

Power & Knowledge of Gender Issues in Taiwanese Grade 1-9 Curriculum: A Critical Pedagogy Perspectives

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is first to explore gender issues of knowledge and power in the Grade 1-9 Curriculum. It then investigates the interplay of knowledge and power in curriculum decision-making in an attempt to understand the position of gender issues in the integrated Grade 1-9 curriculum. Further, this study considers the proposed introduction of gender issues into the curriculum, both its content and educational goals, and looks critically at the contemporary curriculum implementation of gender equity issues in the Grade 1-9 Curriculum. Finally, this study views teachers not only as transformative intellectuals in pedagogy but also as practitioners of social equity through searching for their professional identity.

Key words: Power & Knowledge, Gender Issues, Grade 1-9 Curriculum, Critical Pedagogy

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Introduction

In order to meet the challenge of the 21st century, not only western countries, but also Taiwan, have begun to view educational reform a focus of to development, not only to help students achieve their full potential and but also to develop good citizenship, and to assure national competition. In September of 2001, the Taiwanese government initiated a movement toward educational reform with the introduction of the Grade 1-9 Curriculum policy. Because of the country's transition from an industrial society to a knowledge-based one, it has been necessary to consider how to restructure school learning, revise curricula, and provide specific goals for the future Taiwanese society. In an effort to map education with social trends in the development of the school curricula, an "Integrative Activities" component has been added to each of the learning areas in the Grade 1-9 Curriculum. This serves to infuse social critical issues into the curriculum, and also provides students with alternative learning periods. The school curriculum development committees, together with teachers, will now have the authority to design their own curriculum for these alternative learning periods. The design is based on the infusion of six identified "crucial issues," (i.e. Information Technology Education, Environmental Education, Gender Education, Human Rights Education, Career Development Education, and Home Economics Education) into seven learning areas (i.e. Language Arts, Social Studies, Arts and Humanities, Science and Technology, Mathematics, Health and Physical Education and Integrative Activities).

These six "crucial issues," which had previously been neglected in Taiwan

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compulsory education, are an attempt to respond to the globalization of knowledge as well as to reflect social trends in Taiwan. Hopefully, the infusion of these “crucial issues” into the seven learning areas will help students both to understand the realities of contemporary society and to develop a sense of social commitment through students’ application of what they learn in real situations. In fact, the “crucial issues” in the Grade 1-9 Curriculum reflect not only a diversification of knowledge, but also the possibility of the social construction of knowledge, by emphasizing the integration of traditional knowledge and the practice of social fairness and justice of a democratic society.

Gender Equity Education, one of the “crucial issues” in the Grade 1-9 Curriculum, is especially instrumental in demonstrating the significance of diversified cultural education and social fairness. There are three main elements involved, namely the infusion of rationale or conception, the reaction to the call for action from the Taiwanese Report of Educational Reform (Legislative Yuan, 1996), and the process of a lasting multicultural praxis (Banks, 1989). The essence of Gender Equity Education is to provide both male and female students with equal learning opportunities in school, ultimately achieving a more equal gender balance in society. Because of the efforts of feminist groups and the goals of liberal and democratic education, the Gender Equity movement has become an essential element of educational reform in Taiwan, making it timely to include Gender Equity Education in the Grade 1-9 Curriculum Guidelines. Given both “The Act of Sexual Violation Prevention”, introduced by Legislative Yuan, passed on January 22, 1997, and “The Act of Gender Equity Education” drafted in 1999¹, following the formation of the “Gender Equity Education Committee” in March 1997 by the Ministry of Education, it is hoped that the practice of gender equity, in law as well as in education, can be more concrete. Gender education now needs to go beyond the rationale and conceptual stage, and be put into practice through teacher design of school curriculum.

The purposes of this study, therefore, are to explore gender issues of knowledge and power in the Grade 1-9 Curriculum, and to investigate the interplay of knowledge and power in curriculum integration in an attempt to understand the status of gender

¹ The Act of Gender Equity Education has been passed on June 23, 2004.

issues in the integrated curriculum. Further, this study considers the proposed introduction of gender issues into the curriculum, both its content and educational goals, and critically examines the contemporary curriculum implementation of gender issues in the Grade 1-9 Curriculum. Finally, this study views teachers not only as transformative intellectuals in pedagogy but also as practitioners of social equity through searching for their professional identities.

