critical thinking ability while reading the articles. On the other hand, they mentioned practicing writing plays a critical role in elevating their English proficiency.

Excerpt 8 shows the interviewees' perspectives to this topic as follows:

Excerpt 8

Interviewer: Compared to prior experiences, what is the difference between conventional teaching activities and the ones with the strategy “Questioning the Author”? You can take your personal experiences for example.

S 33: We have to put more efforts in writing the worksheets, which inspire us to use our thinking ability and creativity. It is much more interesting than copying the information provided on the blackboard or just writing down what the teacher says in class. (Other two interviewees have similar opinions with her.)

Interviewer: So, do you think the activities with the strategy improve your critical thinking ability?

S 4: I think all of us are born with critical thinking ability, but it needs to be awoken. Take myself for example. I think now I can use my critical thinking ability more often by raising questions to the articles or to the novels.

S 23: I only use this strategy in English class, but now I am used to thinking while reading the articles.

S 33: I agree with her. Sometimes I still find it strange to challenge the author.

Interviewer: Well, do you achieve any improvements in your English proficiency or undergo any changes in the activities through the strategy?

S 23, S 4: I don't think I have a great improvement in my English abilities. I guess my reading ability is well enough to understand the articles but I need to practice writing more. I feel frustrated that I can't express my opinions clearly and vividly in English.

S 33: I think I have improved in reading a lot. Through the strategy, I know how to catch the key points of the article step by step instead of reading it blindly.

Interviewer: Well, according to your answers, can I conclude that the strategy makes you more interested in writing than in reading?

S 23: The strategy makes reading more interesting, while putting our ideas into words on the worksheets makes us eager to practice writing. I think my English will be better if I can write good sentences without mistakes. (Other two interviewees have similar opinions with her.)

At the end of the interview, the teacher researcher asked the interviewees about suggestions for further implementation with the strategy. Generally speaking, they like the teaching activities with the strategy and hope those can be conducted twice or three times in a semester. The Excerpt 9 shows their suggestions:

Excerpt 9

Interviewer: To be frank, do you like the teaching activities with the strategy “Questioning the Author”? Why or why not?

S 4: We like it, and I think most of our classmates like the activities, too. We have a chance to express our ideas and different opinions from the author in class. Besides, it makes English learning more interesting. (Other two interviewees have similar opinions.)

Interviewer: So, do you want to have these activities in the future? How often should I perform the activities?

S 33: Well, maybe twice or three times in a semester. Thus we can practice something different from the textbook. (Other two interviewees have similar opinions.)

Without any other suggestion, the focus group interview with high achievers was completed. Despite the fact that they perform quite well in the activities, they are not satisfied with their writing ability and mention it several times in the interview. Out of the teacher researcher’s expectation, the activities with the strategy “Questioning the Author” does not enhance their reading ability mostly but lead them to find their shortcomings in writing instead.

4.5.2 Focus Group Interview with Low Achievers

The teacher researcher selected S 10, S 26, and S 35, who all performed well but improved in different degrees during the activities to form the focus group. S 10, who got the lowest score on the English proficiency test among them three, had made the greatest improvement in the activities. The interview was conducted under the same procedures as that with the high achievers. At first, the teacher researcher invited the interviewees to express their opinions on the teaching activities for the last three weeks. Similar to the high achievers, they considered the strategy “Questioning the Author” a useful one for helping them to think actively about the articles. In addition, they also thought the worksheets provide guidance in thinking about the questions. Unlike the high achievers, they enjoyed discussing in groups since the group discussion could stimulate them to generate more ideas. Furthermore, all of them have confidence in their answers, believing their answers are unique and creative. The referring sections of the interview are shown in Excerpt 10 as follows:

Excerpt 10

Interviewer: After the activities for three weeks, do you think what is the key point of the strategy “Questioning the author”? You can give me your answers by your personal experiences during the activities.

S 35: I think the strategy can inspire my creativity and lets me use my brain more often when reading.

S 26: I think the strategy helps me to understand the article thoroughly and lets me think more about the article.

S 10: The activities help me find the unclear parts in the article and guide me to raise questions about them.

Interviewer: Do you think the worksheets are helpful for you? Or . . . ?

Interviewees: I think the worksheets provide guidance for me, and teacher’s explanation and instruction are also helpful for answering the questions and realizing the article.

Interviewer: Well, when you are asked to rewrite or add anything else to this paragraph on the worksheet, do you have confidence in your own answers?

S 35: Of course, I have confidence in my answers because my answers change the article into a unique one. I think I am the co-author and help the original author to make the article better.

Interviewer: Make it more comprehensible.

S 26: I agree with her. But when I have difficulties in understanding the meaning of the article, I have little confidence.

S 10: I have confidence in my answers because I spend a lot of time and effort in understanding the article and questions on the worksheets to figure out the answers. My answers may not be totally correct but I think they are special.

Interviewer: Good, I think all of you grasp the spirit of the activities, So, does the group discussion offer some helps to you? Do you like it?

S 35: Yes, I like the group discussion in class. I like to cooperate with my teammates, especially discuss with her (S 26).

Interviewer: Do you two discuss first to get a common answer?

S 35: No, I usually have my own answers first and then discuss with her. But seldom do I change my answers. We just share our answers with each other.

S 26: Yes, I think it is helpful, and I like to discuss with her (S 35).

S 10: I like the group discussion because we can share answers with one another in group. I can learn from my group members.

Next, the teacher researcher aimed at what the interviewees had learned during the activities. It was divided into two aspects: one was to investigate their learning process through the strategy “Questioning the Author”; the other was to understand the self-evaluation of their performance on applying the strategy to the article. The referring sections of the interview are shown in Excerpts 11 and 12 respectively as follows:

Excerpt 11

Interviewer: Do you think the strategy “Questioning the Author” is helpful for you?
You can take your personal experiences for example.

S 10: Yes, I think the strategy encourages me to read the article by myself. Now I am willing to spend more time and effort in reading.

Interviewer: So the strategy increases your interest in reading.

S 10: Yeah, I didn't like reading, especially the articles in English in the past.

S 35: Well, I think the strategy teaches me to read the articles and the magazine in a different way. It helps me to catch the key points of the article and understand the meaning of it more easily. But in the activities, I still meet many difficulties.

