A STUDY ON AN INTEGRATED CURRICULUM FOR VISUAL CULTURE:
USING GENDER ROLE ISSUES AS AN EXAMPLE

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Abstract

This paper emphasizes the importance of an integrated curriculum for art education. Drawing on visual culture for its contents and built within a framework of *discipline based art education* (DBAE), the curriculum can be organized in a way that connects art knowledge and experiences with real life. The study applied constructive activities annexed integrated concepts to develop a structural teaching, with gender role stereotypes as the big ideas. Both visual arts and performing arts were incorporated in the teaching activities. The objective was to motivate students to explore gender issues through the study of the arts, and to develop critical thinking. The research method included literature analysis, action research, and content analysis. The findings indicate that study of the visual culture can help us understand the concepts and implications related to the arts, so that we will gain a better control over the visual information we are bombarded with. The contents of visual culture can fit in with curriculum integration. The researcher believes that cur-

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riculum integration can underscore the legitimacy of disciplinary knowledge and, therefore, integration should be implemented with a structural teaching that emphasizes the acquisition of knowledge and skills. The constructivism of the integrated curriculum can then help students address new problems and situations with a tool for solving real problems.

Key words

integrated curriculum, visual culture, essential of art, discipline-based art education

Introduction

I. Research background

In our world of interweaved global economies, rapid developments of tele-conferencing technologies and growing complexity of our lives, images have become a key medium for the transmission of information in the post-modern society. We are living in a world of visual culture dominated by electronic media and images. Signs, symbols and icons with profound implications abound in our daily life, guiding the way we see and look. In a cultural socie-ty, every experience in life embodies a visual culture (Duncum, 1999, p. 295). Many researchers have suggested an art education with a focus on the visual culture (Wilson, 2000, 2003; Kuo & Chao, 2002; Freedman, 2003; Barrett, 2003; Chapman, 2003; Kindler, 2003; Tavin, 2003). Yet on the other hand, Efland (1996) believes that post-modern curricula should be an inter-discipli-nary integration not only related to visual arts, but involving anthropological and social studies as well. Like other disciplines, the arts provide a represen-tation of realities, and address the real social constructs in their unique ways. And post-modern education is a collage of contemporary existences that involve multiple, complex and non-linear meanings. Art education, therefore, has evolved over time to become multi-faceted and diversified.

Amid the 1-9 curricular reform efforts in Taiwan, curricular integration has become quite the vogue in recent years. Art education is faced with signifi-cant changes and new developments. The Education Ministry groups visual arts, music and performing arts together into the Arts & Humanities Field. The integration of these three subjects by some art teachers, however, is little

more than on the formal level, without addressing the development of students' basic skills and the real meaning of integration. As Parsons (2003) points out, if an integrated art education stops at the integration of visual arts, music and performance arts, the significance and value of the integrated curriculum will be seriously curtailed. Beane (1997) suggests that the aim of curricular integration is to seek a connection between past and present, school and society, and between disciplines, and that the dimensions of an integrated curriculum include integration of experiences, social integration and integration of knowledge. Integration is to organize past experiences into useful tools for resolving real problems that we are faced with in new situations.

Thus it is obvious that art education should include curricular integration. Such integration will focus on the application of art knowledge and the linkage between art experiences and real life (Hsu, 2002). The issues addressed in an integrated curriculum have to be relevant to the students and to their concerns in their lives, so as to encourage creative behavior in the learners. The visual culture prevalent in today's society is a good source of issues and topics that can serve as a focal theme for curricular integration. This study offers an example of curricular integration, within the framework of visual culture and discipline-based art education, that addresses gender themes. Incorporated with performing activities, the curriculum aims to educate students the stereotypes for men and women, and to develop their critical thinking and investigative attitude.

II. Purposes of the Study

1. To build an integrated art curriculum with a focus on gender issues;
2. To develop a curriculum within the framework of visual culture and DBAE; and
3. To try to determine the significance of visual culture in art education.

