

## **Critical Thinking's Effect on Vietnamese Students' Writing Attitude and Performance: Action Research**

Thi. K. T Nguyen

Cantho University of Cantho, Cantho, Vietnam

---

**Abstract:** *This research aims to investigate the implementation of critical thinking (CT) in English writing as a Foreign Language (EFL) educational contexts. In this study, fifty English non-major participants attending the third Basic English at universities in Mekong Delta, Vietnam, were introduced to the concept and activities of CT. This study focused on analyzing the students' writing attitude and performance affected by CT. The findings show that students have positive attitude on writing weekly reflection, an introduction, a survey, and the final part of a story; however telling a story is not favorite. The result also indicates that they perform well in writing advice, introduction, and their attitude to a problem. However, they are not good at giving suggestions and convincing people. The implication is for teachers to adopt and integrate CT in their practices in Asian, and the difficult tasks for the good students should be applied for being optional.*

---

### **I. Introduction**

For decades, the language teaching methods in Vietnam have been set in the traditional teacher-centered educational system and the teachers are the almost all sources of knowledge with one-way interaction. Therefore, students have the tendency of believing in all that the teachers give them. This has led to boring lessons and ineffective learning process. In schools the class attendance is obligatory, but in universities the students are allowed to be absent with some percentage of the course time. In reality, many much frequently absent students are allowed to take the final exam by their teachers, therefore although they finish their pre-intermediate course, the result of their English competence is not good because of their not practicing English and frequent absence due to not liking the lessons. Writing is one of skills affected by this problem. In addition, writing was not taught in schools from the first grade to the twelfth grade for the present university students in Mekong Delta, Vietnam. It results in a big gap between the four skills. Reading is better than writing, speaking and listening. However, at the present with the English real demand of political, cultural, touring, commercial and educational relationship with all countries in the world, many employers recruit prospective workers with at least intermediate level. The Vietnamese government also issued the project in which the graduation criteria for English non-major university student is going to be intermediate level in 2020. In the process of finding the ways to solve the problem, the author finds the positive characteristics of critical thinking (CT). For example, CT are purposeful, reasoned, and goal directed, solving problems, formulating inferences, calculating likelihood, and making decisions, constructive consideration of positive and negative attributes... and outcomes (Diane Halpern, 1989). This fact motivates the author of this paper to do a research about the application of CT in the Vietnamese context. Using two samples of English non-major classes at two universities, this paper investigates the attitude of CT and their writing performance. It consists of five main parts: literature review, methodology, findings and discussion, and conclusion.

### **II. Literature Review**

#### **Attitude**

According to Gardner (2006) attitude is affective reactions to any aspect of the class. It could be assessed in terms of the 'atmosphere' in the class, the quality of the materials, availability of materials, the curriculum, the teacher, etc. Ellis (1994) claimed that their social context affect and shaped the learners' attitudes and learning outcomes. Also, attitude is a mental or neural state of readiness, which is organized through experience, and exerts a directive or dynamic influence on the individual's response to all objects and situations to which it is related (Allport, 1935).

#### **Motivation**

Motivation has the intrinsic and the extrinsic motives. Intrinsic motivation is the desire to engage in behaviors for no reason other than enjoyment, challenge, pleasure, or interest (e.g., Berlyne, 1960; Hunt, 1965; White, 1959). This concept is a contrast to the motivation produced by the popular behavior modification programs, which relies heavily on more extrinsic incentives. When students are intrinsically motivated, they seek out novelty and challenges to extend their capacities and to learn without any apparent reward. While, extrinsically motivated, learners learn in anticipation of a reward from outside. Under specific conditions in

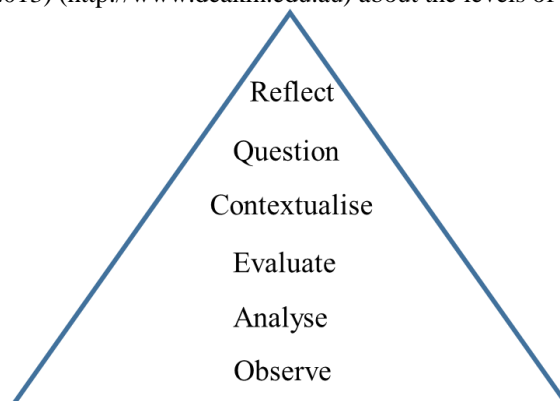
these controlled experiments (e.g., Deci, Koestner, & Ryan, 1999; Lepper & Henderlong, 2000; Sansone & Harackiewicz, 2000), intrinsic motivation appears contrasting with extrinsic motivation. Furthermore, Gardner (1985) proposes two types of motivation: the integrative motivation and the instrumental motivation. Integrative motivation refers to the attitude of the learner towards the target language and target culture. Learners with integrative motivation are socially or culturally oriented and wish to integrate themselves into the culture of the target language. Instrumental motivation relates to ulterior motives, such as acquiring a language as a means for furthering a career or for academic purposes. To consider the role of the motivations, there are some findings. First, successful language learning needs both of these orientations and are not mutually exclusive (Brown, 2000). Second, Semmar (2006) stated that students were more likely to succeed in their English courses with both extrinsic and intrinsic motivations. Brown (2000) conducted the researches on motivation and finds that intrinsic motivation could achieve a long-term retention.