Knowledge and Power in Taiwanese Grade 1-9 Curriculum

The emphasis on knowledge as the main component of curriculum results from traditional choices, as well as from the structure and arrangement of knowledge and power. According to sociological studies on knowledge in England (Bernstein, 1971; Mannheim, 1998; Young, 1971; 1998), the selection, classification, structure, and spread of knowledge are bound to the structure, arrangement, and social control of power in a society. Bernstein (1971) focused especially on the selection and organization of knowledge types, which has inspired legal curricula in a reconstructed society. Bernstein (1971) proposed that curriculum--an organization of time units--includes different components, each with unique content and status, which may be influenced by the society outside the school system. He used the terms "classification" and "framing" to analyze the different organization and the content of various curricula. "Classification" refers to the degree of distinction--the intensity of the border-- between subjects and curriculum content, while "framing" signifies the tools used by learners to acquire information in an educational environment. In order to maintain the integrity of curriculum content, a significant border must be maintained among the various subjects. Teachers of what are generally considered to be "higher status" subjects have to prevent their teaching areas from being "contaminated" by subjects of "lower" status. These borders, therefore, become the strongholds of resistance to such "contamination," and a defense of established parameters of knowledge. Given the intensity of the border, teachers and students alike either enthusiastically support, or resist, any special curriculum definition; that is, what topics should be excluded or included within the curriculum borders. Bernstein (1971) indicated that the intent to change the intensity of curriculum borders reveals

the basis for selection and classification of knowledge as well as inherent power relations. As a result, during curriculum reform, especially where critical issues cross established curriculum boundaries, teachers may face the challenge of restructuring and reframing central issues of curricula.

“Framing,” in the context of the teaching relationship, can be referred to as the rights of both teachers and students to make decisions regarding educational content, including the selection and organization of knowledge, instructional procedures and assessment, and levels of curriculum control, namely who controls what in a specific educational relationship. “Framing” emphasizes what and how a student learns and in what situation it is appropriate. In the case of strong framing, teachers can explicitly control all aspects of learning situations, including the selection, order, and protocols of main subjects and determining appropriate subject matter and the relationship between teachers and learners. Weak framing, in contrast, allows learners to own a degree of control over their learning. While weak framing does not mean that teachers have no discursive space, it does, however, make learners ignore teacher controls (Bernstein, 1971).

Bernstein (1971) and Young (1971) both pointed out that breaking the boundary between school knowledge and non-school knowledge can facilitate social reform. However, one characteristic of curriculum is that it does not reflect common experience, but rather favors power or status. (Young, 1971, p.38). In other words, sociologists of knowledge believe that particular subjects are included in the curriculum based on the collective interests of higher status or dominant groups.

According to Bernstein (1990), curriculum is classified into two categories: classified and integrated. The more traditional a society, the higher the tendency to group certain types of knowledge. In addition, this knowledge will be structured in separate curricula as independent subjects. In a democratic society, however, knowledge may be arranged to reflect a more worldly and pluralistic development so that knowledge structure tends to be integrated, and as a result, there is the possibility of “border crossing” (Chen, 2001; Giroux, 1988). In Taiwan, in the Grade 1-9 Curriculum, the potential for “border crossing” is increasing, through the integration of the 21 subjects in the junior high school curriculum and the 14 elementary school curriculum subjects into 7 learning areas, reflecting both the integration of knowledge

areas, and the infusion of critical issues into the curriculum.

In a postmodern society, however, different knowledge areas are continuously mixed and interact with one another. Therefore, traditional borders can neither delimit nor explain the cultural variety in society because certain issues may cross many areas. In addition, some traditional subjects enjoy a higher status, almost elite status in mainstream ideology, and hence, seek to maintain distinct borders, which usually exclude critical issues, so as not to lose their elitism and power to control the curriculum.

A curriculum which crosses subject areas and cultural lines, however, can better contain multiple narrations and cultural differences so that marginalized groups can express their histories, cultures, and politics from different points of view, thus facilitating the infusion of the critical issues of a technological society into the curriculum (Giroux, 1992).

Furthermore, traditional subjects and instructional models reflected in national standardized tests, such as the "Academic Attainment Testing," which have become the so-called "official" and "high-status knowledge," are criticized as representing only the knowledge of conservative right-wing groups (Apple, 1999; Goodson, Anstead & Morgan, 1998; McLaren, 1988). The knowledge of minority groups and marginalized students, such as the experiences of females or people in non-traditional sexual relationships, however, whose interpretation of knowledge usually reflects their real life experiences, rarely appears in any official curriculum. Therefore, educators in a democratic society are responsible for helping students respect different points of view and assist them in making their voices heard. Critical issues of curriculum thus reflect the possibility of the social construction of knowledge, as well as the possibility that the formation and delimitation of knowledge may no longer be controlled by the interests of the dominant group.

