

# 台灣地區大學選修英語課程應用文學圈提高學生跨文化溝通、學習動機與口語表達自信之觀察分析

蘇靖棻\*

## 摘要

本論文探討於台灣以英語為外語 (EFL) 的大學英語選修課程中，應用「文學圈」(literature circles) 進行英語教學的可能優勢，觀察此教學模式能否促進跨文化溝通、提升學習動機，以及增強學生溝通自信心。筆者對文學圈背後相關理論基礎進行文獻回顧，在實際課程設計裡安排讓學生於課外閱讀兩部英文原著小說、撰寫文學圈學習單，然後再回到課堂裡進行文學圈小組討論。透過分析學生所撰寫繳交的文學圈學習單，搭配教師課堂觀察紀錄，初步審視此教學策略能否促進學生之間的跨文化互動。研究發現學生藉由參與文學圈小組討論，似乎能夠彼此交流對文化議題的不同切入視角，並與來自不同文化背景的同儕互動，深化其對多元文化觀點的理解和欣賞。從學生所撰寫對於課程教學的反饋，亦發現此課程設計對於提高學生的學習動機，以及用英語溝通的信心似乎具有正面的影響。本研究之初步觀察分析發現文學圈蘊含鼓勵積極主動、以學生為中心之學習模式的教育優勢，尤其在全球化教育背景下，更具有培養學生跨文化溝通能力的潛力。

**關鍵詞：**文學圈、跨文化溝通、學習動機、以英語為外語

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\* 目前擔任國立政治大學外文中心助理教授。

# **Observations of the Potential of Implementing Literature Circles to Enhance Students' Cross-Cultural Communication, Motivation, and Communicative Self-Confidence in A College English Course in Taiwan<sup>1</sup>**

Su, Jing-fen \*

## **Abstract**

This paper documents the potential advantages of implementing “literature circles” in a college-level English course in Taiwan, within an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context. This preliminary study investigates whether this teaching model can help foster cross-cultural communication, enhance learning motivation, and boost students’ communicative self-confidence. The researcher first reviews the relevant theoretical foundations of literature circles. In the course design, the students were assigned to read two authentic English novels and complete literature circle worksheets outside of class, and then participate in literature circle discussions during class. By analyzing the submitted literature circle worksheets and the instructor’s classroom observations, the study examines whether this instructional strategy can facilitate cross-cultural interaction among students. The findings reveal that through participation in literature circles, students can exchange different perspectives on cultural issues and interact with peers from diverse cultural backgrounds, thereby deepening their understanding and appreciation of multicultural viewpoints. Written feedback from students also suggest that the teaching design may positively impact students’ learning motivation and confidence in using English for oral communication. The preliminary

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\* Assistant Professor at Foreign Language Center, National Chengchi University.

observations of this study indicates the educational benefits of literature circles in encouraging active, student-centered learning, and also highlights their potential for cultivating students' cross-cultural communication particularly under the context of globalized education.

**Keywords:** literature circles, cross-cultural communication, learning motivation, English as a Foreign Language (EFL)

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## 1. Introduction

In today's globalized classroom, the confluence of diverse cultures offers both challenges and opportunities for effective communication and pedagogy. Literature circles, with their focus on small-group discussions of shared reading texts, present a promising approach to deal with this diversity, particularly in an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) setting like Taiwan. This model not only facilitates language proficiency but also fosters intercultural competence, positioning it as a valuable tool for enhancing cross-cultural communication, student motivation, and self-confidence in communicative skills.

This study investigates the implementation of literature circles in a college-level course in Taiwan, an EFL environment, preliminarily examining their impact on students' cross-cultural interactions and language learning. Through reviewing the theoretical foundations of literature circles, the researcher examines how this pedagogical strategy enriches the EFL learning experience by encouraging active, student-centered engagement with texts and peers from diverse backgrounds. The goal is to explore the role of literature circles in cultivating students as global citizens to navigate the complexities of intercultural interactions, contributing to the broader discourse on language education and its significance in a multicultural educational landscape.

## 2. Theoretical Framework

Literature circles are defined as small, student-led discussion groups distinguished by role-based participation (Daniels 2002). In these circles, members collaboratively read and discuss a specific text. The foundational principles of literature circles resonate with the wider educational movement towards authentic, student-centered learning experiences. This section explores three theoretical foundations underlying literature circles—Reader Response Theory, Sociocultural Theory, and Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)—that facilitate the effectiveness of literature circles on boosting not only students' language skills, but also their motivation, communication skills, and cross-cultural understanding.

### 2.1 Reader Response Theory

Reader Response Theory fundamentally reshapes our understanding of the reading

process by positing that meaning in literature emerges from the interaction between the reader and the text. This theory underlines the reader's active role in creating meaning, emphasizing that reading is not merely absorbing information but an interpretative act shaped by personal experience and context. Louise Rosenblatt (1983) stresses that "the literary experience must be phrased as a transaction between the reader and the text" (34-35). Rosenblatt distinguishes between two modes of reading: aesthetic and efferent. Aesthetic reading is characterized by the reader's engagement with "what happens during the actual reading event," including the evocation of feelings, emotions, and reflections. In contrast, efferent reading focuses on information extraction, emphasizing what the reader takes away from the reading. Rosenblatt argues for the primacy of aesthetic reading, suggesting that it should precede analytical or efferent approaches to texts.

Marjorie R. Hancock, reinforcing Rosenblatt's perspective, argues that meaning is co-constructed in the interplay between text and reader, with readers' varied backgrounds enriching understanding. This theory foregrounds the importance of the reader's background, including personal, cultural, and social elements, in shaping their interpretive experience (Rosenblatt 82-107). Rosenblatt stresses that each reader brings a unique personal history to their reading, affecting their interaction with the text and the potentially different meanings they each derive from it when compared with others. This interaction not only allows the reader to construct their own meaning but also to reevaluate their personal experiences in light of the new perspectives offered by the text. It challenges traditional notions of fixed textual meanings and invites a more inclusive, interactive approach to literature, where the reader's voice and experience are valued components of the interpretive journey.

Practical applications of Reader Response Theory, such as literature circles, encourage students to engage actively with texts, fostering both aesthetic and efferent reading. As Su and Wu (2016) indicate, this pedagogical approach highlights the significance of personal connection, interpretation, and the evolving nature of textual meaning, supporting the idea that understanding literature involves an intricate interplay of personal history, textual features, and reader interpretation. Thus, the reading experience is seen as a rich, reciprocal exchange where both the reader and the text are dynamically engaged, leading to a "complete and rewarding literary experience" (Rosenblatt 107).

## 2.2 Sociocultural Theory

Sociocultural theory emphasizes the critical role of social interaction and cultural context in the development of cognitive skills. This theory, rooted in the work of Lev Vygotsky (1978), suggests that learning first occurs through interpersonal interactions, subsequently internalized through collaborative engagement within one's sociocultural milieu. The practical implementation of literature circles illustrates the theory's emphasis on collaboration and mediation among peers. As Carrison and Ernst-Slavit (2005) suggest, "The literature circle model . . . provides abundant opportunities for dynamic interaction among readers and text" (110). Daniels and Steineke (2004) also highlight how these student-led interactions enhance friendships and collaboration, fostering a cohesive classroom community. Through a dynamic exchange of ideas (Furr 2007), increased language input and output (Kanamura et al. 2013), literature circles promote communicative competence in second language learners, as noted by Atsushi Iida (2012). Within literature circles, each student presents their unique perspective on the shared reading texts, which enriches the collective learning experience. Students transition from individual meaning-making to collective understanding through discussion and reflection.

Moreover, the sociocultural approach underlines the impact of such collaborative learning on language acquisition and cognitive development, linking it to neuroplasticity. Research by Kevin M. Maher (2013) demonstrates how active engagement in discussions and social interactions with others strengthen the brain's synapses for language acquisition. This method not only enhances linguistic skills but also promotes critical thinking and personal development, as students are encouraged to reevaluate their viewpoints through group discussions (Brown 2009). Literature circles serve as a microcosm for broader cognitive and personal development, offering students opportunities to challenge their perspectives, enhance critical thinking, and integrate personal experiences with the texts (Bibby 2012). Through this lens, sociocultural theory advocates for a learning environment where the interplay between social interaction, cultural context, and cognitive development is recognized as fundamental to the educational process.

## 2.3 Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)—Using English for Authentic Communicative Purposes

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) represents a shift in language learning

towards emphasizing real, meaningful communication to enhance language acquisition. Bill VanPatten (2003) highlights the importance of communicative tasks and interactions that increase the learner's communicative competence and awareness, making language learning more relevant and engaging. Furthermore, CLT challenges the conventional grammar-translation methods still prevalent in some educational contexts, advocating instead for the essential role of authentic and meaningful input in language learning. Stephen Krashen (1982) and Simon Bibby (2012) argue for the superiority of engaging with authentic texts and real communicative tasks over focusing solely on grammatical forms. The CLT approach prioritizes functional use over structural form, with an emphasis on message and communication, rather than mere grammatical correctness. Errors are regarded as a natural aspect of the development of communicative skills. Frequent correction is viewed as not only unnecessary but also potentially harmful. It is important to allow students to express themselves freely, despite any grammatical inaccuracies, to encourage both spontaneity and creativity in language use.

