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Difficulties in Studying and Teaching Literature Survey Courses

in English Departments in Taiwan

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Difficulties in Studying and Teaching Literature Survey Courses

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by

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To

My dear brother Chi-tsung,

who is now in Heaven,

and who has always inspired me to be a good person

this dissertation

is dedicated.

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Difficulties in Studying and Teaching Literature Survey Courses

in English Departments in Taiwan

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This multi-case (two-case) interpretive study investigated the difficulties in studying and teaching the required survey courses of British and American literature in traditional English departments in Taiwan as well as what the students and instructors did when encountering these difficulties. Conducted in two traditional English departments in Taiwan, this study had two types of participants: two instructors with different nationalities offering British literature and American literature respectively and the upper-division English majors enrolled in the two classes. The focal student groups from the two classes were volunteers. For cross-validation of the findings, the following data sources were included: classroom observation for eight weeks, questionnaire (mainly to

guide the interviews), semi-structured text-based and in-depth interviews with focal groups, and in-depth interviews with the instructors. Along with classroom observation narratives and analytic memos, interview data with these informants were transcribed and analyzed.

The findings of this study support prior scholarly discussions concerning the fact that students majoring in a foreign language lack target language proficiency and target cultural understanding, and thus the ability to understand the assigned literary texts. Although the masterworks used in these courses were considered to be difficult, it was found that both teacher influence and learner characteristics were even more significant in shaping how difficulties were experienced in studying and teaching literature written in English as a foreign language. Institutional or instructional factors such as curriculum requirements, course requirements, and course objectives were found directly to influence students' difficulties and successes. Further, the findings of this study pointed to the importance of motivation-related issues, as shown in individual interest, aptitude, and motivational orientation, but seldom mentioned in previous scholarly arguments or research data. As a result, instructors encountered difficulties given in their teaching that characteristics of the learners could not be changed in the short term and those of choice of teaching materials were more or less fixed by the curriculum. Based on these findings, suggestions are made for curriculum designers and instructors teaching foreign literature as well as for future research.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Literature constitutes an important component of the core curriculum in foreign language (hereafter FL) departments, and issues surrounding the teaching of literature in the FL context have been of interest to many for decades. In Taiwan, English has been the major foreign language taught and literature written in English has been the most commonly studied foreign literature, so much so that English departments there provide a fertile ground for investigations of FL education in the context of an EFL situation.   In the following sections, I will begin with a brief statement of the problem in the case of Taiwan, followed by a general discussion of issues related to the teaching of foreign literature. Then, I will provide the rationale and significance for my study and conclude with a statement of the research goals and questions that guided this study.

Statement of the Problem

In traditional English departments in Taiwan[1], the Western literature course, the survey course of English literature, and the survey course of American literature by "representative writers" have constituted most of the required core literature curriculum for decades. With additional elective literature courses, required literature courses occupy

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[1] So far, two types of English departments have co-existed in Taiwan—the traditional English departments and the more recent English departments with a focus on business, international trade, etc.   The latter is usually available in higher education in the vocational system—in the institutes of technology.   In the proposed study, the former, traditional type is chosen because canon literature has a significant place in its curricula. Some traditional English departments require the students to take at least one other foreign language in addition to English out of available choices like French, German, Japanese, Spanish, etc. Though such departments are usually called the department of foreign languages and literatures, English is the primary focus among the foreign languages, and British and American literatures are the core of the literature component. In this study, "English Department" is used as an umbrella term to include both "English departments" and "department of foreign languages and literatures" in the traditional type.

a high proportion of credits[2] in comparison to other components in the whole curriculum in English.

Several reasons might explain why masterworks presenting authors in chronological order[3] have for years constituted such a major component of the core required readings for university English majors in Taiwan. First, anthologies containing various texts offer the convenience of text selection and learner "socialization." On the departmental web pages, for example, what is commonly expressed is the intention to initiate learners into the cultures of English-speaking countries through survey courses of literature. In addition, as I found in my practice interview in summer 2002, some literature teachers in English departments teach to prepare students who would go on to graduate study in literature. Taiwan has entrance examinations for university graduates who plan to continue graduate studies of English/American/Foreign literatures, so those texts become a benchmark for instruction and testing. Masterworks are difficult to avoid in the curriculum at present, and an intriguing fact is that, even though they are generally perceived as difficult, there are still plenty of learners who want to continue studying and learning about them. This indicates that some FL learners' tolerance for the many difficulties encountered in survey courses using canonical texts is higher than others'.

However, many students experience extreme frustration and difficulty in these courses, perhaps in part because the courses do not necessarily take into account their

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[2] Please refer to "Appendix A." The minimum numbers of credits that students required to take before graduation vary from campus to campus, ranging from 120 to more than 140. The components in English departments usually include: (1) listening, oral, reading and writing skills courses, (2) literature, (3) linguistics and language teaching, (4) other general courses required by the university, and (5) second foreign language(s) for the department of foreign languages and literatures.

[3] So far, based on information on the various English departmental web pages, some universities such as Taiwan University, Cheng-Chih University, and Central University do not reverse the chronological order, but the English majors there are not required to take the courses in chronological order.

minimal background in literature. Before entering English departments, students usually have not had much experience reading authentic literature written in English. However, besides taking "Approaches to Literature," and "An Introduction to Western Literature" when in the lower-division, in the following years before graduation, English majors are expected to take, in addition to other elective literature courses, survey English and American literature courses, in which anthologies such as *Norton Anthology of English Literature* and *Norton Anthology of American Literature* are used as the major texts. "Literature comes as a great shock," as Nash and Yuan (1992/1993), who taught in the English department of a Catholic Taiwanese university, put it so well.

Those anthologies can be difficult for English-speaking novice undergraduate English majors when they are yet to be socialized into cultural literacy, literary knowledge, and conventions associated with the study of literature. For EFL majors in Taiwan, these texts impose an extremely heavy demand culturally, conceptually, and linguistically. With little preparation in the lower-division years, students are expected to be able to read and analyze the texts and to express opinions based on the literary texts when they are in the upper-division, an expectation that seems far from realistic.

One of the major problems is that the students' previous learning background is completely ignored. Before entering English departments, besides a lack of training in the study of literature written in English, most Taiwanese students' exposure to English reading and writing is restricted to the study of lexical and syntactic features of short passages. Chu (1999), while examining senior high school English textbooks published by the National Compilation Bureau in Taiwan, reported that textbooks focus mainly on "word and sentence level meanings" with little attention to meaning making or to

students' knowledge (p. 46); reading is not conducted as an interactive process. Earlier, other scholars in Taiwan (Hung, 1988; Chi & Chern, 1988) pointed out that intensive reading is what students in senior high schools experience; extensive reading is yet to be actualized. In fact, the "Freshman English" course tends to be intensive in nature, too. The freshman English class is often an extension of the senior high school English class, with more texts for close reading.   Students in Taiwan, regardless of their majors, would seem to need to be guided and encouraged to have substantial opportunities to read extensively, and yet rarely get such encouragement. Second language acquisition researcher Krashen (1993) claimed: " . . . reading is the only way, the only way we become good readers, develop . . . an adequate vocabulary, advanced grammar, and the only way we become good spellers" (p. 23; quoted from Day & Bamford, 1998, p. 38).

As a result, Taiwanese English majors often lack the proficiency to read literature written in English.   In fact, this practice goes against recommendations from Krashen (1985), who clearly stated that foreign-language programs introduce authentic literature before students are competent enough in the target language. It does not take much imagination to understand the difficulties that the learners confront in those literature courses. Their lack of understanding of and response to canonical texts is not surprising. In "Exploring Literary Responses in an EFL Classroom," Liaw (2001) looked into the responses of some Taiwanese first-year non-English majors to five American short stories, and she argued that literature could serve as a vehicle for cultural understanding. However, she pointed out that personal relevance and level of difficulty needed to be taken into account in text selection. In terms of level of difficulty, the texts from *Norton Anthologies* would seem to be less than appropriate for most Taiwanese university

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English majors for foreign cultural understanding.

In sum, texts from *Norton Anthologies* have been commonly chosen as teaching materials in survey courses and occupy a large chunk of the credits in the curricula of Taiwanese English departments. Yet, most students are likely to have difficulty studying them. Nevertheless, empirical studies explicitly focusing on issues concerning canonical literature study and instruction in Taiwan are almost non-existent. If the teaching of literature is to serve an important function in the curricula of English departments and to attract and influence the students, it seemed important to examine exactly what difficulties English majors experience when enrolled in survey literature courses and what they do when they encounter these difficulties. In addition, the views of the instructors teaching such courses also seemed critical in fostering insights into the issues associated with the difficulty of foreign literature education in traditional English departments in Taiwan.

It is not just Taiwanese learners of English who experience these difficulties. The issues regarding literature study and instruction exist in university foreign language departments in the US, in ESL and other EFL situations. Therefore, in the section below, I first review, synthesize, and comment on the most common issues and problems raised in foreign language instruction of literature in general. Then, I describe the few empirical studies, e.g. the Davis, et al. (1992) study, that were direct inspirations for my study.

Issues Related with Foreign Literature Education

In 1967, Knapton and Evans confessed that to satisfactorily answer the question why teach literature at all is difficult, and yet the answer can help elucidate the purpose of teaching literature, which in turn will shape a rationale for "what texts to be selected, in

what order, with what form of presentation, with what activities," etc. (p. 3). More than two decades after Knapton and Evans' observation, in 1991, Benseler maintained that upper-division literature courses in the U. S. were heavily based on "tradition and assumption" (p. 194) instead of explicit definitions of the curriculum and goals for students to achieve.

In FL literature education, issues regarding the difficulty of reading authentic literary texts have been acknowledged. First and foremost, the division between language and literature in FL departments is commonly mentioned. The Schulz (1981) depiction vividly reflects this problem: The lower-division foreign language learners' training is a form of "spoon feeding," and after that, learners are usually "started without mercy on the chronological study of the literary masterworks of the target language in a survey course" (p. 43). Taiwanese English majors' experiences of canon literature study, as I have mentioned earlier, are similar. In undergraduate literature courses, the reading tasks for learners are exactly what Swaffar (2001) was labeling when she described the challenge that German majors in the U.S. confront —"a quantum cognitive leap," involving students struggling with texts about "culturally unfamiliar" verbal systems (p. 233). It follows that in literature teaching, there is no "sequencing" (Parkinson & Thomas, 2000) in accordance with Krashen's ideas (1985). Learners are therefore often thrown into "the deep end" and expected "to acquire the mysterious intellectual qualities" (Parkinson & Thomas, 2000, p. 13) revealed in literary texts in the foreign language.

FL majors' struggle is related to a second issue: The neglect of students' backgrounds and proficiencies in the objectives of literature courses. Commenting on the students' lack of proficiency in the target language, Arens and Swaffar (1987) remarked

on how most colleges and universities assume that foreign language learners' language competency has reached a threshold without explicitly determining whether this assumption is warranted. Moreover, students also often lack foreign cultural literacy to deal with foreign literary texts. FL majors are being asked to deal with literary texts when their repertoire is in fact too little to allow them to do so successfully.

Thus, in the process of learning, the role, abilities, background, and goals of the student are ignored. In FL departments, among other things, the predominance of teacher- and text-centered approaches such as the lecture format has been a persistent problem (Harper, 1988; Parkinson & Thomas, 2000). What causes the lecture mode? Parkinson and Thomas (2000) discussed the possible reason in terms of a "likely imbalance of knowledge and imbalance of power between teacher and learner" in FL literature courses (p.12). In contrast to the teacher, who possesses information and a far more solid knowledge base in the target language and culture, world knowledge, literary knowledge and conventions, the learner lacks such a repertoire to help with understanding and interpreting the text and is thus likely to be forced to rely on the teacher's lectures.

In fact, this transmission model of instruction is not specific to FL; it also exists in L1 context, although the reason behind it can be different. For example, in Britain, Jennings (1995) traced her development from being a mature student to teaching adult classes: "Literature as a discipline fosters its own sense of discipleship"; literature replaces the sacred word of the Bible as "the cornerstone of civilization" (pp. 14-15). For Jennings, literature instructors play the role of pastors, transmitting content knowledge through lectures. Whether "the sense of discipleship" causes the lecture mode is not my major focus of attention; my understanding is that when canonical texts, masterworks, or

the classics are under discussion, the lecture mode is difficult to avoid. Among other factors, the lack of literary knowledge and cultural literacy on the part of students will lead to lectures as a classroom activity.

Thus, literary texts restrict the role of the students in the process of learning and pedagogy as well. The unfamiliar cultural allusions and references in authentic literary texts make it difficult for L2 learners to read beyond the literal (Swaffar et al., 1991) and a "superficial reading" often results (Swaffar, 1992). The "high" culture represented in these texts further places obstacles in reading caused by learners' limited target language competence. Therefore, constructing meaning from literary texts tends to be a true challenge for L2 readers.

What is obvious in the aforementioned is the difficulty in literature study and teaching. FL learners' inability to read and respond to the texts is a serious issue. In the Spanish as a foreign language context, Mujica (1997) observed that the students' "lack of linguistic and cultural proficiency" (p. 211) is a special issue that instructors of foreign literature must confront. Indeed, other scholars have also acknowledged that FL literacy and related issues must be addressed in the curriculum (e. g. Schulz, 1981; Benseler, 1991, Davis et al., 1992).

Last but not least, a frequently mentioned problem is the overemphasis on critical opinion in these literature courses. Widdowson (1985) claimed that the task of literature teaching is to cultivate students' "ability to perform literature as readers" (p. 194). So much focus has been placed on criticism that Widdowson worried that critical comments instead of the literary texts themselves are the "immediate source of reference and inspiration" (p. 185). The tendency to value criticism occurs also in the L1 situation, at

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least in the U. S. (e.g. Mujica, 1997); yet, in the FL context, according to Widdowson (1985), the result is too often "a pseudo-competence in which students learn to manipulate . . . critical terms without understanding, and to repeat for examination purposes the recording of received opinions" (quoted from Maley, 1989, p. 11).

One interpretation of Widdowson is that because of their reliance on critical comments, FL majors by-pass the literary texts themselves. However, it is an important question whether L2 learners who are not efficient readers of authentic literary texts can be competent readers of critical comments. After all, acquiring this "pseudo-competence" requires that L2 readers be able to read the critical comments without too much difficulty or have the intention to read them, a task that can be challenging when they do not possess appropriate L2 language proficiency. L2 language proficiency can be a prerequisite not only for the study of literature but also for the study of literary criticism. There are several questions that remain to be investigated: Do most FL learners, e.g. the more experienced upper-division Taiwanese university English majors, use critical comments frequently when studying canon literature? If they do, how do criticism affect their canon literature study? Do they, to borrow Widdowson's term, acquire a "pseudo-competence" without reading or understanding the literary texts themselves? One related question to ask is: What types of critical comments can be more readable or useful for their study? After all, if properly used, literary criticism can provide good references for literature studies and in itself is not blameworthy.

With all the difficulties surrounding the study and teaching of FL literature, not much empirical research is available to guide decisions one might need to make. Among the few empirical studies, the Davis et al. (1992) study examined issues in literature

instruction, using questionnaires to investigate the attitudes of American undergraduate French and Spanish majors toward the study of foreign literature as well as factors affecting their opinions. Using the drop in enrollment as an indirect indicator of student feeling, the researchers traced the possible reasons for the drop and their potential impact on undergraduate students toward the study of FL literary texts: (1) "the gap separating the language and literature components," (2) "the mismatch between students' objectives and language department curricula," (3) "the lack of appeal of traditional teaching and learning styles to students," and (4) "students' inability to respond to culturally charged texts" (p. 321). Davis et al. called for "the need for continuing investigation of students' reading, both inside and outside the classroom" (p. 326).

Rationale and Significance of the Study

As discussed above, critical issues have existed in foreign literature education in the United States and elsewhere for decades, and despite the acknowledgement of the various aspects surrounding the difficulty in literature study, few empirical studies have focused on issues regarding literature instruction. What is available are common solutions coming from the suggestions made for FL literature instruction. A brief account is provided as follows.

The first type of suggestion is the integration of literature and language. Among others, Hoffman and James (1986), Mckay (1982), Spack (1985), Oster (1989), Lazar (1993), and Sell (1995) all promoted this concept of language through literature for ESL or FL learners. Hoffman and James called for "the integration of foreign language and literature teaching at all levels of the college curriculum," a proposal that entails a drastic change, as a language through literature course is different from a literature course. Along

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this line is a suggestion of reducing the conventional distinction between the literary and non-literary (e.g. Moody, 1983) or blurring the boundaries between the two approaches to treat literature difficulty in the classroom —"literature as resource" and "literature as object of study" (Parkinson & Thomas, 2000). The concept of blurring does not call for a drastic change but instead emphasizes an exchange of ideas between the two approaches.

Indeed, some language through literature courses can be easier to begin with. However, in the English departments in Taiwan, language and literature are not integrated at all; that is, literature is treated as an "object of study."　In the very recent years, Taiwanese scholars have been promoting the concept of using literature in the English as a foreign language classroom with the communicative approach in mind. This recent trend of "literature as resource," however, is for secondary school students (e.g. Liaw, 1998) and for non-English majors at the college/university level (e.g. Kuo, 1997; Hsieh, 1998; Liaw, 2001). When this language through literature approach is mentioned, English majors are usually excluded. To my knowledge, only one Taiwanese teacher researcher has promoted this approach for English majors. In a very recent study, Chen (2001) chose *Cricket*, a children's magazine of literature and art as the reading materials and writing models for a public university freshmen composition/creative writing course for English majors in Taiwan.

The second type of pedagogical proposals is to prepare students for reading serious literature through reading popular literature. Among many scholars, Swaffar et al's (1991) notion of cultural reading and their procedural model strike me to be very feasible for coping with foreign language learners' problems of reading and writing about literary texts.　In this approach, authentic texts function as "specific contexts" for "case studies

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of fundamental human relationships, needs, and social institutions" (Swaffar, 1992, pp. 238-241). Students learn to find the messages of a literary text for cultural literacy (Swaffar et al., 1991); cultural literacy, not writing like critics, is the pedagogical focus. Along with a focus on both reading and writing, the L2 learners are supposed to find cultural patterns from extended clues and distinguish textual messages from their own preconceptions (Swaffar, 1992). Through this, the L2 learners are therefore likely to make connections to their prior knowledge or schemata and reach better cultural understanding of the target text. This integrated, cultural reading approach is in line with research in schema theory. Authentic literary texts functioning as contexts play an important role in activating prior knowledge for comprehension (Schallert, 1982).

As sensible as are these suggestions, it remains that they are based more on theory and intuition than on systematic investigation. In addition, most important, most difficulties and challenges I have discussed above, whether potential or actual, are not based on systematic empirical data. Therefore, an empirical study was needed to provide a basis for a deeper understanding of the actual experiences of students and instructors. As Bernhardt (1995) suggested, it is important to obtain "a real sense of what real students do" (p. 5). This study moved a step further by also examining what real instructors do. This study was an attempt to answer the following broad question: What would data reveal about issues related to FL literature education?

Empirical research into related issues is scarce but urgent. Several scholars expressed the concern that research on the teaching of literature in ESL/EFL contexts has been very much ignored. Marckwardt (1978) stated that uncertainty surrounds the question of the role of literature in FL instruction, but little attempt has been made "to

explore the question in depth from as many angles as possible" (p. 9). Similarly, following Allen (1965), Stern (1987) stated that up to 1987, "in-depth library searches reveal few studies directly linked to literature in foreign- or second-language classes" (p. 48). What is clear from these authors is their concern with the lack of attention given to literature, and the situation remains unchanged even today.

Further, a striking recent trend in Taiwan makes a study to examine issues related to literature teaching in the English departments a pressing matter. A striking recent trend in Taiwan is the rampant establishment of a new type of English departments, "Applied English departments," in which more language (listening, speaking, reading and writing) and business/economic/international trade courses are offered. Trying to cultivate more qualified candidates for the job market, these newly established English departments do not allot significant space for literature courses. This phenomenon was beyond the scope of the current study, but it further underscored the need to examine the issues surrounding survey courses of masterworks of literature. In sum, I proposed that a qualitative study involving triangulation, in its essence using data of different kinds, would represent a timely effort and provide valuable information about the issues regarding the studying and teaching of FL literature.

Statement of Research Goals and Research Questions

The findings from this study were expected to shed light on the issues related to the teaching and learning in survey courses of the canonical texts written in English, which in turn, might inform suggestions for future curricular alignment. As indicated by Wahba (1979), the findings of this kind of study can serve as the basis of the objectives and content of foreign literature instruction in English departments in Taiwan.

This study was guided by the following five research questions:

1. What are the difficulties that upper-division English majors experience when they study masterworks of literature written in English?

2. What do the students do when encountering these difficulties?

3. What kinds of successes do the students report experiencing when reading literature in English?

4. What challenges and achievements do professors experience when teaching survey courses on masterworks?

5. What do the professors do when experiencing these difficulties?

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter, I examine what the scholarly literature reveals about what makes a text difficult to read, and what difficulties lie in the study of literature, especially literature written in a foreign language. Two parts are included. The first part deals with the broad area of research on reading in one's first (L1) or a second (L2) language (L2 is often used as an umbrella term to refer to FL, EFL, and ESL situations.) The section begins with a theoretical definition of reading that will be used as a framework for discussion. The second large section of the chapter is an overview of difficulties associated with the study of literature in the curriculum of university English departments in the EFL context. It will begin with issues concerning school literature in general, proceed to problems specific to literature in the EFL context and then conclude with a detailed look at the Chinese/Taiwanese context in particular.

L1 and L2 Reading

What is Reading

Before dealing with reading difficulties proper, I need to make explicit what reading is. Schallert (1987) proposed the following two propositions based on the psychological and educational literature that I find relevant for my understanding of reading:

> Reading is an activity that involves the *coordination of interactive perceptual and cognitive processes*, sharing the resources of *a limited-capacity processor*, with the goal of *making sense* of a message (e.g. Goodman, 1967, Lesgold & Perfetti, 1981; Roser & Schallert, 1983; Rumelhart, 1977) [italics added] (Schallert, 1987, p. 65)

> Reading comprehension in particular is a meaning-making activity, a *purposeful* process by which a reader takes the print as clues for *restructing* the author's

message. Included in this view is the reader's apprehension of not only the sense but also the significance of the message (e.g. Anderson & Armbruster, 1984; Goodman & Goodman, 1979; Roser & Schallert, 1983; Tierney & Pearson, 1983) [italics added] (Schallert, 1987, pp. 65-66)

Here is my definition of reading based on what Schallert (1987) proposed: Reading involves an "active" reader who has a "purpose" of "making sense" and "restructing" the message from the printed page by making use of his/her "perceptual" skills and prior knowledge (knowledge of the language and knowledge of the world), applying different "appropriate strategies" (Schallert, 1991, p. 34).

In addition, I concur with Bernhardt (1991) that reading is also a social process. Within this view, reading and literacy are "part of the processes of cultural transmissions, enculturation and socialization" (Bloome & Green, 1984, p. 396; cited in Bernhardt, 1991, p. 9), because texts are treated as "manifestations of cultures" (Bernhardt, 1991, pp. 9-10). Different cultural contexts will beget different readings of a text (Bernhardt, 1991).

In the following review of L1 reading, my discussion will use the combination of Schallert's (1987) constructivist view and Bernhardt's (1991) social view of reading to derive insights in dealing with L2 reading difficulties. As a great deal of literature exists to describe the L1 situation, particularly in the U.S., and as L1 and L2 reading difficulties can share common features, L1 reading research can offer insights into L2 reading difficulties. Thus, my review of L1 reading research will precede L2 research. Both L1 and L2 reading difficulties will be reviewed with an emphasis on adult college/university readers whenever applicable, as this population is the research interest of this study.

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L1 Reading Research

Effect of Perceptual Skills on Reading

Automatic "perceptual skills" are commonly deemed to be very important processes in reading (e.g. Adams, 1990; Carr & Levy, 1990; Rayner & Pollatsek, 1989; Grabe, 1991, p. 379). Those perceptual skills are related to the bottom-up orientation of reading (e.g. Stanovich, 1986; 2000), including three types of ability that result in individual differences in reading: (1) "automaticity" (the ability to recognize words automatically), (2) "the speed of word recognition" (the ability rapidly to recognize word and sub word units to code information into short-term memory) and (3) "phonological processing skill" (the ability to recode print items into phonological form) (Stanovich, 2000, p. 38).

Skilled readers possess those skills or abilities whereas poor ones do not. As illustrated by Schallert (1991), learners as information processing systems are "constrained by having limited resources available" (p. 33) due to "limits on working memory capacity" (p. 30). The same task will take novices "major chunks of cognitive capacity," but for experts, they can accomplish it without much effort —automatically. A related concept is Stanovich's (2000) "compensatory processing," which argues that readers use other skills and knowledge source to compensate for weakness in processes at one level. Support for his proposal comes from how poor and skilled readers use context differently. Poor readers lack automatic word-recognizing ability and thus, must rely on context to recognize words; however, skilled readers use context to monitor comprehension (Stanovich, 2000). The question is: Who are expert readers? The fact is that the ability to recognize words rapidly and accurately has been shown to be important

even for L1 college student readers (Cunningham, et al., 1990).

Effect of Prior Knowledge on Comprehension

As specified by Schallert (1991), the role of prior knowledge in comprehension is extremely important. Schemata, the "cognitive structures" as basic "units of knowledge," help explain the important role of prior knowledge in comprehension. In addition, "instantiation" as a mechanism describes how a person's "existing perception interacts with the input to result in comprehension." Comprehension can be facilitated when the new information can be related to existing cognitive structures. That is, comprehension occurs when background knowledge or prior knowledge is activated.

In reading, prior knowledge can refer to various kinds of knowledge. Both vocabulary knowledge (e.g. Stanovich, 1986) and syntactic knowledge (e.g. Perfetti, 1989; Rayner, 1990) are critical to reading. American college/university students do not necessarily possess enough knowledge of their own language to be successful readers of college-level texts. In the *Journal of Developmental Education*, the following article titles are eye-openers: "Bringing Sustained Silent Reading to Developmental Readers" (Mazur-Stewart, 1986), "Picture Books and Developmental Students" (Aikman, 1995), and "Vocabulary Strategies Designed for College Students" (Simpson et al. 1987. However, these articles are reflecting real phenomena: some students in U. S. colleges and universities experience a great deal of difficulty with reading, and remedial and developmental reading courses are offered to college students in the U.S.

Prior knowledge can also refer to content and background knowledge. The content and topic of a text affect the success of reading. An unfamiliar topic will make a skilled reader struggle with the text. Readers who are knowledgeable about narrative or social

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conventions can attend to "text aspects that signal these conventions" (Beach & Hynds, 1991). In poetry reading, Peskin's (1998) think-aloud study showed that language knowledge alone was not sufficient for reading poetry written in the participants' L1. Novice readers could not appreciate poetry fully despite the fact that they had linguistic knowledge, whereas more experienced readers used more world knowledge, literary knowledge, and knowledge of conventions and thus employed more interpretive strategies. Graves and Frederiksen (1991) found that while describing a narrative, two senior faculty member experts were more likely to show sophisticated representation of the text and use the text for supporting inferential statements, whereas sophomore literature majors would closely "paraphrase the texts."

In Britain, empirical research has supported similar views of literature reading and study. Dorfman (1996) investigated the responses of two groups of learners to three types of stories, science fiction, modern British fiction, and postmodern fiction. It was found that graduate expert readers majoring in English and American studies treated the interpretive tasks differently from undergraduate novice students who were majoring in computing science and who had no literature background; they also exhibited different responses across the story types. The experts could have more access to the text information and structure and used the text differently.

Earthman (1992) examined readers' initial responses to literary texts. Think-aloud protocols and interviews revealed that graduate student experts filled the gaps in the text that were more difficult to fill and read in a more "open" way. Expert readers used the text more extensively and looked for alternative ways of interpreting whereas novice freshmen readers' responses were relatively "unelaborated" and almost unchanged.

Earthman concluded that the differences derived from a complex amalgamation of developmental, intellectual, and instructional factors. Those empirical expert-novice studies discussed above have shown that domain-related knowledge is crucial to allow the reader to use proper strategies to monitor comprehension.

Effect of Problem Solving and Metacognitive Processes on Reading

According to Schallert (1991), learners use problem solving and metacognitive processes "to achieve a particular goal" but do always not know "quite how to get there from the current state" (p. 33). That is, the pre-existence of a goal is necessary to invoke strategic processes. Moreover, the research shows that "amount of domain knowledge" seems to be a critical key to successful problem solving in a particular area (e.g. Larkin, McDermott, Simon, & Simon, 1980; cited in Schallert, 1991). In terms of reading, with a goal of making sense out of the text, a reader will think about "what he is reading to monitor comprehension" (Bernhardt, 1991, p. 122).

The problem remains: When can a college student become an expert reader and use appropriate strategies for his/her study? Haas (1993) commented that though most college students have developed automated word-recognition, difficulties remain. Word recognition ability is important but not enough for college academic reading, which requires a variety of strategies including attention to rhetorical aspects of discourse. Analyzing, synthesizing, and criticizing the texts are required. L1 college students lacking those strategies can understand what the text is about but will have difficulty judging "textual arguments."

In fact, it can take long years for a L1 reader to become a strategic reader. In a longitudinal study lasting for several semesters, Haas (1994) examined a college student's

reading processes and practices. This student participant entered college treating the text as "autonomous," but her reading practices became more sophisticated, her goals for reading changed, and her awareness of reading rhetorical framework developed over time for several different reasons. Haas urged college instructors to help students develop their sense of rhetorical reading and to understand the social, instructional, and developmental factors that facilitate this learning. This study reveals that it can take years for a L1 college reader to perform sophisticated rhetorical reading in which contexts and knowledge about authors are used for comprehension. The implication of this study is in line with what Haas and Flower found in an earlier study (1988): While older, more experienced readers use a variety of strategies, college readers focus more on content information alone.

Charney (1993) showed that domain-related knowledge is an important factor for the difference between the novice and expert reading performance of non-literary texts; all the graduate participants in her study read in sequence while the faculty members read in a nonlinear way, selectively and purposely. Even graduate students show that they are still developing as strategic readers.

Nist and Simpson (2000) discussed previous research and offered insights into L1 college readers' difficulties. For instance, many L1 college readers cannot adjust their strategies to the task demands and domains they face. Nist further pointed out that "Learning to Learn" courses attending to students' task demands and domains are designed to teach strategies that the students apply to their domains. These courses show promise: According to L1 training studies, when students are taught to use comprehension strategies, their comprehension abilities are improved.

In sum, L1 college students have academic reading difficulties in studying literary and other college-level texts. The studies that I have discussed indicate that text difficulty comes from different origins, including perceptual skills, strategies, knowledge of the language, domain knowledge, world knowledge, instruction, and other developmental factors. Because novices tend to be disadvantaged in terms of these factors, they are more likely to encounter reading difficulty. Nevertheless, with proper training or instruction, they can be expected to become more effective readers over time.

L2 Reading Research

Effect of Perceptual Skills on Reading

Like L1 reading, the importance of automatic bottom-up processing in L2 contexts has been stressed (Eskey, 1988; McLaughlin, 1990; cited in Grabe, 1991, p. 390). Yet, L2 reading process is often slower and less successful. Cohen (1993), among other researchers, pointed out that target readers spend more time at each eye fixation, often face more vocabulary-related problems, and can be hindered by sentence structure. The outcome can be word-bound reading (Grabe, 1991).

Haynes and Carr (1990) cautioned that "perceptually based linguistic knowledge —writing system," is crucial for reading. Their study indicated that writing-system knowledge is important to visual word processing among L2 readers and that individual differences in such knowledge continue to affect reading success among Chinese-speaking senior undergraduates who have studied English for years and have used English-language textbooks for courses in their majors. Haynes and Carr maintained that when complex sentences or groups of characters are involved in reading, Chinese,

like English, seems to elicit left-hemisphere processing and speech recoding; however, when individual characters are being processed, holistic visual coding seems to be elicited and right-hemisphere processing is involved (e.g. Hung & Tzeng, 1981). The important role of the writing-system knowledge was also found in the Brown and Haynes (1985) study: When decoding English, Japanese EFL readers are slower than the Arabic and Spanish EFL readers. For many of the ESL students who possess a different L1 writing-system knowledge such as Chinese and Japanese, "the transition to the Latin alphabet is an additional source of confusion" (Ernst-Slavit, 2002, p. 118). Indicated in those L2 reading studies is the fact that the huge differences between L1 and L2 in terms of writing systems make the texts difficult. However, in literary theory, when the role of the reader is under discussion, the reader's L1, especially distinctions due to character-based languages, are seldom mentioned. Yet, language differences between the reader's L1 and L2 can add to the difficulty of L2 literary texts.

Effect of Prior Knowledge on L2 Reading

The L2 reader possesses different kinds of prior knowledge that affect the process of reading in L2. In terms of language knowledge, the L2 reader can be influenced by both L1 and L2.

The L2 Reader's Target Language Knowledge. Target language knowledge is a critical factor for L2 reading. Connected with automaticity is vocabulary and syntactic knowledge in reading comprehension (e.g. Berman, 1984, Carrell, 1989a, Grabe, 1991). L2 reading researchers commonly recognize the critical role of vocabulary growth/development in reading comprehension (Grabe, 1991).

In addition, knowledge of language varieties is crucial; as pointed out by Parkinson

and Thomas (2000), EFL learners having difficulties with literature, especially with the classics, often complain about the difficulty in the language of the texts. Literary language as a language variety complicates reading, as it tends to bring a set of deviations from the norm. For FL learners, especially those who are still struggling with the varieties of the norm in the language, deviation can bring further puzzles (pp. 40-45).

The L2 Reader's L1 Linguistic Experiences. One phenomenon commonly recognized and related to prior knowledge is L2 learners' L1 linguistic experiences. Because L2 readers usually are literate in their L1 before studying L2, their L1 linguistic experiences have effects on their L2 reading. For example, in Parry's (1996) study, the secondary school student participants in Nigeria and university graduates in China exhibited different preferences in their reading strategies, reflecting their different linguistic backgrounds and literacy experiences. While the Chinese participants paid close attention to accuracy and other bottom-up strategies, the Nigerian students tended to use top-down methods. Parry concluded that L2 learner's L1 cultural background plays an important role in shaping individual L2 reading strategies, although individual variation must also be acknowledged.

Content- or Discipline-Related Prior Knowledge. In L2 reading, previous research has shown the effects of prior knowledge on reading comprehension (e.g. Carrell, 1981, 1987; Carrell & Wallace, 1983; Carrell & Wise, 1998). Some of this research has shown these effects not only for culturally based background knowledge but also for discipline-specific prior knowledge (Alderson & Urquhart, 1985; 1988). Carrell and Wise (1998) commented that some of the studies in this area confound prior knowledge and topic interest, and they stated that topic interest and prior knowledge may be correlated,

but not always. However, their study showed that the correlations between the two were extremely low.

L2 Learners' Knowledge of the Target Culture. Knowledge of the target culture is crucial for reading in L2. Bernhardt (1991) argued that reading is both a cognitive process and a process of socialization, but it is difficult for L2 readers to perceive the L2 text "in a culturally authentic, culturally specific way," because texts are "social and cultural artifacts reflecting group values and norms" (p. 14). Mikulecky (1990) proposed a stronger view that reading and comprehending a new language means "literally altering the learners' cognitive structures and value orientations" (p. 5).

These researchers' views are in line with findings from an earlier study by Steffensen and Joag-Dev (1984): "Culture loadings," reading passages full of information about the target culture written in L2, beget text difficulty. "Culture loadings" can further interact with L2 readers' reading strategies and thus affect comprehension.

That is, L2 reading can be an encounter with different "cognitive structures and value orientations" (Mikulecky, 1990, p. 5) because cultures not only express ideas differently but also shape concepts and texts differently (Jakobsen, 1993). Cultural knowledge is so important for L2 reading that Rivers (1981) urged the incorporation of cultural elements into authentic texts as either intensive or extensive reading materials. In her six-stage model for developing L2 readers' independent reading ability, Rivers introduced culture into reading as early as Stage Three, even though learners will still need illustrations for help.

Likewise, in reading L2 literary texts, the importance of cultural knowledge can never be ignored. As pointed out earlier, a L1 reader's lack of adequate knowledge, world

knowledge (e.g. past experiences), literary knowledge, and conventions, can make literary texts difficult. For L2 readers, in addition to linguistic knowledge, factors of knowledge of the foreign culture influence greatly the difficulty level of L2 literary texts. Bernhardt (1991) pointed out that comprehending authentic texts is a very difficult task for L2 students because even though the learners have linguistic skills, they have no or very little "implicit knowledge that the native speaking group possesses for whom the text was intended" (p. 183). Brooks (1989) also acknowledged the significance of culture-related factors in reading literary texts in L2, stating that it is often the "cultural strangeness" rather than the technical difficulties imposed by new words and complex structures that is the biggest problem. However, she did not think that the selection of material should be restricted to universal themes to avoid these. Cultural differences can bring both the greatest potential gains and obstacles in the study of FL literature, according to Brooks.

However, cultural differences are not easy to understand because they can take variant forms, such as tone of voice, value conflicts, and difference in metaphors. Among those forms, tone of voice and value conflicts tend to occur at a more abstract and delicate level, whereas metaphorical differences between cultures can originate from some simple concrete fact like climate differences (Brooks, 1989). Because of this reason, to discuss how cultural differences impact the reading of authentic literary texts in a second language, metaphorical differences would be a fruitful area to begin with. How metaphorical differences affect the reading of L2 literary texts and what L2 literary texts can do to L2 metaphorical understanding are examined in what follows.

The pervasive influence of metaphorical thinking on people's lives should be

highlighted before a discussion of how it affects reading literary texts in L2. Researchers such as Pollio and Burns (1977) and Pollio and Smith (1979) (as cited in Danesi, 1993) have recognized the important role of metaphorical thinking. Metaphorical thinking and metaphorical language are at the very heart of everyday mental and linguistic activity (Harris, 1981; quoted in Lantolf, 1999). Danesi (1993) stated that the capacity for metaphorical thinking forces people to "extract meaning from virtually any well-formed combination of words" (p. 497).   Using the utterance "The murderer is an animal" as an example, he convincingly argued that people tend to apply the metaphorical mode in interpretation, and only when told that it was a biological animal that committed the murder would people interpret it literally (p. 498).

As one of the few scholars studying metaphor comprehension and production by L2 learners, Danesi found that learners developing a high level of speaking proficiency in L2 continue to think "in terms of their native conceptual system," using formal structures of L2; in this situation, it is conceptual content, not language form, that is lacking (p. 490). Danesi stated that metaphorical competence is "closely linked to the ways in which a culture organizes its world conceptually" (p. 495). Along the same lines, Lantolf (1999) illustrated how conceptual thought, the way that concepts are organized, differs across cultures. Based on the socio-historical psychology of L. S. Vygotsky and his colleagues as a theoretical framework, Lantolf added that "appropriating culture concepts" enables us to "structure minds in culturally specific ways" (pp. 34-35). Culture and mind are inextricably intertwined and culture thus strongly relates to the ways people express ideas.

A relevant question is: How well can learners acquire foreign cultural literacy in the

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second language classroom? In Danesi's (1993) studies at the University of Toronto, L2 learners at various stages of learning performed poorly on metaphor comprehension and translation tasks. He concluded that metaphorical competence, "even at the level of comprehension, is inadequate in typical classroom learners" (pp. 494-495). In another study of subjects' metaphorical expressions in their writing, Danesi found that three or four years of study of Spanish did not help L2 learners to think "in conceptually different ways" (p. 497). Based on a review of studies on metaphorical comprehension and production, Lantolf (1999) concluded that thinking in conceptually different ways requires a restructuring of conceptual organization, "an unlikely alternative for a second language classroom" (p. 45).

Nevertheless, pedagogical implications can be drawn from second language acquisition (SLA) research. In SLA, comprehension and production are two distinctive kinds of competence, and because of the work by Krashen, comprehension is commonly deemed to need development before production. Thus, pedagogical efforts can and should be devoted to learners' comprehension or understanding, not production, of metaphorical concepts in L2.

Danesi (1993) recognized the significance and difficulty in metaphorical thinking for second language learners; however, he stated that he failed to see "how and where the metaphorical layer fits in" (p. 497). In this regard, literary studies should be an area deserving attention, because, as a figure of speech, metaphor is not only common in daily life but also a fundamental device in literature, especially in poetry. Literary texts, instead of language textbooks, could provide a resource of second/foreign language metaphorical concepts.

Yet, acquiring foreign cultural literacy or proficiency can never be easy. Because of the difficulty of metaphorical thinking in culturally specific way, the target culture embedded in a poem can baffle L2 readers even if the vocabulary and sentence structure are relatively simple. Take Robert Burns' "A Red, Red Rose" as an example. A rose can mean a very different thing for L2 readers because of different cultural connotations. Nowadays, a Chinese reader is aware that a red rose signifies love in a rough sense but is likely to miss its symbolic meaning in Christianity if he or she is not equipped with this religious background. *The Dictionary of Christian Art* defines the rose as:

> A floral symbol sacred to Venus and signifying love, the quality and nature of which was characterized by the color of the rose. A symbol of purity, a white rose represented innocence (nonsexual) love, while a pink rose represented first love, and a red rose true love. When held by a martyr, the red rose signified 'red martyrdom' or the loss of life, and the white rose 'white martyrdom' or celibacy . . . . (Apostolos-Cappadona, 1994, p. 296) (cited from Dodd, 1995)

After locating relevant references, this Chinese reader is likely still to obtain a rose with a shade of meaning differing from what a reader from a Western origin perceives. As Filiberti (2000) put it, "The rose has been prized for thousands of years throughout a wide range of cultures, and has come to symbolize many different things." This Chinese reader thus reads this poem differently from a L1 reader does. Another example is that humor (comics or jokes) conveying target cultural codes can easily baffle L2 readers as well. It is the cultural codes, along with literary conventions, that make up Culler's (1980) "literary competence." However, acquiring literary competence in a FL may seem as difficult as learning the language itself. L2 learners are thus more likely to have difficulty in reading literary texts written in L2.

Strategies for Comprehension in L2

When the linguistic demands of a text are beyond their language competence, L2 readers need to rely on various strategies to compensate for a lack of linguistic proficiency (Cohen, 1993). Mikulecky (1990), following Johnston (1983), saw reading as "a complex behavior, which involves conscious and unconscious use of various strategies" to "make sense" out of or comprehend the text (p. 2). L2 reading research has reported that better L2 readers are also better strategy users (e.g. Carrell, 1989; Devine, 1987). Proper use of strategies is a key to successful L2 reading. Here, the word "proper" is central. Reading strategies are not in and of themselves "good"; depending on "*who* is using them, with *what text*, at *what point* in the text, under *what circumstances*, and with *what purpose* in mind" (Cohen, 1993, p. 84), different strategies become appropriate.

Choosing appropriate strategies is not always easy for L2 readers. For instance, although in the interactive model of reading, both top-down and bottom-up processes are involved in the comprehension process, relying too much on their prior knowledge and their own cultural orientation can mislead L2 readers (Mikulecky, 1990; Barnett, 1989) and produce a "distorted" understanding of the foreign/L2 texts (Steffensen, et al., 1979). This dilemma is not surprising, as according to Schallert (1991), the content requires "too many leaps to knowledge" (p. 31) to allow for comprehension.