In most situations in Vietnam, a small part of learners might have intrinsic motivation with studying abroad or working in English speaking countries or using English in working places in Vietnam. Most of them just want to pass the exams as Holt (2001) wrote that the basic reason for studying English is simply to pass the exam. With positive effect of CT the author assumes that it can enhance students' motivation and attitude and performance in writing.

**Critical Thinking**

CT has been defined over the years (e.g. Facione, 1990). Many departments of philosophy have claimed expertise over CT when given analytic philosophy's emphasis on reasoning and logic (Brookfield, 2012). It is a range of kinds of thinking and styles of reasoning (Mason, 2009). In Diane Halpern (1989) CT is purposeful, reasoned, and goal directed thinking which involves in solving problems, formulating inferences, calculating likelihood, and making decisions and includes an evaluation component, a constructive consideration of positive and negative attributes and outcomes. Critical thinking is skillful, responsible thinking that facilitates good judgment because of relying upon criteria, self-correcting, and being sensitive to context (Lipman, 1988). Meyers (1986) claimed that the ability of raising relevant questions and critique solutions without necessarily posing alternatives is a central element of critical thinking.

Below is a figure by Thyer (2013) (<http://www.deakin.edu.au>) about the levels of CT:



**Figure 1.**Steps of critical thinking by Thyer (2013)

From the figure 1, it can be seen that at low level, CT skill is the ability to observe something, then analyzing. The higher scales are evaluating and contextualizing. The two top levels are questioning and reflecting. In comparison to Meyers (1986), the two tops abilities by the two authors are nearly the same.

Another theory for CT is Numrich's Sequence of Critical Thinking Tasks.

**Table 1:** Numrich's Sequence of Critical Thinking Tasks

| Perspective                  | Critical thinking tasks         | Skills practiced  |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------|---|
| Focus on the students' world | 1. Observing                    | Looking<br>Listening  |
|                              | 2. Identifying assumptions      | Sharing background<br>Expressing opinions<br>Clarifying values            |
| Focus on the text            | 3. Understanding and organizing | Summarizing<br>Distinguishing relevant details<br>Ordering<br>Classifying |

|                       |                             |   |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------|---|
|                       |                             | Comparing and contrasting<br>Explaining cause and effect  |
|                       | 4. Interpreting             | Making inferences<br>Interpreting meaning<br>Hypothesizing<br>Theorizing  |
| Focus beyond the text | 5. Inquiring further        | Surveying the public<br>Interviewing a specialist<br>Researching  |
|                       | 6. Analyzing and evaluating | Synthesizing information<br>Critiquing<br>Reflecting on related ideas<br>Making logical conclusions<br>Reevaluating assumptions |
|                       | 7. Making decisions         | Proposing solutions<br>Problem solving<br>Taking action<br>Participating  |

Numbrich's is somewhat similar to Thyer's. At the beginning ability of CT, students are required to summarize the knowledge, but step by step they must think more to compare and evaluate and finally show their own action. In Kurfiss & Gainen (1988) essays evoke more high-level reasoning processes than writing summaries (Durst 1987) or answering study questions (Newell (1984). Thinking tasks can build from short assignments focused on one or two key concepts to more complex assignments that encourage students to integrate ideas from many sources so that they simultaneously acquire knowledge and develop skill in using it. Kurfiss & Gainen (1988) states that typical tasks in education are using the students' knowledge to accomplish discipline-related tasks like solving problems, interpreting texts, designing or evaluating experiments, or weighing the merits of a proposal.

From all positive characteristics of CT analyzed above especially the feature of expressing their own evaluation, thinking which is very limited in Vietnam, the author assumes that the students can get high intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, and positive attitude. Since then, their writing performance can be much improved.

**Previous Studies**

AlKhoudary (2015) discovered learners and teachers' attitude towards the role of critical thinking in promoting the writing skills at AlBuraimi University College (BUC), the Sultanate of Oman. The author focused on the effect of integrating CT on learners' performance. A combination of qualitative, quantitative consisted of questionnaires, pre and post-tests. One hundred students divided into two groups; twentyteachers (ten males and ten females). In the findings, students who wrote critically were mostly motivated and their performance was affected positively.