Robin Scarcella (1990) and Peregoy and Boyle (2000) note that active engagement in real communication significantly benefits second language development, offering English learners opportunities to practice English in meaningful, real-life situations. Literature circles provide such a real-world context for writing and speaking tasks, diverging from the traditional focus on rote learning and repetitive drills. These informal groups facilitate the negotiation of meaning, familiarization with discussion techniques, and the chance for learners to request repetition and clarification, thus creating a supportive and productive language learning environment. The collaborative nature of literature circles encourages learners to use English for authentic purposes, thereby enhancing their language and literacy skills through the exploration of social and cultural issues within a supportive community.

### **3. Literature Review of Relevant Empirical Studies**

In this section, the researcher first summarizes the history of literature circles and the process of implementing this pedagogical model in classrooms, including their essential components, the selection of reading materials, the various roles within literature circles, and the teacher's role. As a foundation for the primary issues addressed in this study, the literature review also examines relevant empirical studies on the potential impact of literature circles on facilitating students' cross-cultural

communication, enhancing learning motivation, and boosting self-confidence in communication.

### **3.1 History of Literature Circles**

Literature circles, a model of small-group learning, represents a transformative approach to the teaching of Reading/Literature. Initiated by Harvey Daniels and his team in Chicago (Daniels 1994, 2002) and drawing inspiration from the adult tradition of book clubs, this method aimed to bring the enthusiasm found in adult reading groups into US elementary and secondary L1 classrooms. The implementation of literature circles demonstrated the significant shift away from traditional, passive learning methods towards active, student-centered discussions, where students, motivated by their own explorations and exchanges, dive deeper into texts, bolstering their engagement and understanding of literature. This approach transforms the traditional classroom dynamic, replacing indifference with lively debates, interactive discussions, critical thinking, and deeper comprehension, thereby rekindling students' passion for reading and actively engaging in meaningful discussions in English.

### **3.2 Implementing Literature Circles**

Literature circles, as conceptualized by Daniels (1994, 2002), are designed as “small, temporary discussion groups” in which participant take on different roles, fostering peer-led discussions about the same piece of literature. With “discussion roles” rotating in each session, these roles serve to direct both the reading and discussion, ensuring a balance of guidance and autonomy within the group's dynamics (Daniels 2002; Furr 2004). This approach transcends the traditional reading club by creating a collaborative environment that emphasizes peer interaction, individual reflection, and task completion.

#### **3.2.1 Key Components of Literature Circles**

Literature circles are characterized by several key features according to Daniels (2002), further modified by Furr (2004) and others (Graham-Marr 2015; Lubis 2018), including:

- 1) Facilitators select materials appropriate to the level of the class.
- 2) Small temporary groups are arranged at the instructor's discretion.
- 3) The whole class read the same material.



- 4) Students discussed the source material using a predictable and structured format.
- 5) Students use written prepared notes to guide both their reading and discussion.
- 6) Discussion topics come from the students.
- 7) Group meeting aim to be open, natural conversation about books, so personal connections, digressions, and open-ended questions are welcome.
- 8) The teacher plays the role of a facilitator, not a group member or an instructor.
- 9) Evaluation is by teacher observation and student self-evaluation.
- 10) A spirit of playfulness and fun pervades the room.
- 11) When books are finished, students prepare a group project and/or the facilitator provides additional information to “fill in some of the gaps” in student understanding.

These key components may serve as guidelines for instructors who seek to implement literature circles in their classroom.

### **3.2.2 Reading Materials for Literature Circles**

The efficacy of literature circles in fostering reading motivation and literacy skills hinges on the careful selection of texts and the incorporation of authentic literature. While Daniels (2002) advocates for student autonomy in choosing reading materials to enhance engagement and responsibility, other scholars, particularly in the context of EFL teaching, argue for teacher-led selection to ensure the appropriateness and educational value of the texts (Furr 2004; Li 2005). This debate underscores a critical aspect of literature circles: balancing student choice with the pedagogical goals of reading instruction. Moreover, the introduction to authentic literature is crucial for developing genuine literacy skills. Authentic texts, in contrast to skill-based readers or test-prep materials, offer rich, meaningful engagement with language and content, facilitating long-term reading growth and contributing significantly to reluctant and struggling students' reading self-efficacy (Venegas 2018).

Furthermore, the structure of literature circles, especially in EFL settings, necessitates the study of shared texts to maximize the benefits of collaborative learning (Furr 2004). This approach aligns with Krashen's (2003) Comprehension Hypothesis, which posits that language acquisition and literacy development are rooted in understanding authentic textual materials. Literature circles encourage deep reading, critical thinking, and meaningful discussion, moving beyond superficial translation methods often employed in traditional language instruction (Iida 2013).

### 3.2.3 Literature Circle Roles

To prepare for literature circles, students may undertake several reading comprehension processes to derive meanings from the reading texts, including making predictions, identifying important information, making connections, inferencing, clarifying, asking and answering questions, visualizing, summarizing, and evaluating (Cooper et al. 2015; Daniels & Steineke 2004; Whittaker 2012). Each member in literature circles adopts a unique role, promoting a comprehensive understanding through diverse perspectives. As Daniels suggests, role sheets can be adopted to guide both the reading and the discussion of the reading text (Daniels 2002, p. 102). This method, designed to foster literacy development, encourages critical thinking and writing skills by involving students in active discussions and role-based tasks.

Daniels describes four basic roles (Questioner, Connector, Literary Luminary, and Illustrator) in addition to four optional roles (Summarizer, Researcher, Vocabulary Enricher, and Travel Tracer) (Daniels 2002). There have been other diverse names for literature circle roles; for example, Discussion Leader, Summarizer, Connector, Word Master, Passage Person, and Culture Connector (Furr 2007); Discussion Director, Connector, Literacy Luminary, Artful Artist, Word Wizard, or Summarizer (Venegas 2018); Discussion Leader, Real Life Connector, Visualizer, Vocabulary Wizard, Passage Person, The IF Person, Character Organizer, Culture Connector, Summarizer (Maher 2013); and Discussion Leader, Passage Person, Visualizer, Graphic Organizer, Culture Connector, Vocabulary Wizard, Real Life Connector, Summarizer, The IF Maters (Maher 2015).

The structured yet flexible nature of literature circles characterized by these specific roles enhances engagement and allows for the development of critical analytical skills. Through peer discussions and the cyclical process of reading, discussing, and evaluating texts, literature circles not only improve literacy but also foster a collaborative and reflective learning atmosphere, making them a valuable pedagogical strategy for literacy enhancement across educational levels.

### 3.2.4 The Role of the Teacher

The role of the teacher in literature circles is multifaceted, primarily involving the monitoring of group discussions to facilitate collective understanding, or addressing challenges related to language use and cultural concepts (Maher 2013). The teacher

could help broaden and deepen discussions on a wider range of topics. Research by Short, Kaufman, Kaser, Kahn, and Crawford (1999) suggests that both teacher-led and peer-led groups maintained relevance and engagement with the text, indicating that productive discussions can occur with or without teacher presence, underscoring the adaptability of the literature circle model in fostering meaningful dialogue among students.

### **3.3 Empirical Studies of the Potential Benefits of Literature Circles**

Literature circles have been recognized for enhancing reading comprehension, motivation, and speaking skills across both L1 and EFL learners. Scholarly research highlights how this student-centered pedagogical model not only promote reading for pleasure but also encourage active engagement in the foreign language, thereby increasing confidence and proficiency (Burns 1998; Daniels 2002; Furr 2004). This model fosters a dynamic learning environment where students practice critical thinking, autonomy, and collaborative skills, significantly impacting their literacy development and cultural awareness.

Moreover, literature circles have been shown to contribute to a supportive classroom climate, facilitating safe, interactive group activities that cultivate trust and cooperative learning among students (Li 2005; Burns 1998; Carrison and Ernst-Slavit 2005). These advantages extend to EFL learning, where literature circles improve reading comprehension, participation equality, genre knowledge, and soft skills such as teamwork and autonomy. Notably, literature circles align with Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, emphasizing the importance of peer-led discussions in fostering higher-order thinking and critical literacy skills. Through collaborative discussions, students analyze texts, challenge cultural assumptions, and develop a critical awareness that enriches their learning experience.

#### **3.3.1 Facilitating Cross-Cultural Communication**

Literature circles have been found to foster cultural awareness and understanding among learners, bridging the gap between language acquisition and cultural literacy. Moecharam and Sari (2014) and Bibby (2012) both acknowledge the potent role of literature in presenting the sociocultural nuances and features of the target language, thereby enriching learners' cultural competencies. Through engaging with shared texts, students gain invaluable insights into the cultural backdrop, norms, and practices of the

culture of the target language, as emphasized by Iida (2012) and Allington and Swann (2009). This process not only builds schematic understanding and background knowledge but also connects learners to the aspirations and societal constructs of the target culture. Additionally, the interactive and mediation-driven nature of literature circles connects reading literature to students' existing knowledge, and motivate learners by drawing parallels between their own and other cultures.

Imamyartha et al. (2020) found that literature circles significantly enhanced EFL learners' Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC), particularly by increasing intercultural knowledge and fostering open-mindedness and respect for cultural diversity. Students noted that literature circles made them more culturally aware and improved their ability to interpret and interact with different cultures, highlighting its value in the EFL curriculum. Incorporating literature into language learning may effectively promote cultural literacy and cross-cultural communication, further motivating students to utilize the target language more in culturally appropriate ways.

