

## *Taiwanese University Students' Retrospective Evaluation of a Textbook in Use*

Szu An Chen, Wenzao Ursuline University of Languages, Taiwan

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### **Abstract**

In Taiwanese EFL contexts textbooks play an important role in the classroom. As teachers, textbooks provide learners with a resource of L2 input either in the classroom or outside the classroom. A recently published textbook, *Reading Time: A Strategic Approach to Reading in English*, needs to be evaluated from the perspective of its users. The purpose of this study is to examine how student users perceive this textbook and its effect on their English learning through conducting a questionnaire survey at the research context. The questionnaire was developed by the researcher according to the aim of the study, and the quantitative data was collected from eight Level 2 English classes at Wenzao Ursuline University of Languages and then analyzed by using SPSS 23.0 in 2018. The research findings reveal that the student participants reflected positively on this textbook and its effect of helping them learn English at Wenzao. Based on their written comments in response to three open-ended questions in the questionnaire, some suggestions on likely modifications to be done in the future have been made for textbook developers. The present study also addresses the needs of carrying out further research on the evaluation of the textbook from different perspectives.

Keywords: textbook evaluation, post-use evaluation, university students, low achievers

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## **Introduction**

Wenzao Ursuline University of Languages recruits its students mainly from vocational high schools, in which students' attention might not be focused on second language learning particularly. Once students are enrolled into Wenzao Ursuline University of Languages (Wenzao hereafter), which has established its reputation for language education, they need to take a compulsory 24-credit English course and start to attend English class for six hours a week if their scores of College Student English Proficiency Test (i.e. CSEPT) are below 144 (i.e. low proficiency level of English). These students are placed in either Level 1 or Level 2 classes according to their exam performance. In the present study, the student participants are Level 2 freshmen and sophomores from different departments at Wenzao, and their overall CSEPT scores ranged from 120 to 144. In the face of these low and comparatively low achievement students, English teachers have an important job to do in the beginning of each fall semester, that is, textbook selection. Normally, teachers tend to stick to the materials used in the past partially because their evaluation of the textbooks is positive in retrospect and partially because they have gained experience of employing these textbooks to improve students' English proficiency. If there is any possibility of looking for a new textbook in lieu of the one they are using, teachers must scrutinize the selection and keep weighing its pros and cons before, during and after the teaching/learning process. Before the fall semester began in September, 2017, six Level 2 English teachers had decided to use a new reading textbook (i.e. *Reading Time: A Strategic Approach to Reading in English*) to substitute three English learning magazines (i.e. *Studio Classroom*) that they used to ask students to purchase during the semester. *Reading Time: A Strategic Approach to Reading in English* was published by StudioClassroom.com in August 2017. No research has been carried out to evaluate its classroom use from users' perspectives within the teaching/learning contexts, which can be useful for teachers to work on future innovations in their teaching methods as well as for textbook developers to make necessary follow-up modifications. Hopefully this needed research is hoped to benefit learners, teachers, educational administrators and the publisher from the process of judging "the effect of the materials on the people using them" (Tomlinson 2003, p.15). The present study is to generate its key users' perceptions by collecting information concerning students' perceptions of this textbook and the perceived effect of using it to study English at school through a questionnaire survey. The questionnaires consisted of 33 items and were administered to 217 Level 2 students around the end of the fall semester in January, 2018. The findings help us see how the L2 students reflect on this textbook in use. The survey results in more details will be presented in the section of Findings and Discussion.

## **Literature Review**

The role of textbooks and the importance of using them in classrooms must be different from person to person and can hardly be defined flawlessly. Textbooks can affect the effect and quality of teaching and learning squarely and in turn engage or lose their users' attention. While some teachers are striking a balance between being restricted to the rigid structure of a textbook or burning themselves out to self-produce teaching/learning materials, more teachers cannot help but accept a textbook assigned by the higher authority and get ready to present it to students. For novice teachers, textbooks may provide them with guidance in course and activity design (Mohammadi & Abdi 2014) so that they can

shift their energy from ‘what to teach’ to ‘how to teach it’. Under such circumstances, using textbooks might open a door to fulfilling pedagogical aims as well as accommodating learner needs. Frankly, textbook adoption is never an easy task. Although selection and evaluation might not be new to teachers, the whole process tests teachers’ wisdom of analyzing the strengths and weaknesses of a textbook thoroughly and then challenges their professional skills to make necessary adjustments accordingly from the old textbook to the new one.