Section Summary

In sum, the relationship between the reader and the text is never simple. As both the reader and text aspects contribute to a reader's comprehension, both are connected with

text difficulty. The process of comprehension is both "multilevel and interactive" (e.g. Carrell, 1988; van Dijk & Kintsch, 1983). Based on the research of the reading process, Bernhardt (1991) proposed that reading comprehension is "constructive." The reader actively relates new or incoming information in the text to "information already stored in memory"; he or she takes "multiple linguistic and conceptual units" to make sense (pp. 191-192). Moreover, the reader brings to the text all kinds of knowledge about the world (Mikulecky, 1990), actively supplying meaning to text "on a continual basis" (Cohen, 1993, p. 76). As a result, various elements in both the reader-related and the text-related information can interact continually and make the text, literary or non-literary, difficult.

For L2 readers who bring their L1 linguistic knowledge, reading practices or literacy, and their L1 cultural framework to reading in L2, both the reader- and text-related elements can interact in a more complex way and thus further complicate the reader-text relationship. Successful reading of a L2 literary text, like L1 reading, is a process of getting to and going beyond the literal, synthesizing the information, using appropriate strategies and skills, and monitoring skills when any problem occurs. This demands linguistic and conceptual competence and cultural literacy. However, according to Brown (1998), no L2 reading research findings are available to illustrate what level of linguistic proficiency a L2 reader should reach to perform such a task or to what extent readers use lower- or higher-level processing strategies.

Thus, it follows that no one knows exactly how much time is required for a L2 reader to be able to appreciate masterworks of literature in the second language. An efficient reading of canonical texts, besides L2 linguistic knowledge, requires an adequate knowledge of other kinds, world knowledge, foreign cultural literacy, literary knowledge,

and knowledge of conventions. Yet, developing such a varied base of knowledge takes a long time, so reading a canonical text is especially difficult in L2. The fact that reading is developmental cannot be emphasized enough. Rivers (1981) illustrated how reading skill in FL could be developed through "progressive stages," developing FL learners' ability to read independently and fluently. Time-consuming as it is, the development is an uphill struggle for L2 readers.

Literature in the Curriculum of University English Departments

in the EFL Context

In the previous section, I reviewed the literature in the reading field on what makes a text difficult to read. However, the notion of difficulty in literature study does not simply come from reading difficulties. This section will review some of the striking issues concerning "school literature" (Purves, 1991) or English as a discipline. Then, the discussion will proceed to issues and debates regarding literature education in university English departments in the Third World and other EFL contexts, especially the crucial role that literature plays in what is taught. Following this, a brief historical overview will be provided of literature courses as the predominant component in the curriculum of Chinese/Taiwanese university English departments.

School Literature

Swaffar et al. (1991) pointed out that literature became a distinct field of study in the United States in the late nineteenth century. English studies then focused on canonical texts and "instructional acts of interpretation" (p. 215). Students interacted with the instructor's comprehension of the text rather than generating their own interpretation. L2

students' serious interaction with the text was even less likely. As Swaffar et al. (1991) pointed out, in-class expert interpretations have now existed for more than one century now.

In fact, this "instructional act of interpretation" does not illustrate the whole story of school literature. Characteristics of literary study, as Purves, Rogers, and Soter (1995) described, are as follows:

> . . . in colleges and secondary schools people were making the study of literature a big business. Pieces of writing acquired barnacles of articles, books, and dissertations, with definitive editions, annotated editions, scholarly editions, variorum editions; with examinations of structure, imagery, and metaphor; with interpretations political, social, psychological, aesthetic, and moral; with computerized concordances and bibliographies of bibliographies . . . Scholarship became such a growth industry it produced a spinoff: theory . . . Today, theory is a bigger business than scholarship . . . The accumulation of knowledge and secondhand opinions about what writers have written has superseded the reading and enjoyment of their work . . . The thousand or so students we have interviewed say *literature study in school is reading to take tests and give the right answer.* (pp. 13-14; italics added)

Hynds (1991) made a similar comment about literature study in school; the difficulties of studying school literature "go far beyond the difficulty of understanding and interpreting texts." She pointed out, for example, students might need to "preserve their personal affective responses" as a literature class tends to focus on "literal or inferential meaning-making" (p. 120). Students also need to work under the pressures of evaluation and time constraints. Moreover, even when other possible interpretations to any literary text are recognized, students might "implicitly agree to arrive at and conform to the teacher's preferred response in order to succeed in school" (p. 124). After all, the study of literature as a school subject is directly influenced by the grades assigned to a student's performance.

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Purves, Rogers, and Soter (1995) further illustrated that school literature is not reading at home" and "[literature] courses have a content" (p. 40). They specified the following "five basic groups" of content of literature instruction even though the emphasis among them can shift: (a) "literary works," (b) "background information" ("the supposed moral and social content"), (c) "literary terms and theory," (d) "reader responses," and (e) "cultural information" (pp. 40-42). These scholars further commented that "school literature intends to make people culturally literate," and that lying at the heart of cultural literacy is "a fair amount of knowledge . . . concerning the culture" including "semantic knowledge, knowledge of text structures and models and pragmatic knowledge or knowledge as to how to act before, during, and after reading a particular text" (pp. 42-43). This cultural literacy teaching is also relevant to foreign literature instruction; yet, this "fair amount of knowledge" with various dimensions can be difficult to acquire.

Literature in the Curriculum of University English Departments

in Third World Universities and Other EFL Contexts

The aforementioned issues concerning school literature are commonly shared with the study of literature in the curriculum of university English departments in the Third World and other EFL contexts in addition to other matters restricted to more local climates in these countries. In these countries, the teaching of literature written in English is very often conducted as follows: "a chronological survey of the classics, lecture and examination, perhaps with discussion, and/or grammar translation," as Stern (1987) maintained (p. 48). Amidst these issues is the conspicuous sight of a literature teacher

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lecturing on his own or her own one probable interpretation.

According to Stern (1987), in the teaching of literature in ESL/EFL contexts, two major traditions exist: first, the exported British tradition to the Commonwealth countries (formerly most obvious in India; strongly today in Africa, Malaysia, and Singapore); and second, the Continental tradition prevalent where the academic tradition is derived from continental Europe (French-speaking Africa, parts of Asia and the Near and Middle East, and Latin/South America). In the former, English literature is supposed to have a "special educational function as a logical development of literacy" whereas in the latter, the study of English literature is evidence of "a distinctly foreign civilization or culture" and the teaching may even be in the students' language instead of English (Stern, 1987, p. 48). Although English departments in Taiwan follow neither of these two traditions exactly, they do reflect a strong American influence in foreign language and literature education. Like the two traditions, an influence from a dominant culture has been present in Taiwanese English departments.

In addition to lecture as mode, some other difficulties of school literature in ESL/EFL English departments deserve special attention. For instance, the literary survey courses in the university EFL situation rely heavily on translation as a classroom activity (Marckwardt, 1978). Translating the text into students' mother tongue is thus supposed to help students understand the text. While teaching in a public university English department in Taiwan, Bay-Peterson (1990) reported the same phenomenon: "Teaching such classes in Chinese is, presumably, a concession to the real or imagined inadequacy of the students' command of English, and may well enhance their appreciation of literature" (p. 29).

As is true in many foreign language contexts, target language proficiency as an objective is ignored in literature courses in EFL. After reviewing related research in foreign language teaching, English education, curriculum theory, and critical theory etc., Wahba (1979), in a critique of the program of literature in English for advanced Egyptian students, explicitly claimed, ". . . the traditional literary programs in foreign languages are built on flimsy assumptions and irrelevances . . . Chronology is seen to provide no convincing logic for sequence in the syllabus. The time-honored classics excite no sense of wonder in the students who do not *understand* them" (p. 360; italics added). Wahba urged the English literature courses in the foreign language context to consider seriously the "role of the students in the learning process," as "the objectives of the course of study and its content do not take students' background, proficiencies, attitudes, responses, and actual or potential difficulties into account" (pp. 359-361).

EFL learners' lack of target language proficiency is a prominent factor contributing to the difficulty of literature study.   However, it is not easy to answer the question as to which competency level the graduates from university English departments in EFL contexts, as not many research findings are available. However, the findings from Zughoul's (1985) study indicated that these English majors' English proficiency did not allow them to study masterworks in English. Using the Michigan Test of English Language Proficiency (MTELP) to test the graduates of English department at Yarmouk University in Jordan, who were favorably comparable with those of the rest of Arab universities, Zughoul (1985) found the average equated mean score of the 168 subjects was 68. According to the test manual, test takers who receive this score are believed to be "not proficient enough to take any academic work" (quoted in Zughoul, 1986, p. 11). If

the same test were given to English majors in Taiwan, who do not start learning English until junior high,[4] it is likely that they would achieve even less than such "unsatisfactory" scores.

As graduating English majors may often lack the proficiency to undertake academic work, it is valid for Bader (1992) to claim that the literature component of English studies has been the most controversial (see also Obeidat, 1996), that graduates from English departments are not necessarily competent in English, and that it is wrong to assume that students have the ability to "analyze and appreciate literary texts" while in fact they are still lacking important language skills (Bader, 1992, p. 236).

English departments' failure to graduate competent users of English should be a real concern. However, to discuss this failure, in light of a "preponderance" of literature courses, other factors such as the long separation between language and literature in FL contexts, as pointed out earlier, deserve a closer look. Instructors of literature seldom consider it their task to develop their students' target language proficiency. Take the situation in Taiwan for example. *Norton Anthologies*, the commonly used texts for the survey literature courses, have been used in English departments for more than 30 years and have never been used as the basis of improving students' English proficiency. This language-literature rift is not an isolated phenomenon. For instance, in Turkey, a similar phenomenon has been reported (Akyel & Yalcin, 1990).

Along with the hurdle of language problems, students face other challenges in tertiary level literature courses in EFL contexts. In turn, instructors confront

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[4] The requirement for the 5th and 6th graders to learn English in a formal school setting did not go into effect until Fall 2001.

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"under-prepared students" "lacking the background and the necessary study skills" as well as adequate target language competency (Gilroy-Scott. 1983, pp. 1-2). Thus, what can be easily envisioned are the tough tasks of not only studying but also teaching foreign literature at the university level.

Further related questions are: How much focus should there be on literature? What are the respective roles of the related components ―language, linguistics, and literature? Those questions are at the heart of an on-going, heated debate in university EFL English departments, especially those in the Arab World (Bader, 1992; Obeidat, 1997). Indeed, this controversy will continue. Bader (1992) emphasized that the literature component has been the most controversial and pointed out that despite the preponderance of literature courses, English departments in EFL countries have failed to achieve their primary objective ―"to graduate competent users of English" (Zughoul, 1985, quoted in Bader, 1992, p. 233). Haggan (1999) also found in her questionnaire study that her students' initial purpose in joining the department was to enhance their English and not to become linguistics or literature specialists. She proposed that departments of English should attend to students' aptitude and language proficiency: Literature and linguistics were suggested as the chosen areas of specializations only for these students who have an interest in and aptitude for these subjects and a sufficient command of the English language, and before allowing students to undertake these specialized courses, a stricter training should be implemented in language proficiency teaching and testing.

In addition, how should literary texts written in a foreign language be taught, for what purpose, and in what order? Which *genre* should have a greater focus? Moody's (1971) concerns about "what the place of literary studies ought to be in the educational

curriculum of developing societies" and "what kind of literary studies should be offered" (p. 6) remain unresolved issues. However, voices both for and against literature courses in university EFL English departments have been raised. Thus, it would not be fair to present the picture of literature courses in EFL only in a negative light. Some scholars such as Bader (1992) and Zughoul (1986; 1987) lamented the dominant role that literature courses played in the English departments in the EFL contexts. However, others like John (1986) and Salih (1989) preferred more literature study to be included in the curriculum. John (1986) maintained that a preponderance of literature courses over language/linguistics courses in an English program should not be blamed, but should be used as a major approach to developing English majors' language proficiency. He enumerated the benefits of such an approach in terms of grammar, idiom, connotations of the words, etc. Like John, who supported the inclusion of literature in the curriculum, Salih (1989) claimed that students should not be taught literature simply for language proficiency, because for him, literature courses can enhance students' English ability and knowledge of English as well as analytical thinking skill.

Nevertheless, despite scholars' different views, issues abound. However, very little empirical evaluation of different programs has been conducted. As pointed out by Stern (1987), in 1962, the British Council held a conference at King's College, Cambridge, to discuss the related issues and this conference remained the only major organized attempt to evaluate literature teaching in EFL. However, problems have persisted, and literature is still being taught and continues to play a significant role in the English curricula of ESL/EFL coursework, as Stern (1987) asserted.

Literature Written in English in Chinese/Taiwanese Contexts: A Brief Historical

Overview of Literature's Important Status in the Curriculum of English Departments

The Chinese/Taiwanese context has problems similar to those that have been confronted for decades by other EFL contexts. Issues existed even before 1949, the year when the political party Kuo-Ming Tang (KMT) retreated to Taiwan from Mainland China. This section is a brief historical overview, exclusively highlighting the issue pertaining to the significant role that literature has played in the curricula of English/foreign language departments in the twentieth century from Mainland China to Taiwan.

From the 1920s to 1949 in Mainland China

Documents related to requirements for Chinese university foreign language majors before 1949 are rare. According to *A Historical Account of Foreign Language Education in China*, a book written in Chinese (Fu, 1986), since the 1920s, the emphasis of foreign language departments was on the literature component, especially the classics and literary history. The required literature courses in Foreign Language Departments before 1949 at Central University (now known as Nan-Jing University) totaled 36 credits, conveying a significance in percentage terms. As pointed out by Fu (1986), the minimum number of credits that students were supposed to take before graduation was 132 (pp. 59-62).

Since 1949 in Taiwan

This sub-section is a brief account of the important status of literature courses in Taiwanese traditional English Departments since 1949. What is clear is the important role of American influence. According to Li (2000) of the National Council's Humanities and

Social Sciences Department, Taiwan's post-World War II policy has been pro-American as reflected at the cultural and educational levels. Among foreign languages and literatures, English and literature written in English has been dominant in teaching and research. Moreover, American academic circles have influenced the study of English and American literature in Taiwan. This phenomenon is different from Zughoul's (1986) claim that the academic design of English departments in Third World universities has been "inherited or borrowed from their counterparts in British universities" (p. 10).

According to Chang, an expert in Taiwanese modern literature and culture, Zhu Limin, Yan Yuanshu, and Wang Wenxing, who completed their graduate studies in the United States, introduced New Criticism into Taiwan in the 1960's. As professors teaching at National Taiwan University, these two scholars adopted an approach entailing a close reading of the text and high culture. Both canonical texts and their intrinsic value were the foci, leading to the fostering of an elite culture.

Along this line was the Western-influenced Taiwanese Modernist literary movement (S. Y. Chang, personal communication, October 22, 2002). This movement represented "Chinese intellectuals' emulation of Western high culture" and functioned as "a potent sign of progressiveness " (Chang, 1993, pp. 6-9). This phenomenon was shared by other Asian countries; it was an aspiration to "catch up with the world" (S. Y. Chang, personal communication, October 22, 2002). In their "emulation of Western high culture," the scholars mentioned above "tend to borrow authority more from the Western liberal-humanist tradition," represented by Matthew Arnold and F. R. Leavis (Chang, 1993, p. 19). As Chang (1993) further elucidated, Yan Yuanshu strongly upheld Matthew Arnold, viewing the function of literature as "criticism of life" (p. 19). This view of

literature is in line with the role that literature played in foreign language teaching in the 1960s to 1970s--for humanistic inspiration (Kramsch, 2000).

It was also Zhu Limin and Yan Yuanshu who contributed to institutional development of this movement and thus set a "legitimate discourse in literature" in Taiwan (S. Y. Chang, personal communication, October 22, 2002; May 13, 2003). Yan (1970) stated that in literary theory he was a disciple of Arnold, and in practice, he believed that New Criticism was the most effective approach. Thus, Yan promoted the American New Critics' close reading, a dominant approach to literature study in the United States at that time. Along with New Criticism, the concept of goodness and value of the high culture was also introduced into Taiwan.

After graduate study in the United States, Zhu came back to Taiwan in 1959 to teach British and American literature courses in the Department of Foreign Languages and Literature at National Taiwan University. He undertook some reform in the teaching of British literature that year. In addition to the practices of his predecessors, when lecturing on literary history, he selected actual literary texts for the students to read. Although many students enrolled in that first course withdrew, Zhu began a revolution that continued when Yan took over the English literature course in 1963. Yan intentionally used an anthology commonly seen in American universities as the textbook for his English literature class. Afterwards, other English departments in Taiwan followed his example (Zhu, 1990, p. 3).

Likewise, Zhu (1981) also propounded "the idea of literature as art," and he called for attention to "how the language, structure, and other details in the text were used" (Zhu & Yan, 1981; quoted in and translated from Zhu, 1990, p. 1). Promoting attention to the

text in the 60s in Taiwan for foreign literature study was indeed a revolution. Years later, Short and Candline (1989) still maintained the importance of a focus on texts, because so often a "flight from the text" was the case (p. 179). "Teaching *about* literature" instead of the text itself, that is, teaching "biographical facts about authors, descriptions of literary movements and critical schools, synopses of novels and plays," seemed easier for non-native instructors of English (p. 179). After all, dealing with the texts themselves involves attention to minute details of language and culture-specific background knowledge and literary structure, areas of literary studies that might prove particularly difficult for learners of English.

Zhu's (1981) call for attention to how the language, structure, and other details in the text were used did not stop even in the 1980s. For him, "literature is an art" using those elements to convey themes and meanings (quoted in and translated from Zhu, 1990, p. 1). However, since the 1980s, the distance between high culture and reality has been acknowledged (Chang, 1993, p. 20). The space in the curriculum for high culture and for literature has been shrinking even though literature's important status still exists. In these literature courses, *Norton Anthologies* are still the most commonly used textbooks. Yet, as Sung (1995) pointed out, instructors' methods for text selection have changed the concept of the canon. For example, some small portions of significant texts by important writers might be chosen, and important writers' "minor" texts or the more readable texts of minor writers could be chosen (translated from p. 329).

In addition, since August 1994, the Ministry of Education in Taiwan stipulated that each English department at the university level be allowed to design its own required core curriculum and thus to make its own decisions about the role of literature in the

curriculum. As observed by Chen (1999), "flexibility has been the major principle" underlying each English department's efforts in curriculum design. For example, in Taiwan University, "Literature in English" was used to replace canon-based literature courses in designing the new core curriculum (pp. 402-403). Nowadays, while some English departments have more of a focus on literature courses, some allow the students, in the later years in the department, to choose the linguistics track as the focus of study. That is, some Taiwanese English departments allow their students to choose the track that suits their aptitude. Even in those English departments that do not have a linguistics track available for students, some change in terms of required credits for literature courses has occurred in recent years although those courses still have an important status in the curriculum. For example, as shown in Appendix A, at both National Taiwan University and National Cheng-Chih University, in addition to preparatory courses such as Approaches to Literature and Introduction to Western Literature, English majors are now required to take 15 instead of 18 credits of British literature and American literature. Courses of literature in English have a significant status in Taiwanese university English departments. This is different from the situation in China.

Literature in English as a component in universities and foreign-language institutes in Mainland China has been shrinking sharply to a low status in the curriculum since the mid-80s. As Du (1986) pointed out in his article titled "Literature in English: An Integral Part of the EFL Curriculum," "[according] to the data from a 1983 forum," "held in Beijing on the teaching of English to senior undergraduate English majors attended by representatives from 25 universities and colleges," "22 literature courses ranging through all genres and periods [were] operative either as compulsory or elective courses" (Li,

1984; quoted in Du, 1986, p. 23). In the mid-80s, literature seemed to have an important role to play in the curriculum of English departments in China even though the teaching of it presented difficulties, as recognized by Du (1986). Yet, since then, "the usefulness of teaching literature courses" at tertiary level in China "has been greatly challenged" (Shu, 1999, p. 25). According to Shu (1999), in 1991 the State Education Commission of China conducted a national investigation of literature teaching and surveyed "English major graduates from eleven teacher training programs at universities and colleges." This investigation found that 46% of the subjects agreed that "literature should become an optional course" (p. 27). In the new national teaching program for English majors in Chinese institutions of higher education, amended in 2000, "less than 10% of the total teaching hours" are devoted to literature courses (Yin & Chen, 2002, p. 317).

Section Summary

In sum, university English departments in the EFL context have experienced some of the issues concerning school literature that are found in L1 situations such as the United States. Furthermore, masterworks of literature written in English have had a significant status in the curriculum of university English departments in the EFL contexts even though the teaching of them is challenging. Commonly perceived is English majors' lack of enough command of English proficiency to negotiate these texts. Heatedly debated is how much literature should be in the curriculum for English majors or how literature should be taught. Despite the fact that in recent years, masterworks as a representation of high culture have enjoyed less influence, and that their status in English departments in some countries such as Mainland China has been greatly diminished, they remain as the major assigned texts presented in chronologically arranged literature courses for English majors in most EFL situations such as Taiwan.

CHAPTER 3

METHOD

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a description of the research design; of the role of the researcher as an instrument; of the research settings, including criteria for the selection of settings and participants, the participants, and literature courses that the student participants were taking; and of the research methods, including data collection procedure, data sources, and analysis in detail. In addition, I discuss issues of the trustworthiness of the data collected and analyzed.

Research Design

My research methods have been naturalistic in order to explain the complex nature of difficulties in studying and teaching literature survey courses, with a focus on English literature and American literature courses. This study adopted the case study approach because it can allow the analyst to investigate and understand the related phenomena in depth. As Lincoln and Guba (1985) noted, a qualitative case study can offer the kind of "thick description" described by Geertz (1973) and opportunities to explore multiple "*constructed realities*" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 84). As Merriam (1998) well put it, through "intensive descriptions and analyses of a single unit or a bounded system," case studies aim at "an in-depth understanding of the situation and meaning for those involved" (p. 19). This study focused on studying and teaching British and American literature in two traditional English departments in Taiwan as two bounded systems.

This is a multi-case (two-case) interpretive study involving two research sites. As Merriam (1998) noted, multi-site designs and rich descriptions of cases can "maximize

diversity in the phenomenon of interest" (pp. 211-212). In this study, I looked at studying and teaching masterworks of literature in two different settings/cases so that important findings across case data could be highlighted to provide a holistic view. Based on Merriam's (1998) illustration of cross-case studies, I aimed "to build a general explanation that fits each of the individual cases" although the cases vary in their details (Yin, 1994, p. 112; quoted in Merriam, 1998, p.195).

Despite various factors involved in the student and teacher participants' studying and teaching of literature in these survey courses, I aimed at finding important similarities and distinctions in the two cases. This research involved two research sites, two instructors with different nationalities and linguistic backgrounds teaching American literature and English literature respectively, different texts selected for student participants to study on the two research sites, and perhaps different criteria for text selection. In addition, individual differences in personality, gender, age, etc. were allowed to influence the emerging case studies; various types of student participants in each case provided me the representativeness of data.

The Researcher as an Instrument

In order to allow my reader to gain an idea of me as the primary instrument of data gathering and interpretation, I need to explain that my interest in this project originated from my own experience of difficulties when studying and teaching masterworks of literature written in English in Taiwan. My previous experience as a student and later, a teacher of masterworks of British and American literature, provided me an insider's view to conduct this study. By this, I mean as an undergraduate English major, I had studied most of the authors that the student participants in my study were also studying. However,

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possessing this insider's view could have affected my intention to be a detached observer of the classes. I intended to provide a "thick" description of students' and instructors' experiences with a focus on difficulties; yet, I was conscious that my previous experience could negatively affect my objectivity although I strove to "get [my] *expectations* and *preferences* out into the open," as suggested by Gillham (2000, p. 28; italics added).

I would first briefly describe my study of masterworks of literature in English as an undergraduate. Before my university studies, my encounters with literature were restricted to modern Chinese texts in prose or classical Chinese poetry. Before becoming an English major, I had never read any literary texts written in English, not even nursery rhymes or children's literature in English, which I did not encounter until about seven years ago because of my own newly-cultivated interest. However, as an undergraduate English major in Taiwan in the early- and mid-80s, I was required to study texts selected from *Norton Anthologies*. Although more introductory courses —Approaches to Literature —were offered in the first year to provide concepts about *genres* such as short stories, fiction, and poetry as a preparation for further study of literature, struggles constituted an indispensable part of studying these masterworks. As a second-year student (1984-1985), when required to take Survey of British literature (i), which began from Beowulf to the 18th century, I experienced extreme difficulties. Even after looking up all the unknown words that I could find in the dictionary, most of those texts were simply unreadable for me. In my third year (1985-1986), I was required to take Survey of British literature (ii) (which included the 19th century and 20th century British literature) and Survey of American literature; I enjoyed British literature (ii) very much although I could not fully understand those poetic texts. As a third-year English major, it was my

custom to get up early at around 6 a.m., go to the uppermost room of the dorm building, and read aloud the verse lines, immersing myself in my own world of poetry mingled with the early morning fresh air. Those texts in survey literature courses could be both difficult and enjoyable to me at the same time. Even then, I wondered how other people's perceptions of these masterpieces were similar to or different from mine.

Generally, when I was an undergraduate myself, a struggling reader of those texts, I could not fully understand what many of the texts meant because at least in past I still lacked enough command of English. What struck me as more serious came when I began to teach the masterworks myself. In 1996, an opportunity to teach British literature (i) was offered to me for the first time after I obtained my master's degree in literature from the department of English at an American State university in 1992. Aware that studying those texts differed from teaching them, I felt daunted by this offer. Usually, such courses were taught by faculty members holding Ph.D.s in literature. Nevertheless, after consideration, I accepted the challenge so that I could impel myself to reread those texts of pre-18th century British literature. When I taught this course (from Beowulf up to the 18th century) from 1996 to 1999, there were times when, even as the teacher of the course, I found myself unsure of my interpretation of the texts. It seemed to me that an improvement in English language ability could serve to ameliorate only a part of the difficulty in studying these texts. Furthermore, I used *Norton Anthology of English Literature* as the textbook just as my professor had several years before except that my students were studying a recent edition. I witnessed my students struggling with these texts just as I had as an undergraduate student; each year I encountered students who had difficulties writing about what they studied in this course. I realized the obvious gap

between the texts and my students. I was thus intrigued to understand other undergraduate English majors' and other instructors' studying and teaching experiences in negotiating masterworks of British and American literature, including the difficulties, successes/achievements, and what they did to address the difficulties.

Research Settings

Two Traditional English Departments

The research sites for this study were two traditional English departments at TI and CI (pseudonyms) in Taiwan. These sites were chosen through purposeful sampling to select participants and research sites where the richest information could be gathered, as suggested by Merriam (1998) and Patton (2002).

Criteria for Research Sites Selection

The two research sites were chosen for the following two reasons. First, and most importantly, both had a focus on literature, and both did not allow English majors to opt out of the literature track as an area of specialization when the students were in their upper division coursework. I assumed that as no alternative track was available for upper-division English majors, students taking literature courses might not necessarily have either high aptitude toward or interest in literature. Both settings could thus be expected to have a more diverse population of upper-division English majors in terms of views about survey courses of literature than departments that allow students to choose linguistic track, for example. Therefore, the two research sites were purposely chosen.

This decision was inspired by my practice interviews. In summer 2002, when recruiting informants among upper-division English majors of UCT (a pseudonym for a

different university in Taiwan), I had difficulty in finding students who reported negative attitudes towards the required literature courses. One of the crucial factors was that the students choosing the literature track are likely to have more positive attitudes toward those literature courses. UCT allowed its upper-division students to choose either literature or linguistics as a major area of study, and students could even be in an in-between group taking courses from both tracks in their third and fourth years if they could not decide between the two.

Second, in addition to the diversity in terms of student participants, choosing these research sites also provided me with both Chinese and American professor informants, adding another facet of variance to the study. Different instructors could have different criteria for text selection and different approaches to teaching, etc. Because native English-speaking instructors make up a common minority in English departments in Taiwan, and because the rest of the faculties are Taiwanese, I wanted to include representatives from both types.

Criteria for Student Participants Selection

Upper-division English majors instead of lower-division students were chosen for this study because of two reasons. First, student participants at both research sites were experienced in survey literature study, as they had taken similar required literature courses in their previous years in the departments. Therefore, their opinions and experiences would be more informed.

Second, student participants at both research sites had identical literature study experiences since entering university in terms of the content for study, and the total required credits of literature courses taken. Because student participants at both sites were

taking survey courses of literature when the study was conducted, they were likely to offer their insights based on their "here and now" experiences.

Participants at Research Site I--TI

The participants in this study consisted of (1) two literature instructors, and (2) their upper-division English majors at TI and CI (pseudonyms). I will describe participants at TI first and then those at CI.

Prof. L (a pseudonym) at TI

Prof. L had obtained her Ph.D. in comparative literature and was the chair of the English department at TI from 1997 to 2000. She had come to TI in 1992. Since then, she had taught various literature courses, such as: Introduction to Literature; British literature (i), which considers literature from the very beginning to the 18th century; British literature (ii), which extends from the 18th century to the early 20th century; and European literature (ii), which begins with Latin authors, goes through the Middle Ages, and finishes with Voltaire. In the fall of 2002, while this study was underway, she was teaching "Survey of American Literature" offered to fourth-year English majors. Class meetings were on Mondays, from 3: 10 pm to 4 pm, and on Thursdays, from 3: 10 pm to 5 pm.

Student Participants at TI

Student participants at TI were fourth-year English majors. Before Fall 2002 when this study was carried out, they had already taken 15 credits of required literature courses. When in the lower division, they took: Introduction to Literature (i): Fiction, Introduction to Literature (ii): Poetry, and Introduction to Literature (iii): Drama, totaling 9 credits. As

third-year students, they had taken "Survey of British Literature (i)" which was worth 6 credits, lasting for 2 semesters. In Fall 2002, the participants were taking "Survey of British Literature" (ii) (6 credits) and "Survey of American Literature" (6 credits). Each course began from Fall 2002 and extended into Spring 2003. Thus, before graduating, English majors at TI were expected to take 27 credits of required literature courses. In those literature courses, masterworks were the major content for study.

Focal Group at TI. Nine students volunteered to be interviewed. Identifying the focal participants involved simply including all students who agreed to be interviewed by providing their contact information by answering the very last question on the questionnaire. Table 3.1 offers their profiles with a focus on information regarding their individual interest in or aptitude for literature and their future plans. I deem those two aspects to be significant for individual learning. Most key participants at TI were not truly interested in literature. None of them were planning to go on to graduate study in literature.

Table 3.1 Profiles of the Focal Group at TI

Names and Hour(s) of Work Outside of Class	Interest in literature	Plan for the Future
TM1 (5-6 hrs)	--	graduate study in TEFL
TF1 (1-2 hr)	--	English teaching at the secondary level
TM2 (3-4 hr)	--	graduate study (area not decided, but not literature)
TF2 (more than 6hrs)		graduate study in TEFL
TF3 (5-6 hrs)	+ (had enjoyed reading since childhood)	creative writing in Chinese
TF4 (5-6 hrs)	+ (cultivated in the English Dept.)	graduate study in sociology
TF5 (5-6 hrs)		graduate study in TEFL

Table 3.1 (continued)

TF6 (more than 6hrs)	+ (had enjoyed reading since childhood)	undecided but not literature as a career
TF7 (5-6 hrs)		not decided yet

Notes. 1. "+" indicates some interest in literature, and "--" refers to no interest in literature. 2. All the names of key participants at TI start with "T." "M" and "F" represent their gender. Each informant is given a number.

Participants at Research Site II--CI

Prof. M (a pseudonym) at CI

Prof. M was a senior professor at CI; he had been teaching in this English department since 1975. He was a former chair of this English department. He had received a Ph.D. in literature and was an experienced literature educator, offering different literature courses at CI such as British[5] literature (i), British literature (ii), and fiction. However, his area of specialization was 19th century fiction.   When this study took place in Fall 2002, he was teaching "British Literature: Romanticism & Victorian Periods," and most his students in this class were third-year English majors.

Student Participants at CI

Student participants at CI were third-year English majors. As first-year students, they had taken two semesters of "Approaches to Literature" and "Introduction to Western Literature," totaling 8 credits. Moreover, before graduation, they were expected to take at least four of the six survey courses in British and American literature. That is, each English major at CI was expected to take at least 12 credits of British literature and

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[5] For the sake of consistency, the word "British" was used to avoid any confusion to my audience. According to the minutes of departmental meetings at CI, "English literature," not "British literature," was the term for those course titles. In this study, I used "British literature" to refer to both "English literature" and "British literature," two identical terms.

American Literature. Thus, before graduation, the participants at CI were expected to take at least 20 credits of literature courses, in most of which masterpieces were taught.

In Fall 2002 when the study was conducted, students at CI were taking "British Literature: Romanticism & Victorian Periods," and some were also taking "American literature: Before the 20th Century." At CI, four instead of three hours per week were allotted for all the three-credit British and American literature courses. Prof. M's class thus met on Tuesday and Friday mornings, from 10: 10 am to noon. That is, his class met four hours rather than three per week.

Focal Group at CI. I interviewed eleven students at CI, all students who agreed to be interviewed by providing their contact information by answering the very last question on the questionnaire. Table 3.2 provides profiles of the eleven students at CI whom I interviewed. In addition to their individual interest in or aptitude for literature and their personal future plans, I also listed the required literature course(s) that they were taking when the research was conducted. Three out of the eleven students would continue literature study after graduation. Most students who would not continue literature study in the future were not planning to take American literature, given the fact that they could have this choice.

Table 3.2 Profiles of the Focal Group at CI

Name & Hour(s) of Work outside of Class	Interest in Literature	Future Plan	Required Literature Courses Taking
CF1 (3-4 hrs)	--		English lit. (II)
CF2 (1-2 hrs)	--	not decided yet	English lit. (II)
CM1 (3-4 hrs)	+ (cultivated in the Engl. Dept.)	graduate study in literature	English lit. (II) & American lit.

Table 3.2 (continued)

CF3 (3-4hrs)	+ (cultivated in the Engl. Dept.)	graduate study in literature	English lit (II) (had taken American lit.)
CF4 (1-2 hrs)		graduate study in education	English lit. (II)
CF5 (3-4 hrs)	+	translation	English lit. (II) & American lit.
CF6 (3-4 hrs)			English lit. (II) & American lit.
CM2 (1-2 hrs)		graduate study in literature	English lit. (II) & American lit.
CF7 (less than 1 hr)			English lit. (II)
CF8 (less than 1 hr)			English lit. (II)
CF9 (3-4 hrs)	--		English lit. (II)

Notes. 1. "+" indicates interest in literature, and "--" refers to no interest in literature.
   2. All the names of key participants at CI start with "C." "M" and "F" represent gender. Each informant is then given a number.

Protecting Each Participant's Anonymity

The following steps were taken to protect each participant's anonymity, as suggested by Seidman (1998) and Berg (2001): (a) Access to the participants was gained by the researcher's personal contacts; (b) All the formal interviews were conducted in safe places designated by the participants, either on each campus or other locations to be selected by the participants; (c) Pseudonyms were substituted for all names of persons that might directly or indirectly reveal the participants' identities; and (d) Interview transcripts were completed by me, the researcher. And the original names were changed to designated study identifiers. The transcripts remain and will remain in my physical possession. All audio-tapes are now kept in a safety deposit box.

Research Methods

Data Collection Procedure

Data collection began around mid-November and ended around the end of January. Data collection for this study occurred shortly after the participants' mid-term examination, during the rest of Fall 2002, and immediately after the end of the semester.[6]

In order to present a thick description of the participants and to ensure the internal validity of the study, data were collected using the strategy of triangulation; several methods were included: classroom observations, a questionnaire followed by formal semi-structured interviews with the student participants, and a formal semi-structured interview with the professors. In addition, I collected documents, including artifacts such as syllabi, the mid-term and final exam questions, most of the handouts that had been given out in both classes, and program/department documents pertaining to the courses, such as minutes of departmental meetings and online lists of required literature courses. Observations and interviews, the major data sources, were supplemented with these other documents (Berg, 2001).

Data Collection Procedure at Research Site I--TI

Classroom observations preceded my administration of the questionnaire survey to the students, and continued throughout the remaining part of the semester. I observed all class meetings (except for one meeting in each class) after the mid-term exams at TI. That is, I observed each class twice weekly, for about 8 weeks, from around mid-November till the last class meeting of Fall 2002.

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[6] The school calendar in Taiwan is different from that in the U.S. In Taiwanese higher education, fall semesters usually begin in mid-September and end around the later part of January.

The questionnaire survey was administered at TI on December 5, 2002 during the third week of observation when students might be expected to have become accustomed to my presence in the class. I began shorter text-based interviews at TI one week after I administered the survey study. Two text-based interviews with each of the nine volunteered informants were conducted based on the students' take-home essays and interpretive essays. In most cases, they allowed me to copy their works and I read over them before the interviews. The longer face-to-face semi-structured oral interviews with them were conducted after the final exams were over. As for the longer face-to-face semi-structured oral interview with Prof. L, it was conducted after the final exam was over.

Data Collection Procedure at Research Site II--CI

Classroom observations at CI also preceded other data collection methods. I observed all class meetings (except for one meeting in each class) after the mid-term exams at CI for about 8 weeks, from around mid-November till the last class meeting of Fall 2002.

However, at CI, questionnaires were allowed to be distributed to the intact class at CI on Dec. 27, much closer to the end of the semester. Text-based interviews at CI were not workable during the semester, as the survey study was administered when students were busy preparing for their final exams. I interviewed eleven volunteered student participants after the final exam. For a student whose schedule could allow me to have more than one in-depth interview, I arranged a separate text-based interview with him/her. Otherwise, I included the questions for the text-based interview in the in-depth interview, which lasted for about two hours in total. Written documents that were used for the

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text-based interviews with students at CI were their mid-term exam questions and papers and final exam questions. A face-to-face semi-structured oral interview with Prof. M was conducted after the final exam was over. For illustration of the major data collection methods, see Table 3.3 below—"Data Collection Matrix."

Table 3.3 Data Collection Matrix: Type of Information by Source

Information/ Information Source	Observations	Questionnaire	Text-Based Interviews	A Longer Semi-Structured Interview
The Intact Class at TI & CI	YES	YES		
Focal Group at TI & CI			YES	YES
The Instructor at TI & CI	YES			YES

Data Sources

Based on Merriam's (1998) and Patton's (2002) suggestions, different data sources were used to validate and cross-check findings. The data collection methods used in this study are illustrated in Table 3.4 along with the work schedule and participants.

Table 3.4 Data Sources & Work Schedule

Data Sources	Work Schedule	Participants
1. Classroom Observations	after the mid term (mid-Nov. 2002) till around the end of the semester	The two intact classes at TI & CI
2. Questionnaire Followed by Semi-structured Interviews		
a. Questionnaire	Dec. 5, 2002 (at TI) Dec. 27, 2002 (at CI)	The two intact classes at TI & CI

Table 3.4 (continued)

b. Interviews		
(1) Shorter Text-Based Interviews with Students	A. the 1st at TI based on take-home mid-term essays (Dec. 12 to Dec. 20, 2002); the 2nd at TI based on interpretive essays (Dec. 23, 2002 to Jan. 3, 2002) B. after the final exam (at CI) (answers to the mid-term and final exams as written documents)	9 volunteers at TI & 11 at CI
(2) In-Depth, Semi-Structured Interviews with Students	after the final exam	Same group of interviewees mentioned above
A Face-to-Face Interview with the Two Professors in the Fields	after the final exam	Prof. L & Prof. M

Classroom Observations

I observed Prof. L's American literature at TI and Prof. M's British literature course at CI for an understanding of what was going on in class. As noted by Patton (2002), field notes are "the fundamental database for constructing case studies and carrying out thematic cross-case analysis in qualitative research" (p. 305). Field notes taken during observation, as Merriam (1998) suggested, should consist of the following three components: (1) verbal description of the setting, people, and the activities, (2) direct quotations or the substance of what people said, and (3) observer's comments (p. 106).

I contacted Prof. L to know her classroom rules and to get to know her better and plan for each observation. I met her on November 15, 2002 and I went to the observational locations to become familiar with the contexts (Her two weekly class meetings were at two classrooms). Throughout the data collection period, I kept in continual contact with her for rapport with her. She enthusiastically supported me, giving me all the documents they could provide and chatted with me several times during the

semester.

To avoid any disturbance of the class, I did the following: On each day of observation, I arrived at the location a few minutes before class. During the observation, I did not interrupt or participate in class but simply sat behind or beside the students.

I was aware that fieldwork methods could be both "inductive and deductive" (Erickson, 1986, p. 140). On the one hand, my observations focused on relevant data regarding students' difficulties in studying canon literature, their difficulties in responding to the texts or questions in class, their lack of appropriate English proficiency and knowledge of target culture, and challenges that the instructors encountered and how they coped with them, for example. Unable to concentrate simultaneously on both the verbal and non-verbal messages, whenever necessary, I tried to pay more attention to "the sheer physical events" (Jackson, 1990, p. xiii). However, when not many "physical events" occurred, I focused on what teacher and students were saying to each other, if anything. That is, I chose to concentrate more on the non-verbal parts in what happened in the classroom when necessary, as the process of selection is necessary, as suggested by Patton (2002). Following Emerson, et al. (1995), while in the classroom, I recorded any special nonverbal expression of voice, gesture, and movement, and I tape-recorded the verbal content for immediate review after each observation. I also allowed non-deliberative process, allotting space for "intuition and serendipity" (Erickson, 1986, p. 140) to work in the field settings.

For classroom observations of Prof. M's class, I did exactly the same things that I did at TI. Before observation, I visited Prof. M of CI on November 15, 2002, the same date I met Prof. L. He patiently talked with me about his classroom rules and I got to

know him better. Furthermore, during observations, I applied the same principles that I followed at TI. Moreover, throughout the data collection period, I gained rapport with him and he enthusiastically supported me, giving me all the documents he could provide and chatted with me several times during the semester. I also obtained departmental documents because of his help.

Questionnaire Followed by Formal Semi-Structured Interviews with the Student

Participants

Questionnaire. I conducted a survey at both research sites, using the "Literature Questionnaire" listed Appendix B for three purposes. First, questionnaires were used to recruit the informants for face-to-face interviews who provided contact information on the questionnaire. Second, the informants' responses to the questions on this questionnaire provided some information for me to use as a basis for a more in-depth probing in the face-to-face interviews. Third, questionnaires were used to gain a general impression of all the students' literature study experiences at the two sites.

Questions were constructed based on my intention to understand the following: first, the students' domain knowledge of literature and their motivation for literature study; second, what students did to address difficulties; third, students' difficulties and achievements in studying masterworks in English; and fourth, students' current knowledge of English and the target culture. For the first, questions concerning the following were included: (1) the learners' study of Chinese literature written in Chinese (Questions 1 and 2); (2) the learners' study of texts written in English, with questions asked on required and elective literature courses taken, any plan to take more

non-required literature courses, and efforts made as shown in habits of reading more unassigned texts or hours spent on each required literature course, etc. (from Question 3 to Question 7). For the second, questions concerning resources used to help study were included (Questions 8, 9, and 10). For the third, questions included were related with difficulties that learners encountered (Questions 11-16) and achievements (Questions 17-22) that they experienced. For the fourth, questions included were pertinent to the learners' self-rating of their knowledge of English (Question 23), including skills-related abilities in reading, listening, speaking, and writing, knowledge of grammar and vocabulary, as well as knowledge of the target culture. In addition, the last question asked respondents whether they would be willing to be further interviewed, and if so, they were asked to write down their names, their email addresses, and phone numbers. Except for Question 4 that asked the respondents which elective literature courses they had taken and the last question that requested their contact information, other questions were closed questions. Among them, some were Yes-No questions, while most used a 1-5 likert scale.