S 26: I think the strategy increases my interests both in reading and writing. And I try to read the articles in the magazine with this strategy. Besides, I start to keep a diary in English because I find it important to practice writing when doing the worksheets.

Interviewer: Well, I am glad that you have practiced not only reading but also writing in the activities. Can you tell me how do you clarify the author's opinions through the strategy? How do you find out the ambiguous parts in the article?

S 10: I read the article first and circle the parts which I don't understand. I think teacher's explanations are important to me because they can help me to realize the article, and then I can tell which parts need to be clarified.

S 26: I read the article first and try to find out the key points of the article. Then I think about what the author wants to tell me in this article, and discuss with my group members. But same to him, I need teacher's guides to figure out the answers.

S 35: I usually listen to teacher's explanations first and then try to find out the key points of the article. And if I find the author doesn't express clearly, I will add something to that part.

Excerpt 11 (continued)

Interviewer: Do I influence your ideas?

S 35: Not at all. I think my answers are unique.

Interviewer: Since you all read the article first to get the main point, I am wondering how you comprehend the article in process? Try to describe it in detail.

S 10: I circle the new words and look them up in the dictionary. And sometimes I would circle a whole sentence. Then I will ask my group member or the teacher. I think I improve a lot with practice.

S 26: I would find the words I know and use the words to infer the meaning of the whole passage. And I circle the main point of each passage. Then I look the new words up in the dictionary. I may guess the meaning of the sentences I don't understand in context.

S 35: The way I use is similar to hers.

Interviewer: Well, do you use some methods or strategies to comprehend the article? For example, do the questions on the worksheet offer some helps in reading the article?

S 35: Yes, the questions help me to read the article step by step and stimulate me to think more about the article. Writing the worksheets encourages me to learn more new words and expressions in English. And we can discuss in group, which makes English learning more interesting.

S 10: Well, I think writing the worksheets gives me a sense of achievement.

S 26: I have the same feeling with him. I think I am so smart that I can understand the article and revise it to make it better.

Similar to the high achievers, the interviewees consider the strategy of great assistance for them in reading the article step by step, and more importantly, the strategy increases their interests in reading. They put a great deal of efforts to understand the articles and try their best to find the ambiguous parts in them although they cannot describe how they comprehend the articles clearly. With their growing self-confidence through the activities, they all suppose themselves have the ability to revise the articles.

Excerpt 12

Interviewer: For the last three weeks, what is your achievement in the activities?

You can take your personal experiences for example.

S 26: The activities give me a chance to think how to express my ideas in English, and even have a chance to challenge the author. I think I make an improvement and gain a sense of achievement in the process.

S 35: So do I. Putting my ideas into words really gives me a great sense of achievement.

S 10: I think I make a great progress because now I can communicate with my teammates and answer the questions in English. You know my English abilities are not so good.

Interviewer: Well, I am glad that all of you make improvements in the activities.

However, what is the greatest challenge to you in the activities?

S 35: The biggest challenge to me is to understand the article at first. Because I need much time to read the article and think about the questions, sometimes I find it hard to finish the worksheets on time.

Interviewer: It doesn't matter. I can see you work hard on the worksheets.

S 26: It is difficult to find the unclear parts in the article and add some complimentary sentences.

S 10: I think the greatest challenge is to express my ideas in English. So I often ask my teammates and the teacher for help.

The interviewees gain a sense of achievement by expressing their opinions in English, which represents a great improvement to them. Besides, one of them (S 10) considers having the chance to communicate with his group members to be a great achievement. Since his English abilities are not so good, he dares not to share his opinions with others in the beginning. However, he makes progress through the activities for the three weeks. According to the interview, they still encounter difficulties in writing the worksheets owing to their lower degree of English proficiency.

In the following, the teacher researcher focused on the comparison of learning effects between the conventional teaching methods and the strategy "Questioning the

Author”. The interviewees indicated that the strategy makes English reading interesting and meaningful to them, moreover, it even changed their attitude to English learning. Since they had made great effort in reading the articles and writing the worksheets, they made improvements in their English abilities as well as their critical thinking ability in the process. These improvements reciprocally encourage them to take on more challenges with English learning. Excerpt 13 shows the interviewees’ perspectives to this topic as follows:



Excerpt 13

Interviewer: Compared to prior experiences, what is the difference between conventional teaching activities and the ones with the strategy “Questioning the Author”? You can take your personal experiences for example.

S 35: We usually study English for the tests. But now we have to put more efforts in the activities, which inspire us to use our thinking ability and imagination. It is much more interesting and meaningful than copying the information provided on the blackboard or just writing down what the teacher says in class. (Other two interviewees have similar opinions.)

Interviewer: So, do you think the activities with the strategy improve your critical thinking ability?

S 10: Yes, through the activities, I learn to ask “Why” to the articles and even something that seems right to me. I think I become smarter than before. I think now I can use my critical thinking ability more by raising questions to everything.

S 26: It is hard to say. I only use this strategy in English class, and sometimes I feel stuck in the questions.

S 35: I have the same situation with her. I cannot tell if I have any improvement in my critical thinking ability.

Interviewer: Well, do you achieve any improvements in your English proficiency or undergo any changes in the activities through the strategy?

S 35: I think I have improved a lot both in reading and writing. In the past, I couldn't understand the articles by myself, not to mention adding sentences to them. But now I can read and understand the meaning of the articles on my own. Besides, with practice, I think I am doing better and better on the worksheets.

S 26, S 10: Yeah, I have improvements in reading and writing. Through the strategy, I know how to catch the key points of the article step by step and have more confidence in expressing my ideas in English. This is a big change to me.

Interviewer: Well, according to your answers, can I conclude that the strategy makes you both interested in reading and writing?

S 26: The strategy makes reading more interesting and meaningful to us, while expressing our ideas in English makes us feel we are able to take on more challenges in learning English. (Other two interviewees have similar opinions.)

At the end of the interview, the teacher researcher inquired the interviewees about suggestions for further implementation with the strategy. Similar to the high achievers, they like the teaching activities with the strategy and hope those can be conducted twice or three times in a semester. The Excerpt 14 shows their suggestions:

Excerpt 14

Interviewer: To be frank, do you like the teaching activities with the strategy “Questioning the Author”? Why or why not?