The main advantages and disadvantages of using textbooks have also been discussed by many scholars (e.g. Richards & Renandya 2002; Riazi 2003; Ur 1996). Since no course is complete until it has found its relevant textbook (Hutchinson and Torres 1994), teachers or educational administrators select textbooks with extreme caution at all times. Not surprisingly, for years a vast amount of studies suggests various systematic and objective procedures for teaching practitioners to select and evaluate textbooks (e.g. Azizifar et al. 2010; Ansary & Babaii 2002; Carrell & Korwitz 1994; Khodabakhshi 2014; Litz 2001; Marc & Rees 2009; Mohammadi & Abdi 2014; Sheldon 1988; Soori et al. 2011; Tosun 2013; Yarmohammadi 2002; Yasemin 2009). Based on a list of factors such as rationale, activities, skills, content, availability, layout, cultural biases, and so on, these checklists give evaluators a sense of security as they can do their job in a systematic, comprehensive and efficient way which renders the results more objective and reliable. Despite these handy checklists, Ansary and Babaii (2002) makes it crystal clear that not all of these factors shall be present in each and every textbook. That is, teachers need to be under no illusions about finding a perfect textbook. All in all, the core of textbook evaluation is set on helping evaluators identify the edge of a textbook over other options in hand. Afterward teachers need to make good use of it and see if this book closely reflects the aims, methods and values of the course or attends to learner needs as anticipated.

The extent to which a textbook fits the purposes of a course, learner interests and its alliance with the syllabus of the program or can satisfy teaching/learning needs may determine its overall evaluation. Following Ellis’ (1997) three phases of materials evaluation, (1) pre-use evaluation, (2) in-use evaluation and (3) post-use evaluation, the predictive evaluation was no longer in need as *Reading Time: A Strategic Approach to Reading in English* had been evaluated beforehand and selected for the Level 2 English course at Wenzao. Another type of textbook evaluation which can be employed to examine the textbook being currently used in the classroom so as to find immediate solutions for any probable problems of using the textbook was beyond the stage of data collection. Therefore, the retrospective, post-use evaluation was carried out to investigate the perceived values of this textbook from the perspective of its student users in the present study.

### **Objectives of the study**

The present study aims at researching into Level 2 students’ perceptions of one of their learning materials, that is, *Reading Time: A Strategic Approach to Reading in English* when they study English in the Level 2 English Course at Wenzao. Their perceptions of this textbook will be identified to answer the following questions:

1. What are Level 2 students’ perceptions of general contents of *Reading Time: A Strategic Approach to Reading in English*?

2. What are Level 2 students' perceptions of their English study through using *Reading Time: A Strategic Approach to Reading in English*?
3. What are Level 2 students' perceptions of Reading Time Web English, audio CD and unit exercises in *Reading Time: A Strategic Approach to Reading in English*?

For the purpose of illustration, *Reading Time: A Strategic Approach to Reading in English* will be abbreviated as *RT* in the following. The findings are expected to provide insightful information to understand how the Level 2 students evaluate *RT* and the effect of using it to study English in the Wenzao setting. This study may also provide English teachers with some pedagogical implications on using this textbook in their own Level 2 English course. As well as this, the findings may shed light on further modifications for the textbook developers and some suggestions on the strengths and/or weaknesses of *RT* for the publisher.

### **Research Methodology**

The participants in this study were 125 freshmen and 92 sophomores, who were attending the required General English Level 2 Course, constituting of a weekly six-hour integrated English skills class, in the 24-credit English program at Wenzao during the academic year 2017-2018. All these Level 2 students had roughly a homogeneous background in terms of their first language (i.e. Mandarin Chinese) and the amount of formal English instruction at Wenzao. Their overall CSEPT scores were between 120 and 144, which have been considered as an indicator of their English proficiency. The anonymity of the questionnaire respondents was established by specifically asking them not to write their names on the questionnaires unless they were voluntarily willing to be interviewed in the future if necessary.