Research Literature

Different educational trends develop in different times. Post-modern views on the arts emphasize the interaction and connection between individual expression and social developments, with artworks examining and reflecting on issues such as the environment, community, war, peace and sex. Students can go beyond the formal elements of a work and explore themes about age,

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race, sex, social classes, beliefs, etc. Through art we gain a better under-
standing of life from cognitive, emotional, physical and spiritual perspectives.
An education of visual arts is a comprehensive, integrated curriculum that
leads to social reconstruction through adequate teaching and learning strate-
gies. Given the purposes of the study, the discussion on research literature is
divided into five parts: (1) discipline-based art education; (2) visual arts; (3)
curricular integration with a focus on art; (4) gender role issues. Other ration-
ale about curricular development will be elaborated along with the explana-
tion of the curriculum.

I. Discipline Based Art Education

Discipline Based Art Education, or DBAE, is an integrated, comprehensive art
education that includes four basic disciplines: art history, studio art, art criti-
cism and aesthetics. But DBAE embraces much more than the four basics.
Other resources for art education include anthropology, archeology, mass
communication, culturology, educational evaluation, linguistics, philosophy,
sociology, etc. These fields of knowledge can contribute to the understanding
of art education (Dobbs, 1998). An art curriculum involves not only knowl-
edge of art, but also domains such as education, psychology, sociology,
anthropology, history, philosophy and languages (Clark & Zimmerman,
1997). Eisner (1998) observes that DBAE does not provide us with a ready
curriculum or content; rather, it is a concept that can be interpreted in diverse
yet all relevant ways and can be modified when necessary. Stinespring
(2001) stresses that the contribution of DBAE to art education is to manifest
the value of feelings through the study of unique artworks, to allow students
to evaluate the value of feelings in aesthetic ways.

Eisner (2001) says that art education can incorporate visual culture, but
visual culture constitutes only a part of the curriculum rather than being a
dominant element in the content. The author believes that the intrinsic nature
of art and aesthetic experiences as something that cannot be obtained from
other subjects or visual culture alone: the feel of your brush touching upon
the canvas; the surprise of witnessing changing colors and hues; the experi-
ence of wet dirt sticking to your fingers. Discussion of visual culture, however,
can raise students' awareness of the importance of critical thinking. Such
visual-cultural literacy is a practical and useful skill for students to better

understand and relate to the multi-media information around them. Teaching and developing students' observation and judgment is also an important purpose in education.

II. Visual Culture

Visual culture, by definition, is all the cultural phenomena related to seeing and looking. According to Barnard (1998), visual culture is an essential phenomenon in today's society, playing a key role in both constructing and deconstructing the society. Road signs, buildings, vehicles, textile and clothing, advertisements, movies, TV programs, packaging of products, fashions and other popular trends, etc. all belong to the realm of visual culture. Adding to Mirzoeff 's (2001) definition that visual culture is our daily life, Duncum elaborates that visual culture is everyday life that can construct and transmit people's attitudes, beliefs and values. He believes that art educators should study visual arts, which are of educational importance because they happen in a domain where most learning events occur: our vision in daily life. According to Wilson (2000), to understand the differences between visual art education and visual culture, one can think of them as a tree and rhizome; while the former has an orderly pattern of trunk and branches, the latter spreads in all directions. Wilson's vague definition illustrates that visual culture is vital and dynamic, always growing and spreading with whatever new nutrient it can get.

This study adopts Walker & Chaplin's (1997) classification of visual culture into four domains: Fine Arts, Crafts/Design, Performing Arts and Arts of Spectacle, and Mass and Electronic Media. It should be noted that the major difference between visual culture and DBAE/creative development emphasized in the past lies in the comprehensiveness of visual culture: a wide range and variety of imageries in daily life are examined to unravel the workings of a culture, including the significance and meaning of those images in people's experiences, systems and frameworks, and social-economic-political functions. For example, issues like races, social classes, sexes and unequal powers are expressed through the images themselves and the contexts of the works, as well as the ways the works are viewed. Study of visual culture, therefore, extends beyond teaching of fine arts and provides students with a curriculum built on their knowledge and abilities. The study of

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artworks is no longer limited to the works per se, with an emphasis on exploring and experimenting personal experiences; rather, in an art education of visual culture, students learn to create imagery while discovering their own identity and experiencing cultural interactions.