Wichadee (2014) studied the effect of Learning Management System (LMS) as a tool to facilitate students' writing and critical thinking skills in Thailand. The primary data was students' online learning records and from discussion forum postings. The findings showed that students' motivation to learn was at a high level and student motivation was positively correlated with their learning behavior. Male and female students did not differ in their motivation and learning behavior. It enhanced the students' writing skills, encouraged their critical thinking, and helped them write more systematically.

**III. Methodology**

The present study intended to investigate the effect of CT on English non-major students' writing attitude and performance in an EFL learning environment in Vietnam. The study considered the following questions:

1. Can critical thinking enhance the positive attitude for writing of the English non-major students of Mekong Delta, Vietnam?
2. How well can critical thinking make them perform writing?
3. Are there any different effects on the attitude and performance between females and males?

**Instruments**

In-class survey can be served a base to get feedback from the students and decide suitable instructions for improvement (Davies, 2006). In order to investigate the degree of students' attitude and the effect on writing skill after CT activity, a questionnaire with 12 items was administered after the activity. Six questions probed the extent of attitude toward the six writing tasks with some reasons, five questions for measuring the performance of CT ability, and the last question was ranking the three most favorite tasks (see appendix A). In addition, interviews with some questions were carried to know the reasons deeply (see appendix B) and classroom observation was carefully applied to get more evidences.

### Participants and Procedures

A total of fifty English non-major students in Mekong Delta, the southern Vietnam participated in this study in 2015. Among fifty students, thirty ones were from Cantho University and 20 ones from Longan University. Most of them were in the second-year study at a four-year college, and some were in the first year or third year and fourth year and they were from many different majors because they learned by credits and they made their own study schedule. They took a placement test with reading and grammar knowledge before the third Basic English Course. They had unequal English competence in four skills because some urban students studied writing skills in extra classes in foreign language centers while rural ones didn't take any courses.

At the beginning of the semester, the author assigned six CT writing tasks (see appendix C). The course book was *Life of elementary level* by Cengage Learning. Also, other materials included a story from one of the author's previous students, students' writings in the class from weekly reflection, a survey composed by the author. Thanks to the lessons in the course book, the students were equipped enough linguistic knowledge to do the five first CT tasks. However, the theory of how to write a story was not taught to the students. Therefore, writing a story in the sixth task with 'Making a booklet about your own introduction and a story with your comment' was designed to focus on meaning and communication more than the form and especially to encourage the good students. They had chances to show that how they were different from the others. There was one three - period lesson a week and the research lasted for ten weeks. The followings are the details of the treatment. In the 1<sup>st</sup> week, a reflection was done in class and it was applied for 10 weeks as homework and in-class activities alternatively. Every week only ten writing papers of reflection were collected and marked by the author, so the rest were exchanged and shared among the students to communicate. The author also informed of writing their own stories with comments in the reflections as well to make a booklet at the 10<sup>th</sup> week. In the 2<sup>st</sup> week, an introduction as homework was informed and they handed in weeks later. This task could be in a form of a power point or a video clip or a poster. Before filming a video clip, they wrote the scripts (see appendix D), then the author corrected them. In the 3<sup>st</sup> week, another reflection was written in class. In the 4<sup>th</sup> week, they wrote a survey about the ideal life partner in class (see appendix E), then the result was reported by the author in the following week orally. In the 5<sup>th</sup> week, another reflection was written in class again. In the 6<sup>th</sup> week, the in-class task was writing an advice to a female classmate which the author knew her problem thanks to the reflection. In the 7<sup>th</sup> week, a homework reflection about the teacher of the English class, the author, with some prompts given by the author (see appendix F and appendix G). In the 8<sup>th</sup> week, they wrote the final part of a story' (see appendix H and appendix I). In the 9<sup>th</sup> week, there was a reflection in class again. In the 10<sup>th</sup> week, the task was making a booklet with the personal information and a story written during reflections (see appendix J). During ten weeks, some reflections were carried out in class because many males and some females didn't hand in them. All topics for reflections except evaluating the teacher were chosen by the students themselves.

### IV. Findings and Discussion

Detailed findings of the three main sections including a post questionnaire, individual interviews, and weekly classroom observation. In the post questionnaire the Cronbach's alpha coefficient was 1.00, which showed that the items on the questionnaire had a high internal reliability consistency.

#### Attitude

**Table 2:** The Mean of the Survey Tasks about Writing Attitude

| Survey tasks                         | Mean (Max. 4) | Std. D | Rank |
|--------------------------------------|---------------|--------|------|
| 1. Introduction                      | 3.06          | 0.37   | 2    |
| 2. Weekly reflection                 | 3.08          | 0.75   | 1    |
| 3. Final part of a story             | 2.86          | 0.72   | 4    |
| 4. Survey about life partner         | 2.96          | 0.78   | 3    |
| 5. An advice                         | 2.74          | 0.72   | 5    |
| 6. Booklet with a story with comment | 2.64          | 0.96   | 6    |
| All of six tasks                     | 2.89          |        |      |

Note: N=50.