Contemporary critical issues have frequently been neglected in the curriculum for two reasons: the over-emphasis on the elitism of separate subjects, and the curriculum design profession. Separate disciplines reflect social control and the official ideology. According to Foucault (1977), the arrangement of subject knowledge reveals its organization into high-status and low-status subjects and reflects traditional subject power relations. The power structure of traditional subjects has dominated

curriculum; thus, curriculum reform involving the infusion of critical issues makes any actions to protect the status of certain knowledge especially obvious. Science and Technology, for instance, which has always been of higher status, has insisted that it not be infused with specific issues. One possible reason for this resistance may be the fear that integrated subjects would reduce the number of teaching hours devoted to a certain subject, thus weakening the knowledge and power of that subject. Another reason may be the defense of the value in an ideology, or illusion, of “neutrality.” Regardless of the situation involving the integration of subjects or the infusion of crucial issues, the dispute between knowledge and power can be seen everywhere.

Undeniably, there are certain beliefs and assumptions of power and value related to curriculum reform and social transformation, making it a necessary process to rearrange knowledge, power, and resources during the curriculum reform of a democratic society. In Taiwan, the Grade 1-9 Curriculum Guideline is the product of negotiations of various social groups and perspectives, such as Environmental Education, Gender Equity Education, Human Rights Education, Life Education, etc. The guideline transformed the curriculum into seven integrated and infused learning areas, and has met resistance from traditional higher-status subjects, between or even within, learning areas. The dialectical negotiation (dialectic) of knowledge and power reveals opposition to the transformation and spread of knowledge or the resistance of the culture of higher-status knowledge (Chuang, 2002).

In summary, the purpose of the Grade 1-9 Integrated Curriculum is to apply the competence indicators of the ten “Core Competences” to the students’ daily lives. One proposal for infusing the six crucial issues of curriculum designated 20% of teaching time as alternative learning periods, during which critical issues would be taught, but was rejected by most Curriculum Guidelines committees. This was because crucial issues would be innovated with social trends. Apart from two of the crucial issues, Information Technology and Home Economics Education, which were also original subjects, and cannot be included into the seven learning areas for political reasons, the other crucial issues do not gain their own learning periods, but instead, an attempt is made to transform traditional knowledge and make it applicable to contemporary society. Furthermore, the crucial issues can be presented thematically in an integrated curriculum and are flexible enough to be infused into other learning areas.

Gender, Power/Knowledge and Curriculum

Gender issues become legitimate knowledge certainly through discursive practice, meaning the result of the interaction between knowledge and power. Admittedly, knowledge produces power; however, knowledge and power directly imply one another. That is, “[T]here is no power relation without the correlative constitution of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute power relations at the same time.” (Foucault, 1977, p.27).

For Foucault, knowledge is not absolutely neutral, but rather interdependent with power. Knowledge not only collaborates with power relations but is also greatly increased when learners are empowered. In other words, where the power acts is where the knowledge raises. In Foucault’s *Discipline and Punishment* (1977), the term “discipline power” refers to combining tools, skills, procedures, practices, and goals together as a whole like a physics or anatomy of power, or as a technique. Therefore, every power relation is constructed by a related field of knowledge, such as science to mathematics, language to arts, etc.

According to Foucault (1977), the belief that knowledge and power accompany gender issues interdependently is very important, as is the relationship of knowledge, power, and gender. In addition, education itself plays the role of negotiating and transforming knowledge tools, and makes power relations and transforming power of gender issues concrete. To contribute to be an understanding of how educational systems support widespread social power, what is emphasized here is how the relationship between knowledge and power works in educational systems. For example, since the martial period in Taiwan, the number of voices calling for gender equity has increased. As a result, gender issues have been transformed from Taiwanese multiculturalism movements into educational systems so that gender equity knowledge can be conveyed through a gender-conscious curriculum. Furthermore, because powerful knowledges are generally gendered masculine, power/knowledge is gendered in its turn. What bearing does this have on the schooling curriculum?