As more and more teenagers get to know their world through the Internet and electronic imagery, images and signs have become their reality. Visual information with profound and ever-changing implications abounds in our daily life, guiding the ways we see and look. Unlike fine arts that emphasize beauty at a distance, life aesthetics stresses immediate participation; art education cannot overlook experiences in visual arts and their momentum in our daily life. The author believes that, for most students, aesthetic experiences in their daily life are far more important than experiences with arts of a higher level. Art education, therefore, should teach the basic, intrinsic nature of aesthetic experiences, as well as the perspectives of visual culture. Students of visual culture focus especially on its communicative and political role that helps us understand the art around us, so that we can gain control over the visual information we are faced with. This role in education and use of exploratory critical judgment cannot be confined to the boundary of individual disciplines or to certain forms of a context (Sullivan, 2003). It can be concluded then that a curriculum of visual culture is best developed as an integrated curriculum.

III. Integrated Arts Curricula

Art comes from real life, and is for real life. Art education can guide students in their search for the characteristics and meanings of the people, events and objects in their lives. An integrated art curriculum is a curricular development that incorporates knowledge, experiences and skills of art with those of self, society and nature. The unique language and symbols of art can combine learning in other subjects, leading to effective integration of the knowledge and experiences of psychology, sociology, history, geography, natural sciences, etc. A complete art education does not limit itself to creation of artworks, but includes discussion and study of artworks to better understand the artist's message and cultural implications, as well as to discern, analyze, reflect, judge and integrate all the information from various sources for an all-round view and expression of their own opinions and feelings.

In an integrated curriculum, the disciplines are a necessary tool for reflecting upon the relevant issues; they also provide a framework in which knowledge is organized. The art content comprises four basic disciplines: studio art, art history, aesthetics, and art criticism. The relationship between curricular integration and the intrinsic nature of the disciplines is like that of hen and egg, each complementing the other and inseparable. In recent years many art educators have suggested *big ideas, key concepts* and *essential questions* as the cornerstones for curricular integration (Jacobs, 1997; Walker, 2001; Ballengee-Morris, & Stuhr, 2001; Chen, 2002a; Kuo, 2002; Efland, 2002; Parsons, 2003). These provide for a good example for integrated art education in which curricular projects are developed through big ideas or concepts relevant to the theme or activity. This paper is a report on a curriculum based on such an integration model, with a focus on gender issues. Key elements in the integration include:

(1) Big Ideas

Big ideas are important issues in life, and they are complex, ambiguous, paradoxical and diverse. Whether as simple phrases or complete statements, big ideas do not fully expound a concept, but they present the many ideas that constitute the concept and expand to many other fields such as gender role stereotype, community, hero, family, social order, etc. Development of big ideas emphasizes the connection between the ideas and self as an appropriate knowledge basis for developing studio art. Students are encouraged to examine the relationship between big ideas and their own life and ask questions such as "How do these ideas relate to my life?" "Where do I fit in with this idea?" "What knowledge do I want to learn about this idea?" (Walker, 2001)

(2) Key Concepts

Key concepts use clear headlines, short phrases or complete sentences to present the complex, ambiguous, paradoxical, diverse and important "big ideas." Development of key concepts help students understand the framework of the curriculum and explore its meaning (Walker, 2001).