The items were written by observing some principles provided by Johnson (1992). For adequate wording, the following were observed: "Items should be written in clear, nontechnical language"; "items should not contain negative phrasing that is difficult to process"; and "they should contain only one idea per item" (Johnson, 1992; p. 114).

In addition, several other measures were taken were as follows. The language of the questionnaire was Chinese, the participants' mother tongue. That is, I translated the questions into Chinese, and then, two colleagues, native speakers of Chinese, checked them for me. Following this, the questions were back-translated into English by another colleague, and my supervisor was asked to compare the new version of questions in

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English with those in the original questionnaire. These two native speakers of Chinese also served as part of pilot testing; they had taken survey literature courses that my participants were taking. Before the formal administration of the survey study, pilot testing was done. Questionnaires were tried out with several "respondents who [were] similar to those who [responded] in the study" (Johnson, 1992, p. 114). All the aforementioned efforts were made to allow me, the researcher, "to be able to make the assumption that differences in answers stem from differences among respondents rather than from differences in the stimuli to which respondents were exposed" (Fowler, 2002, p. 78).

The questionnaires were distributed during a class period in both classes. To get a higher response rate for this group-administered survey, I was in each of the classes in person and answered any questions about the questionnaire. Before administering it, students were provided with "Participant Information Letters" (see Appendix C). They were assumed that any information that was obtained in connection with this study and that could be identified with the respondents would remain confidential and would be disclosed only with their permission. Confidentiality of the participants was guaranteed. At TI, Prof. L allotted about 20 minutes for her students to respond to the questions in class; the students' responses to the questionnaires were returned to me as soon as the students finished. However, at CI, students responded to the questions at home, and then returned the completed questionnaires to me in later class meetings or by regular mail.

The respondents who would be willing to be further interviewed were asked to provide their contact information by answering the very last question on the questionnaire. That is, this survey study employed a volunteer sample consisting of "persons who

volunteer to participate" in my study (Johnson, 1992, p. 111). Because of this reason, following Johnson's (1992) exhortation, the findings from the survey were used to "[identify] important issues or trends" instead of quantitative generalizing (p. 112).

Face-to-Face Semi-Structured Interviews. The interview was the major data collection method in this study. The major purpose of an interview is to gather specific information that is on someone else's mind (Merriam, 1998; Patton, 2002) or to explore other people's experience of an event and understand their constructed meaning of that experience (Seidman, 1998). Interviewing was thus used to provide me with opportunities to obtain specific information about the students' difficulties in studying literature written in English. In addition, I assumed that it could give me access to the context of learners' experiences of studying literature.

From the paper questionnaire survey, I obtained permission of nine students at TI and eleven at CI to be my focal participants. They represented the variety of responses of the whole classes to the questionnaires. These volunteers were all informed of the study's purpose, their rights, and then signed consent forms (see Appendix D) before they were interviewed. Mandarin Chinese was used in the interviews except for the one with an informant at CI, who was from Indonesia and who was a second-generation Chinese. The interview with her was conducted using both Mandarin Chinese and English. Each interview was tape-recorded. The two types of interviews were as follows:

(1)Shorter Text-Based Interviews with the Student Participants. The first type of interview was designed to focus on how each individual learner had prepared for the required assignments/papers, what difficulties had occurred, etc. The documents used with the nine students at TI, the American literature course were the mid-term take-home

essays and the interpretive essay that they had turned in as assignments. The students at CI, the British literature course, were not required to write any assignment outside of class, so when interviewing them, I asked them about their group report assignment, and the mid term and final exam questions and answers. The required assignments or the exams that the informants were required to work on could thus function as specific contexts about which to elicit more detailed information surrounding the issues of interest.

Each of the interviews was supposed to last for about 20-30 minutes, but when my informants had more to say, I let them continue. The focus of the text-based interviews with the students was on four respects: (1) the reasons or motives behind their selection of doing the assignment(s) (if they were given the choice), (2) how they went about dealing with the assignments/papers, (3) specific resources they used and reasons behind their use of them, and (4) the challenges and achievements/learning that they experienced. For more details, see Appendix E.1. When informants had other more general experience to share pertinent to their study of survey of literature courses, I let them elaborate.

(2) A Longer Interview with Student Informants at the End of the Semester. The second type of interview involved semi-structured, person-to-person, formal interviews functioned as the primary data source in this research to gain a better understanding of each participant's studying experience for the required literature courses, especially English literature and American literature, that they had taken since entering university, the difficulties that they had confronted, and what they had done to cope with them, etc. To facilitate the interview process and to stimulate discussion, I used their responses to the questionnaire as the basis for some direction in the interview process; that is, I probed

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into the student participants' responses to the questions on the questionnaire. In addition, I used an interview guide (see Appendix E.2).

This type of interview was designed to take about 60-75 minutes and was carried out at the end of the semester in time periods convenient for the individual informants after the final exam, and in different parts of the campus where they were comfortable. Although it was expected that each interview would last from 60 to 75 minutes, it happened that the participants had much more to share and were willing to continue talking. Therefore, most of the interviews lasted about 90 minutes; one interview at TI was more than two hours.

A Formal Semi-Structured Interview with Professor L and Professor M

I interviewed both Prof. L and Prof. M using English and Mandarin Chinese, their mother tongues, respectively. (For information about the consent form, please see Appendix F). The purpose of these interviews was for me to develop an understanding of the challenges/difficulties that they confronted when teaching the required canon literature written in English, as well as what they did about those challenges/difficulties. In addition, their views about their students' approaches to studying the canon could help me understand students' difficulties. Interviews with both instructors were also tape-recorded. I also used guiding questions when interviewing them; please refer to Appendix G.

Data Analysis

My analysis began during data collection when writing a narrative and an analytic memo for each classroom observation, based on field notes and on listening to each

audiotape recorded class session. When reviewing the tapes, I wrote more detailed notes, then based on those, I wrote narratives and analytic memos. Narratives recounted what had happened in each class session, and analytic memos provided me the space for continual reflection and questioning of the research process.

In order to increase the credibility of the interpretation of the collected data from different sources, member checking with the informants was conducted. A colleague kindly listened to me regularly for peer debriefing/consulting.

Data Analysis for Data Collected at Research Site I--TI

The results of the questionnaire study were reported by using "numbers [such as frequencies and percentages] that summarize the data." That is, a descriptive analysis was used to report the findings from the questionnaire study (Johnson, 1992, p. 116).

The interview with Prof. L was transcribed verbatim. The interviews with the 9 student informants made up a huge amount of data. As text-based interviews with the 9 student informants at TI were conducted during the semester, time allowed me to transcribe the interview data verbatim and simultaneously translated them into English right after those interviews. For the other data gathered from interviews with students after the final exam, I did the following to better manage this huge amount of data. For about one-third of interviews, that is, interviews with six students, I transcribed verbatim and simultaneously translated them into English. For another one-third of interviews, I transcribed about 90% of them verbatim and simultaneously translated them into English; I omitted the parts where the interviewees criticized the instructors teaching British literature before the 18th Century. This decision was made because I intended to focus on my research interest —the interviewees' "difficulties" in studying such literature courses.

For the other one-third of tape-recorded interviews with students, I only partially transcribed them, about 20 to 30%, and I used these to confirm and disconfirm the categories emerging from the other two-thirds of interview data.

All the interview transcripts and observational narratives and analytic memos were analyzed using open coding. For data obtained from interviews with student informants, I completed an initial reading of the data from interviews with one-third of my focal groups. While reading those data, I used the margins of the transcripts to take notes. When rereading the data, I also took notes on other blank sheets of paper trying the themes or categories found in my previous practice interviews. This process involved a line-by-line analysis. Those data were broken down into data units. The units were then categorized according to properties and dimensions emerging from the initial reading. After this, I read another one-third of the interview data, and I again took notes based on those categories. After taking notes based on this one-third of transcription, I was then able to develop a form containing categories with various properties and dimensions. After this, I converted all my notes about data from interviews with each student into the forms; during this process, the categories were refined. I then used the other one-third of interviews to confirm and disconfirm the categories by listening to the tapes. After many rounds of coding and the confirming and disconfirming process, eventually no new categories emerged from the interview data with students.

In addition, I also coded the narratives and analytic memos for classroom observations, and data from interviews with Prof. L. Those data were then used to cross-check themes from the interviews with students. Using the "constant comparative method of analysis" to analyze (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) the different kinds of data

collected, I looked for the underlying patterns at each site.

Glaser and Strauss described this method as proceeding through the following four distinct stages: (1) comparing incidents applicable to each category, (2) integrating categories and their properties, (3) delimiting the theory, and (4) writing the theory. Although theory building is the final purpose in Glaser and Strauss's "constant comparative method of analysis," it was not the goal of this study. Instead, I focused on describing and interpreting each of the two cases using all the evidence and data collected. After that, cross-case pattern analysis would be done.

Data Analysis for Data Collected at Research Site II--CI

A descriptive analysis was again used to report the findings from the questionnaire study at CI. The interview with Prof. M was translated into English while I transcribed it. As for the interviews with the 11 student informants at CI, I again adopted the identical method that I dealt with interviews with students at TI. At CI, the simultaneous transcribing and translating was also used for handing almost 100% of one-third of the interviews, 90% of another one-third, and about 20 to 30% of the other one-third; the very last one-third was used to confirm and disconfirm the categories emerging from the other two-thirds of interview data.

For all the interview transcripts and observational narratives and analytic memos, I adopted the same methods I described for dealing with data gathered at TI. Similarly, I also coded the narratives and analytic memos for classroom observations, and data from interview with Prof. M.

Trustworthiness of the Data

In qualitative research, the constructs of validity and reliability are subsumed by the term trustworthiness. Validity is "understanding"; it is "the power to make experience intelligible by applying concepts and categories" (Wolcott, 1990, p. 146). The issue of internal validity deals with how well "the research findings match reality" under study (Merriam, 1998, p. 201)--how well the researchers can explore the participants' perspectives and "present a holistic interpretation of what is happening" (p. 204). Accordingly, as a researcher, I intended to make the phenomenon of interest understandable by using "concepts and categories" to represent "multidimensional" reality (p. 202). "Repeatedly testing interpretations against the available evidence until each of the parts can be accounted for in a coherent interpretation of the whole" (Moss, 1994, p. 7) was my guideline. Based on Merriam's (1998) list of strategies to enhance internal validity, this study was valid due to its triangulation of data sources, repeated observations of the same phenomenon, member checks with the informants after the data were collected, and peer examination (p. 204). Two research sites, instead of a single one, were included in the current study to enhance external validity.

For reliability, I take Lincoln and Guba's (1985, p. 288) suggestion--the "dependability" or "consistency" of the results (quoted in Merriam, 1998, p. 206) as guidance, because qualitative research views the researcher as the major instrument of the inquiry. In this study, I stated the basis for selecting the sites and participants and described the social context of data collection. In addition, I described how data were collected and explained how categories were derived through examples. These steps aimed to establish the reliability of the study.

CHAPTER 4

LITERATURE TEACHING AND STUDY: RESEARCH SITE I--TI

Chapter 4 is devoted to describing and discussing the findings of this study from the first research site, TI.   This chapter will be divided into four parts. The first part describes the research context including the English department, the course requirements, and Prof. L's American literature class that I observed. The second part will illustrate how Prof. L designed her class along with her belief and course objectives, course requirements, and the writers/texts covered. The third will be a presentation of the findings from: first, the questionnaire study at TI; second, the difficulties that Prof. L encountered and what she did to address those difficulties as well as her achievements in teaching survey courses of literature such as American literature; and third, student participants' difficulties in studying survey courses of literature at TI, what they did to deal with those difficulties, and third, the kinds of success that they reported. The final section is an analysis and a summary of the findings at TI.

The Research Context

The English Department on the TI Campus

The English department at TI was established in 1955 when the university was founded, and its general educational goals were the following: (a) to help students experience the strength and beauty of language and literature so that they can discover themselves and the enormous world; (b) to help students properly express themselves and their own culture so that they can immersed themselves in this world; and (c) to help students better know and control their own future in this multi-cultural world. Thus, in

addition to training in language and literature, students were expected to be equipped with other expertise as well. The basic essence of educational goals at TI was devoted to humanistic training, not career training.

English and British and American literature were the major focus of study in this department. In addition, students took other related courses such as linguistics, European literature, film, western cultural history, other foreign language(s), translation, journalism, and mass communication. With the aforementioned training, TI expected its English majors to journey in the ocean of British and American culture as well as other numerous rivers and creeks so that they could acquire both language ability and humanistic cultivation.

Graduates from TI served in various walks of life. Some chose careers or areas of study that were directly related with what they had learned in the undergraduate years; not a few of them taught in universities or high school, worked in the arena of mass communication, translation, and educational organizations such as study abroad consultants. Some graduates from this department chose other areas such as the traveling industry, hotel management, travel agency, international trade, publishing industry, airlines, etc., which required not only foreign language ability but a broader knowledge base and perspective. In addition, some graduates chose to run their own business, or enter other business world, banks or the public sector, etc. Actually, TI strove to inspire students' interest in various aspects of life and jobs and to encourage students to develop expertise in multiple areas so that they could become a person of considerable knowledge of different cultures.

Curricular Requirements in the English Departments at TI

According to minutes from departmental meetings, before graduation, English majors at TI are expected to take 94 requirement credits (See Table 4.1 below for details) and 38 from electives. Required courses could be divided into the following two areas. The first included foundation courses and general education courses, and it totaled 28 credits. The second area was pertinent to "English Department requirements," which totaled 66 credits. Subsumed under the latter were the following two categories of courses. The first category consisted of courses related with English-language skills in listening, speaking, reading, writing and research offered for the first-, second-, and third-year students as a preparation for their academic and literature study. The second category included required literature courses; students in the lower division took Introduction to Literature, which initiated them into western fiction, poetry and drama, while those in the upper division took British literature (i), British literature (ii), and American literature, which introduced important writers, texts, literary traditions and developments from a historical perspective. All the courses under the "English Department Requirements" were usually conducted in an English-only format.

Elective courses included literature, linguistics, and other related areas such as English teaching, women's literature, European literature, news writing, and second foreign languages such as Spanish, German and French.

Table 4.1 The Curricular Requirements at TI

	Course Title	Credit Hrs	Freshman 1st	2nd	Sophomore 1st	2nd	Junior 1st	2nd	Senior 1st	2nd
1. (a) **Foundation** **Courses**	Chinese	4	2	2						
	Freshman English	6	3	3						
	Computer Science	3		3						
	Chinese History	2	2							
	Civic Education	2			2					
1. (b) General **Education** **Courses**	Humanities	1.1 Choose three fields and take at least 3 credits from each of the chosen fields. 1.2 Choose four fields or more and take at least 1 course from each of the chosen fields. 2. Take at least a total of 11 credits.								
	Social Science									
	Natural Science									
	Management Science									
	Life Science									
2. English **Department** **Requirements**	English Composition (i)	4	2	2						
	English Oral Training (i)	4	2	2						
	English Listening Comprehension	4	2	2						
	Typing	1	1							
	English Reading	4	2	2						
	Research Methods	4			2	2				
	Introduction to Western Literature (i)	3		3						
	Introduction to Western Literature (ii)	3			3					
	Introduction to Western Literature (iii)	3				3				
	English Composition (ii)	4			2	2				
	English Oral Training (ii)	4			2	2				
	British Literature I	6					3	3		
	English Composition (iii)	4					2	2		
	English Oral Training (iii)	4					2	2		
	British Literature (ii)	6							3	3
	American Literature	6							3	3
	Seminar	2								2
Requirement Credit Hours		94	16	19	11	9	7	7	6	8
Current Elective Credit Hours		38								
Graduation Credit Hours		132								

British and American Literature Courses on the TI Campus

Before I describe the class sessions of Prof. L's American literature course, it should be noted that students enrolled in Prof. L's American literature class were also taking British literature (ii) when my study was conducted. However, I only observed directly Prof. L's class, not the other class.

I will provide a short description of the major texts covered when I sat in and what the class sessions of Prof. L's course were like. In class meetings, Prof. L lectured 85%-90% of the time, but she also asked her students questions from time to time. When asking questions, she usually asked students as a group. As a result, students had opportunities to think about their responses to literature based not only on what they read but also on what Prof. L asked in class. In classroom observations, I noticed that she sometimes queried students individually, but most of the time, she posed questions to the whole class. Some questions were asked to check the students' basic understanding of the text. Other questions were asked to require students' further involvement with the texts and to stimulate them to think more deeply, e.g. "What methods is the author using to persuade his audience?"; "What do you think about . . . "; "What effect would . . . "; "What feeling do you get from this?" and "Whose side do you support?" etc. That is, when interpreting the texts, she gave her students some "space" for further self-exploration by providing questions as their starting point. As difficult as these questions might have seemed to answer, verbal responses did occur. Even when students were not asked individually, five or six of the students, usually those sitting in the front rows, tended to express their opinions. Their answers might not be on the right track but she welcomed their attempts. As a final note, all of the discussion and lecturing in class

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was conducted in English.

How Professor L Designed Her American Literature Course

In this sub-section, I will first describe Prof. L's course objectives, her course requirements, and major writers/texts covered when I sat in. In Prof. L's American literature class, the objectives and requirements of the course were clearly specified in the syllabus (Please refer to Appendix H). Efforts were made to integrate not only literature and history but also reading and writing. In addition, Prof. L focused on cultivating her students' independent thinking ability. In order to achieve those objectives, course requirements for each student were as follows. First, throughout the semester each student was required to join a discussion group and submit at least two email discussion reports during the semester. Four to five people formed a group and met outside of class once a week for one hour, or once every two weeks for two hours, to discuss the reading before class sessions. The two email reports counted for 10% of the semester grade. Further, for writing assignments, students wrote mid-term take-home essays and handed in an independent interpretive essay on any one (or more than one) of the authors covered in this course. Take-home essays were guided by Prof. L's questions, while the interpretive essay required each student to write a 5 to 8-page typed paper on a topic of one's own choosing. No secondary sources were necessary for the writing assignments. In terms of percentage, the take-home essays counted 25% of the semester grade and the interpretive essay 20%. However, Prof. L was flexible enough to allow her students to reverse the percentage for the two assignments or if the students liked, the interpretive essay could count for as much as 30% of the grade while the take-home mid-term 15%. In class, she announced that different arrangements for different students could be made

as long as the whole class agreed that this was fair. Moreover, students took two types of written exams: first, two quizzes made up of objective-style questions on the main points regarding both history and literature covered in class and in the readings; and second, a 100-minute final exam. The two quizzes constituted 20% while the final exam 25% of the semester grade. In addition, an optional oral report on historical background was assigned to students who intended to obtain extra credit. Therefore, Prof. L's students were supposed not only to read but also to think and write about what they read while trying to link literature and historical events. For more information, please refer to Appendix H--"Prof. L's American Literature Course."

The textbook for this class was the shorter 5th edition of *Norton Anthology of American Literature*. Before I began observing, the class had finished the following writers/texts: "The Pima Creation Story," "The Iroquois Creation Story," Columbus, Bradford, Bradstreet, Franklin, Equiano, Irving, Emerson, Hawthorne, Poe, and Melville. When I was observing this class, the major writers/texts included: slave narratives by Frederick Douglass, Harriet Beecher Stowe, and Harriet Jacobs (for the first three weeks); Henry David Thoreau; Walt Whitman; Emily Dickinson, and Abraham Lincoln (for only about 10 minutes). Along with those were oral reports on some significant historical events or issues.

Findings from the Study: Research Site I--TI

In this sub-section, I will present the findings from the questionnaire study, Prof. L's literature teaching experiences at TI, and students' literature study experiences at TI.

The Questionnaire Study

The response rate from the questionnaire study in Prof. L's American literature class was almost 100%. Of the 41 students enrolled in this class, the 40 students, who were present when the questionnaire was administered, all agreed and filled out the questionnaires.

The findings are presented based on the following groups of question items: first, the students' domain knowledge of literature (their prior reading experience) and their motivation for literature study; second, what students did to address difficulties; third, students' difficulties and achievements in studying masterworks in English in contrast to students' current knowledge of English and the target culture.

Students' responses showed that less than 50% (I am grouping ratings of 4 and 5 together) of the 40 students viewed studying Chinese literature personally rewarding, and that only 10 of them read Chinese literature for enjoyment. Such frequencies of responses reflected their lack of either positive experience or interest in/aptitudes towards Chinese literature. Please refer to Table 4.2 below for more information. As for students' study of texts written in English, as shown in efforts made to read more unassigned texts and intention to take more non-required literature courses, did not indicate very positive results either. Of the 39 responses, 10 indicated doing unassigned readings, while 17 of them responded negatively about this. Among the 39 responses, more than 50% indicated a lack of intention to take more elective courses of literature written in English before graduation. However, students spent a great deal of time on each literature course per week outside of class; the 39 responses to question item 7 showed that more than 50% of them spent 5-6 hours or more than 6 hours per week outside of class (see Table 4.3).

Table 4.2 Question Items 1-2 with Frequencies of Students Selecting Each Alternative

	not at all true of me 1	2	3	4	extremely true of me 5
1. I find studying Chinese literature personally rewarding.	3	4	15	11	7
2. I read <u>Chinese</u> "literature"—(i.e. such texts as poetry, short stories, novels, and biographies)—for enjoyment.	1	10	19	8	2

Table 4.3 Question Items 5-7 with Frequencies of Students Selecting Each Alternative

	not at all true of me **1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	extremely true of me **5**
5. I read unassigned texts (of *ANY* type) written in <u>English</u>.	**7**	**10**	**12**	**10**	**0**
6. I will take more <u>elective</u> courses of literature written in English before I graduate.	**11**	**11**	**8**	**6**	**3**

	Less than 1 hr	1-2 hrs	3-4 hrs	5-6 hrs	More than 6 hrs
7. In addition to class meetings, for each survey course of British or American literature, <u>each week</u> I usually spend/spent	**0**	**5**	**14**	**12**	**9**

The second group of questions asked what students did to address difficulties that they encountered when they studied British and American literature. Most students used reference materials whereas only 1 person indicated "not at all true of me," as shown in responses to Question 8. Responses to Question 9 were as follows: Very few students used visual-audio materials; the Internet mainly provided critical comments rather than visual-audio resources; online resources were more frequently used instead of those in the libraries; and English and Chinese handbooks, online critical comments, texts in Chinese translation were used more frequently rather than Cliff Notes or critical comments from the libraries. In responses to 9K, 10 out of the 35 responses showed that they used other non-human resources in addition to these mentioned above: (a) *Sparknotes*, (b) Monkey

Booknotes, (c) exam questions and other materials or notes provided by students senior to them, and (d) history books used in high school for historical background information. For more information, please refer to Table 4.4 below.

Table 4.4 Question Items 8-9 with Frequencies of Students Selecting Each Alternative

	not at all true of me 1	2	3	4	extremely true of me 5
8. To help myself study the texts in British or/and American literature courses, I use reference materials from libraries or the Internet.	1	9	3	17	10
9. A. I use handbooks written in <u>English</u>.	4	3	11	10	9
B. I use handbooks written in <u>Chinese</u>.	1	5	10	15	5
C. I read critical comments written in <u>English</u> from the Internet.	3	6	4	14	10
D. I read critical comments written in <u>Chinese</u> from the Internet.	5	2	5	17	7
E. I use audio-visual materials in the Internet.	17	6	7	5	1
F. I look for audio-visual materials such as videos.	20	6	7	1	1
G. I read British or/and American literature in <u>Chinese translation</u>.	4	4	4	16	8
H. I read Cliff notes.	18	7	8	3	0
I. I read critical comments written in <u>English</u> from the libraries.	13	6	7	5	5
J. I use critical comments written in <u>Chinese</u> from the libraries.	12	7	6	5	5
	YES		NO		
K. I use other resources.	10		25		

As for the students' use of human resources for help, discussing with classmates or rereading the difficult passages rather than consulting the professors were more frequently noted. As responses to question item 10D, most students preferred to use nonhuman resources instead of human resources. Please see Table 4.5 for more information.

Table 4.5 Question Item 10 with Frequencies of Students Selecting Each Alternative

	not at all true of me 1	2	3	4	extremely true of me 5
10. When I have difficulties in studying a text, A. I consult the professors.	8	15	5	6	5
B. I discuss with my classmates.	0	1	2	16	20
C. I reread the difficult passages of the text.	0	1	8	15	15
D. I use the resources that I marked in Question 9.	2	2	7	12	16

Questions 11 to 16 addressed the kinds of difficulties that students encountered. As clearly shown in students' responses, most students needed to rely on the professors' lectures to understand the texts, most students found it difficult to get beyond the literal meaning, and both the far-away historical background in the texts and poetry as a *genre* caused difficulties for most students. Fortunately, amidst all the difficulties, more students indicated that they found the reading load of British and American literature courses reasonable, as shown in their responses to Question 16. Please refer to Table 4.6 for further illustration of students' difficulties.

Table 4.6 Question Items 11-16 with Frequencies of Students Selecting Each Alternative

	not at all true of me 1	2	3	4	extremely true of me 5
11. In the British or/and American literature courses, I need to rely on the professors' lectures to understand the texts.	0	1	7	16	16
12. I can understand the text at the literal level, but I find it difficult to get its underlying meaning.	0	6	10	15	9
13. The far-away historical background in the texts makes it difficult for me to study the masterworks written in English independently.	0	7	9	13	11
14. Poetry as a *genre* is especially difficulty for me.	5	4	11	8	12

Table 4.6 (continued)

15. If I had the chance to write my ideas in Chinese about texts read in British or/and American literature courses, I would enjoy that.	6	10	9	5	9
16. The reading load in the British or/and American literature courses is reasonable.	1	4	17	13	6

Information indicated in Table 4.6 regarding students' difficulties in studying masterworks is interesting given the fact that when asked to self-rate their current knowledge of English, most students viewed their knowledge of English grammar, their ability to write papers/essay questions in English, and their ability to read English positively even though several students gave neutral responses. Interestingly, among the students' self-ratings of their English abilities, not many people considered their vocabulary knowledge of English to be good. This might be a very immediate cause of the difficulties, as a lack of vocabulary knowledge could beget problems in their reading of literary texts. For more information, please refer to Table 4.7 below.

Table 4.7 Question Item 23 with Frequencies of Students Selecting Each Alternative

	poor 1	2	3	4	excellent 5
23. Rate your current knowledge of English:					
A. My knowledge of English grammar is	1	5	18	15	1
B. My ability to write papers/essay questions in English is	2	4	14	20	1
C. My ability to read English is	0	2	17	20	1
D. My vocabulary knowledge in English is	0	7	21	10	1
E. My ability to speak English is	0	5	18	14	3
F. My listening comprehension in English is	0	3	15	19	3
G. My knowledge of the culture of the countries where English is spoken is	1	5	17	16	1

Nevertheless, despite the difficulties that they encountered, most students found

studying masterworks of literature written in English personally rewarding and they had a sense of achievement doing so (please see Table 4.8 below). In addition, as shown in Table 4.9, most students found the required British/American literature courses helpful for enhancing their English ability, their knowledge of literary devices, their ability to deal with different literary discourses, and their understanding of the countries where English is spoken.

Table 4.8 Question Items 17-18 with Frequencies of Students Selecting Each Alternative

	not at all true of me 1	2	3	4	extremely true of me 5
17. In the British or/and American literature courses, I find studying masterworks of literature written in English personally rewarding.	0	3	9	11	17
18. Studying masterworks of literature in British or/and American literature courses gives me a sense of achievement.	0	5	5	15	15

Table 4.9 Question Items 19-22 with Frequencies of Students Selecting Each Alternative

	not at all true of me 1	2	3	4	extremely true of me 5
To what degree, are the required British/American literature courses helpful					
19. for my English ability?	0	5	9	16	10
20. for my knowledge of literary devices such as irony, similes, metaphors, symbols, etc.?	1	2	9	14	14
21. for my ability to deal with different literary discourses?	1	6	12	11	10
22. for my understanding of the countries where English is spoken?	0	1	11	15	13

Prof. L's Literature Teaching Experience on the TI Campus

This sub-section reports the findings regarding Prof. L's literature teaching

experience, centering on the difficulties. The findings were mainly based on data collected from classroom observations and interviews with her. When appropriate, data gathered from her students will also be used as contrasting or supporting materials. Difficulties that Prof. L reported include difficulties emanating from Prof. L's students and difficulties emanating from the teaching materials. Along with each of these I discuss what Prof. L did about them. As a final section, the report will include a short description of Prof. L's achievement in teaching the required literature courses.

Difficulties Emanating from Prof. L's Students and What She Did about Them

Two major types of difficulties originated from her students. First, as American literature was a required course, in addition to being non-native English speakers, most her students did not have a good command of English and were not necessarily interested in literature. Second, her students lacked time to reflect upon what they read.

Challenges stemming from students' lack of English competence or interest in literature & what Prof. L did to address these. The most important challenge facing Prof. L's students were their writing and reading problems. When writing in the essay questions of the final exam, some students were unable to answer to the point or fast enough. They either summarized what they had read, or said something "close" to the answer. However, what really bothered Prof. L was the fact that some students simply did not read instructions for the close reading questions. This happened maybe because "students don't feel like they have enough time. 100 minutes is not enough time, so you can tell they are really rushed. They simply wrote down anything they could think of. I'm actually very generous about that" (int., Jan. 23, 2003).

To address her non-native English-speaking students' writing problems, she had figured out a very efficient, lenient grading system. When I ran text-based interviews with her students, I noticed that Prof. L had checked for good points on the papers. When I asked Prof. L about this grading scheme, she explained:

> Every time they make something like a point, I put a check, OK? [laugh] . . . You kind of checked for each one, and then, you kind of make an average for that question for that class. You can do it intuitively, OK? You don't have to spend a lot of time on it . . . If you tell me something that's related, you'll get some credit for it. See! That's what's very different from a class of native speakers if I teach a class in a country where English is commonly spoken. [laugh] . . . . (int., Jan. 23, 2003)

Her students received points so long as they were able to communicate to her something related to her question. Thus, even though her students had difficulty writing, she emphasized the importance of writing, maintaining that "writing is very beneficial for improving students' deep grasp of literary works" (int., Jan. 23, 2003). She thus assigned writing tasks for her students to help them think more deeply about what they had read even though not all teachers teaching literature included writing in course requirements. However, her students' writing difficulty presented a challenge to Prof. L, and her countermeasure was to use a "generous" method for grading. She put her philosophy into practice and she required her students to write regardless of the class size.

In addition to her students' writing problems, Prof. L had to deal with their difficulties in reading. She knew well that most students lacked the reading ability to "deal with competing interpretations of the same literary texts." In those writing assignments, she thus did not ask students to refer to secondary materials. She intended to have them "focus on their own thinking" and thus avoid any plagiarism as well as having to read difficult secondary sources. After all, independent thinking was what she asked

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her students to cultivate. To help deal with her student's difficulty in reading foreign literature, she tried to reduce the required reading and "distill each writer into a few key passages," though this meant that those passages were not necessarily adjacent to each other. How to guide and motivate her non-native English-speaking students to deal with various aspects in a text in English under available class time was challenging to her. Another challenge related with her students' studying was the following: Prof. L found that "many of the very best students didn't really need a high grade to go on to their next step in life."

Her overall solution to solve her students' reading problems and lack of high motivation was "a combination of relatively light reading assignment and a large place for outside discussion." Although she acknowledged the existence of about 20% to 30% of the students who read the materials second hand relying on her interpretations and other classmates' opinions, she estimated that most students used group discussion for "social and intellectual feedback." Prof. L did not punish this group because she did not want to put pressure on the other students who conscientiously prepared for and enjoyed the course and benefited from the preparation process. She intended "to create more opportunity for the kids in the upper edge to really excel and get really high grades and really stand out and be excellent." She also created opportunities for students who were willing to achieve more by offering extra points to students who volunteered to present oral reports. Thus, oral reports were used to encourage students to achieve and get higher grades.

Challenges stemming from students' lack of time to reflect upon what they read & how she faced those. In addition to her students' English ability, Prof. L encountered a

second kind of challenge emanating from the students —their lack of time to reflect upon what they had read. Her students when in the lower-division had taken 20 hours of assigned courses plus non-credit required courses like PE. Her senior students in American literature class did not take as many credits, but she said, "They do get into a schedule of filling out their whole days. So, I don't think they really have time to reflect." To understand a text better, students were supposed to reflect upon what they were reading. However, Prof. L knew that her students usually lacked enough time to "think." She therefore designed her course requirements for them to have "sustained reflection" both in class and outside of class. She insisted that her students think on their own; she would not "baby-sit" them.

> That's why it'll take students a fair amount of time to prepare for my course. And you can't do it just before the exams; you have to think about the writers. That's why I say all those students who passed the exam did not prepare only the night before the exam. So, I mean even if they got over the reading from their classmates, they did it for the whole semester [laugh] . . . (int., Jan. 23, 2003).

Her students were expected to think beyond the literal because this was part of Prof. L's solution for their lack of time to reflect. She designed the course so that her students had to spend time to work on their own and struggled to think at some certain level.

Difficulties Emanating from Teaching Materials & What Prof L Did about Them

This sub-section includes three kinds of difficulties related to teaching materials that Prof. L reported along with what she did about those challenges. The first stemmed from earlier literature's lack of appeal to the students; the second, from the temptation of exciting themes; and the third, from shrinking credits for literature courses in the curriculum.

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Challenges stemming from earlier literature's lack of appeal to students & what she did about them. Prof. L reported how inaccessible the texts written in earlier era were for her students. In turn, students' difficulties challenged her.

> . . . There's something not about myself per se. I mean students all get excited about those slave-related writings . . . as compared with earlier writings, e.g. Puritan or even earlier 19th century writers like Hawthorne, . . . The writers before the mid term are more difficult in terms of density of their syntax, their vocabulary, and cultural background. And the stories they try to tell are not easy for students to understand. It's not something so elemental as cruelty and desire for freedom (int., Jan. 23, 2003).

Whether it was because of syntax, vocabulary, cultural background, or themes, pre-19th century and even earlier 19th century writings were simply difficult for Prof. L's students. In contrast, slave narratives were about themes that were more gripping and her students could understand them better.

Prof. L even told me an interesting story about how a girl student's concept about her teaching had changed because of the assigned readings. This student complained that she could not understand what Prof. L was talking about "in the first part of the semester" and she used this as her reason for why she had failed in the mid-term take-home essays. "At the end of the semester, she did very well on the paper and everything," and when Prof. L talked with her again, she told her, "You have changed. To tell you the truth, you have changed" (int., p. 13). Because those earlier writings were inaccessible for her students, Prof. L experienced challenge, too. This story indicated that inaccessible assigned readings could negatively affect students' study and even their concept of their instructor.

Prof. L acknowledged how challenging earlier writers could be for her students. Part of her solution was to allow slave narratives to shuffle in the timeline even though this

course used a roughly chronological order of readings. After the mid term, three weeks were intentionally allotted to slave narratives, reading that were far more accessible and more enjoyable than the literature written in the earlier era.

Prof. L was aware that both earlier American literature and British literature pre-18th century British literature were difficult. Difficulties in British literature before the 18th century were shown in the highly cultivated literary style, the older language, and remote cultural background (int., Jan. 23, 2003).

Her solutions had two parts —language and history. First, a readable reference book providing historical background was used; second, she used the modern English version to replace for the very old, and a "double text" format in which both the original and the "ugly sloppy 20th paraphrased" coexisted for students to study Shakespeare. However, the 18th century British literature was hard to deal with. It was still very difficult in terms of language, yet, the 18th century British literature had no substitute modern version or "double text."

Challenges stemming from the temptation of exciting themes & what she did about them. Some themes like the slave narratives were more appealing to her students. Prof. L encountered the temptation of providing something exciting to her students; for earlier writings, she could also find something similarly attractive to her students, emotional, sentimental novels, for instance. However, for her, maintaining "a tension between what the students can do and enjoy" and what she thought were "some kind of tradition" posed a challenge. In her opinion, those exciting themes could provide only "dumb dumb version" of American-ness. As an expert in cultural studies, history was always on her mind when she taught this course. Prof. L thus considered that representing

American-ness in a "historically responsible" way was important.

Her solution to the dilemma that she faced was to include some texts that were less exciting in the syllabus. Earlier less appealing writings were selected although she knew that they were not very accessible for her students. As she put it, even for her, an American, earlier American literature was foreign. As a foreign-literature course, her survey of American literature was to keep this "foreign-ness" "alive," and this "distance from us" was supposed to be part of the learning (int., Jan. 23, 2003) although she acknowledged that this "foreign" essence of American literature for her students existed all the time and was difficult to "sink in" the mind of her students.

As earlier literature was included in the syllabus, her students were thus expected to deal with more themes containing this foreignness. To help her students' thinking and learning, she treated the cultural history of the United States as a starting point for her students to understand social history of the world or Taiwan.

> . . . it can be only an abstract issue when talking about foreign literature, frankly. What matters is how much they see that what's important in Taiwan is based largely on historical and political factors that are grounded in Taiwan. That's more meaningful. I don't really care whether or not they understand the cultural history in the US, really, so long as it helps to understand the social history of the world and social history of their own points of origin, which I take to be in Taiwan (int., Jan. 23, 2003).

How "historical and political factors" decided what was important and less important was what cultural studies was all about. And Prof. L hoped that her students could apply the concept depicted in the text to examine things that had happened.

What Prof. L told me in the interview was in line with what I saw when observing her class: Certain cultural concepts under discussion functioned as starting points for her

students to ponder. For example, on Dec. 19, 2003, Xenia and Ariel's oral report was about the Mexican-American War, and they mentioned "Manifest Destiny." When they had finished, Prof. L further illustrated this concept, saying, "a belief that God wanted the United States to expand." Following this illustration were questions to stimulate her students to think, including one question for one of the reporters: "Xenia, how about Australia? Does something similar happen?" Xenia's parents had immigrated to Australia and she had come back to Taiwan to receive her undergraduate education. Xenia could not elaborate much on this issue. Then, Prof. L asked the whole class, "How about in Taiwan?" As this question elicited no specific answers, she recounted the history of Taiwan, saying, "My understanding is . . . And then more and more people from Malaysia. Then, ..." Her students did not manage to provide specific answers. However, I saw their attentive facial expressions and I knew that they were listening and thinking. For that day's analytic memo, I wrote: "I think it is interesting and thought-provoking that Prof. L illustrated 'Manifest Destiny,' a thinking/an ideology that Thoreau criticized and refuted in his writing. She also asked students to reflect on whether this concept has existed in other parts of the world, including Taiwan. If literature is for thinking training, then students need to think more about the place where they live based on what they read so that they can know themselves better from their understanding of their local environment."

Challenge stemming from shrinking credits for literature in the curriculum & what she did about it. All in all, Prof. L did not think her students had been given enough background to get a "well-rounded introduction to western civilization and culture because we don't have European literature" now. Before 1992, when Prof. L came to TI,

"European literature" and "History of Western Civilization" were required courses, but they were now electives. "Introductory literature courses used to be taught in four semesters," but now in only three semesters, she stated. Her students tended to lack cultural background knowledge such as of the Bible. She stated that literature instructors have encountered in traditional English departments in Taiwan in recent years that the space for literature in the curriculum has been shrinking.

To compensate for her students' lack of background knowledge of western civilization and culture, Prof. L introduced significant historical events through students' oral reports in class. In addition, in class when appropriate and necessary, Biblical allusions were illustrated clearly.

Sense of Achievement That Prof. L Reported

Toward the end of the interview, I asked Prof. L whether she experienced any sense of achievement from teaching survey courses of literature. She laughed and said, "I enhance my understanding of literature. I really like literature; I like talking about literature. I wish I wrote more; I need to write more" (int., Jan. 23, 2003). She seemed to me a professor who enjoyed teaching very much, perhaps more than research. She also expressed that teaching was "immediately rewarding" because she could see people right away. She said, ". . . when I looked around at other professions, I don't think any other profession drives my attention as much as this job. So, you know this is like my life talking."

Literature Study Experience on the TI Campus

This section depicts student participants' literature study experience, with a focus on

the difficulties they encountered. Sub-sections are devoted to the difficulties that various types of student informants encountered. To facilitate the descriptions of different students, sometimes the focus will be on an individual, while at other times, it will be on several students as a group who shared similar experiences.

The depiction is mainly based on data obtained from six out of the nine volunteer informants. The six students were selected for this presentation because they represented variety in their aptitude for or interest in literature, prior knowledge of reading of literature, and their English ability (based on impression that I obtained from the interviews). This group of student informants were as follows: TM1, TF1, and TM2, who were not interested in literature; TF2, who was not very interested in literature and yet had patience with the texts; TF3, who was a literature lover since childhood; and TF4, who was good at English and enjoyed analysis. In analyzing data obtained from these students, three major categories emerged: difficulties emanating from the text, difficulties emanating from the learner, and difficulties emanating from the curriculum and course requirements.

In each sub-section, following a discussion of each or each group of these students is what they did to address those difficulties. Two major categories emerged, using human resources and using non-human resources. Each sub-section then ends with the kinds of successes that student participants reported.

TM1, TF1, and TM2, Who Were not Interested in Literature

Most English majors entered the English department not because of their interest in literature. TM1, TF1, and TM2 were examples of such students. TM1 recalled that he "was so lousy at math" and thus dared not consider opportunities in the business-related

fields. He chose to be an English major because among the departments in the humanities, the English department held more job opportunities for him. TF1 specialized in science when in senior high school and had almost become a math major. She became an English major because English seemed to be an area that she enjoyed and she had started listening to English songs since junior high. As for TM2, he decided to be an English major because he "did so well in English" when in senior high; he entered the English department through *bao-song*, an alternative way for students who had some special talent in some areas. He and the other 39 people became English majors through this method in 1999. Thus, several major reasons led TM1, TF1, and TM2 to become English majors: first, English provided more potential for the job market; second, they were either interested in or good at the English language before they entered the English department.

In addition, in the interviews, they all voiced the opinion that they lacked interest in literature or/and the content of the texts selected in the required British and American literature courses. Thus, I am grouping them together.

Difficulties That TM1, TF1, and TM2 Encountered

Difficulties emanating from the text. This is an account of the following three: first, difficulties shown in difficult language and abstract themes or topics in the text; second, difficulties shown in genre effects; and third, difficulties shown in unfamiliar culture-related elements in the text.

(1) Difficulties shown in difficult language or abstract themes or topics. When the language or themes in a text was not accessible to the students, they could not understand what it was about at all. When the texts were beyond student readers' comprehension, they did not experience Langer's (1995) "stepping into an envisionment," a stance in

which a reader uses his or her knowledge and experiences, surface features of the texts, or any other clues to "form initial ideas" about what they read (p. 16). Reading profound poetry did not allow the three students to get ideas from the text.

During the third interview, TM1 voiced his opinion about those "profound" poems in American literature and British literature (ii).

> A lot of us didn't think it necessary to check up words in Emily Dickinson's poems, but we couldn't figure out what they want to tell us . . . Her poems are too difficult to understand. I mean . . . their deep meaning is simply too deep for people like us to understand. As for British literature (ii), Keats, Shelley or Wordsworth are simply so profound . . . After checking up the words they used in the poetry, I still couldn't get what they are about . . . . (3rd int.)