### **3.3.2 Enhancing Students' Learning Motivation**

Literature circles have been shown to engage previously unmotivated students in active discussion, enhancing reading motivation, and fostering a supportive environment for EFL learners. Researchers like Furr (2004) and Carrison and Ernst-Slavit (2005) emphasize how literature circles not only bolster language skills and reading strategies but also significantly boost student confidence. This is attributed to the decreased anxiety and improved reading comprehension facilitated by the interactive, student-led format. Additionally, a student's belief in their reading capabilities directly influences their engagement and success in reading tasks. Teachers are thus encouraged to adopt strategies that enhance self-efficacy, such as providing encouraging feedback and creating opportunities for mastery experiences through cooperative learning models.

The implementation of literature circles can serve as an effective strategy for improving language proficiency and literacy, and also play a crucial role in enhancing students' self-efficacy and motivation towards reading. Elena M. Venegas (2018) supports the notion that by enabling students to take ownership of their learning, and engage in peer-led discussions, literature circles create a conducive environment for all learners, including reluctant and struggling readers, to develop their language skills and foster a genuine enjoyment of reading, thereby nurturing more confident, autonomous,

and capable learners. Kadidja Koné's latest study (2023) shows that reading circles are a highly effective strategy for enhancing EFL learners' engagement in extensive reading. The strong sense of belonging to a cohesive group, the development of productive routines, and the enjoyment and satisfaction derived from reading significantly contribute to elevated levels of student engagement.

### **3.3.3 Enhancing students' self-confidence in communication**

Through the assignment of specific roles and tasks, literature circles provide students with a clear purpose in reading, writing, and speaking, and boost their confidence, as they come prepared to contribute to small-group discussions (Furr 2004). As Heydon (2003) argues, this method supports scaffolding, aligning with Vygotsky's zone of proximal development, by facilitating peer-led support and enabling students to internalize discussions, transitioning toward independence in language use. The clear role assignment emphasizes individual accountability, motivates students to enhance their reading and writing skills in order to contribute to the group work. This approach not only diminishes writing anxiety but also promotes equal participation, ensuring that all students, regardless of their initial proficiency, become more responsible and autonomous in their learning journey (Lubis & Rahmawati 2019).

Marji et al. (2015) found that Extensive Reading Circles (ERC) significantly improved ESL learners' oral communicative competence in terms of comprehensibility, fluency, vocabulary usage, grammar, and pronunciation compared to traditional reading comprehension activities. The study supports integrating ERC into ESL curricula to foster better engagement and interaction among learners.

Venegas's (2018) research corroborates the positive outcomes of literature circles, especially for reluctant and struggling readers, by increasing their confidence and enjoyment in reading. The collaborative nature of literature circles, where students observe and model each other's thought processes during text-based discussions, plays a critical role in improving self-efficacy, especially of the students who initially show lower confidence in their reading abilities.

Kathryn Mabe's (2022) study found that reading circles significantly boosted student engagement and reading skills in an EFL classroom, with most students enjoying the activities and reporting improvements in reading speed, vocabulary, and other skills like speaking and critical thinking. However, it also noted challenges, including the additional burden on weaker students and varying discussion

effectiveness due to group dynamics and individual motivation.

#### **4. Methodology**

The researcher conducts this preliminary study to explore how literature circles may facilitate students' cross-cultural communication and potentially enhance their learning motivation and communicative self-confidence. In the course design based on literature circles, the researcher as course instructor chose to adopt a set of literature circle role sheets published by Oxford University Press (2011), and also asked students to write feedback at the end of the course. Initially, students engaged in reflective writing outside classroom, which was then shared orally among peers in literature circles in class, serving as a conduit for oral communication training. The hypothesis driving this study posits that through the model of literature circles, there may be a perceivable enhancement in students' learning motivation, self-confidence in oral communication, and cross-cultural knowledge and awareness, ultimately leading to improved intercultural communicative capabilities.

##### **4.1 Research Design**

To observe how literature circles may facilitate students' cross-cultural communication and potentially enhance their learning motivation and self-confidence, the researcher chose to conduct this preliminary study as a qualitative research. As Hossein Nassaji describes, a good qualitative research “seeks to understand and explore rather than to explain and manipulate variables. It is contextualized and interpretive, emphasizing the process or patterns of development rather than the product or outcome of the research” (427). Such a research approach helps the researcher to dive deeper into how literature circles may engage college-level EFL learners in cross-cultural communication and affect their motivation and self-confidence in language learning.

##### **4.2 Research Context**

The research was conducted on a class of 39 students enrolled in the one-semester course titled “English Elective: Reading and Oral Training” for the spring semester of 2023 in a national university located in Taipei, Taiwan, an EFL environment. The elective course is open for university-wide, non-English majors across all years. This course was conducted in English and targeted at students with more advanced English level, with the average around B2 in Common European Framework of Reference for

Language (CEFR).

The instructor incorporated literature circles into the syllabus design. The class met once a week, and each class time was three hours. Among the seventeen weeks of class meetings for the semester, twelve weeks were devoted to novel discussions, while the remaining five weeks were reserved for other complementary teaching activities such as course orientation, students' individual oral presentations (two weeks), film screening, and final examination.

The reading materials for this course encompass two unabridged English novels, *For One More Day* and *The Five People You Meet in Heaven*, by the popular American author Mitch Albom. Each of the two novels is roughly segmented into six parts, thereby extending over to twelve weeks of classroom discussions, each of which devoted to discussing only one part of each novel. Among the twelve weeks of novel discussions, the literature circles were conducted every other week so that the students had time to read and write about a part of the novel and prepare themselves for participating in the literature circles with their completed written role sheets.

### **4.3 Research Participants**

The participants in this research consisted of the course instructor (the researcher) and 39 enrolled students from various departments and colleges. Among the students, 21 were female, and 18 were male. Regarding nationality, two male students were from South Korea, five students were from Malaysia (three females and two males), and one male student was from Belize in Central America, whose native language was Spanish. The remaining 31 enrolled students were Taiwanese. The average English proficiency of the students was approximately B2 on the Common European Framework of Reference for Language (CEFR), with only a few students having significantly higher or lower proficiency levels.

To facilitate literature circles, in the beginning of the semester, the students were randomly divided into six small groups by the instructor, with each group consisting of six or seven members. The groups were reshuffled at the midpoint of the semester to provide the students with more opportunities to interact closely with different peers from diverse majors and cultural backgrounds, maximizing their exposure to and interaction with a wider variety of people and facilitating cross-cultural communication.

### **4.4 Procedures of Implementing Literature Circles**

To implement literature circles of discussing the two American novels, the instructor adopted “Reading Circles Role Sheets” designed by Mark Furr (2011), published by Oxford University Press as online open access resources for English teachers (See Appendix 1). Accordingly, the roles for the literature circles include Discussion Leader, Summarizer, Connector, Word Master, Passage Person, and Cultural Collector. The instructor removed the role of “Word Master” from the literature circle roles based on the consideration that the task for this role was too simple for the enrolled students of the course, offering inadequate opportunities for students to share insights or personal experience related to the assigned readings. Instead, lists of selected vocabulary for the twelve parts of the assigned readings have been compiled by the instructor and posted on Moodle course website in advance for the students’ reference.

As the role of “Culture Collector” is key to the research question about how literature circles may facilitate students’ cross-cultural communication, more detailed information about this role would be provided here. According to the instructions on the role sheet for “Culture Collector,” students were asked to read the story, and identify both the differences and similarities between their own culture and the culture depicted in the assigned reading. They might focus on the main themes or the actions and dialogues of the characters in the story in comparison with those in their own cultural context. Additionally, the worksheet instructs students to formulate questions related to the cultural aspects they identify in the assigned readings, which they later pose to their group members to elicit opinions and comments on pertinent issues during the literature circles in class.

The students were required to complete the weekly reading assignments at home, and undertake varying writing tasks based on different literature circle roles every other week. After completing the writing assignments outside classroom, students came to class with their written role sheets, and were put into small groups of literature circles, where they sat in circles interacting with their group members. Each session for literature circles usually lasted for about one and a half hour. They then orally presented the content they had penned in their assigned literature circle roles. At the beginning of a typical literature circle, the student assuming the role of Discussion Leader initiated the discussions by posing one or two questions he or she had prepared, facilitating the exchange of opinions from group members in response to the questions. Following this, each member shared their written role sheets in turn, such as Summarizer, Passage Person, Cultural Collector, and Connector. Meanwhile, the instructor circulated among



different groups, observing and listening to students' discussions and occasionally interjected with critical thinking questions to stimulate further discussions in the literature circles.

The duration for the literature circles depended on the time all the group members in a group used to orally share their written role sheets, resulting in varying ending times for different groups. To prevent the awkward silences in groups that finished their literature circles earlier, the instructor prepared a set of open-ended questions related to the assigned reading for that week. These questions were provided to the early-finished groups to discuss to ensure they made good use of their time in literature circles. Once all the literature circles had concluded, the instructor engaged the entire class by soliciting responses to those open-ended questions and facilitating a whole-class discussion. Additionally, the instructor shared her observations and highlighted notable topics or insights she had listened to when circulating among different literature circles.

It is inevitable that a group might encompass students of varying proficiency levels; yet, this diversity offers valuable opportunities for peer learning and scaffolding, thereby fostering the growth and stimulation of all participants. To encourage this positive outcome, the instructor, while circulating among the groups, offer special assistance to students struggling with oral expression. This scaffolding support was achieved through patiently guiding students in expressing themselves, offering them key words in the target language, and cultivating a friendly and supportive atmosphere within the small groups. The instructor aimed to model for all the present group members how they could similarly support their less proficient peers in effectively communicating their thoughts.