(3) Essential Questions

Essential questions are questions of a series of possibilities; they are unique

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tool to manifest the focus of the curriculum. The key is to prepare a set of questions that allow students to examine and understand the curriculum within a short span of time, and to use them as clear guidelines for their exploration and investigation. The choice of framework and guiding questions for a curriculum is a teacher's statement of his/her intention for curricular design, the intended focus for students' learning, and the assistance that he/she will provide through the teaching to help students investigate the key concepts of these essential questions (Jacobs, 1997). Essential questions provide a strategy around which the teaching is organized. Presenting the main ideas in the form of questions can better motivate students to learn than imperative diction. Jacobs (1997) observes several guidelines for writing essential questions: (1) each child should be able to understand the question; (2) use broad, organizational terms; (3) the questions should reflect the conceptual priorities; (4) each question should be distinct and substantial; (5) the questions should not be repetitious; (6) The questions should be realistic given the amount of time allocated for the unit or course; (7) there should be logical sequence to a set of essential questions (8) post the essential questions in the classroom as an open statement.

The author suggests a conceptual framework of an integrated curriculum that begins with big ideas, key concepts, and essential questions, followed by main issues and concepts developed from the big ideas for other related disciplines. Once the big ideas for the curriculum are decided, the ideas are then unraveled and expounded with key concepts and essential questions. In the case of an art curriculum, it means to develop issues and concepts, based on the essential questions, which reflect the disciplinary nature of art education.

The flowchart beolw shows an integrated curriculum with gender role stereotypes as its big ideas. It incorporates visual art and performing arts to help students realize gender role stereotypes in art and everyday images. This trans-disciplinary approach (Drake, 1993) starts from the big ideas and key concepts, and then develops teaching activities based on a series of essential questions. Students are encouraged to discover the connections and meanings within from real-life experiences and concerns, and to solve the problems they are faced with. The author sees this approach as one that

develops a structural teaching while not excluding any other teaching approaches, constructive activities or integration concepts.
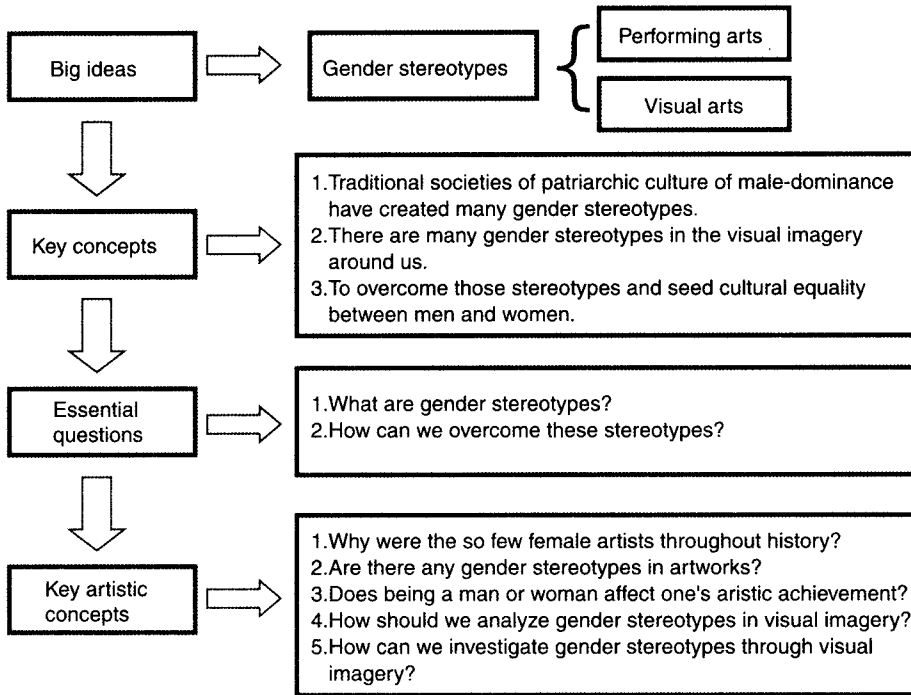
Big ideas → Gender stereotypes { Performing arts / Visual arts

Key concepts →
1. Traditional societies of patriarchic culture of male-dominance have created many gender stereotypes.
2. There are many gender stereotypes in the visual imagery around us.
3. To overcome those stereotypes and seed cultural equality between men and women.

Essential questions →
1. What are gender stereotypes?
2. How can we overcome these stereotypes?