Sheldon (1988) argues that no evaluation criterion is universally appropriate to any teaching/learning contexts. The evaluation checklists can be dated and modified according to the requirements of each learning situation (Khodabakhshi 2014). In order to make the criteria more applicable to the research context, I developed a questionnaire to make it comprehensible to the research participants in order to elicit their first-hand opinions of *RT*. Questionnaires were used as the survey instrument, and the final questionnaires were composed of 33 items including three open-ended questions. The finalized questionnaires were written in Chinese (shown in Appendix A). Questions 1 to 30 used a five-point Likert scale, (5=strongly agree; 4= agree; 3=somewhat agree; 2=disagree; 1=strongly disagree). These 30 five-point Likert scale items can be grouped into five scales of user perspectives, including contents (item 1 to 13), skills improvement (item 14 to 18), Reading Time Web English (item 19 to 25), the audio CD (item 26 to 28) and the unit exercises (item 29 and 30). Internal consistency reliability check of these five multi-item scales was examined by computing their Cronbach alpha coefficients with SPSS 23.0, presented in Table 1. As shown in Table 1, except the fifth scale (i.e. unit exercises,  $\alpha=.857$ ), Cronbach alpha coefficient of the other scales is higher than 0.90. These results suggest that the questionnaire achieves a very high degree of internal consistency reliability in this study.

Scale	Title	Number of items	Cronbach alpha coefficient
1	contents	13	.960
2	skills improvement	5	.921
3	online video channel	7	.969
4	audio CD	3	.928
5	unit exercises	2	.857
Total	5 scales	30	

*Table 1: Internal consistency reliability check*

Question 31 to 33 were three open-ended questions. Question 31 is about the respondents' favorite unit and any likely reasons. Question 32 is about their unfavorable unit and their reasons. Question 33 asks them to briefly describe why they favored this textbook. The questionnaires were administered to 217 Level 2 freshmen and sophomores around the end of the fall semester of the academic year in order to collect the students' perceptions of *RT* after their classroom use. Around the middle of January, 2018, most of the Level 2 English teachers were able to spare the time for their students to fill out the questionnaires as they were reviewing the lessons for the forthcoming final exam. The questionnaire data were gathered within 15 minutes of the students' class time, via prior agreement with the teachers. 217 questionnaires were collected and then analyzed through using the statistical software SPSS 23.0. The descriptive statistics such as mean (M) and standard deviation (SD) were calculated and displayed in the next section.

### **Findings and Discussion**

In this section, the questionnaire data is presented describing the key users' perceptions of *RT* and their English study by using this textbook. 217 Taiwanese EFL university students participated in this questionnaire survey. The research findings will be discussed by answering the three research questions mentioned earlier. In presenting the results of the study, the means and standard deviations of item 1 to 30 as well as the response percentage of item 31 to 33 were calculated to describe and summarize the students' perceived values of the textbook. The results of the items that relate to each research question will be presented in tables, and explanations will be provided accordingly.

The first research question: "What are Level 2 students' perceptions of general contents of *Reading Time: A Strategic Approach to Reading in English?*" was measured through 13 items (item 1-13) in the questionnaire and the responses are presented in Table 2.

<b>Ite m</b>	<b>Statement</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>
1	RT meets my learning needs.	3.9401	.86126
2	Its level of difficulty suits my English proficiency level.	3.7097	.87852
3	The amount of its units (i.e. 18 units) is adequate.	3.9908	.89748
4	RT helps promote my motivation to learn English.	3.7788	.93140
5	RT helps develop my confidence of learning English.	3.6267	.97839
6	RT helps raise my interest in learning English.	3.6912	.97257
7	RT helps advance my reading skills.	4.0138	.85244
8	RT advance my listening skills.	3.7558	.92810
9	RT helps me learn English in an integrative way (integrating English listening, speaking, reading and writing).	3.7465	.93556
10	The topic of each unit in RT is interesting.	3.9355	.90548
11	I can learn multiple cultures in RT.	4.1152	.83920
12	RT helps improve my daily English communication.	3.6037	.96205
13	RT helps increase the amount of my vocabulary which is relevant to the topics in the book.	3.9862	.85786

(5=strongly agree; 4=agree; 3= somewhat agree; 2=disagree; 1=strongly disagree)

*Table 2: Perceptions of the general contents of RT (response frequencies in percentages)*