S 10, S 26: I like the activities very much. I think it is exciting to have a chance to express my ideas and different opinions from the author in class. Besides, we can discuss in groups.

S 35: I like the activities, but sometimes I worry about my answers might be questioned by others.

Interviewer: So, do you want to have these activities in the future? How often should I perform the activities?

S 26: Well, maybe twice or three times in a semester. (Other two interviewees agree with the answer.)

Without any other suggestion, the focus group interview with low achievers was completed. The interviewees are satisfied with their performances in the activities and state that they make great progress in their reading and writing ability. Although they cannot state clearly whether they learn critical thinking ability better, they earn self-confidence in asking questions, discussing with their group members, and challenging the author by providing their own opinions. The teaching activities with the strategy “Questioning the Author” not only enhance their reading and writing ability but also inspire them to learn English in a different way.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The present action research study aims to investigate the process of fostering reading ability of EFL vocational high school students by incorporating a critical thinking strategy, namely, “Questioning the Author”, into the English teaching activities. To conduct this process-oriented study, the methods being adopted are participants’ worksheets, learning surveys, the field notes and the teaching logs of the teacher researcher, and the focus group interviews with both high and low achievers. Data collected from the above instruments are analyzed, and the relevant results are presented in the previous chapter. In this chapter, firstly, the major findings which answer the research questions of this study are illustrated in sections 5.1, and detailed discussions of their relations to previous studies are provided in section 5.2. Secondly, pedagogical implications derived from the present study are illustrated in section 5.3. In section 5.4, limitations of the present study and suggestions for future research are included, and finally the conclusion is epitomized in section 5.5.

5.1 Summary of the Findings

In response to the research questions that guide the direction of the present study, the section intends to sum up the findings, including the participants’ learning experiences in the teaching activities and their responses to the reading process through the strategy “Questioning the Author”, the teacher researcher’s responses and insights to the incorporation of the strategy into reading teaching activities, the problems encountered and the modifications to the teaching activities, and the

different responses and perspectives from high and low achievers to the instruction.

To begin with, the answer to the first researcher question “How would the participants respond to the incorporation of ‘Questioning the Author’ strategy into their reading process?” lies in the results of the participants’ worksheets and learning surveys. It can be concluded that most of the participants hold a positive attitude to the teaching activities incorporating the strategy “Questioning the Author”. Despite their different English proficiency levels, the participants considered the three weeks of reading activities through the strategy to be a joyful experience in learning English and thus developed their interests in reading particularly. They agreed that the queries of the strategy could assist them to understand the article, to clarify their thoughts, and most importantly, to cultivate their reading ability. As stated in the results of the worksheets in the previous chapter, the percentage of the participants who could incorporate the strategy into the reading had increased through the teaching activities. In Week 2, only 28.95% of the participants knew how to apply the strategy to the article, while in Week 3, it had increased to 39.47% and in Week 4, 65.79% of the participants had learnt to incorporate the strategy into reading activities. Briefly speaking, the “Questioning the Author” strategy made a difference in the participants’ reading experiences, and meanwhile improved their ability in reading comprehension.

Secondly, the answer to the second research question “How would the teacher researcher respond to the incorporation of ‘Questioning the Author’ strategy into reading teaching activities?” is shown in the teaching logs. During the activities, the teacher researcher did not explain the content of the article directly, but had to familiarize the participants with the critical thinking strategy, which was different from prior conventional teaching activities. Besides, instead of being the one who provided the correct answers to the queries, the teacher researcher supported the

participants with adequate assistance such as providing more explanations to the queries and some key words in accordance with their proficiency in the discussions, facilitating them to employ the strategy into their reading activities. Through the whole project, the teacher researcher also needed to observe the responses from the participants to modify the ongoing activities.

The third research question is “What difficulties or obstacles did the teacher researcher and the participants encounter in incorporating ‘Questioning the Author’ into reading teaching activities? And, how would they overcome these difficulties?” The answer to the first half of the research question can be attributed to three problems: the participants’ lack of confidence in their English proficiency, their frustration in writing the worksheets, and the time constraints for discussion. To solve these interrelated problems, the teacher researcher made the modifications at different stages of the project. First, in order to have the participants well prepared to receive a new reading strategy, the teacher researcher postponed conducting the project to the 12th week of the first semester owing to the polarization in the participants’ proficiency levels. Before implementing the strategy into reading activities, the teacher researcher explained it in detail with some examples to assist the participants to familiarize the strategy. Second, based on the results of the activities in Week 2, the teacher researcher condensed the worksheet with longer passages of the article, which provided more clues for the participants to answer the questions and allotted more time for whole class and group discussion. Third, considering the participants’ performance in Week 3, the teacher researcher adjusted the procedures to provide more supports, including changing the sequence of whole class and group discussion, putting the key words and good examples of the answers on the blackboard, and allowing some specific participants to use Chinese in writing the worksheet. With

these modifications and practices, most of the participants were growing used to implementing the strategy “Questioning the Author” into reading, and particularly they learnt critical thinking ability better through the strategy and the activities.

Lastly, the answer to the fourth research question “How did the high and low achievers respond differently to the same instruction?” can be elicited from the results of learning surveys and the two focus group interviews. Despite the fact that both high and low achievers considered the strategy “Questioning the Author” a useful one to stimulate them to think deeper about the articles actively, they have inconsistent responses to the teaching activities and different dimensions of their improvements in the activities by incorporating the strategy into reading. As for the teaching activities, the high achievers agreed that the teacher researcher’s explanation and the queries on the worksheets were adequate and essential to comprehend the articles; however, they expressed the opinion that the group discussion was not so necessary to them. In contrast, the low achievers enjoyed discussing in groups since the group discussion as well as the teacher researcher’s explanation could stimulate them to generate more ideas to answer the queries on the worksheets, which could support them to understand the articles better. As for the participants’ improvements, the low achievers believed that they had great improvement both in reading comprehension and critical thinking ability; furthermore, through the activities, they had cultivated more interests in reading and had grown higher self-confidence. On the other hand, although the high achievers considered the strategy enhanced their critical thinking ability, they had little confidence in their writing ability, which lessened their self-evaluation of their improvement in reading comprehension and eroded their interests in reading. Interestingly, the high achievers expressed more interests and higher motivation in using the strategy to improve their writing ability in the future, which brought about a

new dimension for implementing the strategy into English teaching.