The mean of the whole group of six tasks is 2.89 out of 4.00. It means that the students has pretty positive attitude to the CT tasks. The most favorite is weekly reflection about issues in their student life or your family, the second is writing an introduction about their family or their boarding room or their hometown, the third is a survey about your ideal life partner, but the two least favorites are giving an advice to their classmate and making a booklet about their own introduction and a story with your comments. Obviously, the basic and easy levels of CT tasks are more preferred than the complex ones.

Evidences of observation, interviews and reasons in the questionnaire will explain the result more. First, to explain the most like of reflection, in observation, the author saw that the students really liked to hand in their reflection: hand in more than the teachers required. However, some boys didn't hand in the reflection,

so the teachers asked them write some in classes. The maximum number of reflection was eight by a girl. When asked the reason, one girl said, "I like writing reflection most because I can choose the topic and can write a lot, every week". Introduction task was the second choice. Almost all handed in it in power point files, only two were in video clips, one in a poster. They were very proud of their products. The third like was the survey task. They answered the survey enthusiastically, and they looked eager to know its result. In the questionnaire answers, the most favorite reasons for the six tasks was "interesting", the 2<sup>nd</sup> was "share your knowledge and thought", the 3<sup>rd</sup> was "useful".

Interviews revealed the reasons of not liking booklet as much as the others. One student said, "I wrote it but I was too busy to print it out and photo it for my classmates." Another girl said, "I don't like it and didn't make it because I do not need it. I don't know almost all of them. They are from different classes." A boy said, "I can't tell a story, so I didn't write it. In the reflection I just wrote some information about myself and my family". A girl said, "I told my real stories, but did you understand it?". To summarize, the most given reasons of not making the booklet are not being able to write it, not liking it, and not needing it. These answer matched the chosen reason of not liking the booklet in the questionnaire that is "difficult". In reality, they were going to take the final exams of all subjects of their first semester of 2015-2016 school year. Therefore, they were very busy with reviewing the lessons. However, some girls especially the good ones liked writing stories and they shared their real touch ones in their life.

**Table 3** The Means of Gender Difference in Writing Attitude

| Survey tasks                      | Mean (Max. 4) |      |      |      | Std.D  |      |
|-----------------------------------|---------------|------|------|------|--------|------|
|                                   | Female        | Rank | Male | Rank | Female | Male |
| Introduction                      | 3.04          | 2    | 3.07 | 1    | 0.46   | 0.27 |
| Weekly reflection                 | 3.08          | 1    | 3.07 | 1    | 0.88   | 0.62 |
| Final part of a story             | 2.87          | 4    | 2.84 | 4    | 0.67   | 0.78 |
| Survey about life partner         | 2.91          | 3    | 3.00 | 3    | 0.65   | 0.89 |
| An advice                         | 2.87          | 4    | 2.61 | 5    | 0.79   | 0.63 |
| Booklet with a story with comment | 2.75          | 5    | 2.53 | 6    | 0.79   | 1.10 |
| All of six tasks                  | 2.92          |      | 2.85 |      |        |      |

**Note:** Number of females = 24, Number of males = 26.

The mean of all females is 2.92 and the mean of all males is 2.85, so there is no significant difference between females and males' attitude. The task that females like most is weekly reflection, then the second is the introduction, and it is nearly the same for males. Both two groups like the booklet least, but it is not much lower than the others.

**Performance**

The following is the answer result of writing performance done by the questionnaire.

**Table 4:** The Means of the Writing Performance

| Survey items   | Mean (Max: 4) | Std. D | Rank |
|--|---------------|--------|------|
| 1. An introduction about issues in my student life logically | 2.92          | 0.52   | 2    |
| 2. Consider a problem and express my attitude                | 2.86          | 0.78   | 3    |
| 3. A practical and logical suggestion                        | 2.44          | 0.78   | 4    |
| 4. Giving an useful advice                                   | 3.08          | 0.69   | 1    |
| 5. Convince other people with my own ideas or beliefs        | 1.92          | 0.75   | 5    |

Mean of the five items is 2.82 out of 4. This number shows they agree that they can do CT tasks and the best is giving a useful advice to other people in their student life in writing, the second ability is writing an introduction about issues in their student life logically. In observation, the author saw that they had difficulties in vocabulary when they wrote an introduction such as some attractions in their hometown. This caused them not to write it well. But the worst is convincing other people with their own ideas or belief. In fact, they were at pre-intermediate level, so the skill of convincing is difficult for them. They didn't get the official theory about convincing writing, either. What they convinced other people in writing was their creation and synthesis in what they learned.