Whether those poems required TM1 to look up words in the dictionary, they were all equally difficult for him when their themes were not accessible to him. Figuring out "what they want to tell" was not easy for "people like us," as he put it. TF1, who was also present when I interviewed TM1, agreed with what TM1 said about those highbrow Romantic authors dealing with abstract topics. TM2 had a similar problem, especially with Shelley's and Keats' poetry because it was so difficult to make meaning out of reading (3rd int.).

Both TF1 and TM1 preferred authors such as Byron, as he was more accessible for them. TM1 said, "Byron's poems are different; at least, I can accept them and I can see things depicted in them in daily life" (3rd int.). He actually named Byron as the only author, who was appealing to him among all the authors covered in his British literature (ii). When the text was more accessible, both TM1 and TF1 reported their experience of Langer's (1995) "being in and moving through an environment"; they were "immersed in" the text-worlds and were "caught up in the sense or feel of a poem." TF1 named

Bryon's *Don Juan* as an interesting text because "its language is easy to understand and fun to read" (3rd int.).   TM1 liked especially Byron's "She Walks in Beauty"; he said if he came across some girl like that somewhere, he might write about her with "such a state of mind like Byron's" (3rd int.). What TM1 said actually also indicated that he encountered Langer's (1995) "stepping out and rethinking what one knows," a stance in which he used what he understood in the text-worlds "to add to his knowledge and experience."

When talking about the texts in British literature (i), TM1 said, "I don't have much feel for those texts" (3rd int.). That is, he was seldom in the stance of "being in" and "immersed in text worlds." TF1 also talked about the difficult language in British literature (i) and she did not think British literature (ii) was easier than British literature (i), either.

(2) Difficulties shown in genre effects. Concepts surrounding *genre* could be very general and not specific. Yet, at a very basic level, whether a reader can recognize or appreciate some literary conventions in a text, say, a poem or a novel is crucial. As Swales (1990) stated: "An appreciation of genre is a *necessary* if not *sufficient* condition for an appreciation of literature (p. 37; *emphases mine*).

Poetry was especially difficult, as TF1 repeatedly expressed clearly. She said, "I was hopeless when it comes to poetry" (1st int.). Poetry was "so abstract" to her (2nd int.). After the final exam, in the third interview, she told me, "Poetry often got me confused. Then, I have to rely on a lot of materials —the *Internet*, the professors' lectures, etc." TF1 could not appreciate what is in a poem, indicating that poetry as a *genre* made her unable to "step into an envisionment." Again, Langer's (1995) term seemed to apply.

Unable to deal with a poem, TF1 was more likely to form her ideas about it from professors' lectures or online information.

TM1 also talked about how *genre* effects from poetry reduced his understanding of the text. During the third interview, he said, "it happens often in British literature (ii), after I look up the meanings of unknown words in a poem, I won't get what the text is all about." As TM1 explained, "the texts can be arranged or twisted in such a different way, especially in poetry" (3rd int.). To borrow Widdowson's (1983) term, the "deviant language of poetry" made studying poetry difficult for him; "the *parole* of the poem . . . is not *parole* in any straightforward sense" (p. 10), and "the word takes on a different value in the unique frame of reference created by the internal patterns of language with the poem" (p. 11). Indeed, the "unique frame of reference" could not be obtained simply by looking up the words in the dictionary. To be able to understand a poem, a reader is expected to see how the words in it interplay with each other and to infer from the words in the text. The "internal patterns of language with the poem" are the key to meaning-making.

This problem did not seem to apply only to canon literature poetry for TM1. He reported that the "internal patterns of language" with nursery rhymes were difficult for him. In response to my comment that nursery rhymes could be nonsense and just for fun, smilingly, he said, "They are rhymes, but I can't get it because it's in English . . . I can't get how come this line is connected/related to the next" (3rd int.). Nursery rhymes in English seemed very "foreign" to him even though they were composed of easy words in a simple text. Even when no cultural allusions existed in a poem or nursery rhyme, he could not generate meaning out of them, as he failed to see how the different words were

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related to each other. As claimed by Swales (1990), "an appreciation of genre" (p. 37) is extremely basic for studying literature. Yet, it remains to be seen how long or how much training is necessary before a L2 learner is able to appreciate genre, especially poetry as a genre.

(3) *Difficulties shown in unfamiliar culture-related elements in the text.* Culture-related elements such as cultural, historical background, biblical and mythological allusions, symbols and metaphors caused difficulty. TM1, TF1, and TM2 mentioned especially problems with cultural and historical background.

TM1's experience was that when both register and cultural factors existed in the text, "culture issues should be the dominant factor" (3rd int.). Neither *The Catcher in the Rye* nor *Frankenstein* were easy for him to understand; as a first-year English major he read those two novels as outside readings for a Freshman English course. Of the former, he said, "There are words that those young adults speak, . . .You know different cultures also create difficulty." As a fourth-year student, he said, "I don't think they'll be easier now. I mean different cultures are presented there. I mean, I haven't consciously studied the culture presented there. I mean, I didn't consciously study the culture presented there, so difficulty would still exist." Problems with cultural-related elements in the texts persisted a lot longer than language problems with the text.

TM2 also sensed how his understanding or guesses about the significance of the text could be negatively affected by such external factors as elements related with foreign culture. He said, "I need to guess and I might not guess it right. I mean there are other things behind a text, e.g. the author's style, the influence from social cultural background, etc." (3rd int.). Similarly, TF1 shared the same concern; lacking foreign cultural

background shown in the texts decreased her confidence in interpreting the text (3rd int.).

In reading research, background knowledge or prior knowledge has been shown to be crucial for comprehension. Although understanding a literary text and an expository text should not be conflated with each other, knowledge of the target culture is also crucial when reading foreign literature. Yet, in reading foreign literature, it happens that L2 readers' knowledge of their own culture can hamper rather than facilitate understanding and thus interpreting, especially when their cultural background is very different from the target culture. As pointed out by researchers over the years, e.g. Steffesnen and Joag-Dev (1984), Bernhardt (1991), Jakobsen (1993), and Lantolf (1999), etc., the gap between L1 and L2 cultures can negatively affect reading. In addition, as further suggested by the latter two researchers, different cultures express ideas differently. Thus, target culture proficiency, including understanding how the ideas are expressed in a text written in a foreign language, is challenging for L2 readers. However, knowledge of the target culture does not seem to be acquired in a short time, perhaps not within the four undergraduate years of study. Target culture in foreign literature inherently hindered TM1, TF1, and TM2 from understanding the L2 text that they encountered in their literature classes.

Difficulties emanating from the learner. The following two parts will be discussed: difficulties shown in literary understanding and difficulties shown in motivational issues.

(1) Learner-related difficulties shown in literary understanding. TM1, TF1, and TM2 reported difficulties in coming to literary understanding, both in reading literary texts and writing about them. I will discuss the former first, and then, the latter.

When talking about reading literary texts, among the three, only TM1 mentioned his

lack of English proficiency as a source of problem. On the questionnaire, he indicated that he spent more than six hours per week preparing for each British and American literature survey course and he thought, "the major difficulty results from the reading load. I spend so much time reading" (3rd int.). He also admitted that as a fourth year student, "my language proficiency level doesn't really allow me to do this easily!" TM1 acknowledged that lacking English language proficiency was a major contributing factor for his difficulties in studying literature in English.

In addition, he also reported that he lacked independent reading ability and ability to see the underlying meaning, responses to literary texts in L2, and target culture understanding. His description of how he prepared for survey literature courses indicated that even basic ideas could not be obtained easily from reading the assigned texts. As he said, most of his preparation time went to previewing and discussing before class. He described how he previewed, saying, "Generally, we read each text assigned . . . we read it over and check the words that we don't know, and then, we'd listen to what the professor had to say." He said, "Most of the time, most of our discussion was made up of our questions." The time spent on preview did not usually bring him and his group members an understanding of what they had read. TM1 spent time previewing because he was required to do it, but this was not a good investment for his understanding. He and his group members thus relied on the professors as the major source for understanding the texts. TM1 did not think he could "get the texts" when he read them; what his professors said was an "accurate" or a standardized version. He could not trust group discussion because some interpretation from a discussion only came "sometimes," and even when that occurred, it was not so "deep" as what professors could reach. After previewing and

discussing with his group members, he did not review because he was not interested in literature. "I take notes in class and I go over them before the exams . . . Perhaps one week before the exams," he said (3rd int.). Notes taken from his professors' lectures in class were very crucial to TM1 when studying literature in the English departments.

Similar situations and dilemmas existed in what TF1 reported. As she stated, "even 'what's it about' was not really easy for me." Group discussion could not truly solve difficulties in her understanding. She said, "In American literature class, our group discussions are for previews; I would say only a few new ideas can come up" (1st int.). What she said indicated that even group efforts produced a very limited understanding of the text. She further admitted, ". . . I'm not good at associations of ideas . . . for example, the use of symbols is common, but I don't think I can think of them myself" (3rd int.). She emphasized that because "what I read is foreign literature, something I don't really have much background knowledge" (3rd int.). Without cultural background as support, she contended that what she thought about the text was "more likely to be wrong." Thus she had to rely on her professors. In summary, she lacked ability in independent reading and to see the underlying meaning, lacked responses to what she read, and lacked cultural understanding. Similarly, TM2 also expressed that now as a fourth-year student, he lacked independent reading and had difficulty seeing the underlying meaning of a text.

While talking about L2 learner-related factors and their difficulties in reading literature, the three revealed that as individual readers, they could seldom interact with the text. Among the three, only TM1 reported a lack of English language proficiency as an importance source of obstacle in studying assigned literary texts. However, even

though TF1 and TM2 did not mention their lack of English reading proficiency, they had serious problems in reading literary texts. Other factors in addition to language proficiency contribute to literary understanding. Even group discussions could not usually allow the three to understand what the text was about. To borrow Prof. L's term, they read the text "second hand," heavily relying on their professors for understanding although they were not necessarily lazy students who were reluctant to allot time to prepare for the course.

In addition, TM1, TF1, and TM2 reported difficulties shown in lack of disciplinary/domain knowledge. After more than three years of training in the English department, they did not think themselves experts in literature. TM1 reported, "I'm simply a senior university student, who hasn't read many texts in English and who isn't knowledgeable enough to write at a deep level" (3rd int.). Actually, he confessed he did not read many literary texts written in Chinese either. TM1 knew that he lacked enough world knowledge and literature-reading experience to be rated as an expert reader. TM2 mentioned in an email to me, saying that his study of literature had started from scratch since university, because when in senior high, he was "a stranger to western literature" and he did not read much literature of any type (March 15, 2003). TF1 reported that she read Chinese literature, but mostly modern Chinese literature. Lacking wide prior literature reading experience before university was a common problem shared by TM1, TF1, and TM2.

Furthermore, TM1, TF1, and TM2 all encountered difficulties in writing about literature. TM1 had difficulties understanding exactly what he was expected to do is dealing with one of the mid-term take-home essays. In fact, he misinterpreted the

question and could not write to the point. However, even when I pointed it out to him, he did not believe that he did not answer the question (he received a passing grade). He asked me to illustrate further by showing him some other writing example done by one of his classmates who had received a very high grade on that topic. His language proficiency problem seemed to extend to cause his difficulties in writing about what he read. When writing the interpretive essay, he added words for more than four pages simply to meet the minimum required number of pages. Yet all in all, he spent a great deal of time, conscientiously constructing ideas to make an attempt of the writing assignments. As for TF1, she did not usually suffer while writing because she said, "I never got problems with the structures." TF1 wrote the interpretive essay based on "what we had discussed in class" because she could not think of other new ideas. That is, although she lacked analytical responses to what she read, she did not experience the struggle that TM1 did in constructing ideas for the writing assignment. However, she did have a problem in writing enough details.

Similar to TF1, a lack of details and ideas were TM2's problems in writing. He thus wrote "based on the notes," as TF1 did. He said, "Perhaps because of this, I couldn't get a higher grade" (1st int.). In addition, TM2 could not organize his ideas well. He said that this problem had persisted since his first year at university (1st int.). As a result, his writing in the mid-term take-home essays did not allow him to get a passing grade. His interpretive essay did not turn out well either although he managed to get a passing grade.

Together, the three reported the following: First, they all lacked analytical responses to what they read. This seemed to be a reflection of difficulties in reading the assigned texts; it was difficult for them to go beyond what their professors said in class. TF1 and

TM2 wrote by synthesizing what the professors said in class. Second, their willingness to struggle with the assigned writing made distinctions among the three although they all lacked critical responses. TM1 was the one who tried his level best to construct new ideas for the assigned writing, but neither TF1 nor TM2 struggled much as TM1 did. Third, English language ability made the three distinct from each other. For instance, TM1 did not understand the question assigned in the writing assignment. Relevant to this is basic writing skill. As TF1 had no problem with the essay "structure," what she wrote could get by. Writing assignments were thus not so difficult for her, whereas TM2, who was not good at organizing ideas, could only manage to get a passing grade for the second writing assignment—his interpretive essay.

(2) Learner-related difficulties shown in motivational issues. In addition to lacking interest in literature or the assigned the reading of literature courses, TM1, TF1, and TM2 shared several other difficulties shown in motivational issues. First, literature study lacked congruity with their personal agenda. TM1 was preparing for entrance exams to go to graduate study in TEFL, TF1 was in a teaching-training program for secondary school, and although TM2 had not decided what to do in the future, literature was not part of his plan. They all had their personal agenda, in which, literature would not play a first priority role.

Further, a lack of confidence in their opinions about what they read was commonly shared among the three. TM1 claimed that he dared not express his own opinion because he was not confident about his ideas (1st int.). TM2 had the same concern. During the second interview administered after he handed in the interpretive essay, he said, "Only when I see the grade can I be sure if I was on the right track." As for TF1, she said, "I

simply think professors' ideas are better; what I think is more likely to be wrong."

Nevertheless, in terms of time investment, the three differed from each other. TM1 was very devoted to preparing for his future graduate study in TEFL, but he spent a great deal of time studying literature (3rd int.). However, TF1 was not willing to invest time on the assigned texts. Each week outside of class, the "maximum" amount of time that TF1 allotted to prepare for a literature course was one or two hours. Actually, TF1said that she did not really work hard for survey literature courses the semester when I conducted this study, because as a fourth-year student, enrolled in the teacher-training program, she was too busy. "I think personal factors are significant," she said (3rd int.). As for TM2, he said with a big smile, "I guess I'm both busy and lazy! . . . I mean I've got other things" (3rd int.). Yet, TM1 was the one who squeezed time from his schedule for literature study. It seemed that the more possible reason to account for TM1's time investment was individual difference in personality in addition to language problem.

Difficulties emanating from the curriculum and course requirements.

(1) *Shown in too many required courses at the same time.* As described in the "Method" chapter, at TI all fourth-year English majors had no choice but to take both British literature (ii) and American literature to meet the basic requirements for graduation. TM1 said that literature courses were a "burden" to him (1st int. & 3rd int.). TF1 also said, "I got so much pressure; I'm taking two survey literature courses together" (3rd int.). Likewise, TM2 stated he had too much to do with both of the courses (3rd int.).

(2) Shown in analysis as a course focus. Analysis as a course focus caused difficulties for them. TM1 thought it too bad that he was expected to analyze whatever he read. He considered interest was supposed to be a prerequisite for analyzing a text (3rd

int.). TF1 expressed, "I can appreciate what is in the text, but when it comes to critical comments, it's hard for me to come up with ideas" (2nd int.); during the third interview, she said the same thing (3rd int.). TM2 struggled with the two writing assignments; among the two, he failed the first one and for the second, he received a grade just a little over passing.

Analysis as a course focus is not easy for students. Using protocol methods to examine responses to literary texts, Hasson (1991) found that different kinds of understanding could occur. School literature tends to require students to express analytically, but this could pose difficulties for students who understand texts in a less analytical way.

(3) Shown in too challenging tasks. TM1 had difficulties completing the writing assignments for American literature class, which required him to think for a long time and think from his own perspective as well, because the topics were not directly discussed in previous class meetings. However, he mentioned that when answering questions for British literature (ii), the tasks were simply easier. When answering a 20-point questions, he said, "I write a paragraph for it . . . it was not about thinking training, . . . I can get a higher grade by writing more ideas about what was talked about in class." Actually, TF1 and TM2 also mentioned this difference in writing assignments, which in turn constituted different levels of difficulty. The difference in requirement that they mentioned was that while American literature was page-length or even longer essay writing, British literature (ii) was typically short-paragraph writing. TM1, TF1 and TF2 were experiencing some short-term difficulty. In L1 situation, Nystrand's (1991) empirical study showed that writing was the most notable instructional variable; he

concluded that to promote "depth of understanding," it was important to regularly assign written homework--paragraph- and page-length writing, not short-answer exercise (p. 153). In terms of long-term goals, the training that the three students received in American literature was supposed to be good; however, the problem was that they did not seem to have long-term goals for literature study.

What Did They Do to Address Difficulties?

Two categories emerged from data in explaining what these three students did to address the difficulties they encountered: Using non-human resources and using human resources. I will deal with the use of non-human sources first.

Among the non-human resources, two commonly used by TM1, TF1, and TM2 were: first, exam questions and other materials passed down to them by former students, and second, texts in Chinese translation. Those exam questions were used to prepare for exams, especially for British literature (i). Those questions actually worked for them in that course because several of them reappeared on their own tests. Texts in Chinese renditions were referred to as the students were unable to read the original texts, especially those texts assigned in British literature (i). Texts covered in that course were beyond their ability to comprehend although they knew that rendered texts could not be trusted. TF1 remarked, "I don't rely on them. Eventually, what the professors say in class would be significant" (3rd int.). TM1, TF1 and TM2 reported use of non-human resources especially for studying British literature (i). As the assigned readings were unreadable, materials offered by students senior to them, e.g. questions and texts in Chinese translation, etc., and online information were used for survival.

Furthermore, online information and analyses written in English were also used to

by-pass the texts included in British literature (i) by TF1 and TM2. Besides difficulty in understanding the original texts, another reason was that online materials could be located easily, as TF1 told me (3rd int.). As for English articles in the library, they seldom used them because it was "too time-consuming." TM1 did not take advantage of online information, perhaps lacking the strategy to use it or lacking English proficiency to deal with more reading in English, as he indicated earlier. For TM1, locating library material or online information was too much trouble and time-consuming.

Yet, now, as fourth-year students taking both British literature (ii) and American literature, the use of secondary materials did not really work. They still referred to Chinese translations when possible. However, questions given by former students and online information did not work well. Teacher requirements played a part because in both courses, students were required to study the text, not something about it.

As for human resources, the most common ones were their professors, students senior to them, and classmates. The professors were the three students' most important human resource as described earlier, although they all said they did not go to professors in person. What professors said in class counted for the most in their understanding of the texts. Moreover, students senior to them provided them materials for reference. Further, their own classmates mainly helped through peer discussions, e.g. regular discussions assigned for American literature or discussions before exams for British literature (ii).

The three students seldom used themselves as a resource to reread the difficult passages even though on the questionnaires, their responses did not tell exactly the same story regarding this. On the questionnaires, only TF1 indicated "2" signifying "not true of me" in terms of rereading the difficult passages of the texts when difficulties occurred;

TM2 marked "3," a neutral response, whereas TM1 marked "4," meaning "true of me." What TM1 and TM2 told me in the interviews did not show that they reread the difficult passages.

Kinds of Successes That TM1, TF1, & TM2 Reported

The three reported three major types of success from the required literature study: enhancing literary knowledge and devices, improving analytical ability, and cultural understanding. First, all three enhanced their literary knowledge and devices. TF1 now knew "the common writing characteristics" among authors in a literary period and literary devices as well. TF1's text-analyzing ability was "a lot better than before entering university." Both TM1 and TM2 could now use literary knowledge when watching a movie. Moreover, they improved their ability to analyze the text. Further, they all reported cultural understanding from required literature courses. TM1 emphasized, "I think there's definitely cultural understanding through literature." TF1 said that she did not know anything about either English or American culture when in senior high, but she could now "make distinction between those two countries." And TM2 considered himself better at cultural understanding than non-English majors.

TF2, Who Was Not Very Interested in Literature and Yet Had Patience with the Texts

Similar to TM1, TF1, and TM2, TF2 was not interested in literature, literature was not the reason why she entered the English department, and literature study lacked congruity with her personal agenda. However, she differed from the other three in that as an English major she was conscientious about literature study. Before entering the English department, she was both interested in the International Trade Department and

the English Department. And she said, "Oh, my preferred English Department was Applied English Department. I think that type of English Department will not require so much literature study. If our department offers that alternative, I'd choose Applied English." She was preparing for exams to go to graduate study in TEFL.

Difficulties That TF2 Encountered

Difficulties emanating from the text. In regard to difficulties pertinent to the text, TF2 shared the following with TM1, TF1, and TM2: difficulties shown in difficult language and abstract themes or topics in the text, difficulties shown in genre effects, and difficulties shown in unfamiliar culture-related elements in the text. She talked about some especially difficult themes or authors. For example, Emerson was not easy for her to understand. Actually, Emerson or Thoreau's essays were as difficult as poetry for her. She said, "those words in poetry or philosophical texts seemed to be chosen intentionally and each has its purpose" (2nd int.). When coming across cultural-related elements in the texts, e.g. Biblical and mythological allusions, she had to "wait for the professor's interpretation" (3rd int.).

Difficulties emanating from the learner. Like TM1, TF1, and TM2, she had difficulties shown in literary understanding, difficulties shown in non-expert related issues, and difficulties shown in motivational issues.

(1) Difficulties shown in literary understanding. She expressed that she lacked enough reading ability or proficiency to interact with literary texts in English. She said that she and her group members discussed the assigned reading only to end up solving "what's it about" and they had difficulty in grasping the underlying meaning of the texts. Further, similar to TM1, TF1, and TM2, TF2 lacked disciplinary/domain knowledge. TF2

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reported, "Before entering the English department, I never read any literature in English" (3rd int.).

In writing about literary texts for deeper understanding, she stated that under time pressure when writing her take-home essays and the interpretive essay for American literature, she had to write based on her limited understanding of what she had read. However, after interviewing her three times, TF2 struck me to be a very modest person who tended to rate herself as less able than her own performance indicated. She marked her own ability to write a paper/an essay in English as very negative —"2" on 1-5 likert scale, whereas reading was a "3." Her performance on take-home essays was average, but the grade that she received for the interpretive essay was excellent, more than 90 out of 100. Even if her self-ratings were true, her performance in terms of the grades that she received from the writing assignments suggested that she worked extremely conscientiously.

Overall, she needed to rely to some degree on professor's interpretation to deal with. difficult texts, given her lack of ability to understand the texts at a deeper level. She said, "We try to think, but we still need professors' interpretation" (3rd int.). In my estimation, she did not seem to rely on professors' expert interpretations as much as TM1, TF1, and TM2 did.

(2) Difficulties shown in motivational issues. In difficulties pertinent to motivational issues, in addition to a lack of interest in literature and a lack of congruity of between literature study and her future plan, similar to TM1, TF1, and TM2, TF2 also lacked confidence in her own opinions about what she read. However, what differentiated TF2 from those three informants was the fact that she did not lack interest in the content

of the assigned readings. For instance, she treasured the opportunity to have outside-of-class discussions for American literature and in-class discussions in British literature (ii). Group discussions allowed her to "get more ideas."

She was committed to literature study although she lacked interest in literature in general. She was willing to invest more than six hours per week to prepare for each of the two required literature and courses without reluctance. As an English major, she thought of the study of literature written in English as a duty or necessary evil. She said, "As an English major, I can't go out and tell people I haven't read any literature written in English" (3rd int.). TF2 spent a great deal of time on literature courses, but she did not think of such courses as a burden as TM1 did. Another possible reason was that although literature study gave her frustration, a negative sense of achievement, and neutral personal reward when she could not understand the texts, she could also sense that literature enriched her. Perhaps partly because of this reason, she was willing to invest so much time on literature courses.

Difficulties emanating from curriculum and courses requirements. The following four will be discussed: difficulties shown in too many required courses at the same time, difficulties shown in analysis as a course focus, difficulties shown in too challenging tasks, and difficulties shown in concern for the grades.

(1) Difficulties shown in too many required courses at the same time. Similar to TM1, TF1, and TM2, TF2 also mentioned the heavy course load. Talking about time constraint for doing the interpretive essay, she said:

> "I can't give up other subjects simply because of American literature, right? I've got English literature, too, and recently, we have been assigned a lot of readings. I have

got to read; otherwise, first, when he discussed the texts, I wouldn't be able to understand. Moreover, he asks people in class; I have to prepare for that!" (2nd int.)

Every week, there were assigned readings from both English literature (II) and American literature, and in both courses, the professors encouraged students to preview, which made TF2 feel pressured from both teachers.

(2) Difficulties shown in analysis as a course focus. In the American literature class, TF2 had to "squeeze out something" when she was "not inspired" (1st int.) or when "she didn't have any idea" (2nd int.). In the former situation, she was expected to write for the assignment at the moment when she lacked "personal involvement" with the text, if I use Hasson's (1991) term again. In the latter, she was also supposed to write analytically about "moving through an envisionment" when she was still trying to "step into an envisionment." Analysis as a course focus required her to write regardless of her stage of understanding of the text even though Prof. L allowed her students to have some choice of their own.

(3) Difficulties shown in too challenging tasks. TF2 mentioned challenges from the writing assignments. She described them most explicitly when talking about answering the essay questions in the American literature final exam. To understand her difficulties better, I asked her what essay questions she was asked to write about. "For example, one is about comparing different slave narratives, oh, I can't remember . . . I was also asked to talk about the text by Olaudah Equiano. That is a 18th century text. I am not familiar with it. I'm not confident to write about this question, so I skipped this one," she said (3rd int.)

TF2 had spent time writing in the interpretive essay on the nineteenth-century slave narratives and actually received a very high grade for it —more than 90, a grade beyond

her expectation. However, she gave up answering this essay question when required to relate the issues to an eighteenth-century text by Olaudah Equiano. Indeed, for her students to think on their own, Prof. L in-class lectures avoided discussing questions that she would ask her students in the exams. Students were expected to think more independently.

In the interview, Prof. L said, "I sort of drop a few hints" (int., Jan. 23, 2002), but her students might not have noticed those "hints." For example, she actually gave a hint to the question about Thoreau and Whitman, one other question that caused difficulties for TF2. On Dec. 19, 2002, Thoreau's *Walden* was that day's agenda, and in my observation note, I recorded that hint. I knew that she intended to ask her students to focus on the relation between Thoreau and Whitman. However, TF2 was surprised when seeing this question about Thoreau and Whitman in the exam, either because she did not sense the importance of the sentence "I want you to see the connection between Thoreau and Whitman" or because she did not pay enough attention to it. Perhaps this was partly due to the fact that Prof. L made that statement only several seconds before the class was over. That hint just slipped by and it was no wonder the writing tasks were challenging.

(4) Difficulties shown in concern for her grades. Literature as a school subject requires that a grade be assigned based on a student's performance, mainly what he or she has written. TF2 stated,

> Well, I know Prof. L would accept what we write if we could support the ideas. I guess I was afraid that I couldn't write in a well-rounded way. I was afraid what I wrote would not make sense to her, and then, she'd highlight that with a question mark. I was not confident and I was afraid I might not be able to answer to the point. You know, when that happens, I won't get a good grade (1st int.).

When doing the writing assignments, TF2 experienced many worries about grades.

What Did She Do to Confront Difficulties?

Here is a presentation of two sub-categories representing what TF2 did to address her difficulties: using non-human resources and using human resources. In the use of non-human resources, the way that TF2 studied British literature (i) was similar to TM1, TF1, and TM2; they all studied for exams. Similar to them, TF2 studied exam questions given by students senior to them and texts in Chinese translation in order to pass the exams. Thus, they bypassed the literary texts that were too difficult to comprehend. As a fourth-year student, TF2 had a different experience from the previous year's study of British literature (i). Translation was for reference as a reading aid. She could read the original texts to a certain extent although she still "got stuck" and was unable to read a poem as an "intact" whole by herself. The other non-human, but less used, resources were references written in English, such as Encyclopedia.

In terms of her use of human resources, she shared with the other students a reliance on professors' lectures for understanding the assigned texts and on students senior to provide reference materials. She had group discussions with her classmates. As a fourth-year student, she would exchange ideas with other classmate and she reported engaging in more thinking about what she was reading this year (3rd int.).

What really made her different from the three students I first described was that she used herself as a resource. Above all, she reread difficult passages frequently and had patience with the texts. She reread the difficult passages even when previewing. Actually, she spent so much time on preview that she said she seldom had time to review. Furthermore, she showed a strong willingness to improve her abilities to study literature.

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That is, she considered what she needed to do about her difficulties taking a long-term perspective rather than short-term concerns like "how to pass this course." In order to know more about factors that caused her difficulties, she asked me questions about my past literature reading experiences after we finished the third interview. As I remembered, before we could finish talking, the cafeteria where I interviewed her was supposed to be closed because of shorter opening hours in winter break. On that cold day, we went out, shivering and talking, and in the chilly January air, continued to exchange our experience in literature study.

Kinds of Successes That TF2 Reported

TF2 experienced three major types of success: gaining target cultural understanding, enhancing the ability to appreciate and analyze the texts, and improving her language skills. First, like TM1, TF1, and TM2, she obtained target cultural understanding. Second, she considered her ability to appreciate and analyze the text was improved, too, "Even though I still can't get much from those philosophical writings, at least I've studied them and thought about things at a deeper level" (3rd int.). She also said she had become "more sensitive to what she read" (3rd int.). Third, British literature [British literature (i) excluded] and American literature enhanced her English ability —writing, speaking, listening, and reading.

TF3, a Literature Lover since Childhood

TF3 was interested in literature and was an avid reader; she had read extensively since childhood. Actually, she told me that she read extensively, anything that was accessible to her, not just literature. Before entering the English department, most literary

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texts that she had encountered were in Chinese, either Chinese literature or western literature in Chinese translation. She loved literature very much, and she considered herself very good at literature.

However, during the three interviews, she complained about her own English ability all the time, especially English writing. Even before the first interview when I called her to confirm the time to meet and to tell me about her mid-term take-home essay writing, she mentioned that she had been undergoing some "psychological journey." I asked her to talk about that when I met her; she told me a long story about her struggle with English and English writing, which started before she entered the English department.

She considered herself to be good at Chinese writing. She was a creative writer in Chinese and showed me her recent pieces, a combination of poetry and prose. Her creative pieces were crisp, full of thought and allusions. In addition, she struck me to be mature and thoughtful during the interviews. When she talked, she was so eloquent that she seemed to talk without stopping, or taking a breath. At the end of January 2003 when I interviewed her the third time, she was applying for admission to some creative writing program in England.

Difficulties TF3 Encountered

The following depicts the two sub-categories she reported: first, difficulties emanating from the text; and second, difficulties emanating from the learner. TF3 reported no difficulties emanating from curriculum or course designs.

Difficulties emanating from the text. TF3 reported: first, difficulties shown in difficult language and abstract themes or topics in the text; and second, difficulties shown in unfamiliar culture-related elements in the text.

(1) Difficulties shown in difficult language and abstract themes or topics. The topics and readability in terms of language in the assigned texts caused difficulties for TF3 as they did for the other students I have described. For example, they all read texts in Chinese translation when studying British literature (i). "Weird words" in the text influenced TF3, determining if this literature lover would read. Even for British literature (ii), a course taught by a professor whom she admired, she said, "when the weird words can't be found in the dictionary, I lose my intention to read."

(2) Difficulties Shown in Unfamiliar Culture-Related Elements in the Text. In unfamiliar culture-related textual elements, what troubled TF3 most was when the content reflected biblical background. She said, "I'm not a believer in Christianity, so when some symbols or content in the texts have elements of Christianity, it can be difficult for me." Other elements like symbols and metaphors related to the target culture did not cause so much trouble for her because when those occurred, she could still generate her ideas about those texts. As a child, her contact with Greek mythology in Chinese translation also enabled her to "recognize" mythological allusions (3rd int.). She did not lack responses to the text although they were strikingly different from the intended audience.

However, her professors' guidance was necessary for her. She acknowledged, "I think the professors have read more than we have, so their understanding of the texts should be deeper. My understanding is one thing. I take what the professors say in class seriously." She repeated, " . . . If we can reach the middle of the journey, the professors can guide us to finish the journey." Trust in professors' expertise in reading and interpretation was common among all the participants.

Poetry as a genre did not cause her particular trouble, perhaps because she was willing to deal with it, or because she had read extensively since a child. She said, "I like stories, novels, too. Poetry, well, I enjoy poetry, too" (3rd int.).

Difficulties emanating from the learner. The following dimensions emerged from the data:

(1) Learner-related difficulties shown in literary understanding. TF3 reported her lack of English language proficiency as the most serious obstacle to her study of literature. Although she considered herself to be good at literature in general, literature courses in the English departments required her to read texts written in English and this was challenging to her, as she was not very confident in her own English reading ability. "I have never trusted my ability in reading English . . . ," said she (2nd int.). During the third interview, she further claimed that the difficulty in survey literature courses for her came from "language problems." Of the participants I interviewed, TF3 was the one who complained the most about her own English ability. She said she encountered average "more than 30 unknown words on a page," a significant obstacle to her reading.

However, she did in her response to what she read. Culture-related metaphors that could be used differently were difficult, but she said that she could often generate her own interpretation. For example, I asked her how she read a Dickinson poem containing a "robin" and "daffodils" as important symbols. Prof. L had just discussed this poem several days before my third interview with her.

> I didn't know much about robins. But as for that daffodil thing, . . . we had daffodils in Wordsworth's poem in British literature (ii). . . So, for me, daffodils are happy flowers. [laugh] Daffodils are shuei-xian-hua in Chinese although I didn't know when they blossom during the year. But basically, the setting is about happy things and joy; I mean birds and flowers are there in the poem. In Chinese, we say

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niau-yu-hua-xiang. [birds singing and flowers radiating fragrance, a joyous scene in spring] (3rd int.)

Her literary knowledge gained from other literature courses or the repertoire she had accumulated over the years helped her interact with what she read. Her extensive reading experience since childhood allowed her to associate what she was reading with other texts that she had read previously. She commented later, "The connections just come up naturally." Her childhood reading experience allowed her to see inter-textuality (3rd int.). What she reported here indicated that when reading the Dickinson poem, she experienced at least two "stances"--"stepping into an envisionment," forming ideas, and that of "moving through an envisionment," taking "new information and . . . use it to go beyond" the literal meaning (Langer, 1995, pp. 16-17). However, her responses or interpretations were different from the intended audience of the readings. As an EFL learner, her "intuitive response" to a text was more inclined to be wrong, because of unfamiliarity with the target language and culture (Qian, 1993, pp. 146-148).

Furthermore, TF3 had much to say about difficulties in English writing. In the first interview, she reported a long story about her struggles with English writing since her first year in the English department. Forced by her father to choose English as her major, she felt she was studying English from "scratch." In senior high, her English was at such a low level that she "seldom passed any exams." As an English major, forced to take literature courses, her struggles with the English language were evident not only in reading but also writing about literary texts.

Her extremely good ability in Chinese writing did not benefit her English writing; rather, it seemed a barrier for her English writing. English academic writing for her was

like some "formula" that she hated. It had been difficult for her to follow the "structure" of English writing. For example, as a fourth-year English major, she was likely to write an extremely long first paragraph; she wrote more than one page for the first paragraph of her seven-and-half-page interpretive essay.

In addition to her problem with structure, TF3 composed in Chinese and lacked expressions in English. In the second text-based interview, when talking about her interpretive essay and drawing an outline to show me how she had thought before she wrote, she told me, "I don't start writing till I have thought a lot . . . I give a lot of thought to the body part —the middle three paragraphs . . . I always think in Chinese." Her thinking in Chinese "always" led to problems in English writing. For example, she gave me permission to read her interpretive essay, and I saw in it many excellent, well-thought-out ideas, but she expressed those ideas in Chinese-like English sentences and ignored grammatical and sentence structures. I found that I had to read it several times to understand what she intended to say. When I asked her about some sentences that baffled me and asked her if she ever considered editing them, she laughed and said, "This type of sentence is produced because of my Chinese way of thinking. Don't you think this is a perfect sentence if I translate it into Chinese?" The combination of her good command of Chinese and her poor English ability produced a disadvantage for her English writing. She was full of ideas but figuring out how to express them through the right form was challenging for her.

Her struggle with the English format had persisted for years. In the first interview, she told me that she did not revise after writing a paragraph because she did not have patience with "a long passage in English." Her rewriting while writing had nothing to do

with any writing strategies. She avoided looking at "such a long passage in English." She could not make herself get used to the English writing format.

All in all, what she wrote in the writing assignments was rich in ideas but not expressed in an organized fashion. Her ability to think at a deep level showed in not only the way she talked but also in her writing. When she told me how she thought before writing the interpretive essay (indeed there were excellent ideas), I was impressed that she could think so much and so deep about the issues that she intended to discuss in various intertwined ways (2nd int.). Several of her classmates whom I interviewed expressed that she was good at thinking and literature.

(2) Learner-Related Difficulties Shown in Motivational Issues. TF3 was a very motivated learner in the required English and American literature courses. Yet, this literature lover would lose her motivation to read when the content of a text was unattractive to her. When reading those texts covered in British literature (i) in available Chinese translation, she strongly expressed her aversion to those stories. They were "so dumb," "so macho," and so "weird" to her. She jokingly critiqued the characters and the plots of some of the texts. For example, she told me that she tried whatever she could but could only associate the Green Knight in *Sir Gawain and Green Knight* with the green monster (Green Giant) a can of corn.

No difficulties emanating from the curriculum and course requirements. TF3 reported no difficulties related with curriculum and courses requirements. Unlike most of her classmates who complained about too much literature in the English department, literature's significant status in the English department was a good thing for her. Literature for her had no national boundary; generally speaking, she enjoyed the assigned

texts in the required literature courses so much that she said, "Reading literature in a literature courses and reading it in private are no different at all." Moreover, unlike some classmates, for instance, TF2, who was very concerned about the grades, literature courses allowed TF3 to get higher grades than other courses that were solely devoted to language skills.

What Did She Do to Face Difficulties?

Two subcategories will be presented here; one is use of non-human resources, and the other, human resources. TF3 seldom used non-human resources and the major reason was her English language problem; "I lack reading ability in English. After reading other people' s opinion, I won't have time to read on my own," said she (1st int.). In the third interview, she expressed that secondary sources are very often written in English, requiring her to read in English, exactly what her English ability did not allow her to do. As a result, if she could, she preferred reading the original texts themselves.

When the texts such as those included in British literature (i) were not readable at all, she by-passed them, just as TM1, TF1, TM2, and TF2 did, by using the texts in Chinese translation and preparing for exams based on the exam questions available from students senior to her. TF3 claimed that she read translations all the time when studying British literature (i). When the texts were unreadable, no English reading occurred; texts in Chinese translation were what she read. In addition, "In British literature (i), so often the old questions were tested, so I never really studied any text, I brought the textbook to class, but I read something else . . . I didn't preview or study later, but only studied before the exam" (1st int.).

As a fourth-year English major taking both British literature (ii) and American

literature, she still read Chinese translations as a reference, but she said, "I don't always trust what's translated, . . . I'd trust myself usually" (3rd int.).

When encountering difficulties in reading, TF3 preferred to use human resources. She would consult either her classmates or her professors. Professors as human resources for her were not restricted to their lectures in class. Just after observing two times in Prof. L's class, I noticed that TF3 talked with Prof. L during the breaks. Moreover, for texts that made reference to Christianity, she would consult one of her Christian classmate (3rd int.).

Most of all, TF3 relied on herself as a resource. When reading, she was "thinking all the time." She patiently worked through the texts that she liked, and at the same time, she knew that some understanding of certain ideas might not come to her immediately. For the texts that she enjoyed, she tackled all the difficulties related with them (3rd int.). It is worthy of noting special note was that she was thinking about enhancing her reading of literature by reading more philosophy, an area in which she did not have a solid knowledge base. Similar to TF2, TF3 also thought about how to solve reading difficulties using a long-term perspective.

Kinds of Successes That TF3 Reported

Three major categories will be presented here. The required literature courses benefited TF3 in: improving her ability in analyzing the text, gaining humanistic influence, and enhancing her cultural understanding. First, she received training in thinking from the required literature courses and thus her ability to analyze the texts improved. This allowed her to have her "current reading and thinking ability" (3rd int.). Further, this training in thinking affected her life in the sense that literature can have a humanistic influence on individuals (Kramsch, 2000). "English and American literature

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are means of thinking for me," and studying English and American literature allowed her to see farther and further and helped her "know better about how to make choices in life" (3rd int.). She thought of literature as a representation of life. Moreover, she gained target cultural understanding--western people's "different ways of thinking," resulting in different attitudes and concepts as shown in the text.

TF4, Who Was Good at English and Enjoyed Analysis

With regard to her contact with literature before university, TF4 was totally opposite of TF3; while TF3 read extensively, both literary and non-literary texts, TF4 seldom read any literary texts. Further, in contrast to TF3, who stated that she wrote based on Chinese structure, TF4 used English structure even when she wrote in Chinese. She said, "I think when I write arguments in Chinese, I totally use the structure of English writing! A thesis statement, and a topic sentence, etc."

In addition, she mentioned her interest in history and in comparison and contrast as a way of thinking about her world. Those two kinds of interest were significant for her literature study and were relevant to solving difficulties that she encountered in her study of literature.

Difficulties That TF4 Encountered

TF4 reported difficulties emanating from the text and difficulties emanating from the learner. While the former was related to her interest in history, the latter came from her interest in comparison and contrast. No difficulties emanating from the curriculum and course requirements were reported; instead, she reported benefiting from the systematic design of the curriculum. For example, she stated she had learned a great deal from

comp-oral classes and European literature course; she learned different strategies for literature study.

Difficulties emanating from the text. There were three types of text difficulties reported by TF4.

(1) Difficulties shown in difficult language and abstract themes/topics in the text. TF4's interest in history brought her advantages and disadvantages in her study of British and American literature. On the one hand, it allowed her to see difficult texts from a different angle; difficult language in the text was not a problem for her. For example, her strong interest in history gave her advantages when she studied survey courses of literature. When expressing her opinions about British literature (i), she said, "I think the archaic language can be interesting. The chronological order can, um, how to put it, um, can offer some sense of the old culture" (3rd int.). She continued, "I think history long ago is interesting . . . there is something mysterious in British literature (i)." While most people thought the "archaic language" in the texts in British literature (i) to be unreadable, TF4 approached it with zest. Further, British literature (i) provided "some sense of the old culture" and "something mysterious" for her to relish whereas other students often studied texts in Chinese translation simply to pass the course.

On the other hand, her strong interest in history somehow restricted the themes or topics in the texts that she could handle or enjoy. In the very beginning of the first interview, she said directly, "I don't like poetry at all," especially poems "dealing with only personal thinking." She continued, ". . . I prefer themes combined with history, . . . I also like themes related with social reality. That's why I like Blake's poetry; it reflected Blake's time . . . Texts containing too much about personal things, well, like poems by

Wordsworth, are nothing interesting to me" (1st int.). Actually, any author or text that she mentioned as favorite somehow reflected social reality (2nd int.). It was not difficult for me to understand when she said Emily Dickinson's poetry was especially difficult for her (3rd int.), as this author did not really write anything reflecting her time. TF4 stated, ". . . Only when the texts are related with society can I have some feel for them. I think historical background helps me interpret literary texts, but I can't understand texts not related with society" (3rd int.).