Key artistic concepts →
1. Why were the so few female artists throughout history?
2. Are there any gender stereotypes in artworks?
3. Does being a man or woman affect one's aristic achievement?
4. How should we analyze gender stereotypes in visual imagery?
5. How can we investigate gender stereotypes through visual imagery?

Figure 1: A model of big-ideas integrated curriculum

IV. Gender Role Issues

The reformed 1-9 curricula have included gender issues in the seven fields of learning, to expand students' awareness of social issues. It is said that "gender is the social construction of sex." That is, while men and women are affected by their physical conditions and attributes, many of our concepts about the sexes are a result of socialization. Human behavior and social systems have shaped the differences between men and women that we perceive today (莊明貞, 1999). In the realm of arts, since Linda Nochlin (1989) asked the question "why were there no great female artists?" it has been concluded that art in the past was not an activity for the gifted; rather, artistic creation on the whole was influenced by social forces, defined and restricted within the social system. Women did not have the same footing for artistic

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achievement that men enjoyed (Nochlin, 1989). Gender studies, therefore, focus on the acquired social constructs. On the personal, individual level, two principles are generally followed in the construction of sex in the family, school and up to society: gender stereotypes, and sexual discrimination (C. L. Su, 2001).

What are the so-called gender stereotypes? In a traditional society of male-dominance and patriarchic culture, men's tough, strong behavior is praised (hence the saying: "A man's tears are more precious than gold."), while women are expected to be gentle, mild, neat and tidy, dependent, and weak. The concept of a woman taking charge of the household and the man of the world outside the home is a long-held belief that most people take for granted. Citing Ann E. Calgary (1996), Chen suggests three focal points for developing the content and strategies of an art curriculum with gender as its anchor: self-identify, process and aim (Chen, 2002b, pp. 48-49). That is also what this study did: through a series of art activities on the theme of gender stereotypes, students were encouraged to examine their self-identify and social concepts concerning the sexes, and to express their reflections on gender role stereotypes through artistic creations on various themes.

Research Method

The study involves literature analysis, action research and content analysis, but action research is the main focus. Action research, by definition, is about action; but throughout the process of the action, the purposes, methods and results of the action are constantly reviewed and revised to form new action plans. Finally, documentation of the action is compiled into useful knowledge that can be shared and implemented (Altrichter & Somekh). In this study, the researcher is also the actor: through the development and implementation of the curriculum, and analysis of the learning process and achievement of the students, the author intends to test and verify the theories and purposes of the study.

"Gender Matters" – An integrated art curriculum of gender issues

This curriculum hoped that a better understanding of the sex and art issues

would improve students' self-awareness and interpersonal relationships, develop their critical thinking and judgment, draw their attention to the hidden gender role stereotypes in art, and finally allow them to express their views on gender issues by creating a multi-media collage.[1]

I. Curriculum units

"Gender Matters" has five units:

1. Is it more preferable to be a man or a woman?
2. Art Examination
3. Who Is Screaming?
4. Collecting print advertisements
5. Sex and I

II. Teaching objectives

1. To be aware of gender role stereotypes in life and the surroundings.
2. To understand the role of sex in the history of art.
3. To be able to reflect upon and analyze hidden stereotypes in popular visual images.
4. To express and interpret sex issues by multi-media collage creations.

III. Competences in the field of arts & humanities

1-4-1 To understand the relationship between art creation and social culture, exhibit independent thinking, and try multimedia art creation.

1-4-2 To design a theme of interest and use appropriate media and skills to create unique works that express feelings, experiences and thoughts.

3-4-3 To synthesize, compare, and investigate the characteristics and contents of artworks from different cultures and periods, and develop a respect for various cultures.

IV. Competences in the field of sex education

3-2-3 Active investigation of gender biases in the mass media.

3-3-5 Reflection and analysis of the gender myths in the information media.

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[1] See Figure 1 for big ideas, key concepts, essential questions and the key artistic concept.

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3-4-13 Reflection and analysis of gender role stereotypes and sexual dis-
crimination in society, and suggestion of remedies.