**Table 5:** The Means of Gender Difference in Writing Performance

| Survey items   | Mean (Max: 4) |      |      |      | Std. D |      |
|--|---------------|------|------|------|--------|------|
|  | Female        | Rank | Male | Rank | Female | Male |
| 1. An introduction about issues in my student life logically | 3.00          | 2    | 2.84 | 2    | 0.29   | 0.67 |
| 2. Consider a problem and express my attitude                | 2.87          | 3    | 2.84 | 2    | 0.79   | 0.78 |
| 3. A practical and logical suggestion                        | 2.58          | 4    | 2.30 | 3    | 0.58   | 0.92 |
| 4. Giving an useful advice                                   | 3.08          | 1    | 3.07 | 1    | 0.50   | 0.84 |
| 5. Convince other people with my own ideas or beliefs        | 2.08          | 5    | 1.76 | 4    | 0.77   | 0.71 |
| All of five questions  | 2.72          |      | 2.65 |      |        |      |

The mean of females is 2.72 and the mean of all males is 2.65, so there is no significant different. Females and males agree in their writing performance equally. With the means and the ranks of two groups, they are nearly the same.

## V. Conclusions and Recommendations

In conclusion, the findings of this study indicate that English non-major university students of Mekong Delta, Vietnam of the author has pretty positive writing attitude to CT writing. The most favorite is weekly reflection about issues in their student life or their family, the second is writing an introduction about their family or their boarding room or their hometown, the third is a survey about your ideal life partner, the fourth is writing the final part of a story, but the two least favorites are giving an advice to their classmate and making a booklet about their own introduction and a story with your comments. Obviously, the basic and easy levels of CT tasks are more preferred than the complex ones. Also, there is no significant difference about attitude between two genders.

In the aspect of performance, CT enhances the students' writing the skills of basic and easy levels critically, namely giving a useful advice to other people in their student life, writing an introduction about issues in their student life logically, and considering a problem and express their attitude. However, they still doubt their ability to give a practical and logical suggestion and convince other people with their own ideas or belief. Especially, what females and males agree is that their performance ability is almost the same.

However, in order to guarantee these enabling conditions for effective CT application in writing, the CT tasks for pre-intermediate students should be at basic levels with short writing. Difficult tasks should be applied, but they should be optional because they attract the good students' participation and development. The findings can be applied in Asian cultures where students are afraid of expressing their real thoughts and evaluation orally. Further research is required to discover the effective autonomous types that males like to enhance their writing because this group seems less motivated than females in term of self-study.

## Author Note

Thi K. T Nguyen, Department of Basic English and English for Specific Purposes, School of Foreign Languages, Cantho University, Vietnam.

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Thi K. T Nguyen, Department of Basic English and English for Specific Purposes, School of Foreign Languages, Cantho University Campus 1, 30/4 Street, Ninhkieu District, Cantho University, Vietnam. E-mail: ntkthi@ctu.edu.vn

## References

- [1] AlKhouday, Y. A. M. (2015). The effect of teaching critical thinking on Al-Buraimi University College students' writing skills: A case study. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics & English Literature*, 4(6), 212-219. doi:10.7575/aiac.ijalel.v.4n.6p.212.
- [2] Allport, G. (1935). Attitudes. In C. Murchinson(Ed.), *Handbook of social psychology* (pp. 798-844). Worcester, MA: Clark University Press.
- [3] Berlyne, D. E. (1960). *Conflict, arousal, and curiosity*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- [4] Brookfield, S. D. (2012). *Teaching for critical thinking: Tools and techniques to help students question their assumptions*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- [5] Brown, H. D. (2000). *Principles of language learning and teaching*. New York: Longman.
- [6] Gardner, R. (1985). *Social psychology and second language learning*. London: Arnold.
- [7] Gardner, R. (2006). The socio-educational model of second language acquisition: A research paradigm. *Eurosla Yearbook*, 6(1), 237-260.
- [8] Davies, A. (2006). What do learners really want from their EFL courses? *ELT Journal*, 60(1), 3- 12. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/elt/cci076>
- [9] Deci, E. L., Koestner, R., & Ryan, R. M. (1999). A meta-analytic review of experiments examining the effects of extrinsic rewards on intrinsic motivation. *Psychological Bulletin*, 125, 627-668.
- [10] Dickinson, L. (1995). Autonomy and motivation a literature review. *System*, 23(2), 165-174.
- [11] Ellis, R. (1994). *The study of second language acquisition*: Oxford University Press.
- [12] Facione, P. A. (1990). *Critical thinking: A statement of expert consensus for purposes of educational assessment and instruction (Research Report)*. Millbrae, CA: The California Academic Press. [http://assessment.aas.duke.edu/documents/Delphi\\_Report.pdf](http://assessment.aas.duke.edu/documents/Delphi_Report.pdf)
- [13] Halpern, D. F. (1989). *Thought and knowledge: An introduction to critical thinking* (2nd ed.). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.
- [14] Hunt, J. M. V. (1965). Intrinsic motivation and its role in psychological development. In D. Levine (Ed.), *Nebraska Symposium on Motivation*, 13, 189-282. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.
- [15] Kurfiss, J. G. (1988). *Critical thinking: Theory, research, practice and possibilities*. ASHE-ERIC Higher Education Report No.2. Washington, DC: Association for the study of higher education.
- [16] Lepper, M. R., & Henderlong, J. (2000). Turning "play" into "work" and "work" into "play": 25 years of research on intrinsic versus extrinsic motivation. In C. Sansone & J. M Harackiewicz (Eds.), *Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation: The search for optimal motivation and performance* (pp. 257-307). San Diego: Academic Press.
- [17] Lipman, M. (1988). *Philosophy goes to school*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- [18] Mason, M. (2009). *Critical thinking and learning*. Hoboken, NJ: WileyBlackwell.
- [19] Meyers, C. (1986). *Teaching students to think critically*. San Francisco, CA: Josey-Bass.
- [20] Norris-Holt, J. (2001). Motivation as a Contributing Factor in Second Language Acquisition. *The Internet TESL Journal*, 7(6). Retrieved from <http://iteslj.org/Articles/Norris-Motivation.html>