#### **4.5 Data Source**

The data for analysis in this research comprise student compositions from literature circle role sheets, students' verbal feedback on the course, and the instructor's observations of students' performance and social interactions within the literature circles conducted in class. During the one-semester course, 39 students were enrolled, and each was required to complete six literature circle role sheets throughout the semester, resulting in a total of 234 writing pieces for analysis. There were two sources of students' verbal feedback on the course, one from the online Google survey developed by the instructor, and the other from the university's official teaching evaluation system.

#### **4.6 Data Analysis**

After collecting all the data from student writings of literature circle role sheets and students' verbal feedback on the course, the researcher carefully reviewed the data in order to look for similarities, differences, patterns, or trends that emerged among them. Then the researcher categorized the data, analyzed and interpreted them in order to explore the relevant issues about literature circles formulated at the beginning of the study, including how literature circles may potentially facilitate students' cross-cultural communication, enhance students' learning motivation, and boost their communicative self-confidence.

### **5. Results & Discussion**

In this semester-long course, 39 students were enrolled, each required to complete six literature circle role sheets, culminating in a total of 234 pieces of written work. Of these, 46 writings belonged to the "Culture Collector" role, which highly pertain to the research question concerning whether literature circles may facilitate students' cross-cultural communication. Although the assigned readings and writing instructions were the same for all students, they were given the liberty to tailor their writings to themes of their own choice. The researcher noticed that on the 234 written role sheets, selected themes, particularly those related to cultural issues, ranged widely from funeral customs, cremation or burial practices, taboos, and obituaries to broader topics like car ride etiquette, divorce, dancing, beliefs about heaven and the afterlife, amusement parks, carnival activities, parent-child relationships, sports scholarships, polygamy, festival celebrations, weddings, horse racing, the experiences of war veterans and victims (a topic brought up by a South Korean student), stereotypical ethnic traits, freedom of speech, fraternity parties, and similar subjects.

In the first section of "Results & Discussion," the researcher analyzed the students' writings on their literature circle role sheets, complemented with the instructor's classroom observations of the students' actual performance and interactions during literature circles, aiming to discern how literature circles may contribute to enhancing students' cross-cultural communication. The second section of "Results & Discussion" will be devoted to examining the verbal feedback from the students about the course in order to observe the potential of literature circles to increase students' motivation and

self-confidence in English communication.

As a preliminary study, the current research faces certain limitations regarding the data collected during this one-semester course according to standard qualitative research methods. Instead of employing triangulation of multiple data sources—a standard in rigorous qualitative studies—to cross-verify and validate findings, this research relies only on students' written work and the instructor's classroom observations. It lacks comprehensive data from peer evaluations, questionnaires, interviews, or adequate assessment of students' cross-cultural awareness and capability, learning motivation, or communicative self-confidence before and after their participation in the literature circles. Future research on these topics should incorporate more extensive data sources to enhance the credibility and depth of data analysis and interpretation. This would more effectively evaluate the impact of literature circles on enhancing students' cross-cultural communication, learning motivation, and communicative self-confidence.

## **5.1 How Literature Circles May Facilitate Students' Cross-Cultural Communication**

In examining the diverse range of topics students addressed in their written assignments for designated literature circle roles, the researcher conducted a thorough review of all the students' written submissions. These written assignments were based on the same shared assigned reading material. The analysis focused particularly on identifying the subjects the students chose to write about, with an emphasis on those encapsulating cultural dimensions. Among these, two recurring cultural themes—car ride etiquette and funeral customs—stood out. These themes were chosen for more in-depth analysis by the researcher as representative examples to explore how literature circles may potentially facilitate students' cross-cultural communication in this preliminary study.

### **5.1.1 Student Writings on Car Ride Etiquette**

Regarding car ride etiquette, Table 1 below presents excerpts from the writings of three Taiwanese female students, each assuming different literature circle roles—Culture Collector, Connector, and Passage Person.

**Table 1: Student Writings on Car Ride Etiquette**

Student Writings on Car Ride Etiquette	Student's LC Role and Identity
<p><b>Excerpt 1:</b> “My mother taught me not to sit at the back seat of the car if there’s nobody sitting at the front seat when she or my father was driving. Because it means you consider the person as a taxi driver. In this paragraph, it seems that passengers also usually sit at back seat when taking a taxi in western countries. My Cultural Question: <u>Do your parents care about where you sit when family members drive?</u>”</p>	<p>Student 1 as Culture Collector; Taiwanese female</p>
<p><b>Excerpt 2:</b> “As Eddie slid inside the front seat, the taxi driver said that most people like to sit inside the back seat. So do I will choose to take the back seat while taking a taxi, because it is easier to avoid having conversation with the driver as well as having a bigger, comfortable own space. Besides, it is safer to sit right back of the taxi driver that the traffic police corps have mentioned on the website It said that once you encounter the danger, you can blindfold the driver or grip the steering wheel to have a fake accident as you sit right back to the driver.”</p>	<p>Student 2 as Connector; Taiwanese female</p>
<p><b>Excerpt 3:</b> “Different to Eddie, I usually sit at the back seat when taking a taxi. I’m going to take driving lessons this summer vacation, and I’m interested in the tips of driving. Question about the Passage: <u>Where do you usually sit in a taxi? Do you have a driving license?</u>”</p>	<p>Student 3 as Passage Person, Taiwanese female</p>

The three students reflected on a particular episode from the novel *The Five People You Meet in Heaven*, wherein the protagonist, an elderly man who is no longer permitted to drive, opts to sit in the front seat next to the taxi driver on his way to a graveyard. Given that the novel is set against the backdrop of American culture and society, it was natural for the students, approaching the narrative with their distinct personal histories, family backgrounds, and sociocultural experiences, to recognize and contemplate the similarities or differences between their own culture and American culture depicted in the story. This observation led them to analyze and write about this cultural issue from

their unique personal and social perspectives.

As outlined in Table 1, Student 1, assuming the role of Culture Collector, explored her personal experience regarding seat selection in a car, influenced by her mother's advice. Her cultural inquiry relates to parents' views on the seating arrangements of their children in family vehicles. Conversely, Student 2, adopting the role of Connector, discussed her customary preference for the back seat in taxis, elaborating on her reasoning and citing police safety advice. The Connector role does not require posing a relevant question, hence Student 2 provided none. Student 3, fulfilling the role of Passage Person, expressed her usual choice of the back seat in taxis and mentioned her intentions to take driving lessons soon, raising questions related to these topics.

Notably, even when analyzing the same episode from the novel, each of the three Taiwanese students offered slightly differing viewpoints. Student 1 drew comparisons between American customs and her family's practices on trips, whereas Students 2 and 3 compared the elderly man's practice in American culture to their personal taxi-riding experiences. Moreover, Student 3 introduced her driving lesson experiences and posed a question about it, seeking her group members' opinions on the matter. These diverse approaches to the same reading text underscore Rosenblatt's (1983) Reader Response Theory, which posits that individual readers bring their personal experiences to their reading of a text. This personal background shapes their interaction with the reading, resulting in interpretations and meanings that diverge from those of other readers.

A detailed analysis of the students' writings reveals various grammatical errors and differences in vocabulary usage, sentence complexity, and overall length, reflecting the diverse English writing abilities among the students. The fact that all three students, each fulfilling different literature circle roles, independently chose to write about a common theme, underscores the adaptability of literature circles to support students with varying levels of English proficiency and personal interests in topic selection. This flexibility allows students significant autonomy in choosing their focus after engaging with the text, regardless of their English writing skill level. This aligns with Amanda Thein's findings: "The literature circle unit aimed to engage students in discussions of current, relevant political and multicultural texts. Literature circles . . . are designed to provide students with greater interpretive freedom than occurs in teacher-led contexts" (Thein 21). Granted with such interpretive freedom, even if the students were assigned different literature circle roles, it did not restrict them from expressing their thoughts and opinions about the same topic, despite in distinctive ways.

During the literature circles conducted in class, the researcher observed that allowing students the freedom to select their writing topics seemed to bolster their motivation for writing outside classroom and subsequent oral sharing within class, as demonstrated by the students' lively discussions in literature circles. The ability to choose their focus enabled them to explore aspects of the text that intrigued or surprised them. Their eagerness to hear how their peers would respond to the cultural issues they identified (e.g., car ride etiquette) encouraged dynamic and engaging discussions within the literature circles. This approach thus supports the principles of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), which stress the importance of using authentic and meaningful tasks to enhance language learning. In this setup, students were aware that their written assignments would serve as a foundation for discussion in the literature circles, offering them an authentic speaking opportunity with a real and relevant audience.

Moreover, it was also observed that the liberty to choose writing topics might provide students with greater autonomy and control over their assignments and thus appeared to boost their motivation to engage in writing and speaking activities. This sense of ownership and the practical application of their language skills in real-world contexts could potentially lead to improvements in their language proficiency. As students perceive their progress, their motivation to learn and use the target language may increase, possibly creating a positive feedback loop that educators aim to achieve.