V. Target students: seventh graders

VI. Curriculum framework

Table 1:Curriculum framework for "Gender matters"

Teaching unit	hour	Objectives	Main learning activities	Teaching resources	Evaluation activities
Is it more preferable to be a man or a woman?	1	To understand what are gender stereotypes. To observe and explain gender role stereotypes in daily life.	1. Introduction 2. Grouping 3. Raising questions about the differences between men and women, and put students' answers on the blackboard 4. Categorizing the answers into physical and cultrual, and explaining which ones are inborn and which ones are shaped by culture 5. Sharing and discussing the sterotypes in life.	Computer and overhead projector	Teacher's observation and record
Art examination	1	To reflect why therehave been so fewfemale artists in history. To realize the role of sex in the historyof art.	1. Sharing and discussing Worksheet 1 2. Observing the portrayals of sexes in artworks 3. Discussing Sally Swain's interpretation of wonen in her works	Computer and overhead projector Worksheet 1 Picture 1: Masaccio /The Expulsion Picture 2: Munch, Scream Picture 3: Sally Swain, Scream	Worksheet 1 (Appendix 1) Teacher's observation and record
Who is Screaming?	2	To write a playlet based on the image and perform it in class. To reflect on the gender role stereotypes in the play.	1. Developing and writing a playlet based on Sally Swain's Scream, and write it down in Worksheet 2. 2. Dividing the class into 6 teams, each of which will write and perform a playlet. 3. Finishing Worksheet 3: Best Playlet evaluation sheet		Worksheet 3 (Appendix 3) Teacher's observation and record

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Colleting print advertisements	1	To discover and reflect upon visual images in daily life.	1. Students collecting advertisements in newspapers and magazines. 2. Analyzing the advertisements. 3. Each team giving a presentation of their findings.		Teacher's observation and record
Sex And I	3	To reflect one's own gender perceptions in language usage and concepts,and to realize the diverse characteristics of each individual. To express views on the sexes through art creation.	1. In-class discussion of the stereotypes in advertisements. 2. Guiding students to decide upon a theme for their art project. 3. Explaining the characteri stics of multi-media collage, and helping students choose their media. 4. Creating the work and writing the rationale for the creation.	Computer and overhead projector Print advertisements in newspapers and magazines. Painting tools.	Explanations of works and creation Teacher's observation and record

VII. Rationale for the curriculum development

The theme of the curriculum is "Sex Matters," which aims to explore interpretation of the sexes within the cultural structure. The curriculum has been designed within the DBAE framework using visual culture as an anchor. The main activities and theoretical basis of the units are explained as follows.

(1) Is it more preferable to be a man or a woman?

This was a warm-up unit to raise students' awareness of gender role stereotypes in their daily life by discussing some simple questions such as "Do you think 吳國雄 a boy or a girl?" "Is it more preferable to be a man or a woman? Why?" "What do you think are the characteristics of women? And of men?" "Have you been told what a girl or a boy should be like? What were those opinions?" "In the popuar cartoon Detective Conan, who do you think can rescue Ran, the leading lady, when she is in danger?"[2] With these questions and examples of popular TV programs, students were brought to greater awareness of gender role stereotypes in daily life.

(2) Art Examination

This unit guided students to reflect on why there were so few female artists in

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the past, including art history and art criticism. By discussing "Why there were no great female artists in history?" the class re-examined the traditional definitions of great artists. Masaccio's *The Expulsion* was then reviewed for any stereotyped portrayals of Adam and Eve. For example, the man in the picture covers his face with his hands in an effort to suppress his pain, while the woman cries out in agony, her mouth open, eyebrows knotted, and her hands covering her breasts and private parts. The 500-year-old work reflects the old concepts that a man could be seen naked but not in tears, while a woman could cry but not show her body. The unit also compared Munch's *Scream* with Sally Swain's feminist re-creation[3] (Picture 2).

Picture 2:
Scream, Sally Swain

(3) Who Is Screaming?