5.2 Discussion

The findings are examined in terms of the strategy “Questioning the Author” and reading comprehension, the teaching activities with the strategy, and the participants’ perceptions and responses toward the strategy “Questioning the Author”.

5.2.1 “Questioning the Author” and Reading Comprehension

In this study, reading comprehension was measured in light of the participants’ performances on the worksheets. There is a significant improvement in the results of the worksheets among the activities from Week 2 to Week 4. In Week 2, since it was the first time for the participants to apply the strategy to the article, according to their answers to the queries on the worksheets 1 & 2, only 28.95% of the participants grasped the key points of incorporating the strategy into reading activities. Then in Week 3, 39.47% of them had better understanding of the strategy, trying to explore into the article and to challenge the author. The most significant improvement was made in Week 4. 65.79% of the participants, being familiar with the strategy, exerted their critical thinking ability in answering the queries with more profound and pertinent responses. It shows that the teaching activities with strategy “Questioning the Author” have facilitative effect on the participants’ reading comprehension. Since the strategy focuses more on the connection of the text and the readers’ knowledge and experience, readers are encouraged to actively make multiple interpretations of the text and connect themselves to the text. In answering the queries, the participants have to discover the underlying meaning of the text, which needs higher-order thinking to integrate and analyze the ideas (Applegate, Quinn, & Applegate, 2002).

Therefore, through the deep interaction with the text, the strategy reinforces both the participants' critical thinking ability and reading comprehension. Furthermore, since the queries are categorized into the initiative, follow-up, and narrative queries, they are prompted by the teacher to lead the students to take more heed to the gist, characterization, or judgement of the text (Beck et al., 1996, 1997). With repeatedly exercising the discussion and answering the queries, the participants' ability of meaning construction might be enhanced, and the ability to interpret the text might also have been improved. The findings in this study are in line with the argument proposed by Beck et al. (1996, 1997) that lessons with "Questioning the Author" strategy may encourage readers to build up their own meaning for the text as well as present their own ideas.

The findings of the strategy "Questioning the Author" influence on reading comprehension in this study are consistent with those by Sandora et al. (1999), in which the strategy "Questioning the Author" outperformed the Great Books approach in terms of open-ended questions. In Sandora et al.'s study, the strategy was compared with Junior Great Books approach in their effect on reading comprehension. Non-dialogic approaches, such as Junior Great Books approach, offer little interaction between the readers and the text (Sandora et al., 1999). On the other hand, the strategy "Questioning the Author" contributes higher frequency of interaction to readers in various manners. Hence, the interaction among the participants as well as between the text and themselves might have a positive contribution to the effect of the strategy in the present study. The participants can constantly construct their own interpretation of the article, which induces their greater progress in reading comprehension.

5.2.2 *“Questioning the Author” and Teaching Activities*

In this study, the participants taught with the strategy “Questioning the Author” did not make efforts on decoding the surface language of the article. Unlike in the conventional teaching activities, which involve activities that emphasize the elements of an article, e.g., translating, answering literal questions and summarizing, they paid more attention to the hidden meaning of the text and to their inward thinking. Just as stated in the review by Duke and Pearson (2002) on reading researches, if students are asked factual questions in class, they will focus on the factual details of the passage. In this study, the participants practiced implementing the strategy by answering the queries, which impelled them to search for the real ideas that the authors try to convey. The teaching approach that incorporates the strategy “Questioning the Author” into reading is supported by the study of Baleghizadeh (2011). In the study of Baleghizadeh (2011), the learners who discuss texts through receiving the training of the strategy would comprehend the texts better than those without the training. It suggests that the training in asking the right questions, the queries of the strategy, significantly improves reading comprehension of the participants, compared to those who have not received this training.

To utilize the queries, whole class discussion and group discussion are the advisable ways to involve all the participants into the activities. Discussing a text can provide readers the social interaction to reason, evolve thought and internalize the thinking process (Vygotsky, 1978). While actively responding to the text, readers can engage in the text through class collaboration compared with conventional lecture mode (Beck et al., 1996). Since the teacher researcher did not hold the authority in discussions, the participants could participate in a low-anxiety learning environment, without the pressure of seeking the correct answers. According to Krashen, anxiety is

a major cause of “affective filter”, which impedes success in learning or acquiring a language (1982, p. 29). Despite the situation that the high achievers in focus group considered the discussions unnecessary, most of the participants enjoyed the relaxing atmosphere and interaction among others in the discussions.

5.2.3 Participants’ Perceptions and Responses to “Questioning the Author”

In the present study, the participants’ responses in their learning surveys and in the two focus group interviews provided insights about incorporating the strategy “Questioning the Author” into reading activities. It included the reasons why they like or dislike the strategy, the abilities which they perceived developed through the strategy, and the different perceptions between the high and low achievers.

First, almost all of the participants like the strategy and are willing to receive more teaching activities with it. Roughly 90% of the participants, who are at diverse proficiency levels, expressed that they like to grapple the underlying meaning of the article, which stimulated them to think while reading and thus improved their reading comprehension. This finding is similar to that of a quantitative learning survey in the study carried by Chu (2015), in which a majority of the participants are more highly motivated in English reading owing to the incorporation of the strategy “Questioning the Author” in class. Though a number of the participants encountered difficulties in answering the queries, they still put efforts into solving the problems in different manners; meanwhile, they made visible progress in the activities. The participants also expressed their preference to the open-ended questions of the queries instead of the single-answer questions in the typical comprehension test. The queries therefore can guide the participants to construct meanings of the article without too much constraint. As stated by Gall (1970), a good combination of initial and follow-up

queries can help students expand and unclear response, create an energetic atmosphere for discussion, arouse students' sense of curiosity, and develop their critical thinking ability.