The first scale (item 1 to 13) that I measured is the respondents' perceptions of general contents of *RT* in meeting their learning needs, promoting their learner motivation, advancing their English skills, and appreciating different cultures. All these 13 items represent the Level 2 students' positive attitude toward *RT* and its general contents. All their means stay above 3.6, which represents their somewhat agreement and agreement with these statements. In terms of item 7 (M=4.0138) and item 11 (M=4.1152), we can clearly see *RT* has achieved some of the initial objectives of developing this textbook, including to improve users' reading ability through reading texts covering different topics and cultures. Through item 1 to 3, 10 and 13, their means might shed light on the students' self-awareness of learner needs, their current capacity of comprehending reading texts in *RT*, the amount of reading and relevant learning practices and therefore an expanded vocabulary bank relevant to different topics which they think are interesting (item 10) in *RT*. Item 5, 6 and 12 share similar means around 3.6. They are the lowest means in this scale though. Still, the students positively approve of the helpfulness of *RT* in developing their self-confidence and interest in learning English as well as their daily English communication. In addition to improving users' reading ability, *RT* performs quite well as it paves way for integrated learning, such as listening practices (i.e. item 8 and 9). The above is what numbers can tell us for now. As for any possible in-depth views on the perceived values of *RT*, the three open-ended questions (item 31-33) may say more.

The second research question is "What are Level 2 students' perceptions of their English study through using *Reading Time: A Strategic Approach to Reading in English*?" The means and the standard deviations of the five questionnaire items, presented in Table 3.

<b>Ite m</b>	<b>Statement</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>
14	RT promotes my English listening ability.	3.7051	.91065
15	RT promotes my English speaking ability.	3.4608	.97638
16	RT promotes my English reading ability.	3.9816	.86583
17	RT promotes my English writing ability.	3.4931	.94829
18	RT promotes my ability of using English grammar.	3.6083	1.00394

(5=strongly agree; 4=agree; 3= somewhat agree; 2=disagree; 1=strongly disagree)

*Table 3: Perceptions of skills improvement by using RT (response frequencies in percentages)*

These 5 items were used to generate the respondents' perceptions of *RT* and its helpfulness of promoting their different English skills and use of English grammar. The results are not beyond our expectation as the mean scores are all between 3 and 4. Among these five items, item 16 regarding reading ability grabs our attention first. Since *RT* is to serve as one of the main resources of L2 input to sharpen Level 2 students' reading comprehension, *RT* did not malfunction or disappoint its users in this respect. The student participants acknowledged its value in promoting their English reading ability.

Lastly, items 19 to 30 were used to elicit the respondents' perceptions of the online video channel (item 19-25), the audio CD (item 26-28) and the unit exercises (item 29-30) of *RT* to answer the third research question: 'What are Level 2 students' perceptions of Reading Time Web English, audio CD and unit exercises in *Reading Time: A Strategic Approach to Reading in English?*' The findings are presented in Table 4.

<b>Ite m</b>	<b>Statement</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>
19	Reading Time Web English improves my interest in learning English.	3.5853	1.01533
20	Reading Time Web English familiarizes me with each unit.	3.7051	.98396
21	Reading Time Web English helps me recognize correct intonation and pronunciations.	3.7650	.97898
22	Reading Time Web English helps develop my listening ability.	3.7788	.98456
23	Reading Time Web English promotes my motivation to review the lessons.	3.6452	1.02216
24	Reading Time Web English helps me practice my English speaking after class.	3.4747	1.02314
25	Reading Time Web English helps me learn English vocabulary.	3.8018	1.00111
26	Its audio CD helps me recognize correct intonation and pronunciations.	3.9078	.90307
27	Its audio CD helps me practice my English listening after class.	3.8664	.90555
28	Its audio CD helps me practice my English speaking after class.	3.6728	.94714
29	Its unit exercises familiarize me with the units.	3.9217	.97579

30	Its unit exercises helps me prepare for English proficiency tests, such as CSEPT.	3.5714	.99801
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(5=strongly agree; 4=agree; 3= somewhat agree; 2=disagree; 1=strongly disagree)

*Table 4: Perceptions of the online video channel (response frequencies in percentages)*