- [21] Sansone, C., & Harackiewicz, J. M. (Eds.). (2000). *Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation: The search for optimal motivation and performance*. San Diego: Academic Press.
- [22] Semmar, Y. (2006). An exploratory study of motivational variables in a foreign language learning context. *Journal of Language and Learning*, 5(1), 118-132.
- [23] Thyer, E. (2013). *Figure 1: Steps of critical thinking*. Retrieved from Deakin University website [http://www.deakin.edu.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0012/51222/critical-thinking.pdf](http://www.deakin.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0012/51222/critical-thinking.pdf)
- [24] White, R. W. (1959). Motivation reconsidered: The concept of competence. *Psychological Review*, 66, 297-333.
- [25] Wichadee, S. (2014). *Students' Learning Behavior, Motivation and Critical Thinking in Learning Management Systems*. Bangkok, Thailand: Language Institute, Bangkok University. Retrieved from the ERIC database. (EJ1033317)

|                               |
|-------------------------------|
| Gender: Male / female<br>Age: |
|-------------------------------|

**Appendix A**  
**Questionnaire about CT Writing Attitude and Performance**

**PART A: Circle one choice for each question.** (Strongly like (4), like (3), moderate (2), dislike (1), strongly dislike (0)) **and circle the reasons.**

1. Do you like 'An introduction about your family or your boarding room or your hometown'?

Strongly like                      like                      moderate                      dislike                      strongly dislike

**-Why do you like it?** (You can circle more than one)

Interesting    useful    easy enough to do    share your knowledge/thought    (other reason).....

**-Why don't you like it?** (You can circle more than one)

Boring    useless    difficult    not like getting involved    (other reason).....

2. Do you like 'Weekly reflection about issues in your student life or your family'?

Strongly like                      like                      moderate                      dislike                      strongly dislike

**-Why do you like it?** (You can circle more than one)

Interesting    useful    easy enough to do    share your knowledge/thought    (other reason).....

**-Why don't you like it?** (You can circle more than one)

Boring    useless    difficult    not like getting involved    (other reason).....

3. Do you like 'Thinking and writing the final part of a story'?

Strongly like                      like                      moderate                      dislike                      strongly dislike

**-Why do you like it?** (You can circle more than one)

Interesting    useful    easy enough to do    share your knowledge/thought    (other reason).....

**-Why don't you like it?** (You can circle more than one)

Boring    useless    difficult    not like getting involved    (other reason).....

4. Do you like 'A survey about your ideal life partner'?

Strongly like                      like                      moderate                      dislike                      strongly dislike

**-Why do you like it?** (You can circle more than one)

Interesting    useful    easy enough to do    share your knowledge/thought    (other reason).....

**- Why don't you like it?** (You can circle more than one)

Boring    useless    difficult    not like getting involved    (other reason).....

5. Do you like 'Giving an advice to your classmate'?

Strongly like                      like                      moderate                      dislike                      strongly dislike

**-Why do you like it?** (You can circle more than one)

Interesting    useful    easy enough to do    share your knowledge/thought    (other reason).....

**-Why don't you like it?** (You can circle more than one)

Boring    useless    difficult    not like getting involved    (other reason).....

6. Do you like 'Making a booklet about your own introduction and a story with your comment'?

Strongly like                      like                      moderate                      dislike                      strongly dislike

**-Why do you like it?** (You can circle more than one)

Interesting    useful    easy enough to do    share your knowledge/thought    (other reason).....

**-Why don't you like it?** (You can circle more than one)

Boring    useless    difficult    not like getting involved    (other reason).....

