The Application of Critical Thinking to Short Story Analysis: An Experiment on a New Teaching Process

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https://doi.org/10.54855/ijte.23325

ABSTRACT

Attempts have been made to integrate critical thinking into many disciplines to improve thinking quality and enhance learning outcomes. Although many studies have indicated positive effects when applying critical thinking to teaching literary works in varied ways, further research is needed to develop practical approaches that solve the problems of students' passive learning and low interest in literature courses. The author of the study developed a process named R.A.I.S.E-U.P, transforming critical thinking qualities into a practical procedure for teaching short stories at the tertiary level. The aim of the current study is to measure the effects of the experiment on this teaching process conducted in a literature class of 35 English major students at Nong Lam University. Qualitative data were collected through interviews for content analysis. The results showed positive feedback on the experiment both in students' engagement in class activities and improvement of critical thinking quality. The findings consolidate the teaching approach to apply critical thinking to literary analysis.

Introduction

Literature courses are introduced as compulsory in the curricula of many foreign language faculties in Vietnamese universities with the aim to provide their majors with an overview of cultural background and the abilities to appreciate literary works, discover humane values, and improve language and thinking skills. The significance of literary studies is well-perceived by most students in Hasan and Hasan (2019) and Tran (2022). This view reflects the three approaches to literature teaching suggested by Carter and Long (1991): language-based approach, cultural approach, and personal development approach. Al-Mahrooqi and Roscoe (2012) added that the study of literature study can improve critical thinking by comparing practices, values, and traditions of diverse cultures.

Important as it is recognized, instructing literature to English majors has been a challenging task due to students' problems with vocabulary, structures, and concepts and their frequent

practice of searching for pre-existing online analyses and memorizing interpretations for essays. This way of learning can hinder students' creativity, critical thinking, and capacity to appreciate literary artistry, making literature classes most tedious and unproductive.

The first problem that students face is their limited language proficiency and lack of background knowledge related to literary texts, which can seriously affect their full engagement in literature courses, as concluded in the study by Tran (2022). This claim is consistent with Carter and Long's (1991) emphasis on the necessity of familiarity with native language literature, and knowledge of the world, people, and life experience. It is also noted in Phạm's (2019) study that high school students have been acquainted with only listening to the teacher's lectures and remembering notes for later essays, which might be insufficient for competence development.

The second problem of literary study results from conventional teaching methods. Bui and Nguyen (2018) argued that teaching literature in Vietnam only focuses on imparting knowledge while neglecting to enhance students' abilities. As a result, the academic programs lose their connection to authentic tasks and ignore students' interests. Phạm (2019) also remarked that Vietnamese teachers of literature tend to apply the only method of lecturing and impose their own opinions on literary texts. Besides, in the context of teaching literature for English majors at tertiary level, Nguyen (2022) noticed lecturers' mindset of using EFL rather than a lingua franca, which also affects the ways of teaching and assessment. Lecturers, therefore, tend to avoid classic works from British and American literature in their syllabi, and incline to assess students' comprehension and grammatical quality rather than their appreciation of literary works.

Attempts to solve these issues are varied. First, some syllabus designers and lecturers may introduce literary texts as reading materials with the aim at improving comprehension and raising language proficiency, as noticed by Nguyen (2022). Other researchers try different methods to make literature classes more interactive and appealing. Bui and Nguyen (2018) suggested varied solutions for teaching literature on a competence-based approach. Pham (2018) introduces the application of critical thinking through Socratic discussion. Hiner (2013 a) develops her approach to include critical thinking elements in the literature classroom.

The author of the current study attempted to apply critical thinking to literature teaching with the purpose of developing students' sense of discovery and appreciation of literary works, and thus raising their interest and critical thinking. Different from Hiner's (2013 a) approach, the author focused on analysis of short stories and changed the elements of critical thinking into a process of teaching literature. An experiment of the innovative approach was conducted on a literature course, hypothetically increasing more interaction and interest, developing a sense of discovery in literary appreciation, and forming a practice of critical thinking.