Today's youngsters can easily gain access to the internet and find whatever information they need anytime and anywhere. Naturally e-resources have come to be part of the package that users can obtain after they purchase textbooks published on the current market. *RT* is one of them. It provides its users (both teachers and students) with Reading Time Web English, a free online video channel, on which they can watch how Studio Classroom teachers instruct the text on the air, make the corresponding scripts (in)visible and make one's own vocabulary notebook. The purpose is to offer users extra access to the units and learn from a different angle. Users not only can listen to native teachers' interpretation of the text to gain a better understanding of the topic but also increase the frequency of exposing themselves to their L2 after class to achieve higher learner autonomy. Based on the questionnaire data, Reading Time Web English indeed familiarizes the Level 2 students with each unit (item 20: M=3.7051); they can recognize correct intonation and pronunciation (item 21: M=3.7650) and develop their listening ability (item 22: M=3.7788) through watching the online programs. By doing so, the students' interest in learning English (item 19: M=3.5853) and motivation to review the lessons (item 23: M=3.6452) can be promoted. Even more, the students somewhat agree that they can practice their English speaking after class (item 24, M=3.4747) and also learn English vocabulary (item 25: M= 3.8018). Two written comments made on item 33 might be used to support these descriptive statistics. A couple of students said, "I can preview or review the lesson by using Reading Time Web English. Using *RT* and its online resources can promote my learning efficacy.;" "If I miss the class, I can study the lesson by myself at home."

In addition to Reading Time Web English, users can get an audio CD which contains all the audio files of the reading texts of *RT*. Teachers can use the audio version of any text in class whenever necessary to lead students throughout the text, raise their awareness of intonation and pronunciations, or ask students to repeat after the recording in controlled practices. Students can also use these audio files to review the reading texts at home when they are assigned relevant homework assignments. From this perspective, this audio CD helps the students recognize correct intonation and pronunciations (item 26: M=3.9078) and practice their English listening (item 27: M=3.8664) and speaking (item 28: M=3.6728) after class.

Item 29 and 30 were used to generate the respondents' views on the unit exercises, which locate in the second section in *RT*. After teaching one unit, teachers can assign its unit exercise to students. These unit exercises can be used for the purpose of either homework after class or extra practices/quizzes in class. The main objective of this section is to give learners other kinds of practices for them to review the unit or to be more familiar with its content. Hence, the unit exercises can serve as a progress check (as homework) or proficiency check (as quizzes). Teachers can use them flexibly according to their immediate needs in different classroom settings. These unit exercises involve vocabulary (i.e. fill-ins), cloze test, and passage completion. Cloze test is a popular question type in English proficiency tests. As students at Wenzao

have to pass the benchmark before they graduate, item 30 was used to see if *RT* could assist them in preparing for College Student English Proficiency Test (i.e. CSEPT). The expected results show that the students almost agree with *RT* in familiarizing them with the units (item 29:  $M=3.9217$ ) and helping them take tests (item 30:  $M=3.5714$ ).

By computing descriptive statistics on SPSS 23.0, it was easy and quick to analyze numerical and quantifiable data. However, it becomes quite difficult to explore more into the research questions from the students' perspective. The current study is to draw insight on *RT* from its users' point of view. In order to counterbalance the downsides of only using the quantitative approach to collecting data, I put three open-ended questions in the questionnaire which were used to elicit more written responses from the respondents. Hopefully both the depth and the breadth of this study can be somehow enhanced together for me to make better inferences. Item 31 asked the respondents to pick their favorite unit and briefly state the reasons whereas item 32 asked them to come up with their disfavored unit and the likely reasons. Furthermore, item 33 asked them to jot down three recommendations on *RT* if any. As the questionnaires were administered by the end of the fall semester, only the former half of *RT* (unit 1-9) had been worked on. The generated comments were categorized according to different themes. The numbers and percentages are used to present the data in Table 5, which explain the quantitative aspect of the three items. Some response frequencies in percentages which are above 10% will be discussed in the following section. Comparing and contrasting written comments in response to item 31-33 is the qualitative aspect of the study.

Item	Responses	Number of responses	Freshmen	Sophomores	Percentages
<b>31</b>	Unit 1	25	12	13	12.95
	Unit 2	11	3	8	5.69
	Unit 3	20	15	5	10.36
	Unit 4	8	6	2	4.14
	Unit 5	29	14	15	15.02
	Unit 6	4	1	3	2.07
	Unit 7	24	16	8	12.43
	Unit 8	38	21	17	19.68
	Unit 9	34	12	22	17.61
		Total: 193 comments			
<b>32</b>	Unit 1	17	9	8	12.59
	Unit 2	11	5	6	8.14
	Unit 3	8	1	7	5.9
	Unit 4	9	3	6	6.6
	Unit 5	8	3	5	5.9
	Unit 6	9	4	5	6.6
	Unit 7	60	30	30	44.44
	Unit 8	11	5	6	8.14
	Unit 9	2	1	1	1.48
		Total: 135 comments			
<b>33</b>	vocabulary	77	41	36	15.87

grammar	11	8	3	2.26
skills	52	30	22	10.72
worksheets	26	15	11	5.36
contents	233	123	110	48.04
physical	46	29	17	9.48
appearance	16	10	6	3.29
package	10	6	4	2.06
convenience				
others	14	10	4	2.88
	Total: 485			
	comments			