All social contexts are influenced by various power relations, and so are educational institutions. Power relations are constituted by different individual and

group factors, including age, race, gender, and social status, etc. The relation between the stakeholders and selected school knowledge is very important in educational structures. For instance, some students are not allowed to have access to certain forms of knowledge, and some teachers are not allowed to teach certain groups of students or certain fields of knowledge. Curriculum decisions about both what is taught and what is not are taken within gendered power/knowledge relations; they reflect the levels and types of power according to different forms of knowledge and different roles in the decision-making process (Cherryholmes, 1988). Different groups of people and knowledge types are separated in order to prevent the groups from experiencing the ideological “contamination” of border crossing.

In fact, most curriculum reforms in democratic countries seek to change knowledge/power relations of superiority, but they often do not consider the complexity of the knowledge systems, and thus they are criticized as “gender blind.” Paechter (2000) pointed out that the English government tried to change a core subject, “Design and Technology “ (D&T) in the new national curriculum, but was attacked by the “lower classes” in the early 1990s. The failure of this change in the new curriculum was due to the lack of understanding on the part of qualified teachers, of knowledge/power relations based on superiority inside or outside the essence of D&T. This kind of power relation in curriculum reform is similar to the development of the Taiwanese Grade 1-9 Curriculum in its lack of both common sense and adequate negotiations. Since organizations involved in Taiwanese educational reform ignored the fact that teachers had long regarded traditional subjects as superior, it is natural that stakeholders, especially junior high school teachers, would refuse to accept the concept of knowledge integration. A similar situation arose in early 20th century in England, where the government also tried, but failed, to establish a program for women in science. Since knowledge and power relations of superiority support and benefit science education for males, females who want higher achievement in science must have access to this kind of knowledge and education in science. In the late 1980s, however, although the General Certification of Secondary Education (GCSE) in Wales could have proven that boys got higher scores in science than girls, the suggestion was fiercely attacked because it challenged the political supposition that “males and females have equal competences.”

Many layers of knowledge are related to gender because powerful knowledge is usually marked as “male.” In view of postmodernist trends of thought, curriculum researchers are concerned about whether political strategies can change this knowledge and power relations and hence, may rely on negotiation or border crossing. In deciding what subjects to teach or not to teach, we also can consider notions of gendered knowledge and power relations. Based on different forms of knowledge, different leaders in curriculum design often reflect different layers and types of knowledge.

It is possible that the value of school knowledge, which often provides answers to questions about what and how to teach, is determined by knowledge and power relations. For example, American education in the colonial period placed more emphasis on reading than on writing for the purpose of social control. At that time, reading the Bible was regarded as the essential way to establish ethics in early childhood. Writing, in comparison, was not treated with the same importance for fear that those who were good at writing might write about the desire for justice and democracy. As for English society in the 19th century, the mechanical department thought that science education was a tool for controlling male workers who did not believe in national religion. Thus, educational institutions only offered limited science courses, and excluded conflicts and problems of values in order to improve the work ethic. Therefore, the working class would spend more time reading scientific articles instead of proposing radical solution to problems. Workers were given opportunities to learn skills outside scientific labs so that they would have no motivation to participate in social reform. Skill training could thus prevent the workers from gaining political power through rebellion.

Subject areas, such as Mathematics, Science, and Technology, also acquire access to greater power through gaining more teaching hours and increased classroom opportunities. In English-speaking countries, English courses can get more teaching hours, but very few spaces. In order to improve communicative competence in a global village, young learners around the world must have the ability to read English; consequently, English has become the dominant language. As for science, it has great power to gain both time and space. For example, in the first national curriculum implementation in Wales in 1989, most students, aged 14 to 16, were

expected to learn “double-science,” meaning they had to complete the basic subject material in science while simultaneously studying the advanced subject material in science. This required both more teaching hours and greater effort on the part of the teachers to integrate the subject matter. Thus, science was integrated into most spaces or subjects, achieving a greater level of control, thus demonstrating the power of ruling students’ cognitive development.

In Taiwan, the English curriculum in the Grade 1-9 Curriculum is affected by global economics and has been officially implemented nationwide in the elementary schools, beginning in the third grade rather than the fifth, (and even in the first grade in some city areas) Although the effect of English knowledge/power is increasing, the problem of western culture’s hegemony leads to the issue of the post-colonization of English courses. Similarly, based on the worldwide tendency towards localization, dialects as a subject area, now introduced to the curriculum from the first grade, instead of the third grade, also reflect the advocacy of various dialect groups asking for more teaching hours, and further the process of legitimizing knowledge.