Although she said, "historical background helps me interpret literary texts," it seemed that she was nearly imprisoned by her need to know the target culture in order to have a literary response. What she said was unusual for a L2 reader, who would more likely to be imprisoned by his or her own L1 culture. She read history to go along with her literature courses; "I usually read a lot of other things before I really get to the text itself" (2nd int.). In sum, her difficulties in foreign literature study seemed to be related to restricting herself only to topics/themes related with social reality, and limiting her interpretations of text by how it related to the target cultural and historical background.

(2) Difficulties Shown in Genre Effects. Different genre caused TF4 different kinds of difficulties. She said, "I can't get what poetry expresses. In fiction, the passage goes sentence by sentence, . . . In a poem, there's no thesis statement, and I don't know where the key words are located" (3rd int.). She seemed to read a literary text, even a poem, as expository writing. This caused trouble for her. Creative writing, especially poetry, does not necessarily offer a "thesis statement" or "coherence" (3rd int.). She could not understand what Thoreau was writing, she said, "I simply couldn't know where his thesis is . . . his writing is so difficult for me" (2nd int.). Widdowson (1983) stated that poems

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deny "the linear nature" of discourse (p. 12), and this troubled TF4 greatly.

Yet, there signs was that TF4 was learning. She said, "Prof. L sometimes adds a subject or verb to make verse lines a sentence. This makes me understand what the poem is about . . . I don't study a poem as I did before . . . I try to compose some sentences out of a poem" (3rd int.), indicating that she no longer read a poetic text linearly. That is, she had learned the process of interpreting from listening to Prof. L's in-class interpretation of poems. TF4 was the only one who explicitly reported "how" Prof. L interpreted a poem; as a strategic learner, TF4 was learning interpreting strategies. As she was now conscious about using metacognitive strategies to achieve an interpreting purpose, she was on her way to becoming an expert reader, as suggested by Schallert (1991).

(3) Difficulties shown in unfamiliar culture-related elements in the text. Symbols and historical background were barriers, and similar to TF3, TF4's "intuitive response" to a text when previewing before class could be totally different from Prof. L's interpretation in class (3rd int.).

Difficulties emanating from the learner. As a learner, TF4 did not seem to report many difficulties that were based in her own background or approach.

(1) Learner-related difficulties shown in literary understanding. In literary understanding, the only two things she mentioned were a lack of ability to see the underlying meaning of a text and a lack of target culture understanding. For the former, she cited "Ode to a Nightingale" as an example. She said, "When I read it, I simply thought the author was sad about his life in this world and listening to the bird singing . . . After the professor's interpretation, I was moved and understood the combination of the bird's singing and his sadness" (3rd int.).

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Her professor's interpretation brought her into the text-world so that she understood this poem more deeply. As for her lack of target culture understanding, part of her countermeasures was to study the historical background for the literature. She said, "I always . . . I take a look at what happened in history first, and then, at an author's background. And after that, I study texts written by this author" (3rd int.).

She considered her English reading proficiency to have improved as a student in the upper division and she was thus better prepared for the required English and American literature courses. Lacking prior literature reading experience before university did not cause her difficulty for literature study. Before university, she said that her "knowledge of literary devices . . .was near zero!" and she "didn't have any feel for literary texts" (3rd int.).

However, she considered herself good at analyzing the texts, a mental exercise that she enjoyed. Her interest in analysis and comparison and contrast was what she did in private, and it was also emphasized in an elective literature course that she had taken, "European literature." ". . . I took European literature last school year and the professor often asked us: "What you think you're reading? What texts have you read before that seem to be similar to this?" I guess I thus thought about that very often" (1st int.). It seemed that she started with analyzing a single text, but then she looked for more challenge to compare and contrast two texts. During the third interview, she said, "Perhaps, I've got a mind for analysis; it's a matter of aptitude" (3rd int.).

She approached literary texts with this "mind for analysis":

. . . I know some people say they can sense the text strongly, but they can't write about it . . . I mean some people can be touched by a text emotionally! But I emphasize things like, "Oh, what a good writing technique!" [laugh] "Oh, this text

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reflects the author's time!" I guess I'm more rational! . . . If you want to be moved, you're supposed to know how well it was written! (3rd int.)

Her classmates' lack of intellectual analysis even when they may have been involved with a text "emotionally" is exactly what Hasson (1991) pointed to based on an empirical study of L1 readers reading L1 texts. Students who cannot "write about" what they read encounter difficulties when taking a literature course.

In addition, TF4's interest in and ability in analysis made her very different from TM1, TF1, TM2, and TF2, who lacked either ability to critically analyze the text or ability to organize ideas. Analysis as a focus in literature courses was not a problem for her.

She said, "I think I am good at analyzing the text." She added, ". . . I look for clues and hints from the text to support my ideas . . . When I talk with my classmates in group discussion, I'd say what I think and let them know I'm not sure. They don't know if what I think is right, but they don't think as much as I do" (3rd int.). She could analyze the text and effectively communicate her opinions in both oral and written form. Although her analysis or interpretation might not be workable, she was not hesitant to express what she thought. In class, she was one of a few students who habitually responded to Prof. L's questions. Her ability in analysis and English seemed to be the causes. She reported no difficulties in English writing. She seemed to have learned academic writing in a smooth way, and she received the highest grade from her take-home mid-term essays--96 out of 100.

(2) Learner-Related Difficulties Shown in Motivational Issues. TF4's only motivational issues were time constraints because she was a double major in English and

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sociology. She developed her interest in literature in the English department; however, she needed five or six hours per week of preparation time only for the American literature course, because Prof. L designed the course requirements for her students to have "sustained reflection." Under time constraints, for TF4, the amount of time for each literature course depended on professors' requirements. In the British literature (ii) class, because she was not required to preview and review, she only studied just before the exams. The way she studied British literature (ii) was similar to how she had studied British literature (i).

What Did She Do When Encountering Difficulties

This category is further divided into use of non-human and human resources.

Use of non-human resources. In use of non-human resources, TF4 used online information most often for both historical background and "materials related with the texts" (3rd int.). She described, "Things like study guides, study questions, etc. Well, . . . I usually read summaries, and I seldom read analyses and study questions. After reading some summary/summaries, I can read the text myself" (3rd int.). She said that previously she had read information related with historical events or the author's background before going to the text. Yet, what she said here indicated that after reading historical background, she usually read summaries before reading a text itself to study a text "more smoothly." She tried to read the original texts herself, and she used Chinese translations to by-pass the texts only when she did not have enough time to do the reading in English.

She relied on secondary sources to solve her difficulties in study, and she was strategic enough to use specific types of materials or resources in certain situations. For

instance, "study questions" were referred to only when she could not understand what she read. Later, I realized one secondary material that she used often was online *Sparknotes*. She said, "I usually read the summary, and then I go to the text itself. But [laugh] if I don't read the original text and I don't have time to read it any more before the exam, I'd read the analyses" (3rd int.).

She did not tell me how often she read "analyses" without reading the original texts though. She referred to different secondary materials all the time. ". . . when I can't understand the text, I'd look for secondary sources. With the help from secondary sources, I might be able to get it; otherwise, I'd wait for the professor's interpretations in class" (3rd int.). What she said about her strategic use of non-human resources seemed to indicate that her English proficiency allowed her to refer to more secondary materials than her classmates could or would. Actually, she herself rated her ability in writing and reading English as high. She did not think it time-consuming to read those critical comments in English. "I memorize the ideas, and oh, how come it's time-consuming?" She said she only took the parts she needed (3rd int.). She seemed to be more strategic than other students when using these critical opinions and she seemed to know how to use them in a correct way. As pointed out by TM2, critical comments did not work for British literature (ii) exams for him. He received an extremely low grade in the mid-term by writing points taken from literary critics.

Moreover, TF4 also used short-entry Chinese critical comments for preparing the exams. She said:

> . . . I'd take a look at books written in Chinese, such books like: A collection of
> Critical comments on English and American literature. In that kind of books, they
> say what status an author has in literary history . . . For example, I read a statement

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like, um, Whitman is a patriotic poet. And then, I reflect upon what I've studied about Whitman and think about how come he's a patriotic poet! (3rd int.)

Those short passages about certain authors not only saved her preparation time but also provided her angles to reflect upon as she read the text.

In sum, she efficiently used secondary resources. In the beginning, historical background was used, and then a summary when it was available. Then, if she still could not get what the text was about, she referred to study guides. Before class, she relied on secondary materials and then waited for the professor's interpretations in class; she did not reread the difficult passages. In addition, she read English critical comments regularly. Before exams, she efficiently referred to short-entry critical comments written in Chinese to prepare for the exams.

Use of human resources. Her use of human resources was rare, limited to professors and herself. She seldom went to professors in person and she seldom worked with her classmates who were unlikely to finish reading on time (3rd int.). As for herself as a resource, she used her knowledge of historical background to "guess" the meaning of the text, visualized what it depicted, or turned herself into the author and continued to think. Moreover, she learned strategies from different professors. Thus, in literature classes, her professors' in-class interpretations were not simply for understanding the text; more importantly, she learned strategies for reading and understanding literary text.

Kinds of Successes That TF4 Reported

This category is divided into the following subcategories: first, training in thinking; second, cultural understanding. TF4 stated, "Studying those texts keeps me thinking all the time!" and "I think British and American literature helps me more in terms of

thinking. I actually emphasize analysis and thinking a lot" (3rd int.). In addition, she increased her cultural understanding, but said that this understanding came from her supplementary reading of historical background than from the literature itself (3rd int.).

An Analysis and a Summary of the Findings: Research Site I--TI

In this section, an analysis and a summary of what data collected at TI said will be provided.

An Analysis

Students at TI studying survey literature encountered obstacles from the texts, from themselves, and from the curriculum and course requirements. For this group of L2 learners, the literary texts in L2 were inherently difficult, according to data from both the questionnaires and interviews. Only TF4, who was strongly interested in history, found that the archaic English language with which these texts were expressed could be "interesting." Further, they all found the abstract themes and unfamiliar culture-related elements very difficult. Poetry as a *genre* was especially difficult for all students except for TF3, who had read extensively since a child and who somehow could enter the text-world of poems.

In the literature courses that the students were required to take before graduation, text difficulty was not a major criterion considered when teachers chose texts for their students. Texts considered to be significant in various eras were selected as these courses were chronologically arranged. For instance, in the American literature class, they were supposed to deal with earlier American literature, as Prof. L wanted to be "historically responsible" in text selection and thus included some early American literature, selections

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that were difficult and not very appealing to her students. As an attempt to help her students with these difficult texts, Prof. L paid close attention not to overwhelm them in terms of reading amount and interpreted some specific parts of the texts as well as making connections between literature and history.

Even though on the questionnaires, most students self-rated their knowledge of English grammar, ability to write papers/essays in English, and their ability to read English as good (Please refer to Table 4.7 again), the interview data showed that the students themselves tended to lack English language proficiency, ability in independent reading, ability to see the underlying meaning, responses to the text, target culture understanding, and domain knowledge of literary reading. All these could contribute to the students' difficulties in reading masterworks. Different types of knowledge and different learner abilities interacted with each other to affect their study of literature. Lack of responses was a common issue given the fact that different learners tended to be weak in certain abilities though perhaps a little stronger in others. For the minority who could respond to the texts, their intuitive responses were liable to be wrong. All in all, even understanding of what a text was about did not come easily for most of the students. Most students had difficulty in reading these texts and writing about them. As shown in both the results from the questionnaires and interviews, they all needed their professors to guide their response to the texts, although different learners seemed to have different levels of reliance on the professors' expert interpretation.

None of the students had become an English major because of an interest in literature. Yet, only those students who were interested in literature (such as TF3 & TF4) or who were good at analysis (such as TF4) reported no motivational struggles. For

example, more than 50% of students lacked intention to take more elective courses of literature in English before they graduate. Among the motivation-related issues, a special note must be made of the amount of time of study per week outside of class for preparation. As indicated on the questionnaires, more than 50% of the students indicated 5-6 hours or more than 6 hours of outside of class preparation. Various factors contributed to this trend. Different factors besides interest in literature determined time investment, such as teacher requirements and individual students' personal traits, schedules, or motivational orientation. First, Prof. L designed her American literature class in such a way that her students had to spend a longer amount of time than usual for reflection. Moreover, for some of the students (such as TF2), their motivational orientation influenced how much time they invested. They could spend time on literature courses without reluctance even though they were not interested in literature and literature was not in their career plans. As for double majors such as TF4, investing time on literature courses competed time with the many other courses. In addition, as shown in the interview data, although the students varied a great deal in their time investment, time investment was not concordant with text understanding. Most students' large amount of time investment in each British or American literature course coexisted with their difficulties in studying the masterpieces. Spending more time on the required literature courses did not necessarily alleviate the difficulties that the learner experienced. The quality of time investment counted and could vary with different levels of English language proficiency. For example, while TM1 spent a large amount of time, TF1 reported very limited time investment under the same curriculum and course requirements. TM1 was one of the students who complained about his English

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proficiency as a major cause for his difficulty in literature study.

In addition, the curriculum and course requirements directly caused students'
difficulties: too many required literature courses to be taken at the same time, analysis as
a course focus representing too challenging a task, and a high concern for grades. Only a
few students (TF3 & TF4) who were either interested in literature or good at English
reported no such difficulties. Required to take both British literature (ii) and American
literature at the same time as fourth-year students, four out of the six students reported
that such a course load was too heavy. Analysis as a course focus also affected literature
study, as the students were expected to analyze what they studied even though they
lacked a deep understanding of the text. Some even reported that they did not find any
text interesting enough to write about although they were allowed to choose a topic of
their own. Independent thinking was emphasized and the students were supposed to use
their own stances or perspectives from which to write. That is, students were expected to
go beyond the professor's interpretation and some questions or topics were not discussed
as thoroughly in class with an expectation that the students would then have more space
to explore. As most of them reported, such a task demand was too high for them as their
understanding of the text was likely to be limited and they could not go beyond their
professor's interpretation. Two of the six students (TF1 & TM2) reported that they wrote
based on notes taken from what their professor had said in class. Four of the six, with the
two who were interested in literature excepted, were concerned about their grades when
doing writing assignments although Prof. L graded their writings very leniently. Most
students felt no confidence in doing the writing assignments even though they usually
received passing grades and even though they had received three years of previous

training in writing, including essay writing. Prof. L seemed to want to be true to literature as a discipline. However, most of her students could not perform the tasks she assigned.

Nevertheless, the students tried as best they could to overcome the difficulties that they encountered. Taking pre-18th century British literature as third-year English majors, they could not even understand at a very basic level what the texts were about. The incomprehensibility of the texts combined with a lack of guidance to gain entry into the text made the students study exam questions that the professor had used in the past, read texts in Chinese translation, or use online critical comments and analyses if their command of English somehow allowed them to do so. Interestingly, only some students (10 out of 35 responses) honestly described on the questionnaires that they studied exam questions that the professor had used in the past as a preparation for the exams; however, such a compensatory strategy was explicitly reported in the face-to-face interviews by five of the six student informants. When the texts were so beyond comprehension, real reading could not occur, and the students studied secondary materials to pass their exams. Even those who were interested in literature engaged in these supplementary strategies. Students' pervasive use of texts in Chinese translation was shown in both findings from the interviews and the questionnaires. Texts in Chinese translation were commonly used although as three of the six students (TF1, TF2, & TF3) acknowledged, they were not a reliable source for understanding. The professor's tacit permission allowed students to pass the course without really studying the original texts. As some of the students explicitly expressed, several of the old exam questions for British literature (i) reappeared on their exam papers. Whether and how the students relied on secondary materials to combat or avoid difficulties in study depended on the readability of the assigned text, the

students' English proficiency (as so many critical commentaries were themselves in English), and also teacher requirements.

The students used human resources, including help from the professors, their classmates, and the learner himself/herself. All students needed their professors' interpretation for a deeper understanding of the text even though most students did not consult their professors in person, according to data from both questionnaires and interviews. Further, during the interviews, three of the six students who were not interested in literature did not use themselves a resource when difficulties occurred although some of them reported differently in their responses shown at different levels in the 1-5 likert scale. Further, only students who intended to study or who were interested in literature tried to make sense while reading. Moreover, only such students considered difficulties in literature study from a more long-term perspective. One (TF2) even asked me to share with her my own past reading experience. Whether the students had intention to study decided whether they would actually apply their eyes to the pages of the original text.

Thus, the students at TI were not in fact truly learning how to study for literature courses except for one (TF4), who was a strategic user of both non-human and human resources. When listening to professors, she learned "how" they interpreted, not just what they interpreted. That is, she learned "how to learn" and reported learning different strategies for literature study from different professors. Conscious learning of strategies may have been one reason why she was more successful in the study of literature.

Amidst all these difficulties, in the interviews, all six informants unanimously reported two kinds of success in their literature studies: improving their ability to analyze

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or think and enhancing their cultural understanding. Those were exactly the course objectives written in Prof. L's American literature course syllabus. Her ideals somehow seemed to be internalized in the mind of her students. Questionnaire findings also pointed to the fact that studying masterworks in English was a personally rewarding experience, giving most of this group of students a sense of achievement despite the tremendous difficulties that they encountered.

A Summary

Teacher Influence

By teacher influence, I am referring to the influence that the instructor had on whether and how students experienced difficulties in literature studies. Although the instructor could not change the readability of the texts herself, her influence was shown in students' understanding of the assigned readings, course requirements, and the kinds of success that students reported. No matter how she chose the texts, the readings were never easy for the students. The instructors' in-class interpretation thus became a major resource for students in coming to an understanding of the assigned texts. Prof. L's course requirements for analytical writing with an emphasis on independent thinking caused her students difficulty. And yet, they also reported that their ability to analyze and think and their cultural understanding increased from such literature courses. However, none of the students would continue the study of literature in their future.

Learner Characteristics

Features related with learners themselves such as learner characteristics, students' abilities, interest, aptitude, and motivational orientation, etc. constituted an important part

of difficulties the students encountered. Learner characteristics could not change the difficulty level of the texts, but they influenced the student learners' study of literature in various aspects. First, the students' English proficiency affected their reading of the texts and their ability to write about them, the amount of time they had to allot to study, and the secondary materials that they could refer to if they used them. Moreover, the students' aptitude toward or interest in literature was in accordance with their motivation for study, their tolerance for challenging task demands, and their attempt to solve reading difficulties, such as using themselves as resources for self-help. Other students who had less interest in literature may have been motivated to do well in their literature courses out of a need to be a good responsible student.

Curricular Requirements

Most students reported that being required to take two required literature courses at the same time was very difficult for them.

Negotiations with Regard to the Text, the Student Reader, and the Teacher

As mentioned above, directly involved in the difficulties that the students encountered was the teacher influence as exhibited in text selection, in-class interpretation of the texts, and the course requirements, which in turn presented crucial challenges to the instructor. The instructor thus continuously faced decisions about which masterworks to choose and negotiated with her course objectives and what her students could achieve given that these texts generally presented difficulties to the students.

In deciding how to conduct her course, various aspects pertinent to the text, the student reader, and the instructor herself all counted. Actually, during the interview, Prof.

L offered me vivid metaphors depicting her role of a "conductor" or "skillful tugboat," indicating that she knew that she could not completely control the way the course went. As Prof. L recognized, she could only try to "affect its course." She described what she did for her American literature course as follows:

> You have this big project, and you kind of messaging different angles. But you never can explore the whole thing, because it's not yours. Um, it's an arrangement between you, your students, and the material. I mean I'm, you can say, a director or a conductor . . .You know it's not something that I control all the parts, so all I've been trying to do is push a ball bigger than you down the road, and you kind of press it and make it kind of move here or there. You can't pick it up and move it somewhere all together. All you do is influence it. Or to use another metaphor —you are a small tugboat, and you're pulling a big ship. All you can do is affect its course, but you can't, well, of course, [laugh] you have to be a very skillful tugboat to move a ship. You know what I'm saying is that the course is always bigger than the teacher . . . (int., Jan. 23, 2003)

CHAPTER 5

LITERATURE TEACHING AND STUDY: RESEARCH SITE II--CI

This chapter reports what literature teaching and study was like on the CI campus, focusing on the difficulties that Prof. M and his students experienced. This chapter will start with a description of the research context, including the English department and its curricular requirements as well as Prof. M's British literature class that I observed. Following this is an illustration of how Prof. M designed his British literature class. Then, the findings from the study of the CI case will be presented: first, the questionnaire study at CI; second, the difficulties that Prof. M encountered and what he did to address those difficulties as well as his sense of achievements in teaching the survey course of British literature; and third, student participants' difficulties in studying survey courses of British and American literature at CI, what they did to deal with those difficulties, and the kinds of successes that they reported. The final section is an analysis and a summary of the findings of the study at CI.

The Research Context

The English Department and Its Curricular Requirements

According to online information (http://www.nchu.edu.tw/~foreign/e-intro.htm, retrieved on June 16, 2003), the English department at CI was established in 1968. Its major educational goal was to cultivate students' integrated talents and skills in foreign languages, primarily English. This goal was similar to that of TI.

A minimum of 136 credits was required to graduate for the undergraduate English majors at CI. Of these, 78 credits were from required courses, which could be divided

into university required course credits and "English Department Requirements" credits. The former consisted of 28 credits (from courses such as Freshman Chinese, Freshman English, history and social studies courses, Sun Yat-sen and Contemporary Thought, ROC Constitution, and general courses). The latter group of courses belonged to the "English Department Requirements," which totaled 50 credits and could be divided into four categories: (a) English proficiency training, (b) literature, (c) linguistics and language teaching, and (d) second foreign languages. Elective courses under those four categories were offered. Similar to TI, CI required its English majors in the lower division to take preparatory literature courses such as Introduction to Western Literature and Approaches to Literature in addition to English language training courses. For more information on courses under "English Department Requirements" (see Table 5.1 or (http://www.nchu.edu.tw/~foreign/e-undergrad-1.htm, retrieved on June 16, 2003).

Table 5.1 Courses under English Department Requirements at CI

	Course Title	Credits	Freshman		Sophomore		Junior		Senior	
			1st	2nd	1st	2nd	1st	2nd	1st	2nd
English Proficiency Training	English Composition (i)	4	2	2						
	English Oral Training (i)	4	2	2						
	*Language Lab Workshop (i)	2	1	1						
	English Composition (ii)	4			2	2				
	English Oral Training (ii)	4			2	2				
	*Language Lab Workshop (ii)	2			1	1				
Literature	Introduction to Western Literature	4	2	2						
	Approaches to Literature	4	2	2						
	**British Literature: The Middle Ages & 16th Century	3			3					
	**British Literature: The 17th Century & 18th Century	3				3				
	**British Literature: The 19th Century	3					3			

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Table 5-1 (continued)

		Credits								
	**British Literature: The 20th Century	3						3		
	**American Literature: Before the 20th Century	3					3			
	**American Literature: After the 20th Century	3						3		
Linguistics & Language Teaching	Introduction to Linguistics	4		2	2					
Second Foreign Language	Japanese (i)/French (i)/ German (i)/or Spanish (i)	6		3	3					
Minimum English Department Requirement Credits		50								
Graduation Credits		136								

Notes. 1. Courses marked with * required two hours of class meeting per week, while those with ** required four hours per week.   2. Students were expected to take at least 4 out of the 6 courses that marked with **.

British and American Literature Courses on the CI Campus

Again, before describing what the class sessions of Prof. M's British literature course were like, I need to note that some students enrolled in Prof. M's British literature class were also taking American literature course offered by Prof. C (a pseudonym) when my study was conducted. However, I focused on Prof. M's class sessions, the only ones I observed directly.

When observing Prof. M's class, I noticed that attendance was around 55 students at each class session (63 students were officially enrolled), a level that I considered good given the fact that this was a large class that met in a traditional classroom, rectangular in shape. Usually at the beginning of the class, it happened often that some students were unable to calm down; they talked without seeming to notice Prof. M's existence. Prof. M would use his microphone to speak loud enough to remind them that class had begun; however, he did not force them to stop talking. Only once or twice when it was very

noisy did he simply keep silent for several seconds, with his hands on two sides of his waists. This procedure seemed to work; students would stop talking, and then he could start talking. Prof. M was not in any way a domineering professor. I never heard him scold his students for being late even though it happened almost in every class session that several students, not exactly the same ones each time, would come in as late as 20 or 30 minutes after the beginning of class.

When I went to observe these class sessions, I found the following striking. First, I noticed that Prof. M interpreted the texts in great detail. His lectures were delivered in both English and Chinese. For example, he would illustrate parts of a text, e.g. a poem, in English and then he often translated what he had said in English into Chinese. Sometimes, he would add more humorous Chinese reflecting the mood or atmosphere of the poem. He seemed to be afraid that his students would be confused about what the poem intended to express. As an observer I sometimes felt bored because he explained texts in such detail, but I soon realized that this great level of detail seemed to be necessary. As I looked around, I saw that most students in class were busily taking notes, with a few doing things irrelevant to what was under discussion. Second, when appropriate or possible, Prof. M would play music to accompany the poems about which he had just finished lecturing. In the interview, he mentioned that he tried very hard to locate the lyrics because he thought audio-visual materials would supplement his lectures. Otherwise, he worried his lectures would be boring for his students. All in all, he did not put much pressure on his students, concerned always with the care of their psychological states.

How Professor M Designed His British Literature Course

This section illustrates how Prof. M designed his British literature course including course objectives and requirements, and the major texts covered during the time of my observation. According to Prof. M, the major objective of this course was "literature itself." He explained what he intended to achieve: "not knowledge about literature, but what's presented in the texts —different things in life. My ultimate goal is literature, not language through literature" (int., Jan. 14, 2003). His main goal was to make students interested in the content and be influenced by it. He said, "What I hope to achieve is to make them interested in what they read. And I hope those texts can influence them in their life" (int., Jan. 14, 2003). Both in our first meeting (Nov. 15, 2002) and in the later longer interview (Jan. 14, 2003), he emphasized that he did not teach to "prepare students for entrance exams" to go on to graduate study in literature.

The grading method that Prof. M used was as follows: class attendance and participation counted for 10% of the semester grade, the mid-term exam 45%, and the final exam 45%. Because 63 students enrolled in his English literature class, Prof. M did not give his students too many outside-of-class requirements except for two group discussions for oral reports in class. The class was divided into groups, each dealing with Colderidge's "Ancient Mariner" before the mid term exam and Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* before the final. Study guides were provided.

The textbook that Prof. M used in this course was *Norton Anthology of English Literature* (Vol. II, 7th edition). Prof. M was similar to Prof. L in that he was careful about the reading amount. Before I began observing in this class, major authors that had been covered were Blake, Burns, Mary Wollstonecraft, Wordsworth, Dorothy Wordsworth, and

Coleridge. When I sat in after the mid term exam, the major texts covered included Coleridge's *Biographia Literalia* (a small part), Lamb, Moore, Byron, Shelley, Keats, and Mary Shelley.

Findings from the Study: Research Site II–CI

This sub-section is a presentation of findings from the questionnaire study, Prof. M's literature teaching experiences, and students' literature study experiences at CI.

The Questionnaire Study

The response rate from the questionnaire study in Prof. M's British literature class was approximately 72% with 45 out of 63 students enrolled in this class completing the questionnaires. Again, similar to the way I presented the findings at TI, I will illustrate findings in various groups of question items.

Of the 45 respondents, 20 viewed studying Chinese literature personally rewarding, and 21 of them read Chinese literature for enjoyment. Such responses seemed to show that not a few of the respondents indicated positive experience or interest in/aptitude towards Chinese literature. However, it was difficult to say if they possessed enough domain knowledge of literature or how helpful this knowledge was for their study of British and American literature. Please refer to Table 5.2 below for more information.

Table 5.2 Question Items 1-2 with Frequencies of Students Selecting Each Alternative

	not at all true of me				extremely true of me
	1	2	3	4	5
1. I find studying Chinese literature personally rewarding.	0	9	16	16	4
2. I read <u>Chinese</u> "literature"–(i.e. such texts as poetry, short stories, novels, and biographies)–for enjoyment.	0	13	12	14	7

As for students' study of texts written in English, as shown in efforts made in reading more unassigned texts and intention to take more non-required literature courses, students' responses did not indicate very positive results either. In response to Question 5, 10 answered positively while 18 negatively about doing unassigned readings. In their responses to Question 6, 17 would take more elective courses of literature written in English while 11 were less likely to do so. However, of the 45 responses (approximately 67%) to Question 7, 30 indicated a lack of time investment in each British or American literature course that they took; these respondents spent no more than 2 hours per week outside of class. The students' lack of time investment was obvious. See Table 5.3 below for more information.

Table 5.3 Question Items 5-7 with Frequencies of Students Selecting Each Alternative

	not at all true of me 1	2	3	4	extremely true of me 5
5. I read unassigned texts (of *ANY* type) written in <u>English</u>.	7	11	16	8	2
6. I will take more <u>elective</u> courses of literature written in English before I graduate.	3	8	14	9	8
	less than 1 hr	1-2 hrs	3-4 hrs	5-6 hrs	more than 6 hrs
7. In addition to class meetings, for each survey course of British or American literature, <u>each week</u> I usually spend/spent	15	15	11	1	3

Most students not only spent little time on each British or American literature course but also lacked intention to take more such courses because they were given the choice to do so. Among the respondents, most of them (39 or approximately 89%) had taken pre-18th century British literature. However, most respondents had not taken American literature. While taking British literature (the 19th century) (when the study was

conducted), they were not taking American literature, and they were not planning to take

it before graduation either. For more information, see Table 5.4.

Table 5.4 Question Item 3 with Frequencies of Students Selecting Each Alternative

	YES	NO
3. A. I have already taken British Literature (the Middle Ages to the 18th C.)	39	5
B. I have already taken American Literature.	12	29
C. This semester, besides taking British Literature (the 19th C.), I am taking American Literature.	13	30
D. I am NOT taking American Literature and I haven't taken it, but I WILL take it before I graduate.	8	22

Questions 8 and 9 asked how the students helped themselves to address difficulties

when studying British and American literature. While some students used reference

materials, some did not, as shown in their responses to Question 8. What was more

revealing in their responses to Question 9 were as follows: Use of audio-visual materials

was not common, and reading Cliff Notes or any critical comments from the libraries was

not common either. For more information, please refer to Table 5.5 below.

Table 5.5 Question Items 8 -9 with Frequencies of Students Selecting Each Alternative

	not at all true of me 1	2	3	4	extremely true of me 5
8. To help myself study the texts in British or/and American literature courses, I use reference materials from libraries or the Internet.	6	9	13	6	10
9. A. I use handbooks written in <u>English</u>.	4	15	8	8	5
B. I use handbooks written in <u>Chinese</u>.	6	9	8	10	6
C. I read critical comments written in <u>English</u> from the Internet.	3	7	14	6	7
D. I read critical comments written in <u>Chinese</u> from the Internet.	8	7	10	9	6
E. I use audio-visual materials in the Internet.	13	14	7	2	3
F. I look for audio-visual materials such as videos.	15	13	7	1	3

Table 5-5 (continued)

	1	2	3	4	5
G. I read British or/and American literature in <u>Chinese translation</u>.	8	11	5	11	5
H. I read Cliff notes.	15	6	12	5	1
I. I read critical comments written in <u>English</u> from the libraries.	13	13	5	6	2
J. I use critical comments written in <u>Chinese</u> from the libraries.	15	8	7	8	1
	YES		NO		
K. I use other resources.	4		37		

As for the students' use of human resources, discussing with classmates or rereading the difficult passages was more common than consulting the professors. In contrast, as the frequencies of responses to question item 10D showed, most students used nonhuman resources more often instead of human resources. Please see Table 5.6 for more information. A very few students listed newspapers, materials recommended by the professors, and some relevant references found in the bookstores as some other resources that they used.

Table 5.6 Question Item 10 with Frequencies of Students Selecting Each Alternative

	<u>not at all true of me</u> 1	2	3	4	<u>extremely true of me</u> 5
10. When I have difficulties in studying a text, A. I consult the professors.	9	15	10	5	4
B. I discuss with my classmates.	2	2	6	19	16
C. I reread the difficult passages of the text.	1	2	6	16	19
D. I use the resources that I marked in Question 9.	5	7	7	13	12

Questions 11 to 16 addressed the kinds of difficulties that students encountered. Most students needed to rely on the professors' lectures to understand the texts (Q11), most students found it difficult to get beyond the literal meaning (Q 12), and both the

far-away historical background in the texts (Q13) and poetry as a *genre* (Q14) caused difficulties for most students. Fortunately, amidst all the difficulties, most students indicated that they found the reading load of British and American literature courses reasonable, as shown in their responses to Question 16. When asked to self-rate their current knowledge of English, many students gave neutral responses. Thus, only more striking aspects will be presented here. More respondents viewed their ability to write papers/essay questions in English negatively while more positive responses were given to ability to read English. Please refer to Tables 5.7 and 5.8 for further illustration of students' difficulties.

Table 5.7 Question Items 11-16 with Frequencies of Students Selecting Each Alternative

	not at all true of me 1	2	3	4	extremely true of me 5
11. In the British or/and American literature courses, I need to rely on the professors' lectures to understand the texts.	1	4	5	15	20
12. I can understand the text at the literal level, but I find it difficult to get its underlying meaning.	1	3	8	18	15
13. The far-away historical background in the texts makes it difficult for me to study the masterworks written in English independently.	1	5	11	20	8
14. Poetry as a *genre* is especially difficulty for me.	4	6	12	17	6
15. If I had the chance to write my ideas in Chinese about texts read in British or/and American literature courses, I would enjoy that.	6	12	14	8	4
16. The reading load in the British or/and American literature courses is reasonable.	2	1	15	20	7

Table 5.8 Question Item 23 with Frequencies of Students Selecting Each Alternative

	not at all true of me 1	2	3	4	extremely true of me 5
23. **Rate your current knowledge of English:**					
A. My knowledge of English grammar is	2	11	18	12	2
B. My ability to write papers/essay questions in English is	2	15	19	7	1
C. My ability to read English is	1	2	25	16	1
D. My vocabulary knowledge in English is	2	7	26	10	1
E. My ability to speak English is	4	9	20	9	3
F. My listening comprehension in English is	2	9	19	12	3
G. My knowledge of the culture of the countries where English is spoken is	1	8	21	13	2

Nevertheless, similar to the situation in TI, despite the difficulties that the students encountered, for most of them, studying masterworks of literature written in English was personally rewarding and gave them a sense of achievement (please see Table 5.9 below). In addition, most students found the required British/American literature courses helpful for enhancing their English ability, their knowledge of literary devices, and their understanding of the countries where English is spoken. In addition, 20 out of 45 responses were positive about the improvement of their ability to deal with different literary discourses (See table Table 5.10).

Table 5.9 Question Items 17-18 with Frequencies of Students Selecting Each Alternative

	not at all true of me 1	2	3	4	extremely true of me 5
17. In the British or/and American literature courses, I find studying masterworks of literature written in English personally rewarding.	0	2	6	21	16

Table 5.9 (continued)

18. Studying masterworks of literature in British or/and American literature courses gives me a sense of achievement.	2	2	9	17	15

Table 5.10 Question Items 19-22 with Frequencies of Students Selecting Each Alternative

	not at all true of me				extremely true of me
	1	2	3	4	5
To what degree, are the required British/American literature courses helpful? 19. for my English ability?	0	2	12	16	15
20. for my knowledge of literary devices such as irony, similes, metaphors, symbols, etc.?	0	6	11	15	13
21. for my ability to deal with different literary discourses?	0	7	18	14	6
22. for my understanding of the countries where English is spoken?	0	4	16	15	10

Prof. M's Literature Teaching Experience on the CI Campus

This section will begin with a discussion of the difficulties that Prof. M encountered, further divided into three parts: namely, difficulties emanating from Prof. M's students, difficulties emanating from the teaching materials, and difficulties emanating from Prof. M himself. Along with each, what Prof. M did to address the difficulties will be provided. Then, I will write a short description of Prof. M's achievement from teaching the required literature courses.

Difficulties Emanating from Prof. M's Students & What He Did about Them

Here is an account of two major student-related difficulties that Prof. M experienced along with what he did to combat them. First, some students had some misconception that English learning could occur without the study of literature written in English and they

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thus had no intention to study literature. Second, his students lacked English competence.

Challenges stemming from his students' misconception about English learning and their lack of intention to study literature written in English. Prof. M said in the very beginning of the January interview, " . . . many people have a misconception that practicing English, conversations, listening to English programs, and reading magazines would be enough to learn English. They have no intention to study literature written in English in a more thorough way" (int., Jan. 14, 2003). In these words, Prof. M was indicating that he did not think that learning only the English language is enough for English learning. Thus, he had to confront students' misconceptions that they could acquire a language without taking literature courses. Moreover, he also faced students who lacked serious intention to study literature written in English.

Counteracting this common attitude, he strongly promoted and defended literature courses in English departments. He believed that literary texts were "the choicest parts" of a language and the best means for cultural understanding. "As English majors, students need to know the cream of presentations of the English language through literature" (int., Jan. 14, 2003). He further claimed:

> If we design the curriculum to include only practical English courses like journalistic English and business English, well, I mean those are boring. Besides, when one's English level reaches a certain level, s/he should be able to read those independently . . . A certain course should be offered when only very few people can work on it independently. I mean very few people can study literary texts independently. Also, the texts covered in a literature course are more interesting . . . We need literature courses because literary texts can be read again and again and they are interesting. Literature courses are necessary. (int., Jan. 14, 2003)

Thus, for Prof. M, literature courses in the English department should exist because those literary texts covered in those classes were both interesting and difficult. Indeed, the fact

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that most students had difficulty in studying the texts independently seemed to him to mean that they could benefit from a course. He said that he tried to persuade his students of the value of studying literature at the first meeting of each new school year.

Challenges stemming from a large class of students lacking English competence.
Prof. M acknowledged the significance of reading and writing training for his students. He said, ". . . when it comes to reading, I think nowadays what our students lack most is reading ability. Among the four skills, reading and writing depend on reading those profound texts" (int.). Interestingly, I found that he defended not just literature, but "profound" literature. The importance of cultivating students' reading and writing ability could not be denied, but, his opinion was that "reading and writing depend on reading those profound texts."

Most texts included in English literature courses were poetry, something he did not think his students could study independently most of the time. He doubted his students' ability in reading those texts, especially poetry, and he doubted their ability in writing papers about those texts as well. Prof. M did not expect his students to prepare for each session outside of class because he thought the texts were too difficult for them, most of whom were third-year English majors. Whether his students previewed did not matter for him. Especially for poetry, he did not expect his students to be able to study a poem by themselves and then to discuss it in class unless it was a narrative poem such as Coleridge's "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner." As there was a story in it, he considered it easier for his students. In fact, he had assigned this poem to his students for group discussions and group oral reports before the mid term providing them guiding questions for discussion. After the mid term, in the last two weeks of the semester, students gave

reports on Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*. Again, each student was given guiding questions, and each group was assigned with different questions. Thus, it seemed clear that Prof. M expected his students to express opinions about what they read only when he had provided reading guides to them.

Prof. M knew that his students lacked English writing ability and he did not think that his students could write a paper. Although he thought that they could write reflective types of writing, he dared not assign such a writing task. He recognized the importance of writing in literature courses; yet, he could only use the mid-term and final exams to evaluate his students. This was because he was usually assigned large classes, preventing him from assigning many writing tasks to his students. Although he required his students to write only in the mid term and final exams, these took him an enormous amount of time to grad. As he graded, he seemed to focus quite a bit of attention on students' grammatical errors, and he seemed to correct every word that each student wrote.

On December 17, after pointing out common grammatical errors he had seen on the mid-term exams, he surprised me by making the only complaint he ever made to the whole class, "Punctuation is the biggest problem. The most terrible sight is a comma at the beginning of a line. Well, many of you made such a mistake! If you begin a new line with a comma when taking an exam in the future, people might not take a look at what you write" . . . (class talk, Dec. 17, 2002). In that day's narrative, I wrote, "It never occurred to me that such an unprofessional error in punctuation could be made by English majors."

Prof. M was very aware of his students' difficulties, especially in reading literary texts, and he took the following four measures to address this situation. First, when he

lectured in class, he interpreted the texts in extreme detail, including a detailed illustration of literary devices. However, because I also noticed that he did not test his students on them, I asked him about this during the interview, " . . . Literary devices are something mechanical, so I only talk about that in class to make them understand them, um, especially in traditional poetry, it happens often that sounds are often used to express something. Well, but I don't want to test them on those things [laugh] Too mechanical" (int.). He explained such literary devices as rhyming, alliteration, and onomatopoeia in great detail. According to him, he did not expect that his students would know these things without his help.

His approach could be characterized as a close reading of the text. He said, "Those texts can be read at a deeper level, sentence by sentence." He added, "As Francis Bacon said, 'they can be chewed slowly'" (int.). To facilitate his students' "chewing," in class observation, I noticed that when appropriate, he translated the passages into Chinese and related them to what his students knew.

Second, he used a text-centered approach. He said, "When it comes to teaching, I seldom mention history of literature, because the major task is reading the texts themselves . . . I seldom select literary criticism in the syllabus . . . I prefer my students to read some good and famous texts in a literary period" (int.). He continued, "I still mention historical background or authorial background, but I don't test students on those things" (int.). In this aspect, he was an interesting contrast to Prof. L, who attempted to link literature and history.

Prof. M chose very few texts of literary criticism; he said Coleridge's *Biographia Literaria* was too difficult for students. He continued, saying, ". . . But I include criticism

by Wordsworth, because his writing is a reaction to the 18th century and what he wrote is directly related with Romanticism as a whole. So, when selecting literary criticism, I include only those that are most essential" (int.). In addition, literary criticism could be "words played with by those scholars." He continued, "I don't really think they are that related to my students' study" (int.).

The third measure that Prof. M took was to emphasize "chemistry" between teacher and students. As described earlier, he did not expect his students to prepare before class. They came to class, listened to his words and sometimes to music, and took notes. He said, ". . . I mean we should not scare people away! . . . Reading amount is important. And load in the exams also counts. I give my students two and half hours to write in the exam. Well, . . . they try what they can to write . . . They are willing to spend time expressing what's in their mind" (int.).

Prof. M was a traditional teacher, but not an authoritative one. He thought it was his responsibility to interest his students, to get them to like the texts that he included in the syllabus. For him, the human factor, the relationship between the teacher and students, was most important. He elaborated on this, "I mean the so-called 'chemistry,' if I say it in English, between my students and me existed long before I teach them English literature. As about 50% of the students were in my listening comprehension class the previous year, no matter what texts I choose, they are likely to accept them" (int.).

Fourth, Prof. M was very careful about text selection, taking care of the fact that his students were non-native speakers whose command of English might not be good. He considered his students' English ability a big cause of difficulty in studying survey literature. It happens often that students could encounter many unknown words, and he

could not help them much with vocabulary problems. Because he knew well his students' language level, he tried to pick some entertaining texts, too, such as texts with lyrics. He tried audio-visual material, lyrics, online information, etc. (int.). In addition, Prof. M tried parody or popular literature inspired from the masterpieces to show how masterworks could be connected with modern society. He said, "I want my students to know those texts . . . are related with other texts. Popular literature can be inspired by those texts" in the *Norton Anthology*. Moreover, he intentionally chose texts related to student background. He cited *Heart of Darkness* as an example, saying, "This text is about post-colonialism, something definitely relevant to us" (int.). Obviously, those measures were taken as he worried strongly about the difficulties that his students encountered while studying foreign literature.