*Table 5: Comments on the units and recommendations on RT (response frequencies in percentages)*

Their written comments were categorized carefully to represent their overall perceptions of different units and *RT*. I would like to focus on three units in particular. In terms of favorite units, Unit 8 ('Ten Fun Things to Do in Singapore') and Unit 9 ('Churchill: The Polar Bear Capital of the World') seem to be the most appealing based on the results. Around one fifth of the comments (19.68% and 17.61%) were made on these two units, which might release the information on the students' preferred topic, 'Travel'. Interestingly, the topic of Unit 7 ('Pennsylvania Dutch Country') is also travel-oriented but unfortunately attracts the most negative evaluations ( $N=60$ , 44.44% of the responses) in this study. After taking a closer look at those written responses to Unit 7, most of them were made on the level of difficulty of the text due to more new vocabulary, unfamiliarity with Pennsylvania and Amish and the text length. Compared to Unit 7, Unit 8 is popular ( $N=38$ ) because it is full of colored pictures, a shorter text, and a city in East Asia. Unit 9 is welcome too ( $N=34$ ) because it introduces polar bears, other natural creatures and fun activities in Churchill, which might interest college students more. Unit 7 is the final unit that Level 2 students need to study before the final exam. Unit 8 and Unit 9 are used for their self-study at home. Normally the closer the final exam is approaching, the more stress students might be under as there are other academic subjects they also need to attend to at the same time, plus essays, written exams, or final presentations to be carried out in other classes. These competing distractions might severely deprive students of sleep and in turn remove their energy or attention from English study to other missions. It is not surprising to see the student participants made such comments on Unit 7, which demands more of their concentration and commitment. Such results might also be relevant to the time of questionnaire administration. Probably different results would have been elicited if the questionnaires had been distributed at other times of the academic year. This finding has pointed a new direction of my future research on the influence of midterm/final exams on students' attitude toward their textbook.

Item 33 was used to encourage the respondents to come up with three strengths of *RT* from their own perspective. 485 written comments were collected and then categorized carefully according to nine different themes, including contents, vocabulary, skills improvement, and physical appearance. The contents of *RT* elicit the most responses from the students ( $N=233$ , 48.04% of the responses). For example, topics are interesting, comprehensive, up-to-date, international, multi-cultural, real-life, practical, and reader-friendly; the reading texts are interesting,

information-rich, knowledge-inclusive and understandable; Chinese translations of the texts are easily accessible for self-study at home. In the questionnaires, some students said, “The reading texts get longer and harder gradually. Compared to the textbooks that I have used, I prefer *RT*,” “In addition to learning English, I also can learn some knowledge, which makes English learning less dry;” “Some units arouse my curiosity;” “Studying *RT* is like reading a magazine, and it is relaxing;” or “Each reading text crosses two pages or so, which is not too long or too complicated.” Among these written comments, one student mentioned that “Its contents are abundant, so there is a lot to study for exams. It is not suitable for unmotivated students to use this book.” The richness of the contents in *RT* is regarded as one of its advantages, which, on the other hand, is also a possible downside for some students at this English proficiency level.

In terms of vocabulary in *RT* ( $N=77$ , 15.87%), most of the comments made on a large amount of words, frequently used words, proper level of difficulty, word definitions, Chinese equivalents, example sentences, practicality of words, word bank, and phonemic scripts. For example, one student said, “Compared to other textbooks, vocabulary in *RT* is more practical. But my limited knowledge of vocabulary sometimes interrupts my comprehension of a reading text.” Or, “these words are selected and so are more real-life.” The students also valued the improvements of their language skills in *RT* ( $N=52$ , 10.72%), such as reading skills, correct pronunciations, oral performance, colloquial phrases, listening comprehension, integrated learning of different English skills, and so on. One response indicates that “the level of difficulty of *RT* is a bit higher above my current English proficiency. But I think it can help me learn more vocabulary. As other materials are not challenging, *RT* can help me advance my English level.”