Gender, power, knowledge and curriculum are tightly interrelated. Through gender issues of curriculum, power is provided for specific groups. The degree of knowledge infusion shows different power relations. Some knowledge is quite gender-classified, such as Arts and Humanities, Language Arts, Social Studies, and Health and Physical Education, while those subjects constituting “male knowledge” usually exclude females. Aside from the exclusion of women from the curriculum, at present, perhaps due to inadequate identity development in adolescents, males are also excluded from some kinds of knowledge, such as home economics. These subjects are, however, typically those which possess less power. Curriculum design is usually seen as the result of a struggle for political power, and can be viewed in this light along with gender, power and knowledge relationships. Through the use of power by educational institutions, teachers, and students, the phenomenon of gender inequity has existed for a long time.

In the Grade 1-9 Curriculum, the major strategy was originally to infuse gender issues into several humanities curricula and related learning areas. This failed, due to the selection and exclusion of integrated subjects within the learning areas, and as a result of the infusion of the six crucial issues. In addition, the infusion of gender

issues into learning areas in the school-based curricula and in the textbooks examined may differ depending upon the ideas of the curriculum policy maker, who may have a different consciousness of gender issues and different critiques of traditional gender awareness. However, gender issues in daily life still provide teachers a way to make use of the power of discursiveness.

Goals and Contents of Gender Education in Grade 1-9 Curriculum Guidelines

Based on contemporary social needs, the Grade 1-9 Curriculum policy subsumes gender issues in the social critical issues of curriculum. Although curriculum guidelines retained the term “Gender Education,” which appeared in the draft of the curriculum guidelines in 1998, the task of curriculum development was to offer competence indicators, five main themes and relevant learning topics based on a rationale of gender equity in education.

Curriculum Goals of Gender Equity Education

“Gender Equity” refers to providing equal access to educational opportunities without discrimination based on gender. Therefore, gender equity education seeks to improve appropriate gender development in learners by looking not only at issues regarding gender difference and limited opportunities based on social constructions of gender, but also by analyzing inappropriate social or cultural systems, which limit individual development regardless of gender. Further, rather than viewing “male” culture as the mainstream culture, the completeness and contribution of female experiences are emphasized. Thus, the primary goal of Gender Equity Education is to illuminate the social construction of gender as the crucial factor responsible for behavioral and developmental differences in men and women. Only by eliminating, through education, social stereotypes regarding gender, and by correcting inappropriate social systems and laws, can learners be able to adjust their own potential prejudices unwritten rules. Furthermore, by destroying improper social constructions and adjusting personal attitudes and behavior, as well as patterns of thought, people can create a society with gender harmony, justice and fairness. In

other words, gender education is gender equity education, which includes an examination of gender concepts constructed by social and cultural systems. As for “equality,” besides maintaining basic human dignity, it argues for equal gender opportunity and cooperation in a harmonious society.

The current curriculum goals of “gender education” in the Grade 1-9 Curriculum are as follows (Chuang, 1999):

1. Cognition perspective: Understand the meaning of gender, the development of both gender roles and the gender relations.
 - (1) Recognize the variety and differences of gender development.
 - (2) Realize personal growth and career planning as a way to break through social expectation and limitation based on gender.
 - (3) Investigate relative issues of gender development and gender interaction.
2. Affective perspective: Develop appropriate concepts and values of gender.
 - (1) Show self-concept and pursue personal interests and advantages.
 - (2) Cherish self and respect others.
 - (3) Eliminate sexual discrimination and prejudice and respect social pluralistic phenomena.
3. Action perspective: Develop critical self-reflection and concrete actions.
 - (1) Make use of various resources and develop the skills and abilities to handle crises.
 - (2) Develop positive personal career choices without the effects of gender stereotypes.
 - (3) Criticize various inappropriate social gender values.
 - (4) Construct a model of gender equity and respectful interaction.

In summary, in order to achieve the goal of gender equity education, we must examine the patriarchal culture, which ignores the entire life experiences and contributions of women, and avoid discrimination based on gender and physical differences. We suggest that society should provide equal opportunities and value individual differences so that everyone can cherish him/herself, respect others and develop without gender discrimination and limitation.