After three weeks' exposure to the strategy, a large proportion of the participants agreed that they have made progress in their critical thinking ability as well as in reading comprehension ability, with only a small portion of them met hindrance for their insufficient vocabulary. Moreover, most of the participants also expressed their improvement in clarifying their own opinions in group discussions and in writing the worksheets. The improvement in these abilities echoes the findings in numerous previous studies (Baleghizadeh, 2011; Beck et al., 1996; Liu & Chu, 2008; McKeown et al., 2009; Sandora et al., 1999; Wu, 2013). In this study, the improvement in these abilities also enhances the participants' interests in reading and raises their self-confidence in further English learning.

Though a large proportion of the participants have made progress in their critical thinking ability as well as in reading comprehension ability, the high and low achievers in this study have subtle different perceptions to the effect of the strategy on their reading comprehension. Based on the results of the open-ended questions in the learning surveys and the two focus group interviews, the high achievers, who had better performance in the activities, expressed their feelings of their reading ability was improved little. Instead, the activities with the exposure to the strategy engendered their motivation in practicing writing. On the other hand, the low achievers who made considerable progress during the activities considered the strategy has a consequential effect on their reading comprehension ability. This finding corresponds to the study of Shang (2011) and Hu (2012), both of which focus on the relationship between Taiwanese students' use of reading strategies and their

English proficiency levels. In the study of Shang (2011), the good readers distinguish themselves from the poor ones in the frequency of having the strategic knowledge. Furthermore, readers with the high proficiency level particularly use more testing strategies than readers with the low proficiency level to reach a better reading comprehension performance. Similarly, the study of Hu (2012) presents the finding of the significant difference between high- and low-achievers' use of reading strategies. The high achievers may use several metacognitive strategies, such as the problem-solving strategy, while the low achievers frequently use translation method. In the present study, the high achievers, who normally hold a high expectation for themselves in their academic performances, might apply various reading strategies to comprehend the article. This might explain why they had the perception that the effect of the strategy "Questioning the Author" on the improvement of their reading comprehension ability seems to be little. In contrast, since the low achievers might employ few or even without any reading strategies when reading the article, the exposure to the strategy "Questioning the Author" provided them a favorable opportunity to empower their reading comprehension ability. Nevertheless, the effect of the strategy fell a little short of the high achievers' firm standards in their self-expectation. Despite the fact that both high and low achievers made progress in their reading and critical thinking ability, given these factors, the low achievers benefit more from the implementing of the strategy into reading activities than the high achievers. The low achievers have made substantial improvement in their reading comprehension ability; additionally, they gain much higher confidence and interest in reading than the high achievers do.

5.3 Pedagogical Implications

In comparison with the previous quantitative studies in discussion, the present study adopts qualitative methods to explore the process of fostering reading ability of EFL vocational high school students through the critical thinking strategy “Questioning the Author” as well as its effect on the learners’ reading comprehension ability. According to the findings of the present study, some implications are drawn for practice.

First of all, the positive responses from the participants’ learning surveys and interviews show the feasibility of the strategy “Questioning the Author” in EFL vocational high school language learning context. As indicated by Duke and Pearson (2002), a balanced comprehension instruction should include both explicit comprehension strategies instruction and opportunity for real reading, writing, and discussion; therefore, the strategy is such an effective instruction that can be adopted as a supplement in fostering students’ reading comprehension ability. Just as stated in the review by Duke and Pearson (2002), the more higher-level inferential questions are asked, the more focus will center on the meaning of the text. By implementing the strategy into reading teaching activities, students will be led to desirable changes in their reading behavior. Furthermore, the strategy provides a comfortable and supportive environment for students to express their opinions as well as construct meanings actively. Particularly, since students can challenge the author through the queries of the strategy, they can regenerate their interests in language learning in a different way.

Secondly, for the low achievers in particular, the strategy provides them an opportunity to explore their own potential in language learning. By incorporating the strategy into reading activities, the low achievers have more chances to participate in

discussions, especially group discussions in which they can express their own opinions to the articles and be inspired by other group members. Compared to the high achievers, the interaction in discussions enables the low achievers to have more confidence in themselves, which reciprocally strengthens their motivation in learning new things. Moreover, by familiarizing the strategy, the low achievers can acquire better strategic reading ability which leads to the improvement in their reading comprehension. It can be concluded that the low achievers benefit more from the strategy than the high achievers, since they can develop more interests in reading as well as obtain higher confidence in themselves through the strategy. Teachers can adopt the strategy to assist the low achievers to rebuild their interest and motivation in language learning.

Last but not least, the roles of teachers and students can be re-defined. In traditional language classrooms, teachers have the authority to dominate the teaching scenario in class, while students are the passive listeners. In contrast, by implementing the strategy “Questioning the Author”, students’ discussion and their response to the queries become the major activities in class. With teachers’ proper guidance, the discussions make students the center of learning. This change can also be a response to the recent initiative on “the Flipped Classroom”, a pedagogical model which advocates the reversed classroom in which typical lecture or homework elements are reduced (EDUCAUSE, 2012). Teachers can adopt the strategy “Questioning the Author” to conduct a flipped class in order to endow students with more responsibility for active learning and engagement in class. The implementation of the strategy is in line with the value of a flipped class, in which time is reassigned for students’ discussions, applying their knowledge practically, and interaction with one another in hands-on activities (EDUCAUSE, 2012).

5.4 Limitations and Suggestions for Future Studies

In spite of the positive findings, some limitations of this present study can shed light on the design of future studies with the strategy “Questioning the Author”.

First of all, when implementing the strategy into reading instruction, the researcher encountered a major limitation of time. Taking school’s fixed schedule and the possible teaching effects into consideration, the teacher researcher conducted the study for five weeks, which may not be long enough to see the solid influence on learning. For future studies, a long-term teaching duration, such as one semester or one year, might be worth practicing so as to examine whether the effect of the strategy can be increased in accordance with the duration.

The second limitation lies in the polarization in participants’ proficiency level. In this study, only two focus group interviews—one for high achievers and the other for low achievers—were included. Based on the result of the proficiency test, the teacher researcher could only divide the participants into high and low achievers. The lack of the participants in intermediate level results in the missing part in the picture of the participants’ responses to the critical thinking strategy. For future studies, the researcher should also recruit intermediate level students so that the results of the focus group interview would be more complete.