Another category of response frequencies in percentages around 10% is the physical appearance of *RT* ( $N=46$ , 9.48%). It relates to the characteristics of a book, such as photos, drawings, cartoons, art, colors, the texture of paper sheets, font, layout, weight, size of the book, covers, white space, and so on of a book. Around one tenth of the responses comment on this quality of *RT*. For example, “Drawings are pretty and everything is neat;” “With a rich variety of pictures and illustrations, I can learn a unit better;” “The reading texts are colorful, interesting;” “Pictures can help me understand the reading text;” “With illustrations, the reading texts get more interesting;” and “Its art design is excellent.” Indeed, if one flicks through *RT*, they will find this book does not have too much text crammed onto one page and has enough space to provide its reader with relief. Also, the sequence and separation of the units, the unit exercises and the worksheets is absolutely clear. Among these recommendations, one negative response caught my attention. A student complained, “I don’t like to tear off the unit exercises or the worksheets at all. I don’t want to ruin the completeness of my book. Once they are torn off, I can’t glue them back together and must get them lost somewhere.” Although only one student commented on the inconvenience of separate sheets, still it counts as a word of warning and make me alert to a likely change to be done.

## Conclusion and Suggestions on Future Research

The present study tried to examine the perceived values of *Reading Time: A Strategic Approach to Reading in English* from the perspective of its student users. It seems that this textbook has appealed to the Level 2 students at Wenzao and gained their positive reflections on its contents, Web English, audio CD and unit exercises in helping them learn English, improve their English skills, intrigue their motivation, boost their confidence, learn new world knowledge, expand their vocabulary bank and so on. However, not all of the comments made on the three open-ended questions are fully positive. For example, some students chose Unit 7 over other units which they disapproved of. One student mentioned that (s)he was unwilling to tear off the worksheets from the book. One student mentioned that this textbook might place a burden on those who are not committed to the Level 2 English Course. The textbook developers of *RT* should be open to such feedback from the students and re-evaluate the textbook by taking into consideration of the student users' perceptions of this reading material and improving its quality if possible. The results of the present study have also made the student voices heard by their English teachers. Hopefully they can gain some knowledge on adapting Unit 7 in their future teaching and never miss any influential factor which might affect their students' English study at Wenzao.

The present study has also indicated some gaps that should be regarded and filled with other kinds of research data though. First, as Ansary and Babaii (2001) argue, any perfect textbook is merely a tool in the hands of teachers. How teachers use *RT* or what teachers can do with *RT* has fueled my desire to dig deeper into the unpredictable potential of *RT* for classroom practices in any form which is beyond my current expectation. In the present study, there are deficiencies of the student participants' English teachers' post-use evaluation of the textbook and their actual material adaptations or any innovative class activities based on the contents of the book if any. A qualitative approach to unveiling how another party of users interpret this textbook has carved a niche for me to fill in order to make further pedagogical suggestions for those who are interested in using this textbook in different settings. An interview study or classroom observations might assist me in keeping qualitative, in-depth records of teachers' perceptions of the textbook, their actual teaching of the units, and students' direct responses to the lessons in the classroom settings. Second, the present study did not differentiate and analyze the responses generated from the L2 students in different grades (i.e. freshmen and sophomores). Through using SPSS 23.0, questionnaire data can be calculated to do a *t* test for independent samples and spot any statistically significant differences between these two student groups, based on which an interview study can be conducted to collect the students' comments on these differences. Third, each teaching/learning context has its unique culture and characteristics. A comparative study can be proposed to compare and contrast data generated from book users in different settings in Taiwan. Hopefully in the future there is a chance for me to interview or survey both teachers and students in different areas in Taiwan to gain a fuller picture of the effect of using *Reading Time: A Strategic Approach to Reading in English* on helping Taiwanese EFL learners to learn English and reveal more details of the worksheets of this textbook in helping teachers to prepare for and carry out their teaching of each unit. Such academic students conducted on the evaluation of *RT* are hoped to keep improving the quality of *Reading Time: A Strategic Approach to Reading in English* and the quality of English teaching and learning in the classroom.