**PART B: Circle the choices.** (Strongly agree (4), Agree (3), Moderate (2), Disagree (1), Strongly disagree (0))

1. I think I can organize ideas to make an **introduction** about issues in my student life logically in writing.  
Strongly agree                      Agree                      Moderate                      Disagree strongly disagree
2. I think that I can consider a problem in my student life and express my **attitude** to it logically in writing.  
Strongly agree                      Agree                      Moderate                      Disagree strongly disagree
3. I think that I can make a practical and logical **suggestion** to other people in my student life in writing.  
Strongly agree                      Agree                      Moderate                      Disagree strongly disagree
4. I think that I can give an useful **advice** to other people in my student life in writing  
Strongly agree                      Agree                      Moderate                      Disagree strongly disagree
5. I think that I can **convince** other people with my **own ideas or beliefs** about issues in my student life in writing  
Strongly agree                      Agree                      Moderate                      Disagree strongly disagree
6. Which 3 tasks do you like most?  
The 1<sup>st</sup>:                      ???  
The 2<sup>nd</sup>:  
The 3<sup>rd</sup>:

### Appendix B

#### Semi-Structured Interview Questions

##### Part A: Attitude

- 1- Do you like introducing your hometown to your friends? Why?/Why not?
- 2- Do you like writing reflections? Why/Why not?
- 3- Did you like making the booklet? Why?/Why not?
- 4- What difficulties did you have when doing the six tasks?
- 5- Do you like to know how your friends' ideal life partners are?
- 6- Do you have any recommendation for the six tasks of critical thinking?

##### Part B: Performance

- 1- How many reflections did you write?
- 2- Why didn't you write reflection at home?
- 3- How long did you write in the teacher evaluation?
- 4- Did you make the introduction about your hometown or yourself or your boarding room? Why?
- 5- How did you make the introduction about it? Why?

### Appendix C

#### Six CT Writing Tasks

1. An introduction about your family or your boarding room or your hometown
2. Weekly reflection about issues in your student life or your family
3. Thinking and writing the final part of a story
4. A survey about your ideal life partner
5. Giving an advice to your classmate
6. Making a booklet about your own introduction and a story with your comments

### Appendix D

#### A Script for a Personal Introduction Video Clip by Pham Huu Nhan

Hi, I'm Nhân. Today, I'm telling about my home and my life at home. There are only 2 people in my family, my mother and me. My mother is a beautiful and wonderful woman. We come from Cà Mau, the last plot of country. We are so happy, and every day my mom cooks great meals with many dishes for me. That is my mother's room where I am not allowed to get in. This is my bed. This is the place where I do my homework, relax, and help me have nice dreams every night. I feel warm and soft when lying on it. Look! It is in good order. Every day, I get up early to go to school...hjc. Although I don't like getting up early. After the school hours of stress I often play guitar to relax. This is my guitar. It is made of wood by an artist agent in Saigon. Listen! Its sound is great...and this is my study space. Haha! "Small but martial" it is the cradle of all problems. Every day, I go to school to study and take part in school extra-curriculum activities and come back



to home early. If I come back to home after 10:00 P.M, my mother will not let me in the house. Oh! I must be with my mother for cooking. See you later.

**Appendix E**

**A Survey about the Ideal Life Partner**  
**Part A: A Survey about Your Ideal Life Partner**

Gender: Male / female  
Age:

1. He/ She should .....  
A. work in the same company with me  
B. work in a different company with me  
C. be jobless, then stay at home and do housework  
D. other choice:  
Why?.....
2. He/ She should be .....  
A. younger than me                      B. older than me  
C. the same age with me                D. other choice:  
Why?.....
3. He/ she should be .....  
A. richer than me                      B. poorer than me  
C. as rich/poor as me                    D. other choice:  
Why?.....
4. He/ she should be from .....  
A. the same hometown with me        B. a different hometown with me  
C. a foreign country                      D. other choice:  
Why?.....
5. He/ she should have .....  
A. the same religion with me          B. a different religion  
C. no religion                              D. other choice:  
Why?.....
6. He/ she should be .....  
A. taller than me                      B. shorter than me  
C. as tall as me                          D. other choice:  
Why?.....