Literature review

Definitions of critical thinking

The concept of critical thinking has been defined by numerous authors, not all of whom share the same definitions. However, there is some basic consensus on the process, components,

standards, and purposes of critical thinking. According to Scriven and Paul (1987), critical thinking is "the intellectually disciplined process of actively and skillfully conceptualizing, applying, analyzing, synthesizing, and/or evaluating information gathered from, or generated by, observation, experience, reflection, reasoning, or communication, as a guide to belief and action". It is supposedly founded on universal criteria: clarity, accuracy, precision, consistency, relevance, evidence, good arguments, depth, breadth, and fairness. Paul and Elder (2008) defined critical thinking as the art of analyzing and evaluating thinking to ameliorate it. In essence, critical thinking requires us to activate our ability to observe, investigate, analyze, evaluate, and solve problems instead of relying on our intuition or instincts.

Tools and strategies to train critical thinking.

Many studies develop tools and strategies to train and improve critical thinking. Critical thinking does not only refer to a mere appraisal of arguments or "the correct assessing of statements", as defined by Ennis (1962), but also includes processes, strategies, and attitudes that can be trained. Guleker (2015) introduced several strategies to promote critical thinking. Nosich (2012) provided tools to guide the development of critical thinking in many fields, integrating the teaching of critical thinking into the subjects. Paul and Elder (2006) formulated three components: elements of thought, intellectual standards, and intellectual traits that can be achieved as a result of the consistent and disciplined application of the intellectual standards to the elements of thought. Guleker (2015) emphasized the importance of training critical thinking skills, making learning more effective and livelier.

Application of critical thinking in teaching literature

Studies on integrating critical thinking into literature teaching can be divided in two different directions: teaching critical thinking through analysis of literary works, and teaching literature with the application of critical thinking. For the first direction, Khatib and Mehrgan (2012) concluded that teaching short stories enhances students' critical thinking. Similarly, Minhsun (2009) and Gulsah and Esin (2015) suggested developing critical thinking through teaching fiction in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classes. Chapple and Curtis (2000) also introduced several ways to increase critical thinking skills in foreign language classes through lesson content.

The second trend is to improve literature teaching through the application of critical thinking. Esplugas and Landwehr (1996) recommended that teaching literature should not only stick to traditional teaching, where students simply follow the teacher's suggestions, but should help students apply critical thinking to analyzing literary texts. By this way students their own critical interpretations of the work based on solid arguments. Hiner (2013) proposed a model of applying critical thinking to teaching literature, including the elements of thought raised by Paul and Elder (2006), and standards of critical thinking by Nosich (2012).

Hiner (2013a) transformed these elements of thought into classroom activities with lists of questions combined with cooperative activities. These activities help students explore literary texts more deeply and practice qualities of critical thinking as well. This approach to integrating critical thinking into literature classroom is illustrated in Part II of her paper (Hiner, 2013 b) where she analyzed Dickens's Great Expectations to show a person's transition from an

unqualified thinker to a reflective, metacognitive critical thinker, thereby emphasizing the role of concepts of critical thinking.

Several recent studies in Vietnam have applied critical thinking to teaching literature in high schools and universities. First, the study by Nguyen (2019) built critical thinking questions and cooperative activities based on the steps in Bloom's Cognitive Assessment Framework. According to this approach, the lecturer deploys Bloom's taxonomy to ask questions and design activities for students to analyze literary texts. Students were reportedly engaged in discussing questions, especially questions at the higher levels of Bloom's cognitive scale, such as analysis, synthesis, and creativity. Another attempt to apply critical thinking is the study of Pham (2018), who applied the Socratic method, the method of questioning and discussing to discover the meaning of the text. This method helps learners develop critical thinking and independent thinking.

Research Gap

Although these studies are breakthroughs in teaching and learning innovation, a lack of sufficient analysis of students' feedback on experiments is still lacking. Another question is that students in these classes still rely on the lecturer's prepared questions and guidelines, meaning students have low autonomy during the learning process. Finally, there is a practical need for guidelines for applying critical thinking to an actual process of classroom activities.

Conceptual framework

The author of this study attempted to develop an approach to integrate critical thinking into teaching short stories for undergraduates of English majors at Nong Lam University. Exploring the elements of thought devised by Paul and Elder (2006), the aspects of critical thinking with analysis, inference, evaluation, induction, and deduction (Phillips et al., 2004), the author developed the process with 7 steps: Reading, Asking, Inferring, Searching, Expanding, Uniting, Personalizing, acronymically coined R.A.I.S.E-U.P., which can be introduced in the procedures of classroom activities.