Difficulties Emanating Teaching Materials & What Prof. M Did about Them

Prof. M talked about two difficulties related with teaching materials. First, similar to Prof. L, Prof. M found that earlier literature, e.g. English literature before the 18th century was more difficult than more recent literary texts because of the language and culture. He continued, " . . . The difficulty in British literature before the 18th century probably exists more in time and culture distance rather than its language" (int.). When he taught British literature (i), his solutions were to use Modern English translations of *The Canterbury Tales* and *Beowulf*, and to select texts carefully (int.). He was always careful about text selection, considering various factors when choosing a text for both British literature (i) and (ii), e.g. the language and the content in the text.

The second teaching materials-related difficulties Prof. M mentioned was the inherent difficulty in literature written in a foreign language.

. . . I mean this stuff is totally unfamiliar to my students. I try whatever I can do to guide my students to the texts . . . Of course, plot summaries are not enough, so every time when I give them plot summaries, I warn them that they can read summaries first if they like. I tell them it'll be better if they can plunge into the text . . . summaries can't replace the texts (int.).

Regardless of its genre, literature written in English could be difficult for his students. He emphasized, "All literary texts are difficult for our students." As described earlier, he considered poetry as a genre particularly difficult for his students. However, he knew that his students would have problems with novels, too. He said, ". . . Well, . . . the problem with novels is that students have to read a lot because we won't just have two novels for a semester" . . . (int.). L2 reading processes can be so slow that word-bound reading becomes the outcome, as indicated in research (e.g. Cohen, 1993; Grabe, 1991).

As "all literary texts" were difficult for his students, so it was natural that he thought it necessary to provide his students with reading guides to facilitate entry into the text. He deemed it necessary for his students to be given guides like plot summaries or background information to be able to study on their own. " . . . you know, I give them some plot summary and other background information about aspects that can cause difficulty for them. I think this needs to be done for Taiwanese students" (int.). Prof. M and Prof. L were thus at opposite ends. Prof. L was hesitant to provide too much detail and worried whether too much guide was provided. Prof. M worried about not providing enough.

Difficulties Emanating from Prof. M Himself as a Person Lacking Biblical

Background & What He Did about Them

Prof. M had this to say about the 17th century British literature:

> . . . Well, you can't really skip Milton's *Paradise Lost*, but you don't want to teach it too much. Well, I usually only teach Book I, about 300 lines . . . Besides its language, concepts regarding Christianity in *Paradise Lost* make it hard for students to accept it. I personally think the 17th century especially difficult. (int.)

I was hesitant to probe further, but I took the chance to ask him whether he himself as an instructor encountered reading difficulties, too. I heard him sigh while saying, "Exactly!" He honestly admitted his Achilles' heel. Because much of the writings in the 17th century British literature alluded to Christian constructs, the texts were difficult for both Prof. M and his students due to its biblical content and allusions. His countermeasures were to include less 17th century English literature in his syllabus when teaching British literature (i). In addition, when unable to avoid a text of such significant literary significance as *Paradise Lost*, he selected only a small portion of it.

Sense of Achievement That Prof. M Reported

As Prof. M stated cheerfully at the very beginning of the interview, his sense of achievement in teaching chronologically arranged British literature courses came from the important status of British literature in the English department. It was "an honor," he stated, for him to teach British literature.

Literature Study Experience on the CI Campus

This section depicts student participants' literature study experience, with a focus on the difficulties they encountered. Each of the sub-sections deals with difficulties that various types of student informants encountered, proceeding to what the students did to address those difficulties. And then, the kinds of successes that student participants reported are discussed.

The depiction is mainly based on data obtained from six out of the eleven volunteer

informants. Similar to the six students at TI, the six students of CI were also selected for this presentation because they represented a variety in their aptitude for or interest in literature, prior knowledge of reading of literature, career plans, and English ability (more based on impression that I obtained from the interviews). These students were volunteer informants distinctive in their interests in literature study: CF1, who was not interested in literature but studied it as a duty; CF2, who hated literature; CM1 and CF3, who were late bloomers in the study of literature; and CF4 and CF5, who read for pleasure.

CF1, Who Was not Interested in Literature but Studied It as a Duty

CF1 was one participant who was good at English but not very interested in literature. Studying the required literature as part of her duty as an English major, she said she "read *not* just before the exams." However, she did not think she was very good at literature. She chose to take only the minimum required literature courses given the fact that at CI such a choice was allowed. Literature was not in her future plans although she had not decided what she would do exactly in the future.

She said that she "was extremely good at English when in senior high." Her high level of English competence allowed her to be involved in intramural and extramural activities related with English. For example, right after our interview, she was to meet the chair of the English department to help plan an English-learning camp held in the English department for local senior high school students. She had been writing to an American mentor for six years, and she also had been in contact with undergraduate Taiwanese Canadian students, who could not speak Mandarin or any Chinese dialects although their parents were originally from Taiwan.

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Difficulties CF1 Encountered

Three categories of difficulties will be discussed here: difficulties emanating from the text, difficulties emanating from the learner, and difficulties emanating from the curriculum or/and course requirements.

Difficulties Emanating from the Text.

(1) Difficulties shown in difficult language or/and abstract themes/topics in the text. CF1 mentioned that the archaic English in the texts in British literature (i) made it more difficult for her than British literature (ii). The language of the texts included in British literature (ii) was "more accessible" for her. In addition, she said, "English is not a language I'm familiar with, not my mother tongue. When I read poetry, I don't have any feel for it." English as a medium posed difficulties for her when she studied British literature courses, which included more poetry in terms of genre. At a basic level, the English words on the page created a sense of unfamiliarity and thus a barrier to her entry into the text. A distance existed between this L2 reader and the text in L2. This distance existed despite the fact that she seemed to be a competent user of English.

(2) Difficulties shown in genre effects. During the interview, CF1 frequently mentioned difficulties caused by poetry as a genre: "I can't understand poetry," "it's difficult to appreciate it," and "I don't have enough sensitivity for poems . . . Regardless of their level of difficulty, poems in English are difficult for me."

(3) Difficulties shown in unfamiliar culture-related elements in the text. Historical background associated with the assigned readings was so unfamiliar to CF1. " . . . now in British literature, I'm supposed to interpret texts written in the Elizabethan age or Romantic period; they are so unfamiliar to me. I can't . . . No matter how many times I

study a text in English, I won't dare connect it with its historical background, " she said. She sensed that the target culture associated with the text in British literature would be unfamiliar to her. This acknowledgement of inherent difficulty was also shared by TM1, who deemed the unfamiliar target culture to be the biggest barrier to his comprehension, bigger than his English language problems. CF1 thus avoided answering any essay questions that required her to relate the text to its historical background when allowed; she knew well that she was liable to produce a wrong connection unless she devoted much conscious study of those external factors.

Difficulties emanating from the learner. CF1 reported both difficulties related with literary understanding and motivational issues.

(1)Learner-related difficulties shown in literary understanding. CF1 reported various difficulties in attaining a literary understanding. In reading those texts written in English, although she was not hesitant to express her opinions, she lacked domain knowledge, independent reading ability, and the ability to see the underlying meaning. Because of these difficulties, she was dependent upon her professors' interpretation.

First, she considered herself and her classmates extremely inexperienced readers of literature written in English. When recalling her study of British literature (i) as a second-year student, she said:

> My classmates and I were neophytes of literature . . . as 2nd-year students; those texts were difficult for us. We couldn't have a good command of them. And besides, we relied on the texts in Chinese translation for our oral reports. It's impossible for us to read and understand those texts on our own.

What she said indicated that similar to participants at TI, students at CI were unable to study the texts included in British literature (i) on their own. They relied on secondary

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materials for some ideas about those texts; reading the original texts for understanding was like a mission impossible. As a neophyte of literature, or at least literature written in English, studying those texts in British literature (i) for CF1 was a shocking, hopeless encounter. When describing her experience of British literature (i), she also had this to say:

> . . . when listening to my classmates' reports . . . I couldn't really get what they were saying about the texts . . . I got little impression about the texts listed in last year's syllabus . . . Even poetry was explained by my classmates, not my professor. Well, whatever, I just kind of read over the texts casually. Unlike this semester, Prof. M interprets in great detail and I can see all the similes or metaphors in a text . . . .

Thus, she needed her professors' guidance to reach some understanding. Unable to receive guidance into the original texts, she used to read "casually" and thus form very vague ideas about what she studied.

> . . . Now, when I read some texts referring to what I studied last year, I find myself unable to remember what that text was about. For example, in *Frankenstein*, *Paradise Lost* is mentioned; the monster is forsaken just as Adam and Eve are forsaken by their creator God. Well, I can't remember what is in *Paradise Lost*. I was surprised, because I know it's a very famous text, and yet, I don't seem to have the slightest idea about it (int., Jan. 13, 2003).

CF1, like the participants on the TI campus, doubted she had learned much in British literature (i) and what she remembered from those texts was minimal.

Because she had enjoyed reading classical Chinese literature such as Tang Dynasty poetry and Sung Dynasty *Tz'u* and also modern Chinese prose when in senior high school, CF1 thought she was interested in literature. However, her previous encounter with and interest in Chinese literature permitted no easy access to a literary text in English. CF1 took British literature (ii) because Prof. M interpreted literary texts in detail. According to

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students senior to her, the professor teaching American literature did not "always interpret texts in an understandable way." She thus decided not to take American literature; however, this decision was based neither on a concept of what American literature was nor on whether she liked the content. As an attempt to avoid difficulty, this decision was purely because of her fear that she could not "get what the professors would talk about" in class. Prof. M's in-class expert interpretations were thus necessary for her to gain entry the literature, as she acknowledged.

Second, her dependence on Prof. M's interpretation indicated that she had difficulty in independent reading and in seeing the underlying meaning for herself. As a third-year English major taking British literature (ii), she said, " . . . because we can't really get what those poems are about, Prof. M would point out the unique expressions in certain parts of a text and how this text is related to some other text. If I read it on my own, I can't pay attention to all these things, " she said. She lacked ability to interact with the texts on her own, so Prof. M' s interpretation helped her.

In terms of Langer's (1995) "stances," CF1 experienced at least the following stances. She was "stepping into an envisionment" and thus getting "what those poems are about." Further, she was also "moving through an envisionment" and "stepping out and objectifying the experience," relating this text "to some other text," and seeing text structure, "the unique way of expression" in this text. She described that because of Prof. M's guidance, she could interact with the texts relishing them, using more stances, and seeing their deeper meanings of the text. When performing independent reading, even when she could see something in the text, she could not pay attention to "all these things."

> I think my professors have got along with the texts far longer than us have, so they can compare and contrast different authors and see how one literary period is related to other periods. They can guide me to see a bigger picture. When I study a poem myself, my understanding is this author alone or this single text; I can't contrast a poem with the same author's other poem or other poems in other times . . . I think this is important, because usually, I can't manage to do so.

She acknowledged the fact that as an inexperienced reader, her understanding, if any understanding occurred, was more limited. She trusted in professors' prior reading experience and ability in guiding her "to see a bigger picture." This reliance on and trust in professors and the need for professors' guidance was similar to what many students at the TI campus reported.

However, in addition, she revealed herself to be a reader who was not hesitant to interpret what she read. When reviewing the text, she found, "It happens often that my interpretations are different from Prof. M's. Then, I'd go ask him about what he thinks about my opinions, or whether what I think is on the right track, etc." As a third-year student studying British literature (ii), even with all the difficulties she experienced some interpretation. She talked with her professors about her different interpretations, and she said, " . . . whether I believe what he says is up to me." Thus, she generated her own opinions about what she read, although it happened often she was convinced to take her professor's interpretation.

(2) *Learner-related difficulties shown in motivational issues.* CF1 was confident

about her opinions, but her motivation-related difficulties included lack of interest in literature, lack of intention to take more than the required hours of literature courses, and lack of time to invest in the literature courses that she took.

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During the interview, CF1 said several times that she was not interested in literature and literature courses. Yet, they were required, and she had to take them. Several students on the TI campus had the same state of mind. Nevertheless, she said, " . . . I'm a person with a strong sense of responsibility; I think it is my responsibility to study for all the courses, even for those I don't like." She emphasized that because she was a responsible person, she studied for literature courses. Similar to TF2, CF1 thought studying for the required literature courses was her duty in the English department. Later on, when I asked again how she felt about those courses after being an English major for two and half years, she said, "I now think they're OK." She seemed to accept the fact that she could not escape the study of literature as an English major.

Further, she had no intention to take more than the minimum required credits of literature courses. She said, "I think it'll be too much for me if I take British literature (ii) and American literature at the same time." While her counterparts at TI were required to take both of these courses at the same time, the curriculum design at CI allowed her to have a lighter burden. Required to take at least twelve out of the eighteen credits of British and American literature courses, after taking six credits of British literature (i), she was taking another six credits of British literature (ii). Prof. M suggested that his students take British literature (i) before taking (ii) as he somehow considered the influence of earlier literature on more recent literature.

Moreover, she had no intention to invest much time on the required literature courses that she took. She did not preview because she said she was "not really interested in literature" and also she needed to engage in different activities. In addition, Prof. M did not expect his students to preview the assignments either. As indicated on the

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questionnaire, she only spent about "1-2 hours each week" outside of class on a literature course.

I asked her whether it was her good English ability that allowed her to use so little time to get such a high grade. (She had received 91 points out of a 100-point scale for the British literature (ii) mid-term examination, an extremely high grade.) She said, "Oh, I think that's because I don't read extensively . . . I think grades are a very superficial thing. I'll forget what I study and I won't get in contact with literature at a deeper level and in an extensive way. I mean if it is linguistics, I'd look for more materials for study."

She still studied for the required literature course, but she tried to invest as little time as possible. In CF1's case, a high grade simply ensured a pretty number on her school report card; it was not a reflection of her being influenced by what she studied, as Prof. M would hope to achieve in his class. Nevertheless, it still seemed to me that her English competency allowed her to receive a high grade although she spent little time preparing for this course.

Difficulties emanating from the curriculum and course requirements: Difficulties shown in concern for the grades. CF1 reported difficulties concerning curriculum or/and requirements in the following two dimensions. The first was related to literature as a subject of study at school. CF1's concern about grades did not refer to struggling, to receive a high grade, but instead to her concerns to "preserve" her own responses to the text (Hynds, 1991, p. 120). As she said, "It happens often my interpretations are different from Prof. M's. Then, . . . I'd discuss it with him." And then, she also said that Prof. M's further explanation might not convince her, but when this happened, she said she would write an interpretation her professor would prefer. To achieve a good grade in British

literature (ii), as she reported, she stayed on the safe side and wrote opinions favored by Prof. M.　Literature as a subject studied at school required her temporarily to give up her own personal opinions and favor her professor' s interpretation.

In addition, the curriculum in the English department did not allow other alternative tracks such as linguistics, an area of CF1's interest. As an English major, CF1 found herself fond of linguistics after taking about ten credits of courses. Linguistics did not have a significant status in the curriculum of this English department.

What Did She Do to Address Her Difficulties?

CF1 seldom looked for non-human resources but instead used human resources more often.

Use of non-human resources. For her, looking for secondary sources was usually "a waste of time." She looked for secondary sources only when it was necessary to do so, for example, doing oral reports when studying British literature (i). When she did refer to secondary materials, she considered whether they were readable. Thus, she would first refer to "readable materials" such as reference books in Chinese. She purchased reference materials written in Chinese by Liang (1985): a series titled *Shi-Jie-Wen-Xue-Ming-Zhu-Dao-Du* (*An Introduction to Masterpieces of World Literature*) and a book called *Ying-Guo-Wen-Xue-Xuan* (*An Anthology of English Literature*). Second, she would refer to a translation, if available, but only when she could not understand the texts. However, she did not refer to any secondary sources in preparing for the final exam. "The main reason is that professors teaching British literature (i) and British literature (ii) are different in their way of teaching." It should be because Prof. M interpreted the texts in so much detail that it was not necessary for her to

use those materials to get entry into those texts.

Use of human resources. She used human resources most often. When difficulties occurred, she would reread the text. "I want to know if it's my ability that fails me to understand the text, or if I misread something in the text. I make sure first where the problem is, and then I go discuss with my classmates or my professor." When reviewing, she used herself as a resource first. Then, when her rereading as a self-help strategy did not work, she would consult her classmates or her professors.

Notes taken in class were important for her when reviewing for understanding a text. She "exchanged ideas" and discussed with several classmates with whom she was really familiar.

Kinds of Successes That CF1 Reported

CF1's responses to the questions on the questionnaires were surprising to me. She indicated that the required literature courses were personally rewarding and that she gained a strong sense of achievement from them. I asked her to say more about that; what she said indicated various kinds of successes that she experienced.

> I think being able to interpret a text written in a foreign language can really give me a sense of achievement. Besides, I can also know a culture through its literature. In daily life, when I come across literature-related matters, I can decipher them. Indeed, those literature courses are rewarding, but as I said, I'm not strongly interested in literature . . . Those aspects combined together make me think literature courses are valuable after all. That's why I can keep reading the texts.

Here is a synthesis of the types of success that CF1 reported: first, a strong senses of achievement from an enhanced ability to analyze or interpret masterpieces in English; second, cultural understanding through literature; and third, literary knowledge gained

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from literature courses as a means of "deciphering" things in daily life. In addition, she also said that required English literature courses were good for language learning; the textbook's "editors' introductions to the authors" provided good writing samples for academic writing.

CF2, Who Hated Literature

Similar to CF1, CF2 was not interested in literature. She actually said, "I didn't know I hated literature until I became a first-year English major." She seldom read literary texts written in Chinese, but she was required to take courses in literature in English. Considering herself a person who was neither interested in literature nor good at it, she decided to take the minimum twelve required credits from literature to meet the basic requirements for graduation. Just as CF1 did, after taking six credits of British literature (i) as a second-year student, she was taking another six credits of British literature (ii) in her third year in the department. In addition, she had entered a teacher-training program. She said with assurance, "I'll be a teacher; I'm in the teacher-training program." Because she would be teaching English language skills, literature would not be in her future plans.

Difficulties That CF2 Encountered

CF2 experienced the following sub-categories of difficulties: text-related difficulties, learner-related difficulties, and curriculum or/and course requirements-related difficulties.

Difficulties emanating from the text. CF2 talked about various text-related difficulties. First, the sentences in the text, especially poetry, could be "so reversed" that she "often got stuck." She was unable to comprehend the "rearranged" sentences to

comprehend even the literal meaning. Moreover, culturally-related elements such as metaphors and allusions appeared in the texts and affected her understanding.

In addition, regardless of genres, almost all the texts covered in British literature courses were difficult for her. When I asked her why she had marked "2" (not very true of me) to Question 14 on the Questionnaire--"Poetry as a *genre* is especially difficult for me", she explained, "What I mean is that poetry or non-poetry is equally difficult for me . . . Almost all the texts covered in English literature courses are not easy for me to understand regardless of their genres." "Almost all the texts" were difficult for her. Unlike CF1, who seemed to have difficulty only with poetry, CF2 seemed to be far more hopeless when handling the assigned texts.

Difficulties emanating from the learner. This is shown in her literary understanding and motivational issues.

(1) Learner-related difficulties shown in literary understanding. CF2 mentioned that her English ability did not allow her to "understand the rearranged sentences" in poetry. Similar to CF1, she needed a professor to explain the text in detail. Because of this reason, CF2 took British literature (ii) rather than American literature. She would not take American literature to "hurt" herself again. As from her experience taking "Film as Literature," a course taught by the same professor teaching American literature, she knew that if she enrolled in the American literature class, the professor would say things that would be too "profound" for her.

She appreciated that Prof. M interpreted the texts closely and carefully because she very much needed to rely on professors for understanding a text. Texts in Chinese translation did not really help her. She continued, "I can't understand the texts myself," "I

might not be able to see those metaphors," and she needed the professor to "connect the parts together" and to "explain every line." She clearly expressed that there was no way for her to reach any stance in understanding the texts, especially poetry.

She acknowledged that she lacked responses to the texts that she read while some of her classmates could "say things" that she could not think of. This was also reflected in how she studied a text:

> I contrasted the original poem with Liang's translation . . . I only read the translation of some poems included in Liang's book. I found I could read more fluently with translation for help . . . For the texts with no translation available, I could only try to read them myself, and when it got me, I'd discuss it with my classmates . . . I read one sentence and then I'd take a look at what I write near it. I made sure the whole poem seemed to be clear to me.

In addition to Professor M's interpretation, she heavily relied on texts in Chinese translation for help if they were available. The way she studied a text did not show any sign that she could understand the text on its own. Her reading purpose seemed to be to ensure that as a whole, a poem "seemed to be clear" to her. She thus did not exaggerate when she said, "I seldom try to read the texts for understanding now . . . In the beginning, I tried to read poems for understanding, but later I found that was not easy."

CF2 experienced difficulties when answering essay questions in the British literature (ii) exams, particularly organizing her ideas under time constraints. She said, "I simply wrote what I had in my mind, and then later, I thought of something, which would be better if I had put it in some earlier part." In addition, as they were supposed to be "essays," so "many things were jumbled in my head while I was writing," she said. That is, through Prof. M's interpretation, she somehow could experience a text, and yet, in exams when asked to "step out and objectify the experience," she struggled.

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*(2) **Learner difficulties shown in motivational issues.*** Lacking understanding of the texts included in British literature (ii), CF2 could think only of it a required "burden" for her. She had no intention of understanding them better either. She said, "I' ve got no intention to figure out those allusions. I had no patience with them at all . . . I mean unless my professors emphasized them in a text; otherwise, I' d ignore them." Studying British literature (i) was even less successful. As she put it, " . . . Literature occupies a big chunk of courses I take in the English department, but I can't get any sense of achievement from it."

> . . . what we studied were masterworks, most of which are unreadable for me. Because I can't understand them, they don't have value to me. [laughs helplessly] I mean if, just if, I can understand them, perhaps I will be interested in them. But now, the fact is I can't understand them. [laughs] They are not meaningful to me!

Among the texts included in British literature (ii), she could think of very few interesting texts. Yet, she thought *Frankenstein* was interesting and she talked about it quite a bit. She said, "At least a text should be readable to be interesting. *Frankenstein* is not difficult in the language. I mean it's not archaic English. I can keep reading and have some sense of achievement. I feel so good when I finish reading a novel." Because she could not "understand" most of the masterworks, they were not interesting and had no value or meaning for her.

Difficulties emanating from the curriculum or/and course requirements: Shown in concern for grades. This is shown in concern for the grades and working under time constraints. Similar to CF1, despite the difficult texts that she encountered, she studied for exams to get high grades. She expressed clearly, "Perhaps unconsciously I refuse to study literature because I' ve decided I'm not literature-oriented . . . I often read for exams . . . I

can't get it, so I simply read what my professors said in class." Lacking interest combined with lacking the ability to read the texts independently made her read for exams. Nevertheless, as a high achiever, she received good grades:

> I think I spend a similar amount of time on British literature (i) and British literature (ii). I read until I think I'm ready for the exams. I mean, I take those courses, and I want satisfactory grades . . . I think this affects me a lot. I mean I compete with other people although I don't say it verbally . . .

She worked hard for her grades and she got high grades when studying British literature (i) dealing with texts unreadable to her. She said, "I paid special attention to the parts my professor emphasized and read those parts over," and she also said, "All the grades I got were more than 90," which meant A work. In that course, multiple-choice questions were all she experienced in the exam. On the British literature (ii) mid term exam, she received a 83, a rather bad grade, as well.

What Did CF2 Do to Confront Difficulties?

Here is a summary of CF2's use of non-human and human resources to address the difficulties she experienced. Her most commonly used non-human resources were texts in Chinese translation, especially reference books by Liang (1985). Similar to CF1, she only referred to readable secondary materials. As for human resources, she totally relied on her professor's interpretation.

That is, she used nonhuman resources, notes from professors' lectures, and also consultation with her classmates, but she seldom reread the difficult passages herself. This was different from CF1, who tried to reread most often. CF2 said, ". . . on the one hand, the texts are not interesting to me. On the other hand, no matter how many times I read them, I won't get them, so Chinese translations would benefit me more. I mean, it'll

be a waste of time to reread the difficult passages." She knew that texts in Chinese translation would be more powerful than her own ability as a resource for understanding a text in English.

Kinds of Successes That CF2 Reported?

The kinds of success that CF2 experienced from the required English literature courses were rather limited. In terms of language learning, she thought literature courses "seemed" to improve her reading and vocabulary knowledge. She had learned some knowledge of literary devices, but only a "rough understanding of them." Her ability to handle texts of different genres had improved, too, but again, "only roughly speaking," as she only studied the parts covered in class. When describing those aspects of success, only low-key expressions were uttered.

Cultural understanding and the ability to analyze the texts did not seem to be enhanced. When asked whether she felt she had gained some cultural understanding, she confessed, "Basically, I haven't thought carefully about the texts I read in British literature (i) and (ii). As I said, I read for exams." As for the ability to analyze the texts, she said she did not think it had improved much.

CM1 & CF3, Late Bloomers in the Study of Literature

CM1 and CF3 were planning for graduate study in literature. They both were interested in literature as upper-division English majors though they reported they had a weak background in literature. A turning point seemed to occur to them when they were second-year English majors. When I conducted my study, CM1 was a third-year student, CF3 a fourth-year one. They both were in the British literature (ii) class. In addition,

CM1 was also taking American literature and CF3 had taken American literature the previous year.

As a third-year student taking both British literature (ii) and American literature, CM1 previewed even when not required. He said, "I think if I do the preview, I can get into the world of the texts quickly!" (1ˢᵗ int., Jan. 15). His newly cultivated interest in literature made him review so that he could "step into the text-worlds." His interest in literature shaped his positive attitude toward the required literature courses and motivated him to study now and in the future as well.

CF3 had decided to go on to graduate study in literature as a third-year student. As a second-year English major, when she was taking "An Introduction to Fiction," what the professor talked about fascinated her; she thus changed her opinions about literature. Since then, she studied very hard in literature courses. When I interviewed her, in addition to taking British literature (ii), she was retaking British literature (i) as a fourth-year student. As a second-year student, she had failed the first semester's British literature (i). She had taken American literature as a third-year student. To cut down the course load, she did not take American literature and British literature (ii) at the same time.

Difficulties That CM1 and CF3 Encountered

Even with their interest in and positive attitude about literature study, CM1 and CF3 reported difficulties related with the text, with the reader, and with the curriculum or/and course requirements.

Difficulties emanating from the text. In British and American literature courses, both CM1 and CF3 encountered similar text-related difficulties.

(1) Difficulties shown in difficult language or/and abstract themes/topics. At a very fundamental level, vocabulary in the texts was a serious problem for CM1. Texts written in more recent eras were no exception. Vocabulary problems were a serious issue that he had to confront. Further, the themes in poetry could be a source of difficulty. For example, CM1 said, ". . . when studying a poem, I don't usually know what its theme is. That's why a poem can be difficult for me" (1st int.). CM1 expressed, "I think the texts in any literary periods I've studied are difficult for me" (2nd int.). Actually, the difficulty persisted, as he put it: "Even if I study British literature (i) now, it won't be easier!" As for CF3, she noticed the mismatch between the difficult language in the text and her English ability. However, she had also noticed that this gap had become smaller as she sensed that her English had been improving.

(2) Difficulties shown in genre effects. Poetry made up most texts covered in the British and American literature courses these students were taking; yet, neither of them reported having a good command of this genre. CM1 actually said, "I'm more afraid of poetry" (1st int.). He chose three essay questions on *Frankenstein* and skipped the only question on the poem "Ode to the West Wind" when writing in the final exam of British literature (ii). He said, " . . . it seemed to me I had little difficulty reading this novel. Oh, because it's a novel, I'm more comfortable with it" (1st int.).

(3) Difficulties shown in unfamiliar culture-related elements in the text. Both CM1 and CF3 acknowledged that cultural elements in the texts, e.g. biblical and mythological allusions, caused difficulty.

Difficulties related with the learner: Learner-related difficulties shown in literary understanding. CM1 and CF3 expressed that they had difficulties in reading literary texts

and writing about them although neither of them reported motivational difficulties as upper-division English majors. When studying the texts themselves to make sense, they mentioned their language proficiency, their lack of ability in independent reading, their difficulty in getting beyond the literal sense, and their lack of responses to the texts. They needed professors to help them understand the texts just as CF1 and CF2 did. When asked to write about what they had read, both the lack of stances for interpretation and the lack of English language ability posed problems for CM1 and CF3.

Difficulties in reading literary texts. CF3 stated, "Using our own English ability to study those texts can of course be challenging. And we might feel sleepy while studying." Conscious about the mismatch between her English competence and the difficult language in the assigned readings, she could not trust her own interpretation of texts in British and American literature. She maintained, "I rely on my professors' interpretations so much; I don't know much about other things that my professors have not said. That's why I audit courses in the evening school." She was thus busy not only with courses that she was taking but also with those that she was auditing:

> . . . On Monday evening, I audit English literature; on Tuesday, I have English literature in the morning and I audit in the evening; on Wednesday, I have "Literary Criticism." For each of those courses, I think I'd better prepare before class. Oh, except for Prof. M's class. I read . . . before class so that I can be safe psychologically. After Wednesday, I have Shakespeare; those plays are difficult for me. Each sentence calls for time to think. And you know, I have "British literature" on Friday. You see, I only expect myself to write down the important things that the professors say . . . .

Her weekday schedules were totally occupied with literature-related courses because she was not sure how much understanding she could reach on her own beyond what her professors said. She went to different literature courses to get more ideas about literature.

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For CF3 to respond to the texts written in English was never easy either. Because she had told me she read modern Chinese fiction, too, I asked her to compare her experience reading Chinese and English literature.

> . . . when I read Wang Wenxing's works, I can think of my own experience to relate to what is presented in the texts and I have my own opinions toward those characters. Well, when studying texts in English, the amount of associations and thinking decreases because of the language barrier.

Shown in what CF3 described was the fact that she had not accumulated enough domain knowledge to be able interpret the English literary texts, even though she was a fourth-year student and had been working hard on literature courses since the third year in the department.

> CM1 described similar difficulties in reading a text to make sense.

> I don't have a feel for most poems I come across . . . usually, it is after the professors interpret a text that I can get a sense of it and make a connection between parts in the text. But this often makes me think that this is what the text is all about, as I don't have any other interpretation. Or, I should say, my interpretation is borrowed from my professors' . . . it seldom happens that my interpretation can go beyond my professor's interpretation . . . I'm not sensitive to what a poem intends to convey . . . I'm extremely low in my sensitivity to words. [says this embarrassingly] Well, since the second year, what I got from reading Chinese literature might be just superficial, but it's enjoyable already. Um, that's why I'm so willing to read all this stuff . . . (1st int.)

Whether it was British literature (ii) or American literature, he had difficulty understanding the texts on his own and he had few of his own opinions about them. A more likely situation was that only after listening to the professor could the text make sense to him. One important reason behind this phenomenon was his lack of past encounters with literature. As he well knew that his understanding could be "superficial"

and it was difficult for him to get beyond the literal; fortunately, he found the texts "enjoyable" and he was motivated to read.

CM1 was motivated even to read texts not included in the syllabus. He described his reading of novels.

> I've studied very little when it comes to fiction. I could name them one by one . . .1984. Well, as for other novels, I often gave up in the middle of reading . . . I tried to read *A Tale of Two Cities*, *Emma*, *Utopia*, . . . I think vocabulary is the most serious problem. You know I was too picky, trying to look up those words, as I thought I had to understand all the words. Well, that slowed my reading. I mean I attempted to understand all those words and remember them (2nd int.).

In addition to unknown words on the page, his reading with his English-learning mind set simply interrupted and slowed the reading process. He gave up reading eventually. Later, when he talked about his review reading of British literature (i), he reiterated his use of a language-learning mind set: "In [Medieval Romance], some language is expressed so beautifully that I think I can use it later! (2nd int.)

What he said clearly showed that when reading novels and medieval Romance such as *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* in modern English translation, he treated the text as material for learning vocabulary and beautiful language. He even thought he could "use it later." One might argue that to distinguish a literary text from a non-literary one is difficult. However, as Carter and Brumfit (1986) proposed, "how readers decide to read" a text is what really counts; when reading literature, we are not interested in "any particular pragmatic message" (p. 16).

Langer (1995) gave literary reading and understanding more leeway, suggesting two different ways that people use to approach meaning: One is "literary," which is "to experience or live through the situation in a subjective manner" and the other is

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"discursive," which is "to gain information" (p. 25). She further suggested that "whether we perceive our purposes as literary or discursive" decides "the kinds of meaning" we can reach (pp. 25-26). CM1's English language problem seemed to make his primary purpose of reading those texts "discursive," and the information with which he was most concerned was dominantly the learning of new English words.

> I guess, although I preview before class, there are places that still got me, um, perhaps at the word-level, sentence-level or even deeper level meaning; I think I need professors' help for understanding . . . in American literature class, my professor interprets those poems more generally . . . I mean he doesn't seem to say much about a poem . . . [pause] Um, generally speaking, what he says can provide me with a starting point for understanding. But I won't understand the whole poem . . . I guess I understand something, but when it's time to answer the questions in the exam, I couldn't write much . . . . (1st int.)

What he said indicated both his language problem and lack of independent reading. As CM1 pointed out during the interview, when he read in private, poetry was very unapproachable. And yet, poetry constituted most of the assigned readings in both British literature (ii) and American literature. He needed his professors' interpretation.

Thus, CM1 indicated that Prof. C only guided him to "step into an envisionment" so that he could "understand something" in the text. Then, he seemed to be expected to "move through this envisionment" on his own. Yet, he and his classmates had difficulty achieving this independently. They thus discussed their assigned readings before exams. Because Prof. C did not explain the text in detail, CM1 had to read beyond the literal with other classmates' help. They discussed as a group before exams for the American literature course, as they were expected to experience some interpreting process on their own. CM1 mentioned that no group discussion occurred for British literature (ii) before exams because Prof. M had interpreted almost everything they needed from their

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readings.

Both CM1 and CF3 had few responses to what they read and were likely to trust their professors' interpretation. They were very influenced by their professors, especially CM1. He quoted Prof. C, who was teaching him American literature, many times during the two interviews. I asked CM1 to say more about this. Indeed, this professor had a great deal of influence on him. For instance, Prof. C required his students to preview and asked them questions in class. CM1 thought this helped him develop his own thinking. In addition, as a poet himself, this professor's suggestions about "how to deal with poetry" were helpful. CM1 was still struggling to gain more perspectives to deal with the texts.

Difficulties in writing about what they had read. When asked on exams to write about what he had read, CM1 encountered difficulties. Given space to "interpret," CM1 found that he "couldn't write much." One possible explanation was that he had not developed other stances beyond the stance guided by Prof. C. CM1 and his classmates did not know exactly how to perform an interpreting task.

> Prof. C usually wants us to "interpret" the texts. Some people even mistakenly think to "interpret" is to translate the text into Chinese. "Interpreting" doesn't refer to anything specific . . . toward the end of the semester, we asked students senior to us exactly what an interpretation really means. Our professor said, "Just do what I did in class and talk about a poem as I discussed it" . . . but I'm still not clear about that. Probably I should write one "interpretation" and then ask him if that's what he wants. I have a sense of uncertainty, um, my other two roommates have got the same kind of feeling (1st int.).

Although CM1 knew that no "specific" way is stipulated for his interpreting task, and that he was given the freedom to draw his own interpretation, this task was still difficult for him in American literature course. One semester was not long enough for him and his classmate to learn how to interpret, how to be more professional in the study of literature.

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However, he did not consider answering essay questions in the exams for British literature (ii) difficult because "those questions are specific," he stated.

CF3 experienced difficulties in writing in the exams, too. However, her dilemma seemed to be different from CM1's. While CM1 struggled simply to take a stance, using his own ways to make sense out of the texts, CF3 attempted to organize what her professors said in class.

> . . .When taking American literature, I jotted down what the professor said and wrote about his opinions. I think to be able to write those ideas in an organized way calls for a lot of time to think . . . If I want to write according to what I think, I need to think all the time even when I do my housework. But I don't think I've got so much time to think about those things . . . .

Organizing what the professors said and then expressing it took time, as did developing her own perspective. Given her available time, she could not write beyond the stance given by her professors.

When writing about what they read, understanding something in a text did not enable CM1 and CF3 to write about it well. Their English language problem once again troubled them. CM1 said, " . . . I think basically my English is not good enough and I think in Chinese. It's hard for me to find a proper word or expression for what I want to say in English. As a result, what I write can be different from what I really intend to say" (1st int.). The fact was that his English language ability could force him to twist what he intended to say or simply give up writing some certain opinions "because of some obstacle at the sentence structure level or word level" (1st int.).

Writing in English was part of the course requirement, but English was not a powerful means for him to express himself exactly. He further emphasized that this

problem was not an isolated one. He said that after the American literature final exam, he and another classmate exchanged notes on their writing experience; they both thought that if they could have written in Chinese, they could have clearly expressed their opinions. He described his writing processes as follows: " . . . when in exams, . . . while writing, I found myself very slow in thinking. I construct the ideas sentence by sentence; well, I think in Chinese. And transferring Chinese into English takes time. In exams, time is extremely significant" . . . (1st int.). During the second interview, he confessed again, "I'm still struggling with my writing, and I've got problems even at the word level, e.g. which words to choose"; "I think in Chinese, but I need to express it using English sentences and structures" (2nd int.).

CF3 also thought in Chinese when she was required to write answers in exams. She said that she struggled especially with the English paragraph structure:

> Because I think in Chinese, I have details first, and then the conclusion will come later. This is totally opposite to English writing. So, when my conclusion in Chinese comes up, I write that as my topic sentence in my English paragraph. This process takes me a lot of time. I mean if I write in Chinese, I can elaborate in detail and then come up with a conclusion.

What she said clearly showed that it took her a lot of time to express the ideas through the proper English format.

Difficulties shown in motivational issues that CF3 experienced. With regard to difficulties shown in motivation issues, CM1 did not have much to say. However, CF3 reported the following. First, unlike CM1, she was not motivated to preview although she knew its importance for understanding.

> . . . As I said, he'd explain even single words like "nonconformist" in such detail. Well, I can simply go to class, listen to him, and while he is speaking, I can still find

time to read the text. That's why I don't need to preview in this class. But I know without previewing a text, when in class, I'd panic and have no feeling toward it. I mean, after all I've never read it before, so if I preview, I can kind of know it and will like it better . . . Except for Prof. M's class, I review after class, as those classes are a lot more difficult in contrast to this course.

For CF3, British literature (ii) was not difficult at all as Professor M explained so much in such great detail. She did not preview, did not review after class, and she did not spend much time preparing for the exam either. However, she got 87 out of 100 points on the mid term exam.

Further, CF3 mentioned that in British literature (ii), Prof. M's agenda lacked congruity with her plan for graduate study in literature. She emphasized that whether the class was difficult depended more on "what those professors lecture in class" instead of what texts were chosen. She expressed several times that Prof. M interpreted the text in a simpler way than she felt necessary. She cited Coleridge's "The Ancient Mariner" as an example, saying, "This poem is not really easy, but I guess . . . he didn't ask us to read closely [as we would] for graduate study. When I audited other classes . . . those professors talked about things I don't know, which required me to study more." Unlike CF1 and CF2, she did not seem to appreciate Prof. M's detailed interpretation. She expressed clearly that she previewed and reviewed for classes in which what professors said was more difficult. In contrast to CF2, CF3 seemed to expect her professors to say things that were more "profound." Prof. M did not think that he should teach his students in preparation for graduate study. This was not congruent with CF3's career plan; she thus did not work hard for this class but looked for other alternatives. However, she also expressed that: Prof. M's approach was reasonable and acceptable for most of the students in the class.

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How Did CM1 and CF3 Address Difficulties?

I will present how both CM1 and CF3 used non-human and human resources to resolve the difficulties they encountered in literature study. CM1 actually relied more on human beings, and he said he seldom tried secondary materials.

Use of non-human resources. Both CM1 and CF3 seldom used secondary materials as learning resources though their reasons were different. In CM1's case, he did not use those materials until the third year in the English department. He said, ". . . It didn't occur to me that I could use those sources as learning tools until one day I saw an English major junior to me looking for that stuff" (2nd int.) Second, because he did not "know exactly how to use library resources," he never borrowed materials written in English from the library. Third, as a third-year student, he seldom tried Chinese translations. He said, "As a first-year student, I read western texts in Chinese translation . . . for pleasure. At that time, my English ability couldn't allow me to read the original texts" (2nd int.). As a second-year student, he used texts in Chinese translation for exams. Because of attitude change or his self-expectation as well as an improvement in his English proficiency, as a third-year student, he tried to "study the original texts" as much as possible.

CF3's scarce use of secondary materials came from the fact that course requirements did not require her to do so. She said, "The exam questions are directly related to what [professors] talked about in class." She tried reading literary criticism in English, but her English competence could not allow her to refer to it with ease. When recommended a reference book titled *History of English Literature*, she found it too difficult to read it by herself.

Use of human resources. Both CM1 and CF3 mainly used human resources

including themselves to deal with difficulties they encountered. As described earlier, CM1 relied on professors' help and guidance for perspectives to look at a text, and classmates who exchanged ideas and discussed the texts before exams for their American literature courses. When CM1 previewed, he used himself as a resource, trying to visualize what was presented in the text.

In addition, he expected that the fight against reading difficulties was a long-term one. He knew that he could not avoid reading the texts. He said, " . . . I could only read more. As for my problem with vocabulary knowledge, I can't change myself overnight either. Well, again, I can only accumulate my ability through more reading and study" (2nd int.). He was prepared psychologically for the fight although he knew it would take time.

Similarly, CF3 also used herself as a resource for study. In addition, she relied on professors' interpretations but seldom consulted them in person when difficulties occurred. She tended to reread the difficult passages, trying to understand the content by herself, and waiting to see how professors interpreted the texts in class. She seldom consulted her professors or classmates outside of class.

Kinds of Successes That CM1 and CF3 Reported

CM1 and CF3 experienced different kinds of successes. First, improvement in text-analyzing ability and an increase of literary knowledge or/and cultural understanding concomitant to literature study brought CM1 and CF3 a high sense of achievement. CM1 reported that being able to "sense and be touched by what was said in the text" made him feel successful (2nd int.). Actually, for him, British and American literature courses allowed him to explore what literature was all about. He stated, "It seems to me it's from

English and American survey courses that I started to understand what literature is all about" (2nd int.). CF3 enhanced her knowledge of literary knowledge/devices. She said, "As a first-year student, I didn't even know how to spell 'simile,' 'metaphor,' etc." With regard to cultural understanding, she thought literature offered a different kind of experience from what she had encountered when staying in the United States and England for language study. "Maybe I can say, . . . the tradition existed in . . . mind. I think studying the texts allows me to know some of that," she said.

Second, British and American literature provided these students with humanistic influence or illumination of the mind. CM1 said, "Studying those texts is a kind of experience, experiencing what's presented in them." He experienced that literature study enriched his mind. ". . . Reading literature seems to change the way I speak. I think the more literature I study . . . what I say can be unique in some way" (2nd int.). CF3 also had this feeling of being illuminated, saying, "Because I've come across professors interpreting texts using theories in cultural studies, I become brighter after listening to what they talk about. I now can think and look at things with more perspectives."