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## Appendix A: Student questionnaires

同學對於使用 Reading Time: A Strategic Approach to Reading in English 學習英語之看法

親愛的同學：

本研究問卷目的在於了解您對於 Reading Time: A Strategic Approach to Reading in English(以下簡稱 Reading Time) 這本書的看法及使用它來學習英語的相關問題，問卷結果僅供學術研究之用，請放心作答。

若您願意參與本研究，請翻開問卷後開始作答。仔細閱讀問卷中第 1 至 29 題的每項敘述，並圈選出最符合您目前的想法的答案，數字 1~5 各代表不同的涵義（5：非常同意；4：同意；3：還算同意；2：不同意；1：非常不同意）；第 30 至 33 題請以中文簡述您目前的想法。回答過程中若有任何疑問，請隨時提問，謝謝！

感謝您的參與！若您對本研究有任何疑問，歡迎隨時與外語教學系陳思安老師連絡。辦公室分機號碼：5240；Email：99033@mail.wzu.edu.tw

※ 請根據你使用 Reading Time 的經驗回答下列問題。

5. 非常同意	4. 同意	3. 還算同意	2. 不同意	1. 非常不同意
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題目敘述	5	4	3	2	1
	非常同意	同意	還算同意	不同意	非常不同意
1. Reading Time 教材內容符合我的學習需求。	5	4	3	2	1
2. Reading Time 教材內容難易度適合我的程度。	5	4	3	2	1
3. Reading Time 教材內容量(共 18 個單元)是足夠的。	5	4	3	2	1
4. Reading Time 教材內容有助於提升我學習英語的動機。	5	4	3	2	1
5. Reading Time 教材內容有助於提升我學習英語的信心。	5	4	3	2	1
6. Reading Time 教材內容有助於提升我學習英語的興趣。	5	4	3	2	1
7. Reading Time 教材內容有助於提升我的英語閱讀技巧。	5	4	3	2	1
8. Reading Time 教材內容有助於提升我的英語聽力技巧。	5	4	3	2	1
9. Reading Time 教材內容有助於提升我聽、說、讀、寫整合式的學習方式。	5	4	3	2	1
10. Reading Time 各單元的主題是有趣的。	5	4	3	2	1
11. Reading Time 內容有助於我認識多元文化。	5	4	3	2	1
12. Reading Time 內容有助於我日常生活英語溝通能力。	5	4	3	2	1
13. Reading Time 內容有助於我增加與主題相關的字彙量。	5	4	3	2	1
14. Reading Time 可有效提升我的英語聽力能力。	5	4	3	2	1
15. Reading Time 可有效提升我的英語口說能力。	5	4	3	2	1
16. Reading Time 可有效提升我的英語閱讀能力。	5	4	3	2	1
17. Reading Time 可有效提升我的英語寫作能力。	5	4	3	2	1
18. Reading Time 可有效加強我的英語文法運用能力。	5	4	3	2	1
19. Reading Time 的影音典藏學習頻道能增加我學習英語興趣。	5	4	3	2	1
20. Reading Time 的影音典藏學習頻道內容有助於我熟悉各單元內容。	5	4	3	2	1
21. Reading Time 的影音典藏學習頻道有助於我認識正確語調及發音。	5	4	3	2	1
22. Reading Time 的影音典藏學習頻道內容有助於提升我的英語聽力。	5	4	3	2	1
23. Reading Time 的影音典藏學習頻道有助於我增加練習教材內容的動機。	5	4	3	2	1
24. Reading Time 的影音典藏學習頻道有助於課後自我英語口說練習。	5	4	3	2	1
25. Reading Time 的影音典藏學習頻道有助於我的英語字彙學習。	5	4	3	2	1
26. Reading Time 的課文朗讀 CD 有助於我認識正確語調及發音。	5	4	3	2	1
27. Reading Time 的課文朗讀 CD 有助於課後自我英語聽力練習。	5	4	3	2	1
28. Reading Time 的課文朗讀 CD 有助於課後自我英語口說練習。	5	4	3	2	1
29. Reading Time 的單元卷(回家作業)有助於我熟悉教材內容。	5	4	3	2	1
30. Reading Time 的單元卷(回家作業)有助於我應考英語檢定考試(如 CSEPT)。	5	4	3	2	1

<p>31. 我最喜歡的單元是 Unit : _____ 。</p> <p>請簡述原因 : _____</p>
<p>32. 我最不喜歡的單元是 Unit : _____ 。</p> <p>請簡述原因 : _____</p>
<p>33. 請簡述 3 個您喜歡 Reading Time 的理由 。</p> <p>1. _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>2. _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>3. _____</p> <p>_____</p>

若您願意接受後續的訪談(約 15-20 分鐘，並備有小禮物一份)，請留下您的聯絡方式。

姓名：	Email：
手機：	Line ID：

本問卷到此結束，感謝您的參與及配合。