Figure 1. The R.A.I.S.E-U.P process
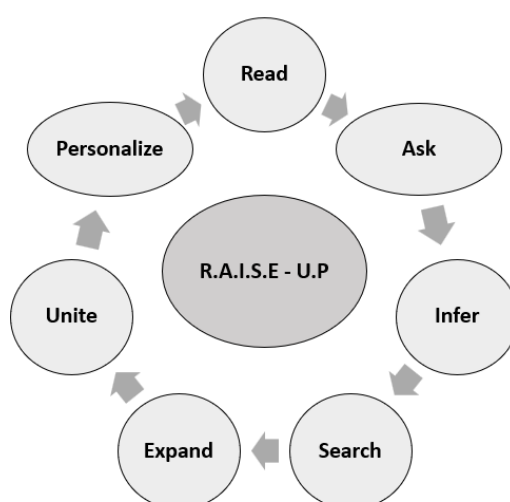
The implications for each step are explained in Table 1 below.

Table 1. The description of R.A.I.S.E – U.P process

Steps	SPECIFICATIONS for each step in R.A.I.S.E-U.P process.	Compared with concepts in critical thinking.
Step 1	**Reading** for a purpose. A literary text is given to read in class or in advance. Groups are assigned with different purposes, e.g, characters, conflicts, plot, synopsis, etc.	Analyzing the issue or tasks, identifying purposes.
Step 2	**Asking** questions from the text for anything strange, new, or intriguing with high-order questions: Why? What does he/she think/feel then? What if? Who is behind the scenes? Really, is it true? What next? What other solutions? Homework: Questions are collected in topics and sent to the groups in charge of particular topics, e.g plot, and characters. The questions are posted in Google Classroom.	Questioning prejudices, challenging assumptions, and identifying problems.
Step 3	**Inferring** from texts and questions. Each group answers the questions related to the topic assigned earlier and gives their first claims (inferences) on their topic: plot, characters, conflicts, or themes.	Making Inferences, Raising hypotheses, Drawing preliminary conclusions.
Step 4	**Searching** for facts, and information from texts, or from the internet. Each group reads the text more closely and or searches facts and comments from the internet to support or eliminate their claims made earlier. It is done as homework.	Searching for evidence, facts, etc. to reason for or support their claims.
Step 5	**Expanding** understanding through exchange with others. Jigsaw activities can be used for group debate. Simultaneously, groups exchange members for presenting and be challenged by others, and then get back together in their home group and discuss for consensus and class presentation.	Discussing and Challenging each other's schemes, Evaluating arguments and Evidence.
Step 6	**Uniting** all for conclusions. Each group presents its points and arguments in front of the class. The lecturer helps students put all together, considering them in different contexts, and perspectives, drawing out different messages with different contexts. The lecturer may give more background or theories for further understanding.	Synthesizing, conceptualizing, evaluating, and checking hypotheses through different contexts, giving implications.
Step 7	**Personalization** of the messages. Each individual writes their reflections, creating new endings or solutions, looking at current issues from their actual life. Reflections are published in google classroom for further comments from peers and the lecturer.	Problem-solving, sharing different points of view, and creating solutions.

The process emphasizes students' engagement in the learning activities, their motivation for self-discovery, group discussion, and personalized reflections, thereby enhancing their autonomy. According to Tran and Vuong (2023), students develop their learning autonomy

when encouraged to draw their own conclusions or challenged with questions. Critical thinking can be developed through this process, in which students ask questions by themselves, form their hypotheses or inferences, search for evidence, and argue for their points, which assembles an authentic inquiry process.

Purposes of the research

This study aims at assessing the effects of the R.A.I.S.E-U.P process on students' engagement in class activities and critical thinking quality. An experiment of this approach was conducted in one course of Introduction to Literature and a structured interview via email was applied to collect data for qualitative analysis.

Research Questions

To fulfill the purpose of the study, the experiment was seeking to answer the following research questions:

1. Does the application of the R.A.I.S.E-U.P process to the analysis of short stories result in more interest and interaction among students?
2. Does the experiment help qualitatively improve students' critical thinking through the process of literary analysis?

Methods

Pedagogical Setting& Participants

There are three literature courses, all compulsory, in the Faculty of Foreign Languages and Technical Education, Nong Lam University. After finishing Introduction to Literature, students take British Literature and American Literature. The subjects of the experiment were 35 students in one class of Introduction to Literature, out of the three classes the author was in charge of. The course comprises 30 credit hours, regularly taken by sophomore English majors. After the experiment, eight students were selected for an interview via email, answering questions on their participation and their experience in the new approach.