In addition, CF3 mentioned an enhancement of her English ability. She stated, "I can sense that my English ability has improved . . . although it happens so often that many texts are still difficult for me."

CF4 & CF5, Who Read for Pleasure

Since childhood, both CF4 and CF5 had enjoyed reading, including texts from world literature in Chinese translation. Before university, CF4 did not know that literature would be such an important aspect for study in the English department, but she "succumbed to" her "fate" in the second semester. She was taking British literature (ii) and considering taking American literature. CF5 preferred to be a Chinese major because when in senior high, she was not actually very good at English. When she knew that she became an English major, her reaction was, 'Oh, I'm a goner now! My English!' However, because of her interest in literature, after taking British literature (i), she was taking both American literature and British literature (ii). She decided to take all the 18 credits from literature in core curriculum, because she said, "I only want to read more . . . ! I know some of my classmates plan to take all the English and American literature courses because they're going to graduate study in literature."

Difficulties CF4 & CF5 Encountered

Difficulties emanating from the text. Like most of her classmates, various aspects in a text could be troublesome to CF4 and CF5. The language in the text e.g. grammatical structures, words, archaic English, etc., and culture-related elements like allusions, all made a text difficult for them.

They both experienced the language in those texts as difficult. CF5 said, "I think the problem is still the language . . . In poetry written in English, I might not be able to get the literal meaning, so I won't be able to think about it" (2nd int.). As for CF4, regardless of literary period, all the texts were difficult. "In both British literature (i) and (ii), *Norton*

anthologies are used as the textbooks, and I think volume I and volume II are similar in terms of their difficulty."

CF4 had more problems with poetry as a *genre*. She continued, "Because the number of words in a poem can be few, each word seems to be significant for understanding." "Poetry can be more beautiful, but I won't say poetry is interesting." What she said indicated that parts in poetry seemed to convey more significance for understanding and could not be ignored. Further, poetry was unique in that it does not usually contain plot elements like drama or fiction does. Reading poetry was nothing like an enjoyable story for her.

Difficulties emanating from the learner.

(1) Learner-related difficulties shown in literary understanding. CF4 and CF5 experienced various difficulties in constructing literary understanding: lack of language competence, lack of ability to read independently or to see the deeper meaning.

CF4 expected that her professors would guide her to get entry into the text. When in the lower division, she had been frustrated in literature courses and was bored by them and she thought she would not consider literature for graduate study. However, as a third-year student taking British literature (ii), she appreciated that Prof. M pointed out certain aspects of texts that allowed her to see the beauty in the text that she could not see by herself. She said, "How my professor teaches me is important." The distance she felt between herself and the text was frustrating to her, so she very much appreciated what Prof. M did in class. The text became more approachable or accessible to her because of his interpretation. Prof. M influenced her not only in terms of British literature (ii) but also in her plans for her future. One reason that she was considering taking American

literature was because he strongly encouraged his students to take American literature, especially the 20th century American literature, when they reached their fourth year.

CF4 commented, "Whether a course load is heavy, the professor is very significant . . . It'll be good if a professor can make a difficult course not so difficult." She recalled, "I got higher grades in last year's British literature (i) . . . I got more than 90. I got such a high grade, but I doubted how much I understood the texts." She very much depended on what Prof. M did in his lectures, and she appreciated it even if she received a lower grade from him. This professor made her understand and appreciate what there was in a text. Toward the end of the interview, she even said, "If I had met Prof. M earlier, I might have decided to go to graduate school in literature." What she said indicated the importance of attention to the text itself. Unable to make sense out of the texts included in British literature (i), she did not seem to appreciate the high grades that she received from that course.

CF5 acknowledged that her English ability led her to experience many problems. She said, "I know my own English ability doesn't allow me to understand a text! I simply want to read because of my interest" (2nd int.). Lacking ability to study the text independently did not decrease her interest in reading.

Further, she reported having to struggle to see how different parts were connected in the text-world. She talked about "shift in thinking" in the text as a reading difficulty. She needed help from professors' interpretations.

> . . . when asked to express what I know about the text, I might not be able to write about it! . . . I don't think my difficulty in dealing with the shift in thinking in the text is restricted to certain writers . . . A poem is developed in some certain way; yet, I don't know how different parts are connected to each other! . . . After I look up all the words, . . . they are only two-dimensional —different pieces connected with each

other one by one. But when the professor interprets the text, he offers me something visual; elements in the poem become three-dimensional.

Her problem seemed similar to TM1's, mainly it was about how different parts of the text were connected to each other to convey meaning. Similar to TM1, she found that trying to understand all the words did not help her make sense. Professors' interpretation was necessary to make "elements in the poem" relate with each other. As a reader of foreign literature, CF5' understanding or response could be different from that of a native speaker, but in the American literature class, she learned to "consciously visualize" the content in order to "get" something out of a text. Her statements made me think that somehow she understood what was conveyed in the text although she had difficulty to organizing all the elements to make them "three-dimensional" for herself.

Yet, professors' interpretations brought no guarantee that she could be familiar with the texts. She had to organize or compose all the parts herself. She talked about the common situation she experienced when writing exams:

> If I haven't become familiar with the texts, I could only follow my professor's idea! [laughs] . . . I mean when I haven't studied enough and become familiar with the text, my understanding would be very limited. I wouldn't dare write about what I think about this text. [laughs helplessly] . . . Well, um, in American literature, if I can experience the mood of the poem, well, I still write what the professor says, but I connect his ideas together! (2nd int.)

She was aware that understanding what her professor interpreted did not mean that she had "moved through an envisionment" and become "familiar with" the text-world, e.g. the "mood of the poem." And yet, even when she experienced "the mood of the poem," she still wrote about her professor's interpretation. That is, the best scenario she could experience was that she "connected professors' ideas together."

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After listening to her professor's interpretation, some process had to be experienced to allow the teacher stance's to become hers. When talking about the British literature (ii) final exam, she described how she answered the essay questions:

> . . . in my mind there are these fragmentary ideas . . . I don't really think I can answer those questions in long passages . . . you know there are several question marks in each question?. . . Because there are several question marks in each essay question, so I write based on what is asked in each question mark . . . I write a tiny group of words for each small question in each essay (1st int.).

As CF5 revealed, when in the written exam, she could not do much more than write "fragmentary ideas." What she said also showed that Prof. M's detailed explanation of the long poem "Ode to the West Wind" had not helped her understanding very much. Although Prof. M interpreted this poem in detail, when she read it herself and was on her own to "sense" it and to be "familiar with" it, she could not. All that existed in her mind were fragments of ideas.

For the final exam, she was supposed to choose three out of the four questions. In addition to addition to the question on "Ode to the West Wind," the other three were on *Frankenstein*. She said: "I guess the three questions [on *Frankenstein*] were not so easy for me to answer. As I told you, I didn't finish reading *Frankenstein*. For questions regarding this novel, I was supposed to cite examples from the text" (1st int.). Because she did not finish reading *Frankenstein*, without even "stepping into an envisionment" and knowing what this novel was about, for her to answer essay questions by giving examples from the texts was difficult.

All in all, when CF5 indeed read a text, her difficulties mainly related with how to put what she experienced in the text together to communicate her ideas effectively. Her

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difficulties seemed to be more at a higher level, as what she said indicated that she could "experience" the text more or less.

(2) Learner-related difficulties shown in motivational issues. Although CF4 and CF5 were interested in literature, they seemed to need some incentive to push them to think about and experience the text.

CF4 was considering taking American literature and partly because she had heard that the professor teaching American literature pushed his students to preview by asking questions in class. She thought this would make her think. She knew the advantages of preview. She said, "If I preview, I can understand the texts better when listening to a professor's interpretation." However, she did not preview for British literature (ii), she said: "I think . . . If I read it all alone and guess, I won't know how others guess. Other people might say something different from what I think and make me think differently. It would be boring if I read it on my own."

She did not preview and instead relied on Prof. M's lectures, as other students did. Previewing and reading the texts alone was a guessing game for her. Even though she knew it was good to preview, she needed some pressure to do so; otherwise, it was boring to "guess" all by herself. She enjoyed interpreting the text to prepare for exams but she needed to do it with other people. She and her roommate used to try to interpret together though uncertain whether their interpretations were "on the right track." As a student who was not confident about her own opinions about a text, discussing and interpreting it together with someone else helped her elevate her confidence.

Likewise, CF5 did not preview for Prof. M's British literature (ii), but she previewed for Prof. C's American literature. While Prof. M did not expect students to preview, Prof.

C expected them to do so. She learned strategies to "experience the text" herself when previewing for the American literature class as suggested by Prof. C. She benefited especially from two methods. First, when previewing, she tried to write down all the questions that baffled her while reading. She described this process of asking herself questions. "I write down anything that got me . . . Well, I simply write down any doubt or question I have while reading . . . I myself am the audience. I write them on a sheet of paper" (1st int.). Second, she "visualized the scenes" presented in the text, as CM1 did. In the American literature class, CF5 was expected to interpret on her own in order to understand the text. Pressure or expectation from Prof. C made her preview, and she seemed to be able to experience the text at some certain level.

Both CF4 and CF5 knew that experiencing the text was supposed to be good for them, but they needed to be pushed or guided to be able to do so. In CF5's case, she could somehow interact with the text under pressure and guidance. She said, "I don't give up so soon now. My professor has an expectation" (2nd int.).

CF5 was taking both the British literature (ii) and American literature courses at the same time. She spent about three or four hours per week outside of class for American literature, but for British literature (ii), she said, "It won't be more than two hours per week" in addition to class meetings. She had her own personal agenda, so when there was no requirement to preview, she did not do so. As she explained, "I have my American literature class . . . I have my own extra-curricular activities, too" (1st int.). "It's when writing that I sense perhaps I haven't connected the ideas well when reading," said she laughingly (2nd int.). She simply could not invest enough time to get familiar with the content, to see how various elements in the texts connected with each other.

What Did They Do to Confront Difficulties?

Both CF4 and CF5 frequently used human resources instead of non-human resources.

Use of non-human resources. CF4 said, "I seldom look for those materials myself, so how my professor teaches me is important." Chinese translation was used when the texts were too unreadable, especially poetry in British literature (i). However, if what the professor explained could allow her to understand the text, she did not need Chinese translations, which could be rendered literally. As for CF5, she expressed that she lacked time and motivation for secondary sources (2nd int.) unless asked to consult these for an oral report.

Use of human resources. Both CF4 and CF5 relied on notes taken from what their professors said in class for references when they studied the text by themselves. At the same time, both tried to figure out some ways to use themselves as resources to address the difficulties they encountered as they read. CF4 admitted that she might not review after class, but when studying before exams, she read over the texts and used the notes that she wrote next to the poems. She tried to understand the text herself. She not only reread the lines silently but also orally.

Similar to CF4, CF5 relied on notes taken in class for reviews and for preparation for exams. She said she tried her best to review after class. To review after class and to prepare for the exams, she relied on what her professors said in class although she tried to study the text independently, too, by using strategies suggested by Prof. C.

However, CF4 differed from CF5 in that classmates were important to her in solving the difficulties she encountered. CF4 enjoyed discussing what a poem intended to convey

with her roommate whereas CF5 did not usually discuss literature with her classmates.

Kinds of Successes That CF4 and CF5 Reported

Commonly shared between CF4 and CF5 was the pleasure of the reading experience from the texts selected in the literature courses. For CF5, it was the visualizing activities that went on in her mind while studying that made those courses rewarding to her. As for CF4, her interest in literature made her think that reading those texts was rewarding and she had a strong sense of achievement from literature courses. She said, " . . . I read without thinking too much! . . . I study poems included in literature courses the same way . . . I don't consciously analyze what I read, using those literary devices. I read as a leisure activity."

As for CF5, the opportunity to read the texts of both American and English literature allowed her not to restrict herself to Chinese literature. She said, "I think it's good that I can know what is available out there!" In addition, CF5's ability to analyze was improved from her American literature class. She said, "I think in American literature, my analyzing ability is functioning. As the professor asks people in class, I have to think all the time about what he'll probably ask next" (2nd int.).

An Analysis and a Summary of Findings: Research Site II–CI

This section is devoted to an analysis and a summary of what data collected at CI.

An Analysis

During the interviews, all six key participants mentioned the difficult language and unfamiliar culture-related elements in the texts as sources of difficulty in literature studies. CF2 thought that all genres were difficult, and another three of the six talked about genre

effects. When talking about literary understanding, five out of the six students unreservedly mentioned their lack of English language proficiency to deal with the texts covered in literature courses, even in British literature (ii).

Similar to participants at TI, all students at CI had not become English majors because of an interest in literature. All, except for two (CF4 & CF5) who had enjoyed reading since childhood, reported a lack of domain knowledge about literature. Nevertheless, interest in literature again played an important role in their literature studies. Those who were not interested in literature avoided taking more literature courses as soon as they were given such a choice.

In fact, as shown in the responses to the questionnaires (please refer to Table 5-4 again), most students chose not to take more British and American literature courses. After taking British literature (i), as interview data pointed out, two students' decision (CF1 & CF2) to take British literature (ii), not American literature, was simply because Prof. M's British literature class had the reputation of being conducted in such a crystal clear way. Prof. M explained literary selections in detail. Students reported both in the interviews and their responses on the questionnaires that they heavily relied on their professors to guide them into a text. Three of the six (CF1, CF2, & CF4) explicitly said that it was extremely significant for the professors to help them "see" what there was in a text. Without such guidance, the three could not understand the texts. In those required British and American literature classes, it was usually difficult for all the students to get beyond what the professors said in class. Despite different levels of reliance on the professors, all six of them mentioned that they needed professors' interpretation for an understanding of the text.

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Two of the six (CM1 & CF5) who were taking British literature (ii) and American literature tried to interact or struggle with the text under the pressure, expectation, and guidance from Prof. C, who taught them American literature. Prof. C had many ideas to help students experience the text themselves in preparing for his class. CM1 and CF5 consciously learned some of these strategies, such as visualizing and self-questioning what they read. CF4, who was not taking American literature, considered taking it the next year; one important reason was that she knew if she previewed, she could get more out of the text, but some teacher inducement was necessary. It seemed that students wanted to experience the text themselves but they needed pressure and explicit guidance to do so.

English proficiency affected not only the reading of literary texts but also writing about them. Even when they understood something in the text, some of the students reported having difficulty in writing. English language proficiency interfered and negatively affected students' performance in literature courses as shown in what they wrote. Lack of proficiency caused both language and thinking problems in writing.

Similar to participants at TI, students who were interested in literature reported no motivational issues, whether they planned to study literature in graduate school or not. Those who were not interested in literature (CF1 & CF2) expressed such motivational issues: a lack of interest in literature courses, a lack of motivation to take more than the required hours of literature courses, and an awareness that literature study lacked congruity with their career plans. However, lack of interest did not deter high achievers from studying. In addition to grades, some studied from a deep sense of responsibility. Others studied but more reluctantly. Students who seemed to be more competent in

English but who were not very interested in literature tried to invest little time on such courses. In sum, interest was important for literature study. For students who lacked interest in literature, individual characteristics and English competency became significant interfering factors in their literature studies.

Further, teacher expectation and requirements also affected the amount of time investment. For example, CF5 revealed the fact that she spent far more time on American literature, as she was expected to preview and experience the text herself before going to class. In contrast, she spent only little time on British literature (ii), as she was not required to preview before class. The questionnaire study also pointed out the fact that most students spent no more than two hours per week outside of class time for class preparation (please refer to Table 5.3 again). When not many requirements were set by the instructors, no large amount of time was necessary for study. Teacher requirements seemed to be significant in determining the amount of time that students had to spent on a literature course.

Teacher requirements also directly affected the tasks assigned to students, and thus, they directly affected the difficulty level of students' literature studies. At CI, almost none of the students whom I interviewed expressed any worries or concerns because of Prof. M's course requirements. Aware that most of his students were under-prepared in their reading and writing ability, Prof. M did not require or expect that his students could do much before class, and in the mid term and final exams, he allowed them ample time to answer all the questions. In fact, very few of them mentioned the curriculum and course requirements as sources of difficulties in literature study. The major reason was that the curriculum design at CI allowed students to take fewer required credits from

British and American literature. They thus could choose not to take many literature courses at the same time to avoid a heavy course load. They could also choose to take only the minimum required literature courses. Only high achievers experienced concerns for the grades. For students who did not hesitate to interpret, such as CF1, they had to favor the professor's opinions to stand on the safe side.

The students' use of human resources to address the difficulties that they encountered was as follows. Findings from both interview data and the questionnaire study showed that professors' interpretation of assigned texts was extremely important to all participants. Some would work with their classmates whereas some did not, depending on individual differences. In addition, although most of the student informants reported during the interviews that they did not preview, most tried to read for understanding when they read. However, similar to the participants at TI, only students who were motivated to study literature and were interested in literature thought it worthwhile to struggle against reading difficulties. In addition, students' use of non-human resources was conditioned by the readability of the original texts, students' English proficiency, and whether their professors guided them to be able to read the original texts. Texts in Chinese translation were also commonly used by students at CI.

Unlike the participants at TI, there was less unanimity among the six students at CI in terms of the kinds of successes they reported during the interviews. In addition, the students seemed to report fewer types of successes than their responses to the questionnaires. Most of the respondents to the questionnaire indicated that studying masterworks was personally rewarding and gave them a sense of achievement despite the difficulties that they experienced. Moreover, most responses to the relevant question

indicated that British and American literature courses were helpful in improving the students' English ability, their knowledge of literary devices, and their understanding of the target culture (Please refer to Table 5.9 and Table 5.10again). During the interviews, four of the six student informants reported enhancing their knowledge of literature as a field, and two mentioned increased cultural understanding. Only CF5 mentioned her improvement in analyzing ability as a more marked success, but she said it was restricted to the American literature class, as she had to think all the time about Professor C's questions in that class. Moreover, only students who were interested in literature experienced influence from those courses at a more personal level —the humanistic influence or illumination of the mind, and pleasure from reading experience. Both instructional factors and the learners' personal characteristics shaped the kinds of successes they reported. Unlike students at TI, most students did not report enhancing cultural understanding and analytical ability as their success, partly because the course objectives did not emphasize this.

A Summary

Teacher Influence

On the CI campus, teacher influence was again obvious. It was shown in text understanding, course requirements, and whether students used secondary materials to solve reading difficulties. Above all, students expected their professors to help them with understanding of the texts. Second, as Prof. M did not set many course requirements or demanding tasks but emphasized the "chemistry" between himself and his students, his students did not experience much pressure from him. However, when assigned some task such as interpreting a text in American literature, some students also reported difficulty.

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Third, students reported that Prof. M' s detailed interpretation was one of the reasons why they did not need secondary resources as they did the previous year.

Learner Characteristics

Similar to the situation at TI, learner characteristics of the students at CI including their English proficiency, their aptitude toward or interest in literature, and their personal traits all affected their literature studies in very similar ways. A slight difference was shown in the fact that learner interest in literature was more saliently reflected in the types of success that the students reported.

Negotiations with Regard to the Text, the Student Reader, and the Teacher

Aware that his students would have problems with reading the masterworks and writing English papers, Prof. M did not require them to do much. Instead, he tried to select texts carefully, to present them along with audio-visual support, to guide students to read using study aids whenever necessary, and last but not the least, to emphasize the "chemistry" between students and the teacher. Difficulties related with teaching materials included difficult language and remote cultural background in the texts; he considered the latter to be a more serious problem. Again careful in text selection, he considered the following factors: the language, the content/story, and cultural background evoked by the texts. Prof. M mentioned as an example the need to understand Christian allusions when reading 17th century British literature. When teaching English literature (i), he included fewer texts from the 17th century. All in all, his major solutions to the difficulties concerning his students and the texts were text-centered, reflecting his teaching approach; he was extremely careful about text selection, taking his students' ability into account.

CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

This chapter first presents the results of a cross-case analysis bringing together what I found at TI and CI and discussing the findings in light of related literature. In due course of presentation, I restate and examine my research questions. Following a section on the limitations of the study, I describe implications of the findings for future policy, teaching and materials, and in a final section, for future research directions.

Cross-Case Analysis

As I pointed out in Chapters 4 and 5, teacher influence and learner characteristics were as significant as the texts with regard to the difficulties that students on both campuses encountered. In addition, the difficulties or challenges that the instructors experienced were related with learner characteristics and the texts as teaching materials.

Relative Difficulties in Studying Masterworks of Literature

In this section, my focus is on students' difficulties in the study of masterworks as influenced by the text, the student reader and the teacher. Aspects of text, reader, and teacher were not fixed and thus they interacted with each other in various ways. This discussion is mainly related to Research Question 1: What are the difficulties that upper-division English majors experience when they study masterworks of literature written in English?

First, difficulties converged on learner characteristics. Individual students were different in (a) their English language ability as shown both in reading the texts and writing about them, (b) their levels of interest in or aptitude toward literature, (c) their

domain knowledge or more properly put, past experience in reading literature of any type, (d) congruity between personal agenda and school agenda, and (e) motivational orientation as shown in their intention to read and time investment in the literature courses. Individual differences in these aspects all interacted with the text features and teacher guidance/help and requirements as described below.

Second, difficulties were also associated with which texts in particular were under discussion. Different texts could create different levels of difficulty for student readers. In the case of studying pre-18th century British literature, student participants on both campuses in the current study reported its difficulty despite the fact that different instructors taught texts in those earlier dates. Moreover, even the same text could not be said to have the same level of difficulty for different student readers. Studying a text can be a personal thing even if we want to discuss the same group of students enrolled in the same class, experiencing the same course requirements. After all, different text features such as the language in the text, culture-related elements, themes/topics, and genres were not necessarily fixed in their difficulty levels; they all interacted with aspects of learner characteristics.

The nature of difficulties in studying masterworks was also influenced, at least in part, by who taught the course. Prof. L and Prof. M taught in different ways and required their students to achieve different things. Both instructors had different beliefs and objectives, and these then influenced how they ran their courses. How the instructors ran their courses in turn was directly related to what course requirements were asked of the students and what texts would be included for study. One sign of the teachers' influence on how students experienced the literary texts was shown in the students' need for their

professors' expert interpretation to understand the assigned texts, an index that students indeed had difficulties in studying the masterworks. Relying on the professors' interpretation was a direct reflection of the fact that students were not very successful in interacting with the assigned texts on their own.

This less-than-successful interaction between the student reader and the text was not restricted to earlier texts such as pre-18th century British literature, texts that the students had studied the previous year. Indeed, when studying pre-18th century British literature, most of the students could not read the texts without close guidance and help; both groups reported that they resorted to secondary materials to pass that earlier course. When the instructors' interpretation could guide their subsequent study of the text, students were less likely to use secondary materials. On both campuses, the instructors as human resources were extremely important for students. Only students who were interested in literature or had intention to study the text used themselves as a resource and tried to read the texts for understanding. Use of secondary materials was also constrained by the students' English ability; most students referred to more readable materials instead of to English critical comments for basic ideas about the texts. Such findings were related to Research Question 2: What do the students do when encountering difficulties with literary texts?

Although the participants at TI were fourth-year English majors whereas those at CI were third-year students, both groups found that the assigned texts were still very difficult for them to understand. One year of difference in study had not changed the level of reliance on the instructors as a major resource for understanding the texts. The fact that masterworks by different authors and different nationalities were assigned did not have

much effect on either groups' ability to understand the assigned readings, regardless of course and instructor. In sum, upper-division English majors had difficulty studying those masterworks of different literary periods, of British as well as American, and taught by instructors of different nationalities; they thus needed their professors to understand the texts.

The second sign of teacher influence was shown in course requirements, including task types and task demands. As students had difficulty reading the assigned text, when given tasks that required independent thinking, most students at TI could not do the job well. They thus reported difficulties because of course requirements. At TI, writing assignments were required in addition to exams. In contrast, students at CI did not encounter high demands from Prof. M and thus did not report course-related difficulties from his British literature (ii) class. However, those same students at CI who were taking American literature did report difficulties writing an "interpretation," in which students were required to find their own stances to deal with what they had read. That is, when students on both campuses were given space to explore meaning and were required to express that meaning, difficulties occurred.

The third sign of teacher influence was shown in the fact that the types of successes that students reported were related to the instructors' course objectives. As Research Question 3 stated--What kinds of successes do the students report experiencing when reading literature in English? —I expected to know the types, but unexpectedly, what the student informants told me also revealed the effects of teacher influence. Students at TI received training in analysis/independent thinking and cultural understanding. They also unanimously reported appreciating the progress they had made from literature courses in

those aspects. At CI, the influence of the teacher on students' reported accomplishments was more diffuse. How, those students who were interested in literature did report the sort of humanistic appreciation that Prof. M had intended for the course.

Difficulties that Prof. L and Prof. M Encountered & Nature of Their

Teaching Styles

The finding that teachers influenced their students' experience of literature was obvious is also related to Research Question 4: "What challenges and achievements do professors experience when teaching survey courses on masterworks?" and Research Question 5: "What do the professors do when experiencing these difficulties? Clearly shown was that instructors on both campuses faced students who lacked various abilities or/and interest in literature. In fact, most students lacked requisite abilities to interact with the texts. Instructors also knew the texts they chose were potentially difficult for their students, culturally and linguistically. How to conduct such a class in a more successful way was a challenging job for the instructors given the fact that characteristics of the learners could not change in the short term and those of the teaching materials were rather set by the curriculum.

Thus, a negotiation between the text, the student reader, and the instructor was necessary but challenging. Prof. L had no intention of relinquishing her goal that her students should experience "sustained reflection." She attempted what she thought would be best for her students, such as requiring a small amount of reading and allotting for a large space for outside of class discussion, writing assignments that focused on independent thinking, and a grading system that was lenient enough to allow students to

pass if they tried. Both the carrot and the stick coexisted in her class to face the difficulties stemming from her students and the texts.

Prof. L's teaching style was based on her own ideals or philosophy shaped from her prior studying and teaching experience. Because she took sustained reflection to be extremely important, she designed course requirements for her students to experience reflection throughout the semester. What was especially emphasized was writing requirements for students to think more deeply about what they read. In addition, as she thought external factors were interesting and important, she made efforts to connect literature and history so that issues of gender, class, and race could be included in her American literature class. She set up a framework for the course based on those issues. For example, she tried a slideshow presentation to make her students more conscious about this framework. Most importantly, teaching as a profession provided a sense of achievement for her.

However, in Prof. M's class, no sign of the stick existed; he seemed to adapt very much to students' abilities. So aware was he of his students' difficulties that he did not require them to do much and did not give them much pressure. He carefully selected the texts and presented them as clearly as he could, translating the passages into Mandarin Chinese and using study aids, audio-visual materials, especially lyrics, for help as well. As he put it, he did not want to scare students away.

Nevertheless, he insisted that masterworks be taught, as those texts contained the "cream" of the target language in his view. Such a concept was text-centered and in line those promoted by upholders of "high culture." What Prof. M told me in the interview revealed himself to view literature as supporting a "high culture" view of language study

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and when teaching survey literature courses, he also adopted a text-centered approach. He stated that teaching English literature as a course in the core curriculum provided him with a sense of achievement even though he had to struggle with achieving a balance among concerns with a harmonious teacher-student relationship, text selection, and task requirements.

Literary Instruction vs. Literary Understanding

The findings from this study indicated that the teaching and study of literature written in English was fraught with difficulties emanating from the text, the learner, and the curriculum and course requirements. The text was usually difficult for nearly every student in my study. Thus, teacher variables and learner differences rather than the text stood out in the discussion of student difficulties. The text was so difficult that literary instruction was mainly in a transmission mode and the students received what the teacher lectured even though different individual students may have interpreted these lectures differently depending on various learner characteristics. For nearly all students, lectures functioned as a facilitation of access for students to gain entry into the text.

Prof. L and Prof. M held different foci in terms of content for instruction in the courses that they offered. Their classes were very different, especially as shown in their course objectives, course requirements, and teaching approaches. As I mentioned in Chapter 2, according to Purves, Rogers and Soter (1995), literary works, background information, literary terms and theory, reader responses, and cultural information all constitute the content of literature instruction. Yet, obviously, different foci on these aspects can bring about a different curriculum, course, and instruction.

Discussion of Findings

Based on the students' and professors' experiences at the two research sites, I next discuss my findings from this study in light of previous research and theoretical arguments concerning foreign literature study and instruction. In this study, L2 literary text understanding was an important, but not the single issue for my exploration. As summarized in the literature review, literary understanding can seldom be easily to achieved for L2 readers; I deem that all the content of literature instruction enumerated by Purves, Rogers and Soter (1995) and mentioned above were relevant. Thus, it seemed very possible that the student informants in my study would lack L2 literary understanding. I thus spread my net wide, allowing all other factors involved in the process of students' study experience in British and American literature courses into my consideration. This study extends the scope of previous studies and discussions about issues concerning foreign literature study and instruction.

The findings from this study could shed light on the following. First, they demand reexamination of previous discussions regarding issues in literary understanding and literature pedagogy in FL. Second, this study involved two classes from two campuses with different course objectives and requirements set by two instructors; institutional and instructional factors were shown to have a dynamic effect on students' difficulties in studying foreign literature. Third, the findings from my study indicated that learner characteristics are significantly related to their difficulties in foreign literature study.

A Reconsideration of Previous Discussions regarding Students' Lack of Responses to

the Text and Literature Pedagogy in FL

These Taiwanese upper-division English majors reported ubiquitously that they needed their professors' interpretation to approach literary texts. The finding showed how difficult the texts were and how the students' ability was inadequate to meet the challenge of the texts on their own. The texts were simply inherently difficult for the students. Not only were surface features of language in the texts difficult but also other factors caused difficulties for the students: the themes or topics, culture-related elements, and genre effects (especially poetry). That is, the texts were inherently difficult and the students lacked target language and target cultural proficiency to interact with the text. In addition, curricular or course requirements also contributed to the difficulties that the students experienced. The students were required to become familiar, even knowledgeable about, ancient and modern literature of the language. Unable to achieve this, they could only resort to their professors' interpretation of the assigned texts in literature courses.

Most students in my study considered the texts covered in chronologically arranged British and American literature courses difficult. This finding is in line with current scholarly opinions about an important dilemma facing university-level students majoring in a FL. Most students in my study reported that they relied on secondary materials to pass the course on pre-18th century British literature, and that when studying more recent literature, British literature (ii) or American literature, they still found those texts so difficult that they needed their professors' expert interpretation as the major source for their understanding.

Further, students' lack of response to what they read supports the analysis of the recall protocols collected from Bernhardt's (1990) two-year German majors and Davis's (1992) "intermediate-level undergraduate" French majors in the United States. In support of previous research and perspectives on L2 reading, most students on the two campuses in my study reported difficulties in making sense out of the texts. Even though responses to the texts could differ from reader to reader, few students in my current study were equipped with the repertoire to negotiate the texts on their own.

As mentioned above, curricular and course requirements constituted part of the difficulties that the students encountered. However, should students' lack of response to the text be blamed? One might ask on what basis could it be expected that students majoring in a foreign language, such as these upper-division English majors in Taiwan, would be able to form a literary response to what they read when reading texts full of difficult vocabulary, structures, and cultural allusions using their limited language and cultural proficiency. Even were a few students to form a true literary response to what they read, could their responses be expected to be on the right track? Thus, my findings regarding students' inability to deal with the text support Scher (1976) and Harper's (1988) assertion: "We unfairly blame our students for difficulties that essentially stem from our own methodological weakness and unrealistic expectations" (quoted in Harper, 1988, p. 402).

Indeed, curricular and course requirements contributed not only to students' difficulties but also their teachers' in teaching literature in a foreign language. Marckwardt (1978) and Bay-Peterson (1990) pointed out that translation is a common classroom activity in university EFL literature classes and may be partly to blame in

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students' not becoming independent readers. Yet, should translation as a frequently used classroom activity be blamed when students indeed reported extreme difficulty simply understanding the texts themselves? The lecture-based transmission mode of teaching has been named as a problem (e.g. Harper, 1988; Parkinson & Thomas, 2000). However, should such a teaching method be abandoned given how much students need it? My participants reported the lecture mode as a solution to their difficulties. Even the few who could respond to literature using their "intuitive responses" reported that they needed their professors. Even students who were more equipped with domain knowledge of literature or L2 linguistic proficiency and were able to or were confident to respond to the L2 text reported that they still needed the guidance and interpretation of their professors.

Yet, I am not saying that this lecture mode should be recommended in the foreign literature classroom. The phenomenon of instructors pointing out what they consider students need to know is exactly what Sumara (1996) terms "a pointing ritual," about which Doll (1997) commented "How pointless!" (p. 298). Doll's (1997) book review entitled "The is-ness of reading" concerns what de Canio (1990) saw: instructors demonstrating "how one meaning is possible" rather than "how many meanings are possible" (p. 53). Both Doll (1997) and de Canio (1990) concur even though the former is speaking about the L1 situation in the United States, and the latter the university EFL Taiwanese context. In the EFL situation as shown in this study, this pointing ritual is not pointless at all. However, I agree with de Canio (1990) that the instructional focus should shift to include trying to demonstrate "how many meanings are possible."

The Dynamic Relation between Institutional and Instructional Factors and Students'

Difficulties in Foreign Literature Study

The finding in my study showed that most students at TI reported too heavy a load when required to take two required literature courses at the same time, whereas students at CI had no such a problem. My finding showed that institutional or curriculum requirements directly influenced students' experience of literature study.

Moreover, my study involving two classes on two campuses that involved different course objectives and requirements by two instructors showed that instructional factors also directly influenced students' experiences in studying foreign literature. Results indicated that curriculum requirements, course requirements, and course objectives had a sustained impact on students' difficulties in studying foreign literature and the kinds of successes that they reported. My finding supports Nystrand's (1991) assertion about the L1 situation: " . . . curriculum and instruction significantly affect the difficulty or ease that students experience with literature . . . [and] literature difficulty is more than a matter of which texts are taught; it is also a matter of how they are taught" (p. 152).

Indeed, students at both sites reported that the texts were difficult, but what they reported about difficulties from course requirements indicated that what they were required to achieve was a more significant factor influencing their view of literature difficulties. As these texts prove so stubbornly difficult, and given that they cannot be abandoned at the present, what can a literature class in a FL context achieve without paying close attention to course requirements?

While it may be true that students at TI were probably experiencing only short-term

difficulties when engaged in those writing assignments calling for independent thinking, when those difficulties were too demanding, as most students reported, their literature study experience became painful even though Prof. L graded what they wrote leniently. Nevertheless, at TI, interestingly, the students' unanimous report of their appreciation for the improvement they felt in their ability to analyze or think and in enhancing their cultural understanding was a direct reflection of the course objectives. As also pointed above, students at CI could also experience difficulties when given "interpreting" tasks calling for their own perspectives. The coexistence of difficulties and successes experienced because of course requirements and objectives indicated that students still nevertheless somehow benefited from those required literature courses. Students on both campuses appreciated the importance of thinking about what they read when given the opportunities to do so. Shown in the findings of my study were that assigned tasks that were too demanding made for a painful learning experience, whereas a little challenge in thinking was appreciated. Students would highly appreciate a literature instructor who could minimize their difficulties such as providing entry into the texts included in the syllabus without sacrificing training in thinking through questioning in class.

Such findings, when viewed in contrast to the finding that only those students who were interested in literature could manage the impact from the requirement for more thinking and analysis and the fact that most English majors entering the English departments were not because of their interest in literature, demand that some thought be given to the following question: How can instructors balance or negotiate between their objectives and what their students can or will be willing to achieve? The differences in course requirements and objectives on the two campuses reflected the instructors'

different "assumptions" about the teaching of literature. As Chang observed, those assumptions differ from campus to campus (Y. S. Chang, personal communication, October 22, 2002). Based on the findings of my study, I would suggest that those assumptions differ from teacher to teacher because of their own past studying and teaching experience.

While Benseler's (1991) claim that the design of upper-division literature courses in the U. S. was mainly based on tradition and assumptions might be applicable to the required literature courses in Taiwanese English departments, how instructors can find a proper balance between what they think about "tradition and assumptions" and their students' needs remains to be seen. Most importantly, weighty issues surround the question of how to adjust the tradition and assumptions about literature given the rapid changes in the educational system currently experienced in Taiwan. According to online information presented by the Ministry of Education, in 1988 the total number of schools in higher education was 109, whereas in 2000 the number increased to 150 (including 53 universities, 74 independent colleges, and 23 junior colleges). In school year 2000, college and university enrollment was 45.26 per 1,000 of the total population (on-line information retrieved in October 2002). In school year 2002, the number of schools was 154 (including 139 universities and independent colleges and 15 junior colleges) (on-line information retrieved on June 5, 2003). Since 2000, the enrollment rate has been even higher. This expansion of the number of institutions of higher education and the high enrollment rate in Taiwan clearly indicates a breakdown of the older, elite system of education. Relevant to the questions described above, Langer (1995) proposed that the role of a literature teacher could become "a professional and an expert—knowing the

discipline and also the students" (p. 81).

Learner Factors Mediating the Difficulties That the Students Encountered

Findings from this study shed light on the fact that individual students' characteristics such as language proficiency, interest in or aptitude in literature, and individual motivational orientation mediated the difficulties they encountered. Further, individual literature aptitude and English proficiency also affected the types of resources that the students could use if they did use them at all.

Scholarly discussions of the difficulties inherent in foreign literature study tend to focus on the fact that students lack target language proficiency (e.g. Gilroy-Scott, 1983; Zughoul, 1985; Arens & Swaffar, 1987), lack foreign literacy (e.g. Benseler, 1991, Davis et al., 1992; Mujica, 1997), and lack literary understanding ability (e.g. Wahba, 1979; Bernhardt, 1990; Swaffar, et al., 1991; Bader, 1992; Mujica, 1997; Davis, 1992). Indeed, deficits in these areas did contribute to the difficulties, as shown in this study. In addition, this study showed that students' target language proficiency affected which resources students could use in order to solve the problems they encountered with the literature. Use of critical comments written in English, if the students did use them, was not common due to students' lack of English proficiency. This finding tells a different story from Widdowson's (1985) prediction that "students learn to manipulate . . . critical terms without understanding" the original texts (quoted from Maley, 1989, p. 11).

The motivational issues pertinent to individual interest, aptitude, and motivational orientation have been mentioned only infrequently in scholarly arguments or research data. Thus, one important finding of this study pointed to the role of motivation-related issues. With regard to individual characteristics, the most striking phenomenon was that

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students who were not interested in literature and whose personal agenda conflicted with literature study could still choose to invest energy in studying literature because of personal goals and commitments. Some students (e.g., TF2 and CF1) considered studying literature as their duty. Like other students who were interested in literature, they would engage in real reading, using themselves as resources for literature study trying to solve the difficulties that they encountered. This finding indicates that if literature instructors could somehow take advantage of such affective factors, using the "chemistry" (as Prof. M put it) between the students and the teacher to encourage such students or to encourage others to adopt similar attitudes, the required literature courses would have more influence on more students.

Limitations of this Study

Some limitations of my study as described below may hinder generalizations and conclusion. In fact, generalizations are reserved for future research and limitations of this study may be addressed in the future.

With Regard to Participants and the Total Time Period for Data Collection

The fact that my study involved two professors and their volunteer students lasting for about two-and-half months might lead to some bias. First, there may have been literature instructors and English majors whose literature teaching and studying experiences were more or less successful. It is thus important to note that my results come from volunteers' experiences. Their views represent people teaching and studying between 2002 and 2003 in Taiwan. Second, my data collection took me about two-and-half months, and although this is a relatively long period of time, it is possible

that an even longer period might have yielded more nuanced findings.

With Regard to Participants' Experience

Moreover, what the student participants reported in this study was based on not only their current but also past experience. That is, their report of studying British literature (i) was not from their "here and now" perception. Thus, a longitudinal study lasting for several school years, beginning with students' first exposure to literature, might be able to provide a more complete story of how students manage more and less difficult literary texts.

With Regard to the Researcher

As an apprentice researcher bustling between two research sites, I must admit that there were times when I was very exhausted, perhaps enough so to have affected my concentration in my observation in the field.

Moreover, one limitation occurred because of the transcribing process. Transcribing all the interview data (except for the interview conducted with Prof. L, a native speaker of English) into English involved translation, a process in which some inappropriateness in transitions and shifts of thought may have been introduced by me, the researcher. I can only say that I attempted through several re-listenings to weigh in all the nuances in meaning.

Further, as a researcher dealing with an interdisciplinary study, and though equipped with background in both, I experienced the tension between the two fields of literature study and literature instruction. As the study involved the application of empirical approaches in education to examine issues in foreign literature study and teaching, I have

strived always to link literature and education. However, the fact is that literature as a field of study, especially foreign literature study, has drawn a paucity of empirical research. As a result, I needed to find proper perspectives to look at the field beyond its current boundaries. What I present in this dissertation based on my exploration is what I can offer so far, but I understand that there is more to be examined.

Implications

Findings from this study offer implications for policy, teaching and materials as described below.

Implications for Policy

Paying Attention to Difficulties in Earlier Literature

At both research sites for my study, most students reported the use of secondary sources, especially texts in Chinese translation, to by-pass pre-18th century British literature. In view of the fact that few students seemed even to look at the assigned texts, it might be time for core curriculum makers to consider what proportion of those earlier texts should be required for English majors if masterworks should still be the teaching materials.

In fact, my finding about students' use of rendered texts to bypass literature of earlier centuries seemed a natural consequence of the difficulties they encountered. Indeed, in Taiwan, earlier British as well as earlier American literary texts were unattractive even to graduate students majoring in foreign literature with a focus on British and American literature. Chen's (2000) study examined what types of theses M. A. graduate students in fifteen traditional English departments in Taiwan between the years

of 1958 and 1998 wrote. The total number of theses was 1,405, 73.9% of which were about British and American literature. In his analysis, he considered the literary periods covered by these theses. He concluded the following: None of these M A. theses was about pre-1800 American literature; only 0.9% of the theses dealt with British literature of the Middle Ages; 1.4% from the Restoration and the 18th century British literature; Renaissance British literature constituted 4.6% of the theses; and the 19th century American literature constituted only 3.7%. He stated that it was understandable that earlier periods of British literature were remote in culture and difficult in language, but this could not as easily apply to 19th century American literature. One suggestion that he offered was to guide students' interests to focus on 19th century American literature. If those earlier periods of British and American literature were inaccessible or unappealing to graduate students, one wonders how undergraduate English majors could be expected to study those earlier texts. After all, this population of students is more varied in interest in and intention to work on literature study, not to mention the fact that this undergraduate group is far more limited in their English proficiency.

An obvious contrast exists between classroom practice and what real students are actually doing. In British Literature (i) class, the required textbook was usually *The Norton Anthology of English Literature* (volume I), but based on what the students in my study reported, they were readers of texts rendered into Chinese, not of the original texts. Parkinson and Thomas (2000) spoke against the use of translated texts in a literature class, and one important reason they gave was that both "form and content and also the connections between them" are important for responses to the texts, but are likely to be "lost in translation" (p. 14). In my study, however, appreciation of the form and content

when reading the original texts from earlier centuries was very difficult to achieve for the students. If they read a modern English translation of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* for example, something would still be lost in the process of translation. It thus might be time for policy makers to change their concept about the use of rendered texts or to take advantage of those texts. Zhu (1990), a famous professor of English language literature, actually strongly recommended the use of Yan's (1983) reference book written in Chinese *British literature: The Middle Ages* to replace the English texts from this anthology. Such a suggestion may in fact be a workable possibility and may allow literature from the Middle Ages to be explored better in less time, allotting more time for texts written in later centuries.