### **5.1.2 Student Writings on Funeral Customs**

The second prevalent theme that emerged from the students' writings pertains to funeral customs. Accordingly, among the students' writings, the researcher selected eight role sheets that focused particularly on funeral customs as representative examples to explore how literature circles may potentially facilitate students' cross-cultural communication in this preliminary study. Eight students, each exploring this theme, predominantly assumed the role of Culture Collector, with the exception of one who adopted the role of Connector. Excerpts from the students' writings, alongside details of their designated literature circle roles and student identities, are displayed in Table 2 below:

**Table 2: Student Writings on Funeral Customs**

<b>Student Writings on Funeral Customs</b>	<b>Student's LC Role and Identity</b>
<p><b>Excerpt 4:</b> “In this part of the article, it mentioned Jewish customs about funerals. I would like to share one thing that is different from Taiwan customs. If you bury the body in Taiwan, you will have to go back to pick up the bones after a few years. There seems to be no such custom abroad.</p> <p>My Cultural Question: <u>Have you ever been to funeral? Do you have any particularly impressive custom?”</u></p>	<p>Student 4 as Culture Collector, Taiwanese female</p>
<p><b>Excerpt 5:</b> “p. 46 Eddie watches a man shovel dirt into a hole . . . about ashes.</p> <p>Differences: The cemetery went on in a different way. Because people in Taiwan seldom shovel dirt into a hole and say something toward ashes.</p> <p>Similarities: People wear black clothings when they attend a funeral, rather than colorful costumes.</p> <p>Question: <u>Have you ever attend a funeral? Do you believe there's a place called heaven after a person died?”</u></p>	<p>Student 5 as Culture Collector, Taiwanese male</p>
<p><b>Excerpt 6:</b> “Nations have burial ceremonies worldwide but the way that it is done is different. In the west close family members are allowed to shovel dirt onto the coffin. Whereas in Taiwan most people don't do this are cremation is preferred.</p> <p>Question: <u>What happens after a person is dead? Is there an afterlife?”</u></p>	<p>Student 6 as Culture Collector; Belizian male</p>
<p><b>Excerpt 7:</b> “Chick's mother requested that Chick toss dirt onto her coffin. She felt it helped mourners accept the body was gone and they should remember the spirit. In my experience, on the day of my grandmother's funeral, all family members viewed her body and covered the coffin before proceeding with ceremonies such as offering condolences, chanting scriptures, and paying respects under the guidance of the officiator. After the scripture chanting ended, the body was cremated, and the</p>	<p>Student 7 as Culture Collector, Taiwanese male</p>

<p>ashes were ultimately placed in a columbarium. The similarity between the two cultures is that we both place the body of the deceased in a coffin and have the last chance to see the departed on the day of the funeral. The difference is that we do not toss dirt onto the coffin.</p> <p>My Cultural Question: My grandmother expressed her wish to has her ashes or body placed in her old home. She believed that this was the only way to ‘return to her roots’ (落葉歸根) after death. <u>Have you heard similar beliefs before? Do you agree with them?”</u></p>	
<p><b>Excerpt 8:</b> “In my country, there is no obituary. Even the gossip will not be written on something like newspaper. In the culture I found in the story, Miss Thelma Bradley, who died not long after, whose obituary in the local newspaper identified her as a ‘retired housekeeper.’</p> <p>My Cultural Question: <u>Is it good or necessary to know one’s death through obituary or it is better to protect the privacy of his/her death?”</u></p>	Student 8 as Culture Collector, Taiwanese male
<p><b>Excerpt 9:</b> “In Chinese culture, there are many taboos of the offerings when worshiping our ancestors. Such as some people might take eating those food for offerings as a negative thing, while foods (including fruit, Hakka rice cake and noodles etc.), rice wine and flowers are all necessary when commemorate our ancestors, maybe flowers are enough in western culture.</p> <p>My Cultural Question: <u>Do you go sweep tombs in Tomb Sweeping Day with your family? If yes, share your experience with us.”</u></p>	Student 1 as Culture Collector, Taiwanese female
<p><b>Excerpt 10:</b> “Every culture has its ways to commemorate the dead. In my experience, although people in my culture will buy their cemetery as a preparation, they usually don’t like to discuss death and see it as a taboo or ominous thing. In this part, I think Posey was very open-minded to ‘death’ because she requested a Jewish funeral for her own, even though she was a</p>	Student 9 as Culture Collector; Malaysian female



<p>French Protestant.</p> <p>Addition: In Malaysia, we got obituary which usually post on newspapers to inform people. It is because sometimes the dead’s family cannot inform every friend. This also a ritual to commemorate and say goodbye to our loves. But in Taiwan, people will more use to give obituary to people that come to the funerals.</p> <p>My Cultural Questions: 1. <u>What are the burial rituals in your own culture? Have you ever attended a funeral in your culture / different cultures?</u> → My group member shared that she was shocked in her grandfather’s funerals because it was very grand and got several electric flower cars.</p> <p>2. <u>Have you ever thought about your funeral? What would it be like?</u> → My group member said she hope her funeral can be more eco-friendly because in her tradition culture people use to burn many paper money or stuff which they think it can wealthy the dead in another world.”</p>	
<p><b>Excerpt 11:</b> “The moment Charlie was at the funeral reminds me of the moment I attended my aunt’s funeral. The atmosphere was full of sorrowfulness, disbelief, regret and gloomy. . . . Her death itself was too sudden and was such a big blow to us. I broke down too. I was confused with my feeling at first. I wasn’t sure why I felt very emotional even though we weren’t that close. . . . However, I later realized that her love and affection was what made me miss her figure. She was such a nice person that we sometimes took granted for. And when she was gone, there’s a hollow in each of our hearts like a shot. (Q: <u>Have you ever attended a funeral of someone you love?</u>)”</p>	<p>Student 10 as Connector, Malaysian female</p>

Most of the students highlighted in the table above were responding to an episode in the novel *For One More Day*, where the protagonist, Charles (or Charlie, “Chick”), is depicted shoveling dirt onto the coffin containing his deceased mother’s ashes, a part of the burial process in the funeral ritual. The author of the novel explicitly attributes

this act to Jewish customs. Similar to the diverse analyses the researcher observed in discussions of car ride etiquette in the previous section, these eight students brought their unique perspectives to the theme of funeral customs.

In Excerpt 4, Student 4 focused specifically on the Taiwanese funeral custom of bone-picking, without sharing personal anecdotes. Her question was broad, inviting her peers to discuss their experiences with attending funerals or any unique customs they have observed concerning funerals.

Excerpt 5 features Student 5 drawing parallels between Taiwanese and Jewish funeral practices, particularly focusing on the act of shoveling dirt and the choice of attire at such ceremonies. His initial question sought insights into his peers' funeral experiences, whereas his subsequent question, straying from the central theme, may indicate his struggle to formulate relevant, engaging questions.

In Excerpt 6, Student 6 contrasted the customs surrounding the act of shoveling dirt onto the coffin in Western and Taiwanese traditions. Similar to Student 5, his question veered off the primary topic, suggesting a challenge in aligning his questions closely with the core subject of his own writing.

In Excerpt 7, Student 7 offered a comparison of funeral practices in Taiwanese and Jewish cultures, enriching the discussion with a detailed and vivid account of attending her grandmother's funeral. Her cultural question focused on her grandmother's wish for her ashes to be returned to her home, directly seeking her group members' views on this specific custom.

Excerpt 8 showcases Student 8's exploration of the rarity of publishing obituaries in newspapers in Taiwan. He raised ethical questions regarding obituaries, pondering their implications for the privacy of the deceased. While his approach to addressing multiple concerns—such as the appropriateness, necessity, and privacy issues related to death announcements in obituaries—was commendable, it suggests a need for further development in question formulation. Specifically, simplifying these complex issues into separate, more focused questions could enhance clarity. Moreover, his use of “Is it good or necessary?” might unconsciously guide respondents toward a certain response type, indicating an area for improvement in crafting more open-ended, neutral questions.

In Excerpt 9, Student 1 focused on the taboos surrounding ancestor worship and asked a question about her peers' experiences with tomb-sweeping practices within their families. During this particular literature circle discussion, the instructor was present with the group and had the opportunity to observe their verbal exchanges in

relevant discussions in class. After sharing the content of her writing, Student 1 spontaneously posed a question regarding any taboos on Tomb-Sweeping Day that her group members might have in their families. This question received immediate responses from her peers: one peer discussed the taboo of “avoiding patting someone on the shoulder from behind,” another mentioned “being deemed too young and small to be allowed to join family tomb-sweeping,” and yet another recounted similar food preparations on these occasions as mentioned by Student 1.

The spontaneous interactions observed by the instructor during this literature circle session within the classroom highlight the inherent flexibility of utilizing “Reading Circles Role Sheets” in classroom implementation of literature circles. Even though the students came to class prepared with preconceived topics and written insights, they still retained the freedom to adapt and introduce new content and questions during their face-to-face communication within the small groups. These writing tasks serve as the foundation for students’ informal oral presentations in literature circles in class, without restraining them to a rigid script for speaking. They were free to diverge from their written content, autonomously introducing fresh topics or perspectives. The researcher observed that this aspect of literature circles, as noted by numerous scholars, seemed to boost students’ confidence in speaking through prior written preparation and help foster a secure and engaging environment for lively and open-minded verbal exchanges among peers in class.

In Excerpt 10, Student 9, a Malaysian female, focused on attitudes toward death, contrasting the open-minded approach of the character Posey, Charles’s mother from American culture, with that prevalent in Malaysia. She included observations on obituaries in the margins of her worksheet (refer to Appendix 2), pointing out notable differences in obituary practices between Taiwanese and Malaysian cultures.

After formulating two sets of questions, Student 9 later documented her group members’ responses during the class discussions on her worksheet, using a different color to distinguish these additions from her original writing. This student’s documentation stood as concrete evidence of the cross-cultural dialogue that unfolded in the literature circle, illustrating the dynamic exchange of personal and cultural experiences among students from diverse backgrounds. Particularly, Student 9’s question about funeral preferences led the group to contemplate the contemporary challenges associated with funeral customs and potential solutions.