Design of the study

The researcher conducted the experiment through these stages:

- First, offering one class of 3 hours to introduce the RAISE-UP approach and practice the steps by analyzing a short story, Uncle Tommy's Visit by Writal, posted on Reddit.
- Second, applying the approach for five weeks, with two short stories: The Last Leaf by O. Henry, and A Very Short Story by E. Hemingway. Table 1 above illustrates the procedures of teaching one short story, which lasted 2 weeks, with 2 class sessions of 3 hours, and homework on google classroom. Class session 1 covered Steps 1, 2, and 3, with homework in google classroom for Step 4 (Table 1). Session 2 covered Steps 5 and 6, with homework for Step 7 (Table 1).

Data collection & analysis

After the experiment, 8 students were randomly selected from the numbered alphabetic name list of 35 students, picking one every 4 numbers, starting from number 3. The selected students include one male and 7 females, somewhat representing the proportion of males and females in the English major class. After agreement of research participation, these 8 students answered the 5 questions in a structured interview via email, which, as Dahlin (2021) suggested, can provide adequate and essential data for significant research tasks, and is considered an alternative to traditional in-person methods. The five questions were sent to them with a deadline of 2 weeks for their responses, supposedly adequate for their reflections on the experiment. The questions were structured but open with "Why or why not?", and "Give examples", focusing on students' perceptions of the five categories: interaction, questioning, debating changes of thinking, and possible application of the process.

All the students sent their feedback in due time. Responses in Vietnamese were allowed to ensure comfortable expression of their ideas and feelings and thus translated by the author. Their responses were quite long; therefore, some parts of the response content were removed due to irrelevance or repetition; negative responses were retained, however. To ensure anonymity, the names of the students were encoded into St.1, St2., and so on.

The responses were sorted into relevant tables based on interview questions. A descriptive analysis of response content was undertaken with respect to the research questions.

Results

Research question 1: Does the application of the R.A.I.S.E-U.P process to literature teaching result in more interest and interaction among students? Responses to interview questions 1, 2 and 3 show how students were engaged in classroom activities: interaction, asking questions and debating.

Students' engagement in interaction: First, as shown in Table 2, most responses (6/8) agreed that the new method engaged them in interaction with others, which helped them to learn from different perspectives. Some of them contrasted it with traditional ways of studying literature from high school and concluded that the new one was more interesting and motivating. Students 4 and 7 did not answer. Student 5 found this method unfamiliar at first, but found it really beneficial later. Students 1, 2, 3 and 6 showed strong support for interactive activities.

Table 2. Responses to Question 1.

Q 1	Did you enjoy the interaction in the class? Why or why not?
St. 1	*I did enjoy the interaction with the teacher and partners in class. First, It makes classes become more vibrant and brings more interest to students; talking and debating continuously help me not to feel sleepy. Second, I can have various interesting perspectives from others about one issue and somewhat learn something new from those perspectives.*
St. 2	*I found this method very new, and very interesting. […] made each class very exciting and engaging, […] Unlike before, when I only studied the old way, […] really disheartened because […] so boring and […] no motivation. […], this new method, my group, and others debated and helped me discover many issues, new perspectives […]*
St. 3	*I really enjoyed having interaction in class like this. Because it helped me understand more about my classmate, about the fact that the ideas we have in our heads are not the same and each one of us has different ideas about one problem. It also improved my skill in listening and working with other people*
St. 4	*No answer.*
St. 5	*I personally like this method very much, this is my first time learning this method. Although it may not be familiar at first, but after only a few times exchanging with friends in the group, it has stimulated my exploration of thoughts, making it easier to understand and remember longer.*
St. 6	*Personally, I feel that this new method was much more interesting and attractive than the old method where the teacher is centered, I enjoyed the interaction in the class. […] required me to "brainstorm" more, read and drew out what I understood first, then consulted more from the teacher and other students.*
St. 7	*No answer*
St. 8	*[…] interaction with questions and answers among teacher and students makes me feel that everyone can state their own understanding, […] raising interesting insights.*

Students' engagement in asking questions*.* Table 3 below indicates all the students enjoyed asking questions, which they believe brought about surprising new insights, triggering more discussion and searching for further understanding. Some of them gave examples to illustrate how they were stunned by questions from others, leading to curiosity and interest in discovery. Student 4 contrasted the old way of learning by which students passively listened to presentations with the asking technique, which encourages original thinking rather than being too dependent on searching on the internet for everything.