Paying Attention to Genre Effects in Literature Study

My finding that poetry as a genre was especially difficult for the students demands that a careful look be given to whether poetry should still occupy the major part of the literature syllabus for undergraduate English majors. When this finding is compared with the result from the Chen (2000) study that I mentioned above, a caveat against the use of poetry as the major teaching materials should be given if we intend to attract students to the study of literature. Chen (2000) found that fiction was the most favored genre as seen in those M. A. theses. In eight of the fifteen English departments, more than 50%, whereas in another four, more than 60% of the theses dealing with British and American literature were about novels. Even for graduate students of literature, novels seem to be more manageable than other genres.

Taking Student Learners' Interest or Aptitude into Account

My study points to the importance of individual students' interests in literature study.

In addition to other efforts, the following measures can be taken. First, an attempt to allow English majors to understand better their own interests/aptitudes can be achieved through a joint effort of the English departments and the counseling units on campuses. For example, question items on interest or aptitude tests from the counseling unit can serve as a ready-made tool for this purpose. Second, more courses in other areas such as linguistics should be offered if no such alternative tracks are yet in place (some English departments are offering alternative tracks already) for students who have developed an interest in or who have more aptitude toward those areas.

Reconsidering the Role of Culture in Literature Study

As shown in my study, the two instructors assigned a different focus on the role of culture in literature study; their different foci led to different teaching approaches. How much cultural information should be included in a literature course should be an open question to be further pondered. In the current study, Prof. L made an effort to link literature and history whereas Prof. M emphasized literature itself. In turn, their different foci and approaches directly affected the kinds of successes that their students reported. For instance, Prof. L's students showed far more consciousness about cultural understanding in literature classes. The finding calls for a reconsideration of curriculum objectives, especially of the role of culture in literature study. Nevertheless, as Sell's (1995) caveat puts it well, "literature is by no means the only manifestation of the target culture" (p. 4).

Relevant to this is a consideration of what the study and teaching of literature written in English has to offer for the curriculum in the English departments in Taiwan. In English departments, the rift between literature and language skill classes (Bay-Petersen,

1990) and that between literature and linguistics areas (Rau, 1994) has often been described. Rau (1994) even suggested how British and American literature teaching could be converged with linguistics. She discussed how stylistics, pragmatics, and semiotics could be applied to the study of literature and further proposed that a course in which linguistics was used to analyze and appreciate literature be offered for English majors in addition to the required introduction to linguistics and to English and American literature courses. However, what she proposed remains to be actualized in the future. Mittman (1999) argued that to pull together the Trinity in a foreign language department, literature, culture, and the target language, practical questions should focus on first, appropriate content, and second, the relationship between content and language instruction. How to form a "coherent curriculum" in a foreign language department, as Mittman's (1999) article title suggests, requires curriculum makers to think carefully about those related questions.

Implications for Teaching

More Teacher Guidance and Patience from the Teacher

As I indicated, based on the findings of my study, it is not reasonable to expect students in most EFL settings to deal with literary text with ease. If we still cannot discard masterworks, teachers need to approach instruction with more guidance and patience. Speaking from the L1 in-the-field experience, Jago (2000) wrote an article titled "Don't discard the classics: But be prepared to guide your students through unfamiliar terrain," clearly indicating that proper guidance into the classics is necessary even for L1 students. She emphasized,

When I became a teacher, I quickly realized that most students are unwilling, to do

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the amount of reading that I had taken for granted. I adjusted. But what took me much longer to figure out was just how much help students need in order to be able to negotiate classic texts. I had come to these books with considerable reading experience. I didn't know how much I knew . . . (p. 46).

If L1 students need help to study the masterworks, L2 students' need for help can only be far more urgent. The following quote from a student informant clearly shows this need. When asked at the very end of the third interview whether there was anything that I had forgotten to bring up, he stated,

> . . . literature professors should guide students like guiding children. Last year, my professor teaching British literature (i) supposed that we should have known those things and . . . I guess that was why he jumped here and there. I mean, it's better to be more detailed. After all, it's written in English and it's difficult for us . . . (TM2, 3rd int.).

TM2 was a fourth-year English major who urgently needed help from his literature professors to be able to get into the masterworks in English. Instructors, especially new faculty members, teaching survey literature courses need to be more conscious about such student need for help.

In addition, student informants in my study also pointed out that they lacked any affinity for the texts they studied. Although most students at both research sites did not reject studying masterworks written in English, one of the end results from such historically arranged survey literature courses was that few students were interested in studying more masterworks or were intrigued enough to go on to graduate study in literature. That is, after years of literature study in the English department, not much future affinity for literature was cultivated. Such a finding concerning the emotional aspect strongly suggested that a further consideration of what literary instruction and understanding means in university English departments in the Taiwanese context if

literature study is intended to be meaningful for the students.

However, if it is not possible to avoid entirely the teaching of masterworks, which is likely the case, based on my findings, other relevant questions to ponder are the following: How can the instructors make those texts more workable for English majors? How can an instructor demonstrate that there are many meanings possible and that his/her interpretation is only one of the possible ones? I witnessed the expertise and the skill at meeting the challenge that these two instructors exhibited. One possibility may be to pair the masterworks with some texts of popular literature based on similar themes that would allow students to get entry into the text more easily, as suggested by Fairbanks, an expert in literature pedagogy (C. M. Fairbanks, personal communication, June. 11, 2003).

Systematic Preparation of Students for Interacting with the Text

Harper (1988) urged "a need to develop approaches that systematically prepare and guide student development of the skills necessary for interacting with the literary text and provide opportunities check for the student to express, negotiate, and revise personal interpretations" (p. 407) in foreign literature classes. As shown in my findings, this need is still urgent and the word "systematic" is key. As my findings indicate, most students were not conscious about strategies they could have used to deal with the texts; the explicit teaching of strategies or skills would be necessary to decrease students' reliance on the instructors' interpretation. Only one student (TF4) seemed to acquire, without explicit instruction, strategies about how to interpret a poem from Prof. L's lectures. At CI, when provided suggestions about how to preview, e.g. visualizing what the text is presented and self-questioning, students knew how to try to experience the text before a class meeting. "Learning to learn" could be a more significant goal of the foreign

literature classroom, and may help rectify the current tendency in the classroom of having an instructor explain just how one meaning is possible. At a very basic level, students need explicit instructions as to how to preview instead of simply looking up unknown words in their dictionaries. Yet, only when students can experience the text can we talk about their interaction with the text.

Exchange of Ideas among Instructors

The sharing of ideas among professionals is necessary as a future pedagogical effort. Graff (1992) illustrated that the "disjunction of the curriculum" (p. 106) and the "insularity of the classrooms" (p. 107) were taken for granted in literature teaching; different instructors are interpreting and assuming different theories in different classrooms. My finding that most students on both campuses did not have successful contacts with masterworks of literature in English calls for an exchange of ideas among literature instructors. That is, in addition to other things regarding of literature teaching and literary understanding, instructors with different voices and teaching styles should hear from each other so that their students can be further helped.

Implications for Materials

The findings from the current study pointed to the fact that survey courses on masterworks in English were not very successful, posing difficulties for studying and teaching. Yet, before going so far as to say that the literary texts themselves should be abandoned, I want to reflect again, as I described in Chapter 2, that literature, or I should say the masterworks written in English as a foreign language, still has a significant status in English departments in Taiwan or in other EFL contexts. On the one hand,

masterworks represent high culture, a cultural influence that has been shrinking in its impact on modern society. On the other hand, masterworks have been part of an accepted and defended practice even though opinions against using them have long been voiced, too.

Using Young Adult Literature and Popular Literature as Preparatory or Complementary Materials

From a learning perspective, masterworks presented difficulties for studying and teaching as well. One possible source of help would be to replace or supplement them by other texts such as texts belonging to young adult literature. Young adult literature may not necessarily be less difficult to read in terms of target culture knowledge and register exhibited in the text; however, it may present less difficulty because of less complex sentence structures and vocabulary and thus could provide more avenues for students to get entry into the text. At least, young adult literature could be a major component of the preparatory literature courses such as Approaches to Literature for the first-year English majors so that students could gain knowledge of various genres as well as be exposed to more extensive reading. In fact, preparatory courses using young adult literature or children's literature might need to start earlier, even in senior high school, for students who intend to be English majors because most of the student informants in my study expressed that they lacked extensive reading experience of literature of any kind before university. Extensive reading of more literary texts should be a means to accumulating domain knowledge of literature, which might affect the students' study of masterworks of literature even though how much domain knowledge is necessary for such literature courses remains an open question.

More reading of young adult or children's literature might be a useful measure to be taken, as indicated by Saito, Horwitz, and Garza (1999) in their preliminary study of foreign language reading anxiety. In this study, Saito, Horwitz, and Garza (1999) found that levels of foreign reading anxiety "seemed to be related with the specific writing systems" and "increased with [the student readers'] perceptions of the difficulty of reading in their FL (p. 202). Indeed, English majors reading masterworks of literature in English confront not only a totally different writing system but also potentially difficult texts in terms of the readers' perception of what they read.

Future Directions

In view of the paucity of empirical research regarding difficulties in teaching and studying literature, I would consider the following for future research. First, a study of the policy makers' and also literature instructors' assumptions would be helpful to lay the groundwork for modifications of curriculum and pedagogy. Based on the result of such a study, proper decisions about literature courses can be made. Second, a longitudinal study lasting for a longer period of time might contribute to a better understanding of students' difficulties in literature study in an EFL context. I would suggest such a study lasts for at least two school years when the students take the required British and American literature courses. Third, issues regarding literary understanding remain a topic to be further investigated. A longitudinal study involving recall protocols and journal responses, if the very few undergraduate students who are more proficient in English can be persuaded to participate in such a study, might be useful in providing a window on how the understanding of literary text in a foreign language could evolve if EFL students are more linguistically proficient. Another way to approach foreign literature understanding can

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involve graduate students using learner interviews and think-aloud protocols.

Concluding Thoughts

In conclusion, based on data from different data sources including classroom observations, interviews with student and instructor informants, and also the questionnaire study, my findings support the notion that the study of literature in a foreign language classroom is fraught with difficulty. In addition, the teaching of literature in English as a foreign language is difficult as well.

However, I would caution my audience, as I pointed out in various parts of Chapter 4 and Chapter 5, findings from the questionnaire could differ from what the respondents to it reported in the face-to-face interviews because of various reasons. In addition to all other reasons, different respondents might perceive the question items differently even though as a researcher I had tried what I could to ensure that these items were reliable, as explained in Chapter 3.

The findings of my study contribute to the expansion of our knowledge about difficulties in studying and teaching literature in the English departments in Taiwanese universities, and to a certain extent other EFL or FL contexts as well. My findings that students lacked the ability to generate a literary response to texts that were too difficult for them could be used as a starting point to rectify instructors' expectations of students and their teaching practices. In addition, my findings that institutional or instructional factors such as curriculum requirements, course requirements, and course objectives directly influence students' difficulties and successes in literature study calls for a need for curriculum makers and literature instructors in English departments seriously to consider their assumptions or objectives so that better decisions can be made for text

selection, course requirements, and course objectives. At the same time, they should pay attention to students' interests or aptitudes, significant factors in their literature study, as shown in this study. More importantly, they should also make teaching and study of literature in English departments in Taiwan successful to avoid the diminished role of literature as experienced by universities and foreign-language institutes in Mainland China.

Appendix A
Required Literature Courses in the Traditional English Departments

The content in the following is based on online information accessed in April 2003. This is not a complete list of traditional English departments. However, universities listed here are national ones whose English departments were established before 1995. Each of the courses is usually worth three credits, and some special ones are specified.

Required (Literature) Courses	Universities
1. English and American Literature Courses & Methodology (21 credits) From the following (1) to (6), students can choose any 5 courses (refer to: http://www-ms.cc.ntu.edu.tw/~forex/content/E-course.htm) (1) 2nd yr--British Literature to 1600; (2) 2nd yr--British Literature 1600–1800; (3) 3rd yr--British Literature 1800-1900; (4) 3rd yr--British Literature since 1900; (5) 4th yr--American Literature to 1865; (6) 4th yr--American Literature since 1865; (7) 1st yr--Approaches to Literature (I); (8) 1st yr--Approaches to Literature (II)	Taiwan U.

2. Other Required Literature Courses (18 credits) [Choose 3 courses out of (1) ~ (4); Choose 3 courses out of (5)~(8)]
   (1) 1st yr--Introduction to Western Literature (I); (2) 1st yr--Introduction to Western Literature (II); (3) 2nd yr--European Literature--1350 to 1800; (4) 2nd yr--European Literature since 1800; (5) 3rd yr--Drama (I); (6) 3rd yr--Drama (II); (7) 4th yr--Fiction (I); (8) 4th yr–Fiction (II)

Required (Literature) Courses	Universities
1. English and American Lit. Courses (at least 15 credits) From the following , students choose at least 5 courses before graduation. British Literature--Middle Ages & Renaissance (offered in Fall semester) British Literature–Restoration & 18th C. (offered in Spring semester) British Literature–Romanticism (offered in Fall semester) British Literature–Victorian Period & 20th C. (offered in Spring semester) American Literature to 1865 (offered in Fall semester) American Literature since 1865 (offered in Spring semester)	Cheng-Chih U.

2. Other Required Literature Courses (10 credits)
   1st yr--Introduction to Western Literature (I) & (II) (2 semesters; 6 credits)
   1st yr--Approaches to Literature (I) & (II) (2 semesters; 4 credits)
   (refer to http://english.nccu.edu.tw/engver/underdescription.htm)

Appendix A (continued)

From the following, including non-literature courses, students   Central U.
take 14 courses (totaling 42 credits) before graduation.
1. For the following (1) to (5), 1st-year students choose at least 2 courses:
   (1) 1st yr–English Phonetics; (2) 1st yr–Introduction to Western Literature (A);
   (3) 1st yr–Introduction to Western Literature (B); (4) 1st yr–History of Western
   Culture (I); (5) 1st yr–History of Western Culture (II)

2. For the following (1) to (6), 2nd-year students choose at least 3 courses:
   (1) Introduction to English Linguistics; (2) British Literature (I); (3) British Literature
   (II); (4) American Literature (I); (5) American Literature (II); (6) Study in Fiction

3. For the following (1) to (7), 3rd- and 4th-year students choose at least 4 courses:
   (1) Seminar: Linguistics; (2) Seminar: Teaching English as a Second Language; (3)
   Literature in World Englishes; (4) Modern British and American Literature (I); (5)
   Shakespeare; (6) Literary Criticism; (7) Introduction to Cultural Studies. (Refer
   to--http://english.ncu.edu.tw/office/01/course/required/91_required_courses.htm)

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1. English and American Literature Courses (12 credits)   Chiao-Tung U.
   2nd yr--British Literature before 1800 (fall semester)
   2nd yr–British Literature after 1800 (spring semester)
   3rd yr–American Literature before 1865 (fall semester)
   3rd yr–American Literature after 1865 (spring semester)

2. Other Required Literature Courses   (4 credits)
   1st yr–Introduction to Western Literature (I) (2 credits)
   1st yr–Introduction to Western Literature (II) (2 credits)
   Note: Students take 9 credits of courses from (a) literature, (b) linguistics, or (c)
       literature combined with linguistics as an area of specialization before graduation.
   Refer to: http://www.fl.nctu.edu.tw/index.html

Appendix A (continued)

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1. From the following (1) to (4), students   **Sun Yat-sen U.**

    choose at least 2 courses.

    (1) 2nd yr--British Literature: Before 1660

    (2) 2nd yr--British Literature: 1660-1800

    (3) 3rd yr--British Literature: 1800-1900

    (4) 3rd yr--British Literature: after 1900

2. From the following (1) to (2), students choose at least 1 course.

    (1) 4th yr–American Literature (before 1865)

    (2) 4th yr–American Literature (after 1865)

3. From the following (1) to (2), students choose at least 1 course.

    (1) 2nd yr–European Literature: 1350-1800

    (2) 2nd yr–European Literature: After 1800

4. From the following (1) to (3), students choose at least 1 area (6 credits).

    (1) 2nd yr--British and American Drama (2 semesters; 6 credits)

    (2) 3rd yr--British and American Poetry (2 semesters; 6 credits)

    (3) 4th yr–20th British and American Novels (2 semesters; 6 credits)

5. Other Required Literature-Related Courses   (12 credits)

  1st yr–Introduction to Western Literature (2 semesters; 6 credits)

  1st yr–Approaches to Literature (2 semesters; 6 credits)

Note: **Students are required to take 30 credits from courses listed above in 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5. The minimum number of credits taken before graduation is 128. (Refer the above information to: http://www2.nsysu.edu.tw/zephyr/main.htm)**

1. English and American Literature Courses   (18 credits)   **Cheng-Kung U.**

  2nd yr--American Literature (I)

  2nd yr--American Literature (II)

  2nd yr--British Literature (I)

  2nd yr--British Literature (II)

  3rd yr--British Literature (III)

  3rd yr--British Literature (IV)

2. Other Required Literature Courses (6 credits)

  1st yr–Introduction to Western Literature (I)

  1st yr–Introduction to Western Literature (II)

  (Refer to: http://www.ncku.edu.tw/~foreign/chinese/frame.html)

Appendix A (continued)

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1. English and American Literature Courses   Chung-Hsing U.

   [Students choose at least 4 courses (12 credits) from the following].

   2nd yr--British Literature: The Middle Ages & 16th C.

   2nd yr--British Literature: The 17th Century & 18th C.

   3rd yr--British Literature: The 19th C.

   3rd yr--British Literature: The 20th C.

   3rd yr--American Literature: Before the 20th C.

   3rd yr--American Literature: After the 20th C.

2. *Other Required Literature Courses (8 credits)*

   1st yr--Approaches to Literature (I) (2 credits) & (II) (2 credits)–4 credits

   1st yr--Introduction to Western Literature (I) (2 credits) & (II) (2 credits)–4 credits

1. The following (1) to (7) (totaling 18 credits), including   Tsing-Hua U.

   non-literature courses, are required for all the English majors.

   (1) Introduction to Western Literature (I); (2) Introduction to Western Literature (II); (3)

   Approaches to Western Literature (I) (2 credits); (4) Approaches to Western Literature

   (II) (2 credits); (5) Introduction to English; (6) Introduction to English Linguistics; (7)

   Applied English Linguistics (2 credits)

2. Required English and American Literature courses

   (for students in the literature track).

   (1) British Literature (I) (2 semesters; 6 credits)

   (2) British Literature (II) (2 semesters; 6 credits)

   (3) American Literature (2 semesters; 6 credits)

   Note: Students are allowed to choose either the literature track

   or the linguistics/English teaching track when in their 2nd year.

   Before graduation, students are expected to take 128 credits.

   (Refer to: http://www.hss.nthu.edu.tw/~fl/under/under.html)

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Appendix A (continued)

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(1) Introduction to Western Literature (2 semesters; 6 credits)   **Chung-Cheng U.**

(2) British Literature (The Middle Ages and the 18th Century) (2 semesters; 6 credits)

(3) British Literature (The 19th and 20th Century) (2 semesters; 6 credits)

(4) American Literature (2 semesters; 6 credits)

Note: Students are allowed to choose either the literature track

or the linguistics/English teaching track when in their 2nd year.

Before graduation, students are expected to take 141 credits.

 (Refer to: http://www.ccunix.ccu.edu.tw/~fllcccu/choice.html)

Appendix B Literature Questionnaire

B.1 (English Version)

The purpose of this questionnaire is to gain a better understanding of upper-division English majors' experience of the study of masterworks written in English in the required literature courses. This questionnaire will ask you to reflect upon your literature study experiences such as your habits of study, your studying difficulties, and the resources that you use, etc. Based on the results from this questionnaire study, further oral interviews will be conducted.

The aim of this study is NOT to evaluate individual professors. Thank you for taking the time to answer the questions thoughtfully.

Note: Place a check (v) after the number or word that most closely match your opinion (but write above the lines for questions 4 & 24).

	NOT AT ALL TRUE OF ME	EXTREMELY TRUE OF ME

1. I find studying Chinese literature   1_____2_____3_____4_____5_____
   personally rewarding.
2. I read <u>Chinese</u> "literature"—(i.e.   1_____2_____3_____4_____5_____
   such texts as poetry, short stories,
   novels, and biographies)—for enjoyment.

(Note: If you are a student at TI, please skip Question 3)

3. A.   I have already taken British Literature   YES_____   NO_____
       (the Middle Ages to the 18th C.)
   B. I have already taken American Literature.   YES_____   NO_____
   C. This semester, besides taking British Literature   YES_____   NO_____
      (the 19th C.), I am taking American Literature.
   D. I am NOT taking American Literature and I haven't   YES_____   NO_____
      taken it, but I WILL take it before I graduate.

4. In addition to the <u>required</u> courses of British and American literature, I have taken
   <u>elective</u> literature courses, e.g._____

	NOT AT ALL TRUE OF ME	**EXTREMELY TRUE OF ME**

5. I read unassigned texts (of *ANY* type)   1_____2_____3_____4_____5_____
   written in <u>English</u>.

6. I will take more <u>elective</u> courses of   1_____2_____3_____4_____5_____
   literature written in English before I
   graduate.

7. In addition to class meetings, for each survey course of British or American literature,
   <u>each week</u> I usually spend/spent

   less than 1 hour____   1-2 hours____   3-4 hours____   5-6 hours____
   more than 6 hours____

	NOT AT ALL TRUE OF ME	**EXTREMELY TRUE OF ME**

8. To help myself study the texts in   1_____2_____3_____4_____5_____
   British or/and American literature
   courses, I use reference materials
   from libraries or the Internet.

(Note: If your answer to Question 8 is "1," please skip Question 9)

9. A. I use handbooks written in <u>English</u>.   1_____2_____3_____4_____5____

   B. I use handbooks written in <u>Chinese</u>.   1_____2_____3_____4_____5____

   C. I read critical comments written in   1_____2_____3_____4_____5_____
     <u>English</u> from the Internet.

   D. I read critical comments written in   1_____2_____3_____4_____5_____
     <u>Chinese</u> from the Internet.

   E. I use audio-visual materials in the   1_____2_____3_____4_____5_____
     Internet.

   F. I look for audio-visual materials   1_____2_____3_____4_____5_____
     such as videos.

   G. I read British or/and American   1_____2_____3_____4_____5_____
     literature in <u>Chinese translation</u>.

   H. I read Cliff notes.   1_____2_____3_____4_____5_____

   I. I read critical comments written   1_____2_____3_____4_____5_____

in <u>English</u> from the libraries.

   J. I use critical comments written in

     <u>Chinese</u> from the libraries.   1_____2_____3_____4_____5_____

   K. (i) I use other resources   YES____   NO____

     (ii) If your answer is YES, please

     describe:_____

     _____

                      NOT AT ALL TRUE OF ME   **EXTREMELY TRUE OF ME**

10. When I have difficulties in studying a text,

   A. I consult the professors.   1_____2_____3_____4_____5____

   B. I discuss with my classmates.   1_____2_____3_____4_____5____

   C. I reread the difficult passages of the text.

                           1_____2_____3_____4_____5____

   D. I use the resources that I marked in Question 9.

                           1_____2_____3_____4_____5____

11. In the British or/and American literature 1_____2_____3_____4_____5_____
   courses, I need to rely on the professors'
   lectures to understand the texts.

12. I can understand the text at the literal   1_____2_____3_____4_____5_____
   level, but I find it difficult to get its
   underlying meaning.

13. The far-away historical background   1_____2_____3_____4_____5_____
   in the texts
   makes it difficult for me to study the masterworks
   written in English independently.

14. Poetry as a *genre* is especially difficulty 1_____2_____3_____4_____5_____
   for me.

15. If I had the chance to write my ideas in   1_____2_____3_____4_____5_____
   Chinese about texts read in British or/and
   American literature courses, I would
   enjoy that.

16. The reading load in the British or/and   1_____2_____3_____4_____5_____
   American literature courses is reasonable.

17. In the British or/and American literature 1_____2_____3_____4_____5_____

courses, I find studying <u>masterworks</u> of literature written in <u>English</u> personally rewarding.

18. Studying masterworks of literature in   1_____2_____3_____4_____5_____
    British or/and American literature
    courses gives me a sense
    of achievement.

<div align="right">NOT HELPFUL AT ALL   EXTREMELY HELPFUL</div>

**To what degree, are the required British/American
literature courses helpful**

19. for my English ability?   1_____2_____3_____4_____5_____

20. for my knowledge of literary devices   1_____2_____3_____4_____5_____
    such as irony, similes, metaphors,
    symbols, etc.?

21. for my ability to deal with different   1_____2_____3_____4_____5_____
    literary discourses?

22. for my understanding of the countries   1_____2_____3_____4_____5_____
    where English is spoken?

<div align="right">POOR   EXCELLENT</div>

23. **Rate your current knowledge of English:**
    A. My knowledge of English grammar is   1_____2_____3_____4_____5_____
    B. My ability to write papers/essay   1_____2_____3_____4_____5_____
       questions in English is
    C. My ability to read English is   1_____2_____3_____4_____5_____
    D. My vocabulary knowledge in English is 1_____2_____3_____4_____5_____
    E. My ability to speak English is   1_____2_____3_____4_____5_____
    F. My listening comprehension in English is 1_____2_____3_____4_____5_____
    G. My knowledge of the culture of the
       countries where English is spoken is   1_____2_____3_____4_____5_____

24. If you would be willing to discuss with me the researcher any information along the
    same lines, please sign below, give me your phone number or email address so that we
    might find convenient times for interviews.
    Name:_____
    Phone #:_____
    Email Address: _____

B.2 (Literature Questionnaire in Chinese Translation)　文學問卷

　　　　本問卷，旨在了解英/外文系三、四年級學生在必修文學課研讀經典文學之經驗。本問卷將煩請您反思您的研讀習慣、研讀困難、所使用的學習資源等各項文學研究經歷。依據本問卷調查結果，本研究者將進一步作口頭訪問。

　　　　本調查，不在評估個別教授。謝謝您費時、費心回答本問卷。

註：| 請在合乎您看法的號碼或字後方打勾。〈第 **4 & 24** 題：請在橫線上方作答。〉|

　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　完全不合乎我的情況　　　　極合乎我的情況
1. 我覺得研讀中國文學對我個人而言具價值。　　1____2____3____4____5____
2. 我以閱讀中國文學〈比方說，詩、短篇故事、　　1____2____3____4____5____
　 小說、傳記等文本〉為樂趣。

〈註：如果您在 **TI** 就讀，請略過第三題〉
3. A. 我已經修過中古時期至十八世紀的英國文學。　是 _____　　　不 _____
　 B. 我已經修過美國文學。　　　　　　　　　　　是 _____　　　不 _____
　 C. 這學期，除了修十九世紀英國文學，我也修
　　　 美國文學 。　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　是 _____　　　不 _____
　 D. 我還沒修美國文學，但我會在畢業前修讀它。　是 _____　　　不 _____
4. 除了必修的英國文學、美國文學課程，到目前為止，我還選修了其他文學課，
　 如：_____
　 _____

　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　完全不合乎我的情況　　　極合乎我的情況
5. 我閱讀老師未指定的英文文本 〈種類不拘〉。　　1____2____3____4____5____
6. 我會在畢業之前選修更多使用英文文本的文學課。1____2____3____4____5____
7. 除了上課時間外，每個禮拜我花在每一門英國文學或美國文學的時間通常
　 少於 1 小時____　　1-2 小時____　　3-4 小時____　　5-6 小時____　　超過 6 小時____

　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　完全不合乎我的情況　　　極合乎我的情況
8. 為了幫助我自己研讀英國文學或/和美國文學課使
　 用的文本，我會利用圖書館或網頁上的參考資料。1____2____3____4____5____
〈註：如果您第 **8** 題的答案是 **1**，請略過第 **9** 題〉

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9. A. 我使用<u>英文</u>參考手冊。　　　　　　　1___2___3___4___5___

   B. 我使用<u>中文</u>參考手冊。　　　　　　　1___2___3___4___5___

   C. 我閱讀網頁上的<u>英文</u>評論。　　　　　　1___2___3___4___5___

   D. 我閱讀網頁上的<u>中文</u>評論。　　　　　　1___2___3___4___5___

   E. 我使用網頁上的視聽資料。　　　　　　　1___2___3___4___5___

   F. 我尋找視聽資料，如錄影帶。　　　　　　1___2___3___4___5___

   G. 我閱讀英國文學或/和美國文學的<u>中譯本</u>。　1___2___3___4___5___

   H. 我閱讀 Cliff Notes。　　　　　　　　　1___2___3___4___5___

   I. 我搜尋圖書館裏有的<u>英文</u>評論。　　　　1___2___3___4___5___

   J. 我搜尋圖書館裏有的<u>中文</u>評論。　　　　1___2___3___4___5___

   K.(i) 我使用其他資源。　　　　　　是 _____　　　不 _____

    (ii) 如果您回答『是』，煩請描述：

_____

_____

　　　　　　　　　　　　　　完全不合乎我的情況　　　極合乎我的情況

10. 研讀文本遇困難時，

   A. 我找老師討教。　　　　　　　　　　　1___2___3___4___5___

   B. 我和同學討論。　　　　　　　　　　　1___2___3___4___5___

   C. 我重讀文本中困難的段落。　　　　　　　1___2___3___4___5___

   D. 我使用第 9 題我所標示的各項資源。　　　1___2___3___4___5___

11. 在上英、美文學課時，我需要仰賴老師的
　　講析來了解文本意涵。　　　　　　　　　1___2___3___4___5___

12. 我能夠了解文本字面意義，但覺得要了解
　　文本中深層的涵義有困難。　　　　　　　　1___2___3___4___5___

13. 文本裡頭遙遠的歷史背景，令我覺得要自行閱讀
　　英文原文名著有困難。　　　　　　　　　　1___2___3___4___5___

14. 詩這個文類對我而言特別困難。　　　　　　　1___2___3___4___5___

15. 如果有機會讓我用<u>中文</u>抒寫我對英、美文學課所讀
　　文本的相關見解，我會喜歡這麼做。　　　　1___2___3___4___5___

16. 英、美文學課指定的閱讀量是合理的。　　　　1___2___3___4___5___

17. 在英、美文學課上，我覺得研讀英文原文名著

對我個人而言具價值。　　　　　　　　　　1____2____3____4____5____

18. 在英、美文學課上研讀英文原文名著令我
　　有成就感。　　　　　　　　　　　　　1____2____3____4____5____

　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　毫無幫助　　　　　　　極有幫助

必修的英、美文學課程，對下列各項有多大幫助？
19. 我的英文能力　　　　　　　　　　　　1____2____3____4____5____
20. 我對反諷 (irony)、明諭 (similes)、暗諭(metaphors)
　　、象徵 (symbols)等各文學寫作手法的認識。1____2____3____4____5____
21. 我處理各類不同文學話語 (literary discourses) 的
　　能力。　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　1____2____3____4____5____
22. 我對英語系國家的了解。　　　　　　　1____2____3____4____5____

　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　極為貧乏　　　　　　　極佳

23. 請評估您目前的英文知識:
　　A. 我的英文文法知識　　　　　　　　1____2____3____4____5____
　　B. 我用英文寫報告或申論題的能力　　1____2____3____4____5____
　　C. 我的英文閱讀能力　　　　　　　　1____2____3____4____5____
　　D. 我的英文字彙常識　　　　　　　　1____2____3____4____5____
　　E. 我的英文口語能力　　　　　　　　1____2____3____4____5____
　　F. 我的英文聽力　　　　　　　　　　1____2____3____4____5____
　　G. 我對英語系國家的文化認識　　　　1____2____3____4____5____

24. 如果您願意和本研究者進一步討論本問卷中的相關議題，煩請寫上您的大名、
　　電話號碼或 **email** 以便安排方便的時間訪談。
　　姓名：＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿

　　電話號碼：＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿

　　Email Address:＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿

Appendix C Participant Information Letters for "Literature Questionnaire"

You are invited to participate in a study of Taiwanese upper-division English majors' difficulties in studying canon literature and what they do when encountering those difficulties. My name is Hsiu-sui Chang and I am a doctoral candidate in the Foreign Language Education Program at the University of Texas at Austin, located in Austin, Texas, U.S.A. This study is being conducted for my dissertation research for the completion of my Ph. D. degree.

You are being asked to participate in the study because you are an upper-division English major and your valuable experience of studying English and American literature empowers you to offer insights into the issue related with my research interest. This study will be a good opportunity for you to be more aware of the problems that you encounter and resources that you can use when studying canon literature.

If you participate, you will be one of approximately 110 people in the questionnaire study, and each class (a total of about 50-60 students) will receive a reward with a value of 800 NT dollars. If you decide to participate, I will ask you to complete a short questionnaire. The completion of this questionnaire will take about 10 to 15 minutes.

There is a risk of lack of confidentiality in responding to the questions on this questionnaire. However, great care will be used to maintain confidentiality. In particular, your responses on the questionnaire will not be shared directly with your teacher. Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission. Your decision to participate or to decide not to participate will not affect your grade in any class at your school, nor will it influence your present or future relationship with your instructor, your college, or the University of Texas at Austin.

The purpose of this questionnaire is to identify participants for face-to-face interviews (about 10 to 12 people from each class). Therefore, if you could provide your contact information by answering the very last question on the questionnaire, it will be highly appreciated. Based on the results from this questionnaire study, further oral interviews will be conducted to gain a better understanding of your studying of literature, especially masterworks written in English.

If you have any question about the study, please ask me. If you have any question later, you may contact me at 04-2350-8039 (Taichung, Taiwan) or through E-mail hschang@mail.utexas.edu. You may also contact my supervisor Professor Diane Schallert (Ph. D.) by phone (002-1-512-471-2749) or through E-mail (dschallert@mail.utexas.edu). In addition, you may also contact Clarke A. Burnham, Ph.D., Chair, The University of Texas at Austin Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects, at 002-1-512-232-4383 or through E-Mail burnham@psy.utexas.edu.

You are making a decision whether or not to participate. Your actions of answering the questionnaires will indicate that you have read the information provided above and have decided to participate in the study. If you later decide that you do not want to participate in the study, simply tell me. You may discontinue your participation in this study at any time. Thank you very much!

> Sincerely,
> Hsiu-sui Chang
> Ph. D. Student, UT, Austin

Appendix D
Consent Form (for Interviews with the Upper-Division English Majors)
Difficulties in Studying Literature Survey Courses in English Departments in Taiwan

You are invited to participate in a study on difficulties related with studying canon literature/masterworks of literature written in English. My name is Hsiu-sui Chang and I am a doctoral candidate at the Foreign Language Education Program at the University of Texas at Austin, U.S.A. This study is being conducted for my dissertation research for the completion of my Ph. D. degree. I hope to learn what difficulties that you confront when studying canon literature and what you do when encountering those difficulties. You are being asked to participate in the study because you, as an upper-division English major, are experienced in studying canon literature since entering university. If you participate, you will be one of approximately 20-24 people in the study.

If you decide to participate, I will interview you. During the semester, based on your written assignments or/and the final exam paper (if applicable), when the text(s) is/are available, I will interview you to obtain information about how you prepare for those specific works and what the difficulties that you experience. For each text-based interview, which will last for about 20-30 minutes, please bring a copy of each work to facilitate our discussion. Right after each interview, I will give each copy back to you. At the end of the semester, when the final exam is over, a longer interview will be arranged and it will take about 60-75 minutes. This interview is to gain an understanding of your experiences and views about all the required American and English literature courses that you have taken since entering university. All the interviews will be tape-recorded and transcribed so that the common patterns among the participants can be located. This study will be a good opportunity for you to be more aware of the problems you encounter when studying canon literature.

There is a risk of lack of confidentiality in the interviewing process. However, great care will be used to maintain confidentiality. The recorded cassettes will be coded so that no personally identifying information is visible on them.   Also, the cassettes will be kept in a locked file cabinet in the investigator's house. All the cassettes will be erased after they are transcribed. Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission. Your decision to participate or not to participate will not affect your grade in any class at your school, nor will it influence your present or future relationship with your instructor, your college, or the University of Texas at Austin.

If you have any questions about the study, please ask me. If you have any questions later, you may contact me at 04-2350-8039 (Taichung, Taiwan) or through E-mail hschang@mail.utexas.edu. You may also contact my supervisor Professor Diane Schallert (Ph. D.) by phone (002-1-512-471-2749) or through E-mail (dschallert@mail.utexas.edu). In addition, you may also contact Clarke A. Burnham, Ph.D., Chair, The University of Texas at Austin Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects, at 002-1-512-232-4383 or through E-Mail burnham@psy.utexas.edu.

You will be given a copy of this consent form for your records.

You are making a decision whether or not to participate. Your signature below indicates that you have read the information provided above and have decided to participate in the study. You may discontinue participation at any time by just telling me you want to stop.

_____
Printed Name of Participant   Signature of Participant   Date_____
  Signature of Investigator   Date_____

Appendix E Guiding Questions

E.1 (for Text-Based Interviews with Student Informants)

1. Could you tell me why you chose this particular text for this assignment?
2. How do you go about doing this assignment?
3. Would you be willing to tell me why you use certain resource(s) instead of others?
4. What is/are the challenge(s) that you come across?
5. What do you learn from this assignment?

E.2 (for Longer Interviews with Student Informants)

1. What brought you to become an English major?
2. Please describe your reading activity of canon literature since your university experience.
3. Please describe how you study before going to each class of American literature/English literature.
4. What resources and strategies do you rely on to help you read?
5. Many people think reading canon literature can be challenging. What do you think about this?
6. Among the texts you've read in either English literature or American literature, which is most difficult/interesting to you and why?
7. Among the texts you read in the canon literature survey courses, which *genre(s)* (e.g. poetry, essay, novel, plays, etc.) do you think is/are more difficult? And why?
8. How does the professor's lecture help you better understand and interpret the texts?
9. Not a few professors think close reading is an important task or goal for canon literature education. How has your analytical reading ability been enhanced since you became an English major?
10. What do you think lead you to think studying canon literature rewarding/not rewarding?
11. Would you be willing to talk about what you expect from canon literature survey courses?
12. Besides the required canon literature courses, what other literature course(s) have you taken, and how is it/are they different from canon literature study?
13. Is there anything else that you would like to share that I may have forgotten to bring up?

Appendix F
Consent Form   (for Interviews with the Professors)

Challenges/Difficulties in Teaching Canon Literature
in English Departments in Taiwan

You are invited to participate in a study on the issues related with survey courses of canon literature written in English. My name is Hsiu-sui Chang and I am a doctoral candidate at the Foreign Language Education Program at the University of Texas at Austin, U.S.A. This study is being conducted for my dissertation research for the completion of my Ph. D. degree. I hope to learn what achievements and difficulties that you experience when teaching survey canon literature written in English in the university English departments in Taiwan, an EFL context. You are being asked to participate in the study because your valuable teaching experience empowers you to provide insights into canon literature education in Taiwan.

If you decide to participate, I will arrange a face-to-face interview with you at the end of the semester. It will take about 60-70 minutes and will be tape-recorded and transcribed. There is no risk in participating in the interview. The recorded interview will be transcribed. This interview is to gain an understanding of your experiences and views about teaching the required American or/and English literature course(s) that you are teaching. This study will be a good opportunity for you to be more aware of the problems you encounter when teaching canon literature.

There is a risk of lack of confidentiality in the interviewing process. However, great care will be used to maintain confidentiality. The recorded cassettes will be coded so that no personally identifying information is visible on them.   Also, the cassettes will be kept in a locked file cabinet in the investigator's house. All the cassettes will be erased after they are transcribed. Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission. Your decision to participate or not to participate will not affect your present or future relationship with your college, or the University of Texas at Austin.

If you have any questions about the study, please ask me. If you have any questions later, you may contact me at 04-2350-8039 (Taichung, Taiwan) or through E-mail hschang@mail.utexas.edu. You may also contact my supervisor Professor Diane Schallert (Ph. D.) by phone (002-1-512-471-2749) or through E-mail (dschallert@mail.utexas.edu). In addition, you may also contact Clarke A. Burnham, Ph.D., Chair, The University of Texas at Austin Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects, at 002-1-512-232-4383 or through E-Mail burnham@psy.utexas.edu.

You will be given a copy of this consent form for your records.

You are making a decision whether or not to participate. Your signature below indicates that you have read the information provided above and have decided to participate in the study. You may discontinue participation at any time by just telling me you want to stop.

_____
Printed Name of Participant

_____   _____
Signature of Participant   Date

_____   _____
Signature of Investigator   Date

Appendix G Guiding Questions

(for Semi-Structured Interviews with the Professor Informants)

1. What are your major achievements in teaching survey American literature/English literature?

2. What is the major anthology used in your class(es)?　Would you be willing to talk about why you choose this anthology?

3. What criteria do you generally use for text selection?

4. In the States, England and some other parts of the world, the concept of canon expansion has been a big issue. How does this concept affect your text selection?

5. Many English departments on the web pages state that initiating the English majors into the target culture is one of the major educational objectives. To what extent do you agree with this statement?

6. What you think are the other objectives in teaching canon?　What do you do to the canon literature courses to fulfill the educational objective(s)?

7. In the English-speaking countries, at least, the US, not a few professors think developing students' close/analytical reading ability is an important task or goal for canon literature education. What do you consider this in your university?

8. Canon literature courses are usually arranged chronologically. What you think the advantages or disadvantage would be if the 19th c. and 20th c. literature goes before that of the previous era?

9. Would you be willing to talk about some of the major challenges in teaching survey canon literature?

10. Have you offered elective literature courses?　How does teaching such courses differ from teaching survey courses of literature?

11. Is there anything else that you would like to share that I may have forgotten to bring up?

Appendix H Prof. L's American Literature Course

Course Objectives

1. To survey, selectively, the main authors and developments in the literature of the U.S. from the European conquest of the New World to the end of slavery and the Civil War.

2. To offer an outline history of this time period (1492-1865).

3. To explore the ways in which literary writing reflects, refines, and reconfigures the ways in which American society imagines itself.

4. To help students express and develop their own views concerning the course material.

5. To help students further their command of English, both written and spoken.

Course Requirements

1. *Discussion groups.* Each student should join a discussion group (4-5 members each). Each group should meet at least once a week for one hour, or once every two weeks for two hours, to discuss the reading. The group members must then take turns preparing an email summary of their group's discussion, including unsolved questions. Each student is required to submit at least two discussion reports per semester.   In addition, during the class sessions on particular literary works, the discussion groups will take turns being "on call," which means they should be ready to ask and answer questions in class.   Excellent questions and answers will be awarded extra credit.

2. *Interpretive Essay.*   An independent interpretation of one or more literary works by any of the authors covered in this course, 5-8 typed pages in length. (Essays on works by Whitman or Dickinson may be submitted in the second semester; in that case, the essay will be counted toward the second semester course grade.)   Secondary sources are not required, but if they are used they should be properly cited.

3. *Quizzes.* Objective-style questions on the main points covered in class and in the readings.

4. *Exams.*   The midterm will be a take-home essay exam; the final will be a 100-minute exam.

5. *OPTIONAL ORAL REPORT (for extra credit; up to 5 points added to the course grade).*   A short presentation (10 min.) made by one or two students on one of the topics listed on the course schedule.   The report should include a handout that lists the sources used.

Grading Method

Discussion Reports 10%; Essay 20%; Quizzes 20%; Midterm 25%; Final 25%

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