This unit asked the students to interpret the image in Sally Swain's Scream, and develop a story from it. It was a narrative approach. From a critical pedagogic point of view, *identify* lies in the conflicts and interactions of perception, experience, language, culture, power and history (McLaren,1995, p. 229), while narration is a statement of an event or experience, a text based on the story about historical, political, social or life dialogues to underline the existence of the narrative content. Pauly (2003) observes that narrative of culture is a tool to analyze the visual images that carry and transmit cultural meanings.

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[2] TV cartoon series Detective Conan, based on a Japanese comic book, features a high school detective. His sweetheart Ran is a karate expert and capable of getting herself out of danger. But most students answered that Conan would rescue her like a knight in shining armor.

[3] Sally Swain, a feminist artist known for her feminist re-creations of famous artworks.

Efalnd (1996) also quotes Jerome Bruner's narrative model of describing cognition, stressing the significance of narrative in a postmodern curriculum. He suggests that presentation of knowledge is like collage or an interconnected net; exploration of issues requires not only traditional layered logic, but also diversified narratives. Each approach to understanding knowledge has a basic working structure and unique concepts and principles. The fundamental difference lies in their processes. A story is different from a well-organized argument, though both can be used to convince. An argument tries to convince people of one of the realities; a story stresses the similarity in each other's life. One is a process to verify and establish a form and real experience, while the other establishes vivid, though not true, representations. Stories, therefore, do not exist for understanding realities, but to give meanings to our experiences (Efalnd, A. etal. 1996, p. 118).

Carol Witherell and Nel Noddings' narrative approach to teaching often uses stories or fables. Other forms include history, fictions, family photo albums, movies, paintings, diaries, imaginations and description of dreams. By connecting the stories with their own experiences in the teaching process, teachers and students begin to understand the surrounding environments (Guinan, 1999). This strategy of individual narrative can address the environmental needs of different economic classes, age groups, sexes and regions to examine the interaction of people, environment and culture. There were two main activities in this unit. Every student was first asked to interpret Sally Swain's Scream (Picture 2) and write a story based on the image. Then he/she would use the story to analyze if there were any hidden gender stereotypes. The exercise was to help students discover the gender structure that was taken for granted. Finally, the class was divided into teams to elaborate the work through words, body language and teamwork, again followed by analysis of any gender role stereotypes in their performances.

(4) Collecting print advertisements

As images become an essential instrument in mass media, social concepts and ideologies are constantly spread in forms not readily recognizable. Radio broadcasting, television, movies, computer images, newspapers and magazines carry the images and texts of certain events and stories about people or locations in certain ways. Such information is absorbed by people through

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a variety of channels, and has profound impacts on our life, relationships, values and beliefs in the society.

According to Sturken and Cartwright (2001), imagery of women in contemporary movies and advertisements is often presented in diverse ways, but its creation remains dominated by men and dictated by social and cultural implications. Women seem to be defined as delightful spectators, even in the visual culture of contemporary advertisements (Sturken, & Cartwright, 2001, pp. 81-82). As the audiences rarely think much about the working ideologies behind the advertisements, such images begin to shape our self-image without our knowing it. The preferable images for women projected in the advertisements are accepted by the audiences and become a standard by which they judge themselves. Obsession with staying slender is a good instance. Tavin (2003) believes that critical pedagogy and visual culture is a trans-disciplinary discussion and practice, with a focus on everyday life and popular culture as the fighting arena. Visual culture is an analytical and interpretive study to examine how visual experiences are constructed in the social system, structure, and practice. TV programs, musical CD's, movies and popular merchandise provide the building blocks for language, encoding and values (Tavin, 2003, p. 197).

With these theories in mind, this unit asked the students to collect visual images around them, and discussed with their team whether the products presented by different sexes or the way the actors/actresses were dressed reflected any gender stereotypes. The students were also encouraged to come up with ways to overcome those stereotypes.