Core Competence and Content of Gender Equity Education

Previously, the goals of compulsory education were determined by academic attainment testing, and set highly on emphasizing memorization, and discounting children's authentic life experiences so that students were unable to do something with what they had learned. Presently, however, the Grade 1-9 Curriculum transforms the ten curriculum goals of compulsory education into ten core competences, which are more concrete than they were before and are designed to take into account the social change and the future needs of Taiwan, as well as to be comparable with American, Japanese, and Australian, etc. policies. The ten core competences include: 1.realizing self and developing potential, 2.cherishing performance and creation, 3.career planning and life-long education, 4.expressing, communication and sharing, 5.concern and cooperation, 6.learning and understanding international culture, 7.organization and practice, 8.making use of technology and information, 9.automatic exploration and studying, and 10.thinking independently and problem-solving (Ministry of Education, 2000). In addition, the ten core competences need to be further transformed into "Competence Indicators" in every learning area with crucial issue as the basis of curriculum design and implementation. Replacing academic knowledge, core competence focuses on the whole life experience of the learner and tries to increase the quality of citizenship and the nation's ability to compete. As for the core competence of gender education, curriculum development adopts four learning stages within the seven learning areas and sets up competence indicators for appropriately infusing gender issues into the theme and the core of each learning area (Chuang, 1999).

The core competence of Gender Education in compulsory education should include "gender self-understanding," "gender personal relationship," and "gender self-breakthrough." The three core competences are defined as follows.

1. Gender self-understanding: The role of gender in self-development.
2. Gender personal relationship: The relationship between gender development and social/cultural interaction.
3. Gender self-breakthrough: The construction of a harmonious, respectful and equal society through self-understanding and combining with society / culture.

With regard to the implementation of gender education, in addition to

constructing an environment and culture of equal gender, and also in keeping with professional development by schools, teachers -- the most important practitioners of curriculum, instruction and evaluation -- should build appropriate gender concepts, choose subject matter with gender equity, and clarify and adjust the gender biases in textbooks. Furthermore, in school-based curriculum development, teachers should infuse gender education into the basic teaching hours of every learning area and the alternative learning periods to include gender equity in curriculum implementation.

Unfortunately, during the integration of the seven learning areas, teachers of some areas, such as Languages Arts, Arts and Humanities, considered the logistics of competence indicators and pointed out that because of time limitations, it is hard to negotiate the infusion of the crucial issues, while teachers of some other areas, such as Math and Science and Technology, insisted that issues of relevance to the subject area make it harder to infuse the gender issues. As a result, the competence indicators of the six crucial issues were presented independently outside the seven learning areas, as an "Eighth Area," which is linked to the relevant core competence indicators of the seven learning areas in order to help the teachers and textbook editors appropriately infuse the six issues into the seven learning areas. Since the six crucial issues so far have been viewed with an "additive approach," which separates them from the seven learning areas, more effort is needed to return to the original "transformative approach" during the current editing of the temporary curriculum guidelines.

Reflection on Infusing Gender Issues into Grade 1-9 Curriculum

It has now been three years since far, the Grade 1-9 Curriculum implementation (two years for the junior high school). Several policies, such as the school-based curriculum development, racial identity issues in the dialects curriculum, border crossing curriculum integration, critical issues of social construction of knowledge, teacher negotiation of team teaching, competence indicators with authentic assessment of knowledge structure and multiple curriculum decision-making, all reflect postmodernism perspectives (Chuang, 2002). However, the uncertainty of implementation policies, the limited necessary tools and the insufficient competency of

practitioners resulted in an inability to demonstrate the richness of the Grade 1-9 Curriculum and failed to gain teachers' enthusiastic commitment to it. Basically, there are six crucial issues in the National Curriculum Guidelines: Information Technology Education, Environmental Education, Gender Education, Human Rights Education, Career Development Education, and Home Economics Education (Ministry of Education, 2003). The central concern of the crucial issues is that the question about how to infuse the six issues about gender, environment, information technology, home economics, human rights, and career development into every learning area should be well planned in curriculum designs (Ministry of Education, 2000, p. 14). Since the description above only mentions the principle, but no implementation procedures, here we will examine the current phenomenon of gender issues infusion from political and practical perspectives in order to provide references for curriculum improvement.

The implementation of gender issues into Integrative Activities merely achieved the goals of “gender relation and interaction.”

The sketch of the implementation of curriculum planning above is admittedly rather rough and can be further explained. It requires neither the proportion of instructional hours of crucial issues infused into each learning area, nor a set standard of implementation. But by reviewing implementation experiences in every school, most schools tend to choose “Integrative Activities” to teach crucial issues. Because the purpose of Integrative Activities is to integrate social issues and to make them become the ten required content areas, it is easier to implement the plan using concrete activities as models. In addition, Integrative Activities is one of the areas, which can best present the transformation from knowledge to practice, making Integrative Activities the most popular means of implementation so far. However, the shortcoming of the Integrative Activities is that it cannot accommodate other curriculum goals. Moreover, gender issues merely provide the Integrative Activities the theme, “Gender relation and interaction.” Hence, if the curriculum is additive and based only on textbooks, it is hardly a question of gender issues infused into curricula.