Table 3. Responses to Question 2.

Q. 2	Did you like asking questions about literary works? Why or why not?
St. 1	*Yes, I did. Raising questions helps me to realize many things about details and stories, especially critical questions, bringing more interest and curiosity about the story.*
St. 2	*I felt like this new way of learning was really interesting. We were given chances to discuss and challenge each other with questions. We really engaged ourselves in discovering new ideas and were surprised at new ideas [...].*
St. 3	*I was very surprised because the questions were very diverse. They asked questions to express their personal views, thoughts, and opinions. This leads to my changes in thinking about character judgment and character emotions. For example, the character Luz, at first [...]*
St. 4	*Instead of presenting and passively listening, students will be actively preparing questions and responding to any questions from other groups, so we learn to think first and not depend too much on searching the internet for answers.*
St. 5	*I find asking questions about literary works very interesting, because it helps me continuously think of appropriate answer options, and stimulates exploration and analysis of the lesson.*
St. 6	*I was quite surprised when someone from another group challenged, "Do you think the nurse in A Very Short Story is older than the soldier?" And the teacher said, "Maybe!", and we searched and checked more info on the Internet.*
St. 7	*Asking questions is really fun and resourceful. For example, to the question, "Why didn't Hemingway give the character "he" a name?", different groups suggest different ways, which bring in different, new, and surprising ideas [...].*
St. 8	*When we read questions from the other groups, I recognize many new things. For example, one group raised a question about the "relationship" between Sue and Johnsy in The Last Leaf, we were quite stunned at the different answers, especially after checking more facts on the internet about artists in* Greenwich Village,

The findings from Ho and To (2022) emphasized the importance of questioning techniques in improving students' critical thinking. Asking questions is an important technique in critical thinking, as concluded by Cojocariu and Batnaru (2014)critical thinking technique, as Cojocariu and Batnaru (2014) concluded. In the traditional way, students just try to answer the questions given by the teacher, thereby experiencing a passive and unproductive learning environment.

Engagement in debating: Table 4 shows the students' opinions on debating activities. All of them approved of the benefits of debating in gaining more interest and seeing opposite views, thus figuring out the writer's intentions. Through debating, they recognized new ideas and new perspectives they never thought of before. Students 3, 5, 6 and 7 gave examples of how debates yielded some hints that helped them understand surprisingly more about the characters in the stories. For example, they recognized that the nurse in A Very Short Story is more mature, and perhaps biologically older than the soldier. More importantly, they all reported that they actively participated in debating activities and were so excited to see different views on any single

incident in the stories.

Table 4. Responses to Question 3.

Q. 3	Do you think debating in your group or with other groups gave you more interesting or surprising ideas? Give examples.
St. 1	*Yes, debating gave rise to more interesting ideas from other groups, e.g. we challenged arguments about Luz's possible reasons for breaking up with the soldier. And learned more ideas when viewing from different perspectives.*
St. 2	*Debating increases interest and gave rise to new ideas, even silly or not good sometimes, but even so they really elicit others' insights and help limit making similar mistakes. […] debates, interactions, and criticism contribute to making the class more fun, interesting and active. For example, when studying A Very Short Story, we got surprised by many good things from both sides of the debate.*
St. 3	*Yes, debating with other groups gave me new ideas. For example, in discussion with other group's members, I have learned that Behman in The Last Leaf must be totally awake from the drunk when he drew the leaf in the snow […]*
St. 4	*In my opinion, when we debate or argue about something with each other, most people will try to support their available ideas and find out some gaps in the ideas of the opposition.*
St. 5	*Debating between groups makes me feel more excited to learn more […], the groups give a lot of good ideas and sometimes it surprises me. for example: is Luz's love with the major by accident or on purpose? […]*
St. 6	*When debating, I could hear many different opinions, and felt that I hadn't thought deeply enough when looking at things. At first, I ignored some sentences from A Very Short Story, and thought they were so simple. But through debate, I found that I had missed so many "hints". After that, I focused on re-reading the article more carefully and gradually discovered the author's intentions.*
St. 7	*Yes, I think discussions with our group and others are effective and intriguing. They provided us with some different and interesting perspectives about details from the literary works that we've studied, or even about characters' psychology. For example, our group once discussed the sacrifice of Berhman in The Last Leaf through different views: his behaviors, silent job, 'masterpiece', inspiration, and hope for Sue and Johnsy's bright future.*
St. 8	*I really enjoy group discussions […] I really love to express myself through the process of debating whether the character is good or not, and what nonsense about the story, […] Moreover, I can get some hints about what their personality is. One example I found intriguing is when we debated the character Luz and discovered that everything around her is so mature and sophisticated […]*