Finally, since the present study was conducted to mainly explore the process of fostering students’ reading ability through the critical thinking strategy “Questioning the Author”, the effect of the strategy on students’ writing ability improvement is still unknown. Although in present study the participants were required to write the worksheets to record their answers to the queries, the teacher researcher did not set a systematic rating criteria on their writing. In high-achievers’ focus group interview, they expressed their eagerness in strengthening their writing ability. Therefore, for

future studies, it will be practicable to see the effect of the strategy on students' writing ability and additionally, the interrelationship between their reading and writing ability improvement will be investigated.

5.5 Conclusion

The investigation of the present study provides an overall profile of how the critical thinking strategy "Questioning the Author" assist Taiwanese vocational high school students in improving their reading comprehension ability as well as their critical thinking ability. By incorporating the strategy into reading, students develop their interests and confidence in language learning, which results in their improvements in reading comprehension ability. The finding in this study may provide an answer to the curriculum guideline exacted by the Ministry of Education to develop critical thinking skills for high school students. The strategy may be an option for senior and vocational high school teachers in response to the call. Especially for vocational high students, whose English proficiency levels and motivation in English learning are averagely lower than senior high school students, the significant effect of the strategy "Questioning the Author" on the low achievers will benefit EFL vocational high school students' reading comprehension ability for sure. By implementing the strategy, it is expected that vocational high school students will gradually develop their independent critical thinking ability as well as shoulder their own learning responsibility. Eventually, they all will become active and autonomous learners.

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Appendix 1: Worksheet 1

Reading Article: Crazy Contests: Birdman Flying and Extreme Ironing (I)

經由課堂中的討論，你是否有些自己的想法呢？請你寫下在閱讀與討論的過程中，自己的想法與答案。

Reading article and Questions

Crazy Contests: Birdman Flying and Extreme Ironing (Part I)
When it comes to sports competitions, you may think of the Olympics. However, not all competitions are so serious. The following two examples show a “healthy” sense of humor.
Q1. What is the author trying to tell you?
The first event is the International Birdman in England. It began in 1971. It is held in mid-August every year and attracts an audience of tens of thousands. In the event, people run along a platform, jump off over the sea, and try to fly.
Q2. What is the author talking about?
Q3. What do you think the author wants us to know here?
Q4. Does the author tell us why the event was held? Does the author say it clearly?
Q5. How could the author have said things more clearly?
To win the first prize of 30,000 pounds, serious contestants make machines or hang-gliders to reach the 100-meter mark. However, some people join the event just for fun. They do not use anything except their own bodies. The point is not to “fly” the farthest, but to make the audience laugh.
Q6. What is the important message in this section?
Q7. Why do you think the author tells us that now?
Q8. Does the author say it clearly?
Q9. How could the author have said things more clearly?
Q10. What would you say instead?

Appendix 2: Worksheet 2

Reading Article: Crazy Contests: Birdman Flying and Extreme Ironing (II)

經由課堂中的討論，你是否有些自己的想法呢？請你寫下在閱讀與討論的過程中，自己的想法與答案。

I. Reading article and Questions

Crazy Contests: Birdman Flying and Extreme Ironing (Part II)
The second event, Extreme Ironing, was also created by an Englishman, Phil Shaw. He came up with the idea one day back in 1997. Shaw wanted to go rock climbing, but he had to iron some clothes. At that moment, he decided to put the two activities together into one event!
Q1. What is the author talking about?
Q2. Why is the author telling you that?
Q3. Does the author tell us why the event was created?
Extreme Ironing now takes place in a number of places around the world. Contestants bring an iron, an ironing board, and clothes to different kinds of places. They do this on cliffs, under the water, and at the top of trees. Some people even do it together with other risky activities, such as skiing, bungee jumping, or parachuting!
Q4. What do you think the author wants us to know here?
Q5. Does the author tell us how the event is carried out? Does the author say it clearly?
Q6. How could the author have said things more clearly?
The first Extreme Ironing World Championships were held in Germany in 2002. The prizes included washing machines and other household goods. People from ten nations came to take part in this contest. Some now hope that Extreme Ironing can become an event in the Olympics. This would certainly be difficult to achieve. However, the contestants' fighting spirit shows that nothing is impossible.
Q7. What is the important message in this section?
Q8. Why do you think the author tells us that now?

Q9. Does the author say it clearly?

Q10. How could the author have said things more clearly?

Q11. What would you say instead?

II. After reading, what are the most important points included in the article?

1.

2.

3.



Appendix 3: Worksheet 3

Reading Article: Eating Customs around the World

經由課堂中的討論，你是否有些自己的想法呢？請你寫下在閱讀與討論的過程中，自己的想法與答案。

Reading article and Questions

Eating Customs around the World (Part I)
<p>In Taiwan, it is common for people to bring their pets into some restaurants. Some of these restaurants even serve food just for animals. But imagine you are having dinner in a fancy restaurant in an Arab country like Sudan. Should you bring your camel in with you? The answer is NO! This is just one example of different eating customs. There are more to be found around the world.</p>
Q1. What is the author trying to tell you?
<p>Perhaps many of you have had ramen before. Noodle dishes, such as ramen, are popular in Japan. If you walk into a local restaurant in Tokyo, you may hear a very special noise. The Japanese like to slurp their noodles as loudly as possible when they eat. Slurping noodles is a way of praising the chef. It means that you like your food very much, and that you can't wait to get it in your mouth!</p>
Q2. What is the author trying to tell you in this paragraph?
Q3. What does the author mean here?
Q4. Does the author tell us why the Japanese like to slurp their noodles? Does the author compare this eating custom with those in different places (e.g. in Taiwan)?
Q5. How could the author say it more clearly?
Q6. Would you add anything else to this paragraph? What would you say instead?