These discussions, sparked by Student 9’s initial cultural insights, encouraged her

peers to share their personal experiences and reflections on the cultural issues they were discussing in the literature circle, resulting in various interpretations and understandings of the same text. This aligns with Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory, which emphasizes the critical role of interpersonal interactions and collaborative engagement in fostering cognitive development and learning. By fostering an interactive, cohesive classroom community, literature circles seem to provide ample opportunities for students to generate innovative ideas through authentic, vibrant, and open-minded communication about the shared reading.

In Excerpt 11, Student 10 adopted the role of Connector, focusing her narrative on the emotional impact and personal reflections prompted by the loss of a beloved family member, rather than the specifics of funeral rituals. Her narrative provided a rich, detailed account of her late aunt's personality and deeds, her relationship with her aunt, her initial response to her aunt's death, and the ensuing realization of her aunt's lasting influence on her life. While the Connector role did not necessitate the formulation of relevant questions, Student 10 took the initiative to pose a question at the end of her narrative. This question encouraged her peers to share their personal experiences with funerals, if any. According to the instructor's classroom observations, prompted by Student 10's touching account and her question, her peers were engaged in heartfelt discussions in the literature circle, demonstrating the transformative power of genuine social interactions in this pedagogical model. This instance seems to exemplify how literature circles, supported by Vygotsky's sociocultural theory and Rosenblatt's Reader Response Theory, may enable students to bring their unique personal experiences to collective, sociocultural discussions, thereby deepening the collective interpretation of the shared text.

The writings of these ten students, displayed in Tables 1 and 2, reveal various degrees of grammatical inaccuracies and imprecision in vocabulary use. To address these issues in the course, the instructor carefully reviewed and corrected the students' written assignments before returning them to students, guiding them toward grammatically correct and appropriate expressions. Regarding the errors that students might make during their oral interactions with their peers in literature circles, the instructor opted to offer hints of English keywords or subtly rephrased statements to model correct language use, facilitating students' internalization of these expressions. This scaffolding method helped correct the errors without demoralizing or frustrating the students who made them.

This approach aligned with Jeng-yih Tim Hsu's (2004) findings on the efficacy of literature circles on achieving Vygotsky's "zone of proximal development": "True learning is believed to occur on a social level when content becomes meaningfully and personally relevant and when a learner interacts with a more experienced mentor who leads the learner through scaffolded information to a level of increased understanding. The true collaboration has been demonstrated in literature circles such as students-initiated inquiry, choices, self-direction, and mutual interdependence" (Hsu 4). When the instructor was assisting a certain struggling student in expressing their ideas through scaffolding in a literature circle, other present group members would witness the whole process. This was deliberately done so that the instructor's scaffolding strategy could serve as a model to encourage other more proficient students to imitate and adopt the same method in helping their group members with lower proficiency levels. In such an environment of mutual support and interdependence, discussions may become more autonomous and self-directed, progressing effectively even without the instructor's guidance.

Lastly, an analysis of the students' question-formulation skills based on their writings reveals a need for improving their ability to craft open-ended questions that stimulate group discussions. Among the 11 excerpts, only three sets of questions (from Excerpts 6, 9, and 10) were truly open-ended, which may help promote deeper engagement and discussion among peers in literature circles. The prevalence of close-ended questions, which typically elicited brief or binary responses, suggests a lack of training in formulating questions that foster critical thinking and lively dialogue. Addressing this gap would be essential for enhancing the effectiveness of literature circles and creating a more engaging and reflective learning environment.

## **5.2 How Literature Circles May Enhance Students' Learning Motivation**

To observe the potential impact of literature circles on students' learning motivation and their confidence in communication, the researcher analyzed the data from students' verbal feedback collected at the conclusion of the course in this preliminary study. In addition to the official teaching evaluation system conducted by the university, the researcher also designed a customized online Google survey form specifically to gather students' feedback on the teaching methods, activities, and materials adopted in this course. The students' verbal feedback was categorized into two sources: I. Responses from the online Google survey developed by the instructor,

and II. Input from the university's official teaching evaluation system. Both sources are detailed in Appendix 3, with relevant student comments underlined for emphasis.

Key observations made by the students seem to suggest the potential of literature circles to help boost their enthusiasm for writing, speaking, and participating in classroom activities. These observations include:

- 1) Feedback I.2 highlights the boundless learning effects and meaningful nature of such a teaching model.
- 2) Feedback II.4 attests to the class's undeniable role in improving English proficiency and facilitating discussions about personal relationships and life perspectives.
- 3) Feedback II.5 reflects a shift in attitude towards English, with a student who initially disliked the language growing interested because of the course.
- 4) Finally, Feedback II.8 praises the inspirational quality of the books discussed, emphasizing their value in contemplating life's direction.

These reflections from students may suggest the potential of literature circles in stimulating their motivation to learn and engage, possibly affecting students' attitudes toward learning English.

The rationale behind integrating literature circles into the curriculum was to engage students in authentic tasks that resonate with Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) principles, emphasizing meaningful use of language for real-life communication. In this context, when students prepared their literature circle role sheets outside the classroom, they understood these tasks were not merely for teacher evaluation but served as a preparatory step for their oral presentations to peers within the literature circles in class. This anticipation of sharing with a defined audience—their literature circle peers—may transform the writing task, imbuing it with purpose and relevance, thus mitigating the ennui and perceived pointlessness often linked to conventional writing assignments.

The challenge of writing in a non-native language is daunting. Without perceiving the value behind assigned writing tasks, ESL writing can become an onerous burden for students. Conversely, when tasked with expressing their thoughts, feelings, and insights in English—prompted by an English novel which addresses themes pertinent to their lives—students may be more inclined to make the best use of their current level of English proficiency to complete the assigned writing task. Knowing their efforts would culminate in an opportunity to share and connect with their peers in class helps create

a sense of anticipation and motivation. This eagerness to share one's thoughts with peers may mitigate the challenges of ESL writing, potentially giving students a sense of accomplishment after completing these authentic tasks.

Drawing from years of implementing literature circles in college English courses, the researcher observed that selecting reading materials that touch on universal themes appealing to the majority of students can amplify the benefits of the literature circles. When students can relate to the content, they are more easily inspired to contribute in both written and oral forms. Furthermore, such relevance to one's life experiences can spark vibrant discussions, empathy, inspiration, and even debates within literature circles, thereby enhancing the dynamic and depth of group interactions in class. Consequently, students not only may become more engaged in discussions, experiencing greater satisfaction and a sense of achievement, but also may improve their oral communication skills. Over time, this willing practice can potentially lead to advancements in students' pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, intonation, and overall fluency, affirming the long-term benefits of literature circles in language learning.

## **5.2 How Literature Circles May Enhance Students' Self-Confidence in Communication**

The verbal feedback from students on this course in this preliminary study suggests the potential impact of literature circles in bolstering their self-confidence in communication. One student noted the camaraderie and expressiveness within their group, enhancing their class experience (I.1 in Appendix 3). Another student highlighted the kindness among peers, fostering a supportive atmosphere (I.5). The creation of a friendly English learning environment, where students could practice English and share life experiences, was greatly appreciated, with one student expressing gratitude for the opportunity to learn in such a setting (II.6).

The encouragement from the instructor to express ideas boldly throughout the semester was a recurrent theme (I.7, I.8). This support extended to all students, including those hesitant in speaking, with the instructor showing patience and encouragement for everyone to voice their thoughts (II.1). The thought-provoking nature of the instructor's questions was credited with encouraging students to think and articulate their ideas in English, thereby reducing their apprehension about using the language (II.2).

Students also appreciated the response and assistance received when they

struggled to express themselves, highlighting the course's interactive and supportive nature (II.3). One student remarked on the shift in their attitude towards English, from disinterest to engagement and a newfound confidence in speaking (II.5). The course provided ample opportunities for English speaking practice, which was seen as a significant benefit (II.6).

The improvements in English proficiency, attributed to reading, discussions, and presentations, were notably mentioned, indicating the course's effectiveness in enhancing language skills (II.7). Lastly, the instructor's respect for student opinions and adeptness in guiding discussions were praised, underscoring the positive learning environment created in the course (II.9).

Due to insufficient data triangulation in this preliminary study, the positive student feedback highlighted above may not convincingly validate how literature circles enhance students' self-confidence in English communication. The feedback from students offers only a glimpse into the potential benefits of literature circles in enhancing their self-confidence in language use. To substantiate stronger claims and conclusions, further research employing meticulously designed questionnaires, peer evaluations, and interviews is needed to collect relevant data from multiple sources. Despite the limitations of the current research scope and data collection methodology, the majority of student feedback still suggests the potential advantages of literature circles in fostering collaborative discussions and bolstering students' self-expression in English.

Notably, some students recounted feeling supported and encouraged by their peers and the instructor within the literature circles, especially when facing frustration or difficulty in expression. This feedback underscores the importance of creating a safe, comfortable classroom environment and a cohesive community. The instructor's role as a scaffold and model may be crucial in assisting students with lower confidence in their English skills. Within the safe and supportive environment, class discussions may become not only engaging and enjoyable but also a platform where students could be emboldened to communicate more freely in English.

While the scholarly literature extensively discusses the instructor's varied roles in facilitating literature circles in L1 or EFL settings, the discussion often overlooks the instructor's attitude towards managing these socially interactive small reading groups. Drawing on years of experience implementing literature circles in college-level English courses, the researcher observed that the instructor's attitude could be pivotal for the



success of these small groups, alongside the careful selection of reading materials. This insight suggests a potential direction for further research to understand how the instructor's demeanor and attitude toward implementing literature circles may influence the outcomes of this pedagogical model.