Research Question 2: Does the experiment help qualitatively improve students' critical thinking through the process of literary analysis?

This research question aims at assessing whether the new method positively affects their thinking quality and reasoning habit. This can be seen through students' tendency to ask questions, look for evidence for their claims, look at things from different perspectives, and accept different views. First, it can be seen from Table 5 that all the students gave positive responses to the new method, highlighting some improved thinking qualities. It is noted that most of them said they learned to look at things with different views and would give careful judgement with tolerance. The examples showed how they learned to be sympathetic with characters after analyzing different contexts and perspectives. They also started to "doubt the first impressions" and ask more critical questions about necessary details.

Table 5. Responses to Question 4.

Q. 4	Do you think studying with this method really changes you in some way? The way you think about life, for instance?
St. 1	*I think I have some changes. I tend to ask questions and pay careful attention to details and have enough facts before I give judgment.*
St. 2	*I started to think more tolerantly when it comes to give judgments about someone. I must think twice and try to get more information about that person. […]*
St. 3	*Working with others and asking questions helped me to think more carefully. I think I need to doubt first impressions or avoid jumping to conclusions so quickly.*
St 4	*No answer.*
St. 5	*I really feel that I can empathize with the characters more after analyzing them from many perspectives, because then we will see the issue more broadly, have more reason, and also understand why they are so important.*
St. 6	*I find myself somewhat in love with the character "he" in "A Very Short Story" after being cheated by Luz, however when I put myself in Luz's place, a woman seemingly older than "he", […] Therefore, I feel pity and sympathy for Luz.*
St. 7	*I am not sure. I like classes with more interaction. I hate listening to long lectures and learn by hard in a boring way. I think asking questions helps us to actively participate in class. I love questions like Why not? What if? Really? Who stands behind the scenes? They are very challenging.*
St. 8	*I find myself more sympathetic. As for Johnsy, I can understand why she would have such stupid thoughts and accept those thoughts. But I will not agree with and support her negative, unscientific thoughts like "when the last leaf falls, I will die".*

Secondly, to answer the research question, interview question 5 (Table 6) investigates the students' intentions to apply critical thinking in the future. This is an open question to elicit general opinions about the new method, and intentionally not mention any particular thinking

qualities to avoid bias. Remarkably from Table 6, all students, except Student 4, shared the same desire to apply the techniques in the future, namely raising questions and thinking critically, expanding their views on issues, building more knowledge through discussion, and reflecting on the application in real life. Most of the students do not answer the question directly but show the reasons for their choice.

Table 7. Responses to Question 5.

Q. 5	Do you want to apply this way of learning to literature study in the future?
St. 1	*Definitely yes. Learning in this way helps me to improve my skills which is raising critical question and critical thinking. [...] Besides, interacting with teacher and friends also helps me to learn more new things as well as gain more knowledge.*
St. 2	*... It made me feel the characters more deeply thanks to ... questioning and analyzing the characters through small details in the work. [....] From asking questions, I felt the character from many different perspectives. [...] more sympathetic for some characters [...].*
St. 3	*I really felt more interested in your new teaching method. Because it helps me see all the different sides and scenarios of a problem. In addition, the discussion between the groups helps to improve our ability to reflect and absorb knowledge.*
St. 4	*No answer.*
St. 5	*This method makes me feel more interested, makes me and my classmates feel the most at ease, [...] because it allows us to interact with each other. [...] be enlightened about many interesting things, seeing things from different perspectives.*
St. 6	*I feel like I learned more than just literature. [...] After all, literature is also about life. This new method helped me improve the way I think now, and will apply it to my life later. Instead of passively listening and agreeing, we should think for ourselves first, have our own opinions, and then argue and present the arguments to contribute ideas and show more respect for each person's own opinion.*
St. 7	*I myself am totally satisfied with the new technique. It is undeniable that the lessons could be more appealing when students have their own interaction actively. Generally, I'm truly keen on the new way.*
St. 8	*Absolutely without a question, I would die for a chance to have the same class like this one in the future.*