Appendix 4: Worksheet 4

Reading Article: Taiwanese Taboos

經由課堂中的討論，你是否有些自己的想法呢？請你寫下在閱讀與討論的過程中，自己的想法與答案。若有困難，可以參考同學在討論中所發表的看法。

Reading article and Questions

Taiwanese Taboos
<p>We all have different beliefs about what to do and what not to do. The things that we are not supposed to do are called taboos. In Taiwan, there are some taboos regarding words, special days, and eating habits. We believe we should avoid breaking these taboos because it might offend others or bring us bad luck.</p>
<p>Q1. What is the author trying to tell you?</p>
<p>There are also taboos regarding certain periods of the year. For example, we believe that the Lunar New Year brings us good luck. As a result, we do not sweep the floor on the first day of the Lunar New Year because this would take away the good fortune. Another belief is about the seventh month of the lunar calendar, a month that is also called “Ghost Month.” During this summer month, Taiwanese parents warn their children not to go to the beach. This is because we believe that ghosts may take us away if we go near the water.</p>
<p>Q2. What is the author trying to tell you in this paragraph?</p>
<p>Q3. Does the author tell you the origins of these taboos? Do you know the origins of them?</p>
<p>Q4. Do you find something unclear in this paragraph? Can you point it out?</p>
<p>Q5. Would you add anything else to this paragraph? What would you say instead?</p>
<p>When it comes to taboos about eating, there are certain rules to follow. First, we don't stick our chopsticks straight up into a bowl of rice. Chopsticks which are stuck this way would look like the incense sticks that are used to honor the dead. Second, we have to eat up every grain of rice. Otherwise we might marry a person with many pockmarks on the face.</p>

Q6. What is the author trying to tell you in this paragraph?

Q7. Does the author tell you the origins of these taboos? Can you guess the origins of them?

Q8. Do you find something unclear in this paragraph? Can you point them out?

Q9. Would you add anything else to this paragraph? What would you say instead?

What is the main idea of this article? Please use a sentence as your answer.

Appendix 5: Learning Survey 1

請你回顧閱讀課文的兩堂課中，你所做的課堂活動與學習單，並請針對以下各點，勾選出你對於這次閱讀學習的看法，以及最符合你目前學習狀況的選項。

若有其他感想與建議，也請你一併寫下，謝謝。

	非常同意	同意	部分同意	不同意	非常不同意
對於「質疑教學法」與活動的看法					
1. 我喜歡老師以「質疑教學法」來帶領我們閱讀文章。					
2. 我覺得「質疑教學法」比傳統的方式活潑有趣。					
3. 我覺得「質疑教學法」使學習氣氛變得輕鬆。					
4. 我覺得「質疑教學法」能幫助我理解文章。					
5. 我覺得「質疑教學法」能提升我的閱讀興趣。					
6. 我覺得老師問的問題難易適中。					
7. 我覺得分組討論能幫助我理解問題與文章。					
8. 我覺得老師的引導能幫助我理解問題與文章。					
9. 我覺得以「質疑教學法」來閱讀文章，使文章變得生動有意義。					
10. 我覺得「質疑教學法」能促使我在閱讀的同時不斷思考問題。					
對於學習單的看法					
1. 我覺得學習單能幫助我理解文章。					
2. 我覺得學習單能幫助我釐清我的思緒。					
3. 我覺得學習單能幫助我思考更多問題。					
4. 我覺得學習單的問題難易適中。					
5. 我覺得學習單能提升我的閱讀興趣。					
學習成效自我評估					
1. 我充分了解在上課時所討論的所有問題。					
2. 透過問答與討論，我能找出文章作者語意不清的地方。					
3. 透過問答與討論，我充分了解文章作者想要表達的意思。					
4. 在問答與討論中，我能主動地回答問題，而非等待同學的答案。					

5. 在問答與討論中，我能想到更多問題，表達自己的意見。					
6. 透過問答與討論，我充分了解文章的意涵。					
7. 透過問答與討論，我覺得我能使文章更易於瞭解，比作者的表達方式更好。					
8. 透過問答與討論，我覺得我能挑戰作者。					
9. 透過問答與討論，我的思考更加活潑有彈性，更加敏銳。					
10. 透過問答與討論，我對於英文閱讀更有興趣。					
11. 透過問答與討論，我的英文閱讀能力更加進步。					
12. 整體而言，「質疑教學法」提升了我的英文程度。					

你對於這次的「質疑教學法」活動有什麼建議呢？請具體寫出意見。



Appendix 6: Learning Survey 2

請你回顧閱讀課文時，你所做的課堂活動與學習單，並請針對以下各點，勾選出你對於這次閱讀學習的看法，以及最符合你目前學習狀況的選項。並請回顧我們上一次的活動，做反省與評估。

若有其他感想與建議，也請你一併寫下，謝謝。

	非常同意	同意	部分同意	不同意	非常不同意
對於「質疑作者法」教學流程的看法					
1. 我覺得在「質疑作者法」教學活動中，我願意主動回答老師的問題。					
2. 我覺得在「質疑作者法」教學活動中，老師問的問題難易適中。					
3. 我覺得在「質疑作者法」教學活動中，老師的引導能幫助我理解學習單的問題。					
4. 我覺得學習單上的問題難易適中。					
5. 我覺得學習單能幫助我理解文章。					
6. 我覺得學習單能幫助我思考更多問題。					
7. 我覺得學習單能幫助我釐清我的思緒。					
8. 我覺得分組討論能幫助我回答學習單的問題。					
9. 在「質疑作者法」活動中，我能主動參與小組分組討論。					
10. 我覺得在「質疑作者法」教學活動中，透過分組討論與同學分享的回答，能刺激我有更多的想法。					
11. 我覺得以「質疑作者法」來閱讀文章，能促使我在閱讀的同時不斷思考問題。					
學習成效自我評估					
1. 我充分了解在「質疑作者法」教學活動中所討論的所有問題。					
2. 透過「質疑作者法」教學活動，我充分了解文章作者想要表達的意思。					
3. 透過「質疑作者法」教學活動，我能澄清作者的立場與觀點。					
4. 透過「質疑作者法」教學活動，我能找出文章作者語意不清的地方。					
5. 透過「質疑作者法」教學活動，我能想出比作者更好的表達方式。					
6. 透過「質疑作者法」教學活動，我覺得我能挑戰作者。					
7. 透過「質疑作者法」教學活動，我能增進批判的能力(如辨別作者的表達是否清晰)。					
8. 透過「質疑作者法」教學活動，我能掌握文章閱讀的脈絡。					
9. 透過「質疑作者法」教學活動，我的思考更加活潑有彈性。					