**Part B:**

1. Which job do you never want your life partner have? Why?
2. Number the important qualities that your life partner should have. (number 1 is the most important)  
Handsome/beautiful,      intelligent,      loyal,      generous,      rich

**Appendix F**

**Prompts for Evaluating the English Teacher and Giving Some Recommendation**

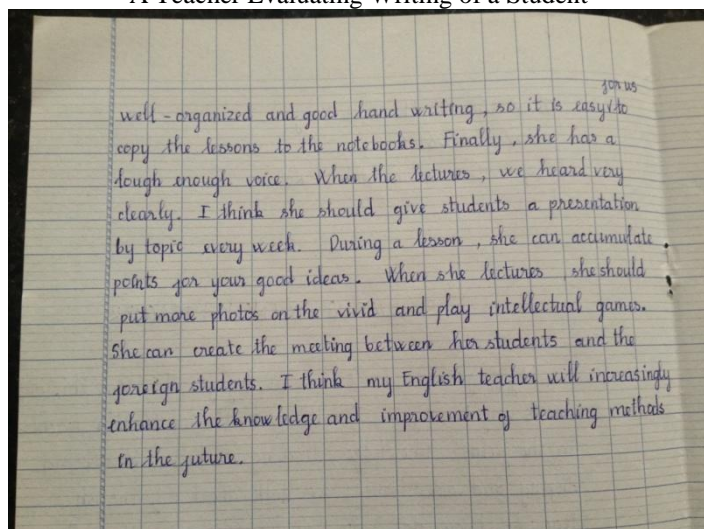
**A. Evaluate**

1. Knowledge
  - Good / ok / bad
  - Large / enough / limited / poor
2. Teaching methods
  - Work: individual work, pair-work, group-work, homework
  - Activities: Interesting/boring
  - Kinds of activities: many / some / a few
  - Activity arrangement: suitable/unsuitable; create comfort / relaxed / tired
3. Blackboard display
  - Handwriting: clear / good / unclear / untidy
4. Voice
  - loud / loud enough / soft voice
5. Style
  - strict / easy-going / friendly

**B. Recommendation**

### Appendix G

#### A Teacher Evaluating Writing of a Student



### Appendix H

#### A CT Task: Write the Final Part of the Story

##### A Stormy Day

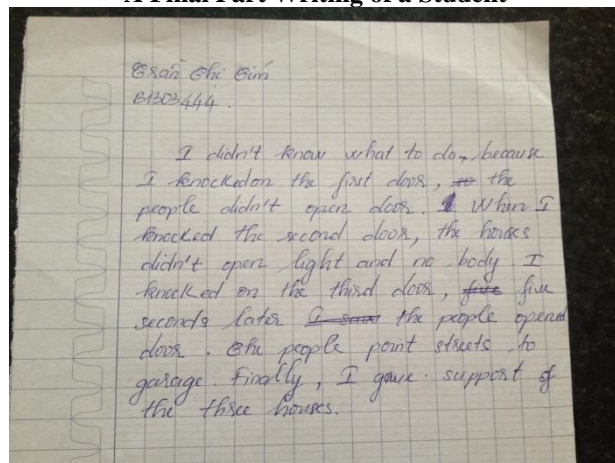
It happened five years ago in winter. I went to make some payments and to buy some food. When I was in the post office, it started to rain hard. My two girls were with me. It was 4 pm, and the line was very long in the post office. When I finally left that place, it was night. The streets looked like little rivers. It was difficult to drive, but I had to do it.

When I was driving, I saw a red light ahead. I had to stop. Five seconds later, when I was supposed to stop, the brakes of my car didn't work. I was scared because I couldn't stop the car. What I did at that moment was turn the emergency lights on and push the horn repeatedly. I was crossing a puddle at the same time. When I was in the middle of the puddle, the car's engine turned off. I couldn't start it again. There wasn't a public telephone close to there. The area was deserted. My nine month old baby had a temperature, and the oldest was only three years old. I didn't know what to do because I couldn't carry both of them, and if I would have left them in the car, someone could have taken them. I was worried.

I decided to leave the girls in the car for a while. I walked to find some help. Close to there, I saw three houses. I knocked on the first door...

### Appendix I

#### A Final Part Writing of a Student



## Appendix J

### A Writing of Personal Information and a Story with Comments for the Booklet



**M**y full name is Nguyen Thi Hong Tham. I come from 42, Rach Nghe hamlet, Thong Hoa commune, Cau Ke district, Tra Vinh province. I was born in Tra Vinh hospital. My birthday is 14.08.1995. Now, I'm a third-year student at Cantho University. My major is Commercial Law. I live in a boarding house with my friend. I come back my hometown once a month by bus. In my free time, I like listening to music, especially, I like singing pop ballad music. In addition, I like surfing Zalo, surfing Facebook, reading books and news. On and off, I open cook. In the future, I want to become a good lawyer and I hope that my dream will come true.

**I** was born and grew up in Tra Vinh province, but now I live in Cantho city and I'm a third-year student at Cantho University. I feel that life in the city is full off activities. Cantho city is the place where I can see many vehicles, many skyscrapers, many people with a hurry of life. Here, we can take the chances to study and work best because there are many good Universities for us to choose. When I graduate, I also find a job easier with good salary. Although lives in a big city are quite luxurious and morrden, I want to live in the contryside because I like the slow pace of life in the contryside and people there.