The implementation during the alternative learning periods was easily pushed out by other school routine activities.

Another way of implementing critical issues is to make use of alternative learning periods, using 9.09 % to 19.35 % of the total learning hours, a percentage determined after the school has selected textbooks. However, after allotting the time for local or central essential activities, such as information technology, safety education, life education, poison and smoking prevention, democratic education, and English (dialects) teaching, time will be limited if a school intends to adopt the crucial issue as the school-based curriculum. As the teaching hours of the infused issues in every learning area increase, most teachers would claim that the hours for most areas like Languages Arts are insufficient, so that they need to make use of alternative learning periods. They also ask how they can have the time for infusing crucial issues. Moreover, some teachers indicated that only four hours a year is required for implementing the gender education curriculum stipulated by the Act of Sexual Violation Prevention so that teachers' motivation to implement gender education in the Grade 1-9 Curriculum is not high. Furthermore, the crucial issues are often squeezed out of the alternative learning periods by routine activities.

The infusion of crucial issues in seven learning areas can achieve the goal of transformative curriculum.

The principle of the transformative approach is to transform the competence indicators of the crucial issues infused in every learning area into applicable competence and the social action praxis using the concepts, events, and themes of critical issues without adding other curriculum elements (Huang, 1991; Lin & Chuang, 2001;). Moreover, through social equality, human values, and gender consciousness in textbooks, students can develop personal awareness and holistic education which transforms knowledge into effect and action. Therefore, the implementation of a transformative curriculum refers to the reconceptualization of whole the curriculum and the representation of teachers and their professional identity (Pinar, 1998). The transformation from gender issues into another learning area can be integrated into a new curriculum structure. Although currently we have six crucial issues infused into seven learning areas, meaning a total of 42 avenues to infusion, few teachers would

want to implement the infusion curriculum. The teachers' corporate action research by solo researchers or team research often does not inspire school curriculum innovation, but only appears in bailment cases based on political motivations. Most teachers do not have a strong will to transform curriculum before they realize the significance of the social construction of knowledge. Since the infusion is related to social problems as well as to teachers' thoughts and attitudes, curriculum design requires lasting and professional development. In the contemporary school curriculum agendas of compulsory education, gender issues are frequently infused in Integrative Activities, Social Studies, Health and Physical Education, and Life Curriculum, while less infused in Language Arts, Arts and Humanities, Mathematics, and Technology.

Pedagogical Praxis: Teachers as Transformative Intellectuals

The assumption that treating teachers as transformative intellectuals and takes the forming, planning, designing, and practicing of curriculum conceptions as teachers' technical ability is proposed by Giroux (1998) according to technical and material ideology. Giroux conceptualized power as a concrete set of practices that produces social forms through which distinct experiences and subjectivities are shaped. What he emphasized is the social responsibility of a teacher in the goals and expectations of schooling. If we believe that schooling involves not only the production and transmission of knowledge, but also involves teachers speaking out, as necessary intellectuals in a democratic society, we can link the goal of teacher education, the development of the teaching profession, the order of democracy, and the development of social construction together. It is in this sense that teachers as cultural workers need to be attentive to pedagogy as a political practice and to the cultural practices of a language of critique and a language of possibility (Giroux, 1998; 2003). Additionally, teachers should get together to resist economic, political, and social inequity and injustice, while providing learning contexts to make students become knowledgeable and progressive citizens who attempt to struggle for their radical democracy.

The above analysis casts doubt on the pre-specified subject matter and instructional strategies of technical rationality. The teacher education curriculum

should teach teachers how to criticize and analyze school ideology and lead teachers to use reflective thinking in addition to an instructional technique involving efficiency management. Accordingly, our traditional knowledge structure should be reformed and socially reconstructed.