In conclusion, with regards to research question 2, it can be noted from Tables 6 and 7 that the students reported their belief in the benefits of questioning, debating, checking the evidence for judgement, viewing issues from different contexts, and their intention to apply them in the future. This feedback proves that they are forming some basic dispositions of critical thinking such as skeptical thinking, open-mindedness, respect for evidence and reasoning, and different points of views, as stated in Beyer (1995).

Discussion

The students' feedback on the experiment positively responded to the research questions on students' participation and thinking quality. The responses to the first research question show students' high appreciation of the RAISE-UP process. Nearly all the students from Tables 1, 2, and 3 really enjoyed class activities of interaction, asking questions, and debating. This result echoes that of the study by Nguyen (2019), in which students are reported to enjoy critical thinking activities based on Bloom's taxonomy, with questions of various levels.

For the second research question, the results also indicate some improvements in the students' thinking which can be seen through their favor for asking questions, interacting for shared ideas, searching for facts and evidence, sharing, and accepting perspectives, etc. Most students agree they now think more carefully or search for facts or evidence before giving judgment, which shows some standards of accuracy and logic as described in Nosich's (2012) terms. In addition, they start to think "more tolerantly", "empathize with the characters", "put me in Luz's place", and "analyze things from many perspectives" or "see issues more broadly", which reflects another critical thinking standard, namely "Encompassing multiple viewpoints" defined by Nosich (2012), and "Point of view" by Paul and Elder (2006).

The first part of the RAISE-UP process highlights the technique of asking questions and challenging prejudices or rigid interpretations. In conventional ways, students are often given guiding questions and hints that lead them through analysis under the direction of lecturers and have no opportunities to utilize their higher cognitive functions: inquiring, reasoning, evaluating, judging, etc. In the experiment, students were trained to raise critical questions by themselves and reportedly used them to gain unexpected ideas. With these questions as an empowerment tool, students start their journey of inquiry and get excited at their own discoveries. This step shares similar approaches suggested by Hiner (2013) who transformed the critical thinking standards into questions, and Nguyen (2019) who devised questions based on Bloom's cognitive domain taxonomy.

The following steps in the R.A.I.S.E-U.P process foster critical thinking. Stapleton (2012) suggested that when students are put into a "disagree" position, they reveal their tendencies toward critical thinking. In the Expanding step, debating helps them to challenge their own schemes (Piaget's Disequilibrium process) and accommodate new schemes from observing issues from different perspectives or contexts. Lecturers are supposed not to impose their conclusions or delay their interference but join the students' discovery journey instead. The final step of "personalization" is the opportunity of creativity for students to put things all together and express their ideas and feelings through different perspectives or personalizing the writer's messages in applying them to real-life issues. Hiner (2013) also noted her students' improvement of writing quality with respect to critical thinking and creativity.

Conclusion

Despite the short term of application, the R.A.I.S.E-U.P process gained positive feedback from students. Most of them are considerably excited at the activities. The process is an empowerment process that allows students to "raise up" their own voice in the inquiry process,

thereby raising more motivation, triggering better reasoning capacity, and incorporating new ideas in specific contexts or perspectives. If successfully applied, students can develop their critical thinking competence and attitudes for daily life and work, and also learn to confidently appreciate a new literary work later by themselves, surely without teachers' guidelines then.

There are some limitations of the experiment with respect to the small size of the qualitative method. For the first investigation into the field, the author focused on content analysis at expense of collecting large data. Because the course Introduction to Literature spares only five weeks for short stories, the brief period of the experiment is not sufficient for better explanation and training of critical thinking, and thus the effect might not be optimized. Another problem could arise from the faculty not including a critical thinking course in the program. Therefore, the experiment is limited to some basic steps and qualities of critical thinking, rather than formal reasoning methods or logical fallacies.

Further research is recommended to assess the R.A.I.S.E-U.P process with quantitative methods on a larger scale, In fact, a new experiment with a control group is being developed with statistical data collection and content analysis of students' papers.

Acknowledgments

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