From the students' verbal feedback presented in Appendix 3, it seems to suggest that the sincerity of the instructor's feedback and comments on their writings was highly valued by the students. For instance, one student appreciated the heartfelt feedback provided by the teacher (I.4), while another noted the meticulous and careful feedback given for each written assignment (II.1). This approach to offering feedback on student writings was part of a broader pedagogical strategy: the instructor utilized the tool of literature circle role sheets as a conduit for authentic communication with the students. The instructor engaged with the students' written inputs—ranging from thoughts to questions and reflections—with empathy, genuine interest, and an open heart, effectively turning these exchanges into a written dialogue reminiscent of letter exchanges. This method may facilitate not only students' practice of written expression in the target language but also their preparation for informal oral presentations within the literature circles, embodying a model of interactive communication that the students could emulate in both written and oral forms.

Furthermore, some students found encouragement and solace in the personal stories and life experiences shared by the instructor (I.2, I.4, I.7). The narratives shared by the instructor, characterized by warmth and depth, seemed to provide encouragement and foster a healing atmosphere within the classroom. By sharing her own stories, the instructor demonstrated a form of sincere interaction that encouraged students to make personal connections during literature circle discussions, potentially enriching the discussions with genuine, open-minded exchanges built on mutual trust and respect.

This pedagogical approach reflects the instructor's overarching philosophy towards integrating literature circles in the classroom. Through small group discussions around a shared text, this teaching model offers a unique platform for students from diverse backgrounds to engage in meaningful dialogue with each other. Such authentic interpersonal communication is crucial in today's society, where misunderstandings and misconceptions may be common sources of conflict. Through open-minded dialogues about texts, students may be encouraged to explore sociocultural issues from varied perspectives, thereby fostering an appreciation for diversity and promoting cross-cultural understanding. Sharing and listening to personal stories within this context may

not only help enhance empathy and mutual respect but also celebrate the individuality of each participant, highlighting the importance of diverse viewpoints in enriching discussions about literature and the broader world.

### **Conclusion**

This preliminary study explores the potential benefits of incorporating literature circles into college-level EFL classrooms in Taiwan, focusing on their potential in fostering cross-cultural communication and improving students' motivation and self-confidence in communication. Through literature review of the theoretical foundations of literature circles and relevant research on the subject, the observations made in this study offer a glimpse into how this instructional model may help promote cross-cultural communication among students discussing two authentic novels in English in small groups of literature circles.

Owing to the limitations of the preliminary research design and data collection methods, the researcher could only rely on students' verbal feedback on the course to observe their potential perceptions of literature circles implemented in the course, and this teaching model's possible impact on students' motivation and self-confidence in English writing and speaking. These limitations present an opportunity for future research, suggesting the need for incorporating meticulously designed questionnaires, peer evaluations, and interviews as tools to further investigate the effectiveness of literature circles in boosting students' cross-cultural communication, motivation, and self-confidence in EFL learning.

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## Appendix 1: Reading circles role sheets

### READING CIRCLES ROLE SHEETS

*In Reading Circles, each student has their own role. The six roles are usually Discussion Leader, Summarizer, Connector, Word Master, Passage Person, Culture Collector. These role sheets will help you prepare for your Reading Circle discussions in the classroom.*

# Discussion Leader



STORY: \_\_\_\_\_

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

### The Discussion Leader's job is to . . .

- read the story twice, and prepare at least five general questions about it.
- ask one or two questions to start the Reading Circle discussion.
- make sure that everyone has a chance to speak and joins in the discussion.
- call on each member to present their prepared role information.
- guide the discussion and keep it going.

Usually the best discussion questions come from your own thoughts, feelings, and questions as you read. (What surprised you, made you smile, made you feel sad?) Write down your questions as soon as you have finished reading. It is best to use your own questions, but you can also use some of the ideas at the bottom of this page.

### MY QUESTIONS:

1 \_\_\_\_\_  
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### Other general ideas:

- Questions about the characters (*like / not like them, true to life / not true to life ...?*)
- Questions about the theme (*friendship, romance, parents/children, ghosts ...?*)
- Questions about the ending (*surprising, expected, liked it / did not like it ...?*)
- Questions about what will happen next. (These can also be used for a longer story.)

READING CIRCLES ROLE SHEETS

*In Reading Circles, each student has their own role. The six roles are usually Discussion Leader, Summarizer, Connector, Word Master, Passage Person, Culture Collector. These role sheets will help you prepare for your Reading Circle discussions in the classroom.*

# Summarizer



STORY: \_\_\_\_\_

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

### The Summarizer's job is to . . .

- read the story and make notes about the characters, events, and ideas.
- find the key points that everyone must know to understand and remember the story.
- retell the story in a short summary (one or two minutes) in your own words.
- talk about your summary to the group, using your writing to help you.

Your reading circle will find your summary very useful, because it will help to remind them of the plot and the characters in the story. You may need to read the story more than once to make a good summary, and you may need to repeat it to the group a second time.

### MY KEY POINTS:

Main events: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Characters: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

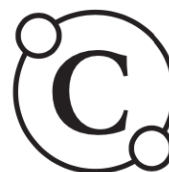
### MY SUMMARY:

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READING CIRCLES ROLE SHEETS

*In Reading Circles, each student has their own role. The six roles are usually Discussion Leader, Summarizer, Connector, Word Master, Passage Person, Culture Collector. These role sheets will help you prepare for your Reading Circle discussions in the classroom.*

# Connector



STORY: \_\_\_\_\_

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

### The Connector's job is to . . .

- read the story twice, and look for connections between the story and the world outside.
- make notes about at least two possible connections to your own experiences, or to the experiences of friends and family, or to real-life events.
- tell the group about the connections and ask for their comments or questions.
- ask the group if they can think of any connections themselves.

These questions will help you think about connections while you are reading.

**Events:** Has anything similar ever happened to you, or to someone you know? Does anything in the story remind you of events in the real world? For example, events you have read about in newspapers, or heard about on television news programmes.

**Characters:** Do any of them remind you of people you know? How? Why? Have you ever had the same thoughts or feelings as these characters have? Do you know anybody who thinks, feels, behaves like that?

### MY CONNECTIONS:

1 \_\_\_\_\_

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READING CIRCLES ROLE SHEETS

*In Reading Circles, each student has their own role. The six roles are usually Discussion Leader, Summarizer, Connector, Word Master, Passage Person, Culture Collector. These role sheets will help you prepare for your Reading Circle discussions in the classroom.*

# Word Master



STORY: \_\_\_\_\_

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

**The Word Master's job is to . . .**

- read the story, and look for words or short phrases that are new or difficult to understand, or that are important in the story.
- choose five words (only five) that you think are important for this story.
- explain the meanings of these five words in simple English to the group.
- tell the group why these words are important for understanding this story.

Your five words do not have to be new or unknown words. Look for words in the story that really stand out in some way. These may be words that are:

- repeated often
- used in an unusual way
- important to the meaning of the story

MY WORDS	MEANING OF THE WORD	REASON FOR CHOOSING THE WORD
_____	_____	_____
PAGE _____	_____	_____
LINE _____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
PAGE _____	_____	_____
LINE _____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
PAGE _____	_____	_____
LINE _____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
PAGE _____	_____	_____
LINE _____	_____	_____

READING CIRCLES ROLE SHEETS

*In Reading Circles, each student has their own role. The six roles are usually Discussion Leader, Summarizer, Connector, Word Master, Passage Person, Culture Collector. These role sheets will help you prepare for your Reading Circle discussions in the classroom.*

# Passage Person



STORY: \_\_\_\_\_

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

### The Passage Person's job is to . . .

- read the story, and find important, interesting, or difficult passages.
- make notes about at least three passages that are important for the plot, or that explain the characters, or that have very interesting or powerful language.
- read each passage to the group, or ask another group member to read it.
- ask the group one or two questions about each passage.

A passage is usually one paragraph, but sometimes it can be just one or two sentences, or perhaps a piece of dialogue. You might choose a passage to discuss because it is:

- important
- informative
- surprising
- funny
- confusing
- well-written

### MY PASSAGES:

PAGE \_\_\_\_\_ LINES \_\_\_\_\_

REASONS FOR CHOOSING THE PASSAGE

QUESTIONS ABOUT THE PASSAGE


PAGE \_\_\_\_\_ LINES \_\_\_\_\_

REASONS FOR CHOOSING THE PASSAGE

QUESTIONS ABOUT THE PASSAGE


PAGE \_\_\_\_\_ LINES \_\_\_\_\_

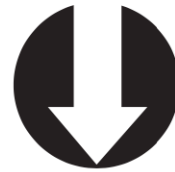
REASONS FOR CHOOSING THE PASSAGE

QUESTIONS ABOUT THE PASSAGE


READING CIRCLES ROLE SHEETS

*In Reading Circles, each student has their own role. The six roles are usually Discussion Leader, Summarizer, Connector, Word Master, Passage Person, Culture Collector. These role sheets will help you prepare for your Reading Circle discussions in the classroom.*

# Culture Collector



STORY: \_\_\_\_\_

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

### The Culture Collector's job is to . . .

- read the story, and look for both differences and similarities between your own culture and the culture found in the story.
- make notes about two or three passages that show these cultural points.
- read each passage to the group, or ask another group member to read it.
- ask the group some questions about these, and any other cultural points in the story.

Here are some questions to help you think about cultural differences.