The infusion of gender issues expects teachers as the agent of critical discourse to replace the reproductive discourse with critical praxis, and to replace knowledge repetition with reflective practice. As mentioned in the previous section, the process of drafting all crucial issues of Grade 1-9 Curriculum Guidelines is very difficult because each of the issues not only has its own knowledge structure but also has to be infused into different learning areas based on the curriculum policy. In the Taiwanese Grade 1-9 Curriculum Guideline published by the Ministry of Education in 2000, the six crucial issues have several common features, including basic rationales, curriculum goals, affective learning indicators, and the synopsis of the infusion into the seven learning areas as well as into the ten core competences. Originally, the policy of curriculum was to treat the seven learning areas and their competence indicators as central, and to treat the issues as subordinate. Thus, as long as the learning area for infusion is definite, we can find the corresponding competence indicators from the synopsis and know about the significances, learning goals, learning themes, integrated areas, and learning contents. Therefore, there may not be technical difficulties in infusing crucial issues into new curricula, but the more important issue here is whether teachers can establish an ideology of social transformation.

In addition, the crucial issues, with exception of Information and Technology Education, have specific units for explanations and concrete examples of teaching activities in Integrative Activities. In fact, these issues are everywhere but are easily ignored. The key point is whether teachers have gender consciousness and can implement it, so that power, knowledge and cultural politics may be linked together.

According to Young (1998), curricula can be facts as well as praxis, and this depends on how teachers construct the curriculum as social construction of knowledge. From the perspective of curriculum development, we can consider the social critical issues as the social construction of knowledge, although practitioners may not be interested in the issues because they think that “additive curriculum” increases pressure on them more than prepackaged curriculum. Therefore, infusing curriculum

going with appropriate design and implementation may well decrease the pressure on teachers and also can achieve the goal of curriculum implementation. During the present curriculum reform, in order to take gender issues as the theme of integrative curriculum, stakeholders have to continuously raise their gender awareness. Moreover, it is necessary for teachers as socially transformative intellectuals to be sensitive to gender issues, to practice their pedagogical discourse, and to create multiple instructional methodologies. In addition, both school knowledge, and teachers' values and beliefs, should be reconstructed; curricula should be adjusted according to social trends, teaching contents and methods. As for the teacher education curriculum, it is in need of modification. In summary, how teachers transform knowledge using gender issues is the key point of this curriculum design. Also, teachers can achieve the rationale of constructing a gender equality society by understanding the texts of gender curriculum.

Conclusion

In conclusion, in the beginning of drafting the Grade 1-9 Curriculum, the subjects, the six crucial issues, and the seven learning areas were having a struggle of knowledge and power. But in view of curriculum essence, gender issues, at least at the compulsory education stage, are trying to transform the knowledge of the traditional curriculum to reflect current social trends, and to concern the contents of diversified culture. Thus, the goal of infusing gender issues into every learning area is to transform traditional subjects and construct a knowledge system of gender equity. According to theories of social criticism and social construction, the reconstruction or integration of curriculum is a necessary process in curriculum reform of a democratic society.

In the infusion of gender issues, we can see the final draft of curriculum guidelines and the synopsis of the competence indicators and issues. Meanwhile, we can see that during the process of curriculum integration, traditional curricula, especially higher-status curricula, defended their own knowledge structures because this is related to the ebb and flow of the knowledge and power. This situation also often arises in the curriculum reform of other countries. Since traditional curriculum

has had a leading role in legitimate knowledge for a long time, some people may think that the mission of educational reform will be accomplished as long as we infuse social critical issues into curriculums and achieve the goals of “holistic education;” however, this is merely the perfection of utopia.

The pedagogical implications of the intention to make gender issues become one of the significant topics of compulsory educational reform require teachers’ discursive practice or a released consciousness. In order to manifest gender issues in school-based curriculum development, teachers’ gender consciousness, the ability to transform the ten core competences into learning indicators and the professional development activities, teachers are empowered to overcome the psychological barrier of curriculum innovation. Also, teachers are encouraged to transform themselves into intellectuals of social equity by searching for their professional identities.

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台灣九年一貫課程性別議題之知識 與權力分析：批判教育學的觀點

莊明貞*

摘 要

本探究擬從批判教育學觀點，分析九年一貫課程性別議題在課程決定中的知識與權力蘊涵，並從性別、知識/權力與課程的批判分析，來理解性別議題的課程位置，並探討台灣近期國定課程在統整各個學科過程的知識與權力之爭，隨後介紹九年一貫課程性別教育議題的目標與內涵，來檢討性別平等教育課程政策落實到學校課程實施的可行作法，最後以教師是轉化的知識份子作為實踐社會公平與教師專業認同的進路，並作成結論。

關鍵詞：知識與權力、性別議題、九年一貫課程、批判教育學

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