10. 整體而言，我喜歡老師以「質疑作者法」來帶領我們閱讀文章。					
11. 整體而言，透過「質疑作者法」，我的英文閱讀能力更加進步。					
12. 整體而言，「質疑作者法」能提升我的閱讀興趣。					
學習成效比較					
1. 與第一次活動相較，我更主動地融入分組討論提供想法。					
2. 與第一次活動相較，我更主動地回答問題，而非等待同學的答案。					
3. 與第一次活動相較，我覺得我更了解「質疑作者法」的閱讀方式。					
4. 與第一次活動相較，我批判能力(如辨別作者的表達是否清晰)更加進步。					
5. 與第一次活動相較，我的英文閱讀能力更加進步。					
6. 與過去的經驗比較，在「質疑作者法」活動中，我能想到更多問題，表達自己的意見。					
7. 與過去的經驗比較，我覺得以「質疑作者法」來閱讀文章，能使文章變得生動有意義。					
8. 與過去的經驗比較，我覺得以「質疑作者法」來閱讀文章，使學習氣氛變得輕鬆。					
9. 與過去的經驗比較，我覺得以「質疑作者法」有助於提升整體英文能力。					

1. 你對於這次「質疑作者法」的教學活動有什麼建議呢？請具體寫出意見。

2. 你覺得以口說回答老師的提問會很緊張嗎？比較口頭回答和寫學習單，你喜歡以何種方式回答問題呢？為什麼？

3. 你覺得學習單對你最大的幫助是什麼？最有成就感的是什麼？最大的挑戰是什麼？

4. 你覺得「質疑作者法」的教學活動對你最大的幫助是什麼？最有成就感的是什麼？最大的挑戰是什麼？

Appendix 7: Learning Survey 3

請你回顧閱讀課文時，你所做的課堂活動與學習單，並請針對以下各點，勾選出你對於這次閱讀學習的看法，以及最符合你目前學習狀況的選項。並請回顧我們上一次的活動，做反省與評估。

若有其他感想與建議，也請你一併寫下，謝謝。

	非常同意	同意	部分同意	不同意	非常不同意
對於「質疑作者法」教學流程的看法					
1. 我覺得在「質疑作者法」教學活動中，我願意主動回答老師的問題。					
2. 我覺得在「質疑作者法」教學活動中，老師問的問題難易適中。					
3. 我覺得在「質疑作者法」教學活動中，老師的引導能幫助我理解學習單的問題。					
4. 我覺得學習單上的問題難易適中。					
5. 我覺得學習單能幫助我理解文章。					
6. 我覺得學習單能幫助我思考更多問題。					
7. 我覺得學習單能幫助我釐清我的思緒。					
8. 我覺得分組討論能幫助我回答學習單的問題。					
9. 在「質疑作者法」活動中，我能主動參與小組分組討論。					
10. 我覺得在「質疑作者法」教學活動中，透過分組討論與同學分享的回答，能刺激我有更多的想法。					
11. 我覺得以「質疑作者法」來閱讀文章，能促使我在閱讀的同時不斷思考問題。					
學習成效自我評估					
1. 我充分了解在「質疑作者法」教學活動中所討論的所有問題。					
2. 透過「質疑作者法」教學活動，我充分了解文章作者想要表達的意思。					
3. 透過「質疑作者法」教學活動，我能澄清作者的立場與觀點。					
4. 透過「質疑作者法」教學活動，我能找出文章作者語意不清的地方。					
5. 透過「質疑作者法」教學活動，我能想出比作者更好的表達方式。					
6. 透過「質疑作者法」教學活動，我覺得我能挑戰作者。					
7. 透過「質疑作者法」教學活動，我能增進批判的能力(如辨別作者的表達是否清晰)。					
8. 透過「質疑作者法」教學活動，我能掌握文章閱讀的脈絡。					
9. 透過「質疑作者法」教學活動，我的思考更加活潑有彈性。					

10. 整體而言，我喜歡老師以「質疑作者法」來帶領我們閱讀文章。					
11. 整體而言，透過「質疑作者法」，我的英文閱讀能力更加進步。					
12. 整體而言，「質疑作者法」能提升我的閱讀興趣。					
學習成效比較					
1. 與前兩次活動相較，我更主動地融入分組討論提供想法。					
2. 與前兩次活動相較，我更主動地回答問題，而非等待同學的答案。					
3. 與前兩次活動相較，我覺得我更了解「質疑作者法」的閱讀方式。					
4. 與前兩次活動相較，我批判能力(如辨別作者的表達是否清晰)更加進步。					
5. 與前兩次活動相較，我的英文閱讀能力更加進步。					
6. 與過去的經驗比較，在「質疑作者法」活動中，我能想到更多問題，表達自己的意見。					
7. 與過去的經驗比較，我覺得以「質疑作者法」來閱讀文章，能使文章變得生動有意義。					
8. 與過去的經驗比較，我覺得以「質疑作者法」來閱讀文章，使學習氣氛變得輕鬆。					
9. 與過去的經驗比較，我覺得以「質疑作者法」有助於提升整體英文能力。					

1. 經過三次活動，你認為「質疑作者法」教學活動的重點是甚麼呢？

2. 你對於這次「質疑作者法」的教學活動有什麼建議呢？請具體寫出意見。

3. 與前兩次活動比較，你覺得這次「質疑作者法」的教學活動令你感到最有成就感的是什麼？

4. 與前兩次活動比較，你覺得這次「質疑作者法」的教學活動令你感到最大的挑戰是什麼？

5. 經過三次活動，你覺得自己是否有能力挑戰作者？請具體說明。

6. 當學習單上要求你改寫文章或增加文句時，你對自己的想法有信心嗎？請舉例說明。

7. 與過去傳統的教學方式比較，你覺得「質疑作者法」的教學活動能使你對英文的哪一方面更有興趣？請說明原因。

8. 與過去的閱讀方式比較，你覺得「質疑作者法」所介紹的閱讀方式是否對你較有幫助？有何種幫助呢？請說明。

9. 在這三次的活動中，你覺得自己最大的進步及改變是什麼？

10. 你是否喜歡「質疑作者法」的教學方式？喜歡或不喜歡的原因為何？請說明。