**Theme:** What is the theme of this story (for example, getting married, meeting a ghost, murder, unhappy children)? Is this an important theme in your own culture? Do people think about this theme in the same way, or differently?

**People:** Do characters in this story say or do things that people never say or do in your culture? Do they say or do some things that everybody in the world says or does?

### MY CULTURAL COLLECTION (differences and similarities):

1 PAGE \_\_\_\_\_ LINES \_\_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2 PAGE \_\_\_\_\_ LINES \_\_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### MY CULTURAL QUESTIONS:

1 \_\_\_\_\_  
2 \_\_\_\_\_  
3 \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix 2: Student 9's Writing

READING CIRCLES ROLE SHEETS

In Reading Circles, each student has their own role. The six roles are usually Discussion Leader, Summarizer, Connector, Word Master, Passage Person, Culture Collector. These role sheets will help you prepare for your Reading Circle discussions in the classroom.

# Culture Collector



STORY: For One More Day, Part 6  
 NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

### The Culture Collector's job is to . . .

- read the story, and look for both **differences** and **similarities** between your own culture and the culture found in the story.
- make notes about **two or three passages** that show these cultural points.
- read each passage to the group, or ask another group member to read it.
- ask the group some questions about these, and any other cultural points in the story.

Here are some questions to help you think about cultural differences.

**Theme:** What is the theme of this story (for example, getting married, meeting a ghost, murder, unhappy children)? Is this an **important theme** in your own culture? Do people think about this theme in the same way, or differently?

**People:** Do characters in this story say or do things that **people never say or do in your culture?** Do they say or do some things that everybody in the world says or does?

### MY CULTURAL COLLECTION (differences and similarities):

*Addition:*  
 In Malaysia, we got obituary which usually post on newspapers to inform people. It is because sometimes the dead's family cannot inform every friend. This also a rituals to commemorate and say goodbye to our loves. But in Taiwan, people will more use to give obituary to people that come to the funerals. **people are more used to giving**

- PAGE** 177 **LINES** 3-6 : Every culture has its ways to commemorate the dead. In my experience, although people in my culture will buy their cemetery as a preparation, they usually don't like to discuss death and see it as a taboo or ominous thing. In this part, I think Posey was very open-minded to 'death' because she requested a Jewish funeral for her own, even though she was a French Protestant. She was also considerate of others as she felt it could help people accept her death **more easily** and hope they can remember her spirit. But I think nowadays more and more people advocate being brave to face death and avoid regrets.
- PAGE** 166-167 **LINES** 23-4 : In the plot of Chick met the famous hitler, Willie Jackson, we can observe that people usually pretend they are fine in life when they are in front of some famous person. They pretend they are having some good opportunities and development because they don't want to let others look down on them. We also can see some situations in movies when people went to school reunions, they will act like they worked at some big company, wear beautiful clothes, and drive expensive cars. Maybe we can see sometimes people are afraid to lose face even they are from different cultures.

Yes, people who lack confidence would pretend they are better than they really are.

### MY CULTURAL QUESTIONS:

- What are the burial rituals in your own culture? Have you ever attended a funeral in your culture / different cultures?
- Have you ever thought about your funeral? What would it be like? *my group member shared that she was shocked in her grandfather's funerals because it was very grand and got several electric flower cars.*
- Have you ever faced these situations? What would you do? *my group member said she hope her funeral can be made eco-friendly because in her tradition al culture people used to burn many paper money or stuff which they think it can waiting the dead in another world.*

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That's a good way to look at such inquiries from relatives, even though some uncles or aunts just love gossip and comparison.

Note: In this writing, Student 9 used different colors to distinguish her original writing from added passages after the literature circle discussions in class. The instructor gave feedback by correcting grammar and vocabulary usage and by offering comments on the issues the student discussed.

**Appendix 3: Teaching Feedback from the Students** (the comments relevant to the issues discussed in this paper have been underlined for emphasis)

<b>Teaching Feedback from the Students</b>	
<b>I. Students' Verbal Feedback from Online Google Survey Form Designed by the Instructor</b>	
1	Thank you for preparing such a great course. It's really worth studying! Furthermore, <u>our group members are all very kind and talkative, which makes me enjoy this class more.</u>
2	真的很喜歡老師的課，老師真的事前準備了非常非常多，所以才能讓學生有很棒的課程體驗。 <u>這學期的兩本書我都很喜歡，每次閱讀完都有很大的空間去反思自己，回推人生的價值。</u> 課程開始前的 warm-up 是一個很棒的活動，課程中間的 voc game 更是讓我很喜歡，特別是利用 Quizlet 的方式讓我非常有效的學習到很多單字，老師您真的好棒，是我遇過最認真的老師，而且帶給學生的學習效果非常無限。我一定會推薦我的同學跟朋友們來上您的課， <u>這樣的英文課才是非常有意義的</u> ，謝謝您！若未來您有開別的課的話我一定會報到！這學期辛苦您了，也感覺得出來 <u>老師人生經歷很多，卻每次都用很溫暖的故事來鼓勵我們</u> ，讓早九的課變得很幸福！每次都拚死拚活得起床上您的課。再次說聲謝謝您！真的獲益良多！
3	謝謝老師這學期的教導！每次上課都能感受到老師真的很認真備課，盡心盡力地為我們準備了很多內容。
4	另外從 <u>老師自身故事的分享</u> 可以感覺到老師是一個很有深度、很溫暖的人，常常很佩服老師，覺得您是一位很值得尊敬的人； <u>老師也總是很真心地給予我們回饋</u> ，真的謝謝老師願意與我們分享這些！
5	還有好多好多，不知道該怎麼一一細數，總而言之我覺得老師是一個超棒的人， <u>這堂課也是一個超讚的課，同儕們也都很好</u> ，完全不後悔選這堂課，還覺得很可惜之後不能再上了，未來如果有機會，希望能再上老師的其他課程！
6	真的很感謝老師的教導， <u>不管是英文練習還是大家的生活經驗分享，都學習到很多東西!</u> 很感謝老師 <u>打造一個這麼棒、友善的英文環境</u> ，非常感謝您!

- 7 整堂課上得很開心！有很多有的沒的小遊戲(？)可以跟同學練習說英文，課程中也有很多很厲害的同學，整體來說很有趣，每次上完課都覺得好療癒！
- 8 謝謝老師在這個學期總是鼓勵大家勇敢發表自己的想法，也準備了非常非常多很用心的教材的互動，真的超開心我有修這門課~~~~

## II. Students' Verbal Feedback from University Official Teaching Evaluation System

- 1 老師人很溫和可愛，每週都有不一樣的上課活動，是一堂很充實的英語課！老師也很鼓勵同學開口發言和互相交流（如果是口說不太好的同學，老師也會很耐心的等你想好說出口~）而且每次的作業老師也都會很認真的一一給予回饋和評語，真的是很認真的好老師！！謝謝，辛苦了~
- 2 每次老師的提問都相當發人深省，鼓勵學生思考與表達，讓我變得較不害怕使用英語表達
- 3 老師很溫柔，即使講得不好或不知道該如何表達，都會給予回應以及幫助，也會補充很多勵志的英文演講及文章，而修習這門課的同學們也都很樂意給予互動，很感謝有一個很棒的英文口說環境！然後覺得兩本小說的主題有點類似，覺得可以將其中一本替換成其他主題的英文小說。
- 4 因為我的系所較少機會接觸英文，所以想要選修這堂課。這堂課無疑是能增進英文能力的，但是意外之喜是，我覺得，這堂課能幫助我們解決一些心靈層面的問題~因為課堂要求閱讀的兩本小說 Five people meet in heaven 和 For one more day 都是和人生哲理，尤其家庭有關的，老師設計的上課流程例如：討論問題、學習單等等……讓大家可以討論自己與家人之間的關係、還有自己對人生的想法，真的是一堂很棒的課！
- 5 老師你超棒！！100分，我本來很討厭英文，因為這堂課開始有興趣，也比較敢講了
- 6 辛苦老師一學期的教導！修了這門課讓自己多了很多練習英語口語的機會，老師挑的兩本指定閱讀也很有啟發性！一周上課一周小組討論的設計也很恰當，不會過於負擔！

- 7 老師人超好，從上課中老師分享的言論跟看法中，可以感受到老師是一個善良、溫暖的人！另外老師也都很認真備課，課程內容豐富、有趣，講課也很清楚，作業也都會回覆老師真心的回饋。而且這堂課看的兩本小說個人覺得都很好看也很有意義！很感謝老師讓我有這個機會閱讀兩本這麼好的小說，也因為閱讀以及課堂上的討論、發表，讓我的英文能力進步很多。小小的建議是小說是分部份閱讀的，有幾次要讀的頁數好像有特別多，可能剛好遇上當週其他課業負擔較重就會讀不完...
- 8 這才是大學該有的英文課，收穫實在太多了。這學期討論的兩本書籍都非常具有啟發性，很值得思考自己的人生定位。我很喜歡老師在上課前準備的暖身活動（例如：賓果、依故事情節排序、boardgame 等）這些都增強了我的學習興趣，而且這種模式非常好的能帶入課程主題，又不缺乏趣味，真的真的很棒，是我人生中遇過最用心的老師。老師也利用了很多自己的經歷以及故事來鼓勵我們，每次都覺得非常暖心，老師感覺經歷了非常多風雨，但是卻願意將這些作為鼓勵我們、支持我們的動力，真的好喜歡！很榮幸能修到這堂課。
- 9 我愛老師！很尊重學生意見又很會引導人，上完這堂課真的學到好多好多，謝謝老師這個學期的教導！