(5) Gender And I

This unit expected the students to express their views on gender by creating multimedia artworks based on what they learned from previous units. Freedman (2003) emphasizes that the complexity of contemporary cultures allows education to enrich students' life, and to develop their critical thinking for better understanding visual culture and its meanings. Visual culture, therefore, challenges past assumptions that emphasized form and skill. It is believed now that art creation should take into consideration (1) the role of the artwork in building the student's self-identity; (2) an emphasis on concepts as well as skills; and (3) students' artistic behavior is like cultural cri-

tique (Freedman, 2003, p. 40). As visual culture involves social life and creation of individual mind, the knowledge in a visual culture classroom comes from creating or discovering the meaning of artworks in the learner's everyday life. Therefore, a theme of gender issues was selected for the studio unit, and the students were asked to write about their ideas behind the creation, so as to enhance the connection between thoughts and creative activities.

VIII. Findings

The overall design of the curriculum includes three dimensions of DBAE: art history, art criticism, and studio art. As for aesthetics, Tom Anderson (1998) says that aesthetics is like critical exploration, a teaching and learning strategy. In the context of education, it is seen as the active participation by students in identifying problems and searching for solutions.

This teaching uses a philosophical strategy of developing the philosophical nature of aesthetics with critical skills, strategies, and framework of thought. The core of aesthetic procedure is to raise questions, expound a standpoint, and try to resolve the questions systematically. Participation in establishing aesthetic theories can develop students' higher level thinking skills, and their confidence in exercising social rights. Seen as such, aesthetics of critical investigation can prepare students to play an important role of leader or decision-maker, rather than a blind follower. This curriculum uses a series of essential questions to guide the students in their investigation of gender role stereotypes in daily life. Continuous debates over the ideologies in visual images are an aesthetic activity. Therefore, the curriculum has employed all four disciplines of DBAE.

Another emphasis of the curriculum content is what Walker & Chaplin (1997) calls the visual culture, with gender issues as an anchor. As Freedman (2003) puts it, the power and universality of visual culture, and the need of social reconstruction in art education (Freedman, 2003, p. 39).

Process and results of the curriculum implementation

"Gender Matters" was given in a class of grade-seven boys and girls for eight hours. There was frequent interaction between the teacher and students, and enthusiastic discussion among the students. In addition to art activities, the students learned critical thinking and the importance of teamwork. The

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process and findings of the curriculum implementation are explained as follows.

I. Is it more preferable to be a man or a woman?

The students entered the discussion with enthusiasm and were very excited when they saw *Detective Conan*.

Table 2: Answers for Unit 1

Question		Is it more preferable to be a man or a woman? Why?
physical attributes	Man	No child birth; no monthly period; stronger physically.
	Woman	(None.)
cultural attributes	Man	Less social restraints; boys are stilled valued more than girls; no responsibility for household chores.
	Woman	No military service; can wear makeups; more observant; can "play the woman" and take advantage.
Question		What do you think are the characteristics of women? And of men?
	Woman	Gentle; talkative; care about appearances; enjoy shopping; overly sensitive; mean; nosy; cute; graceful.
	Man	Randy; pretence to be "cool"; competitive; short hair; tough; brave; more open-minded; rough when angered; strong-willed; active; not fastidious; keen on face-saving.
Question		Have you been told what a girl or a boy should be like? What were those opinions?
	Woman	Should be well-mannered; mild and obedient; have more problems in marriage; not to be out-spoken; responsible for household chores; polite; sit up properly; no dirty language; graceful; no shaking legs; cover mouth when laughing.
	Man	No Scream; be brave; be strong and protective of women; have more problems with career; responsible for supporting the family financially.

Many stereotypes can be found in the students' answers as to what men or women are expected to be. Class discussion and analysis aims to raise their awareness of the stereotypes.

II. Art Examination

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Art Examination uses Worksheet 1 (Appendix 1) for its teaching activity. Of the 35 students in the class, one did not return the Worksheet. Question 1 asked the students to write down the name and sex of three artists, and 陳進 4 was the only female artist that came up in the answers. All the rest were men, including Western artists and those from Taiwan or mainland China such as Picasso, Munch, Michelangelo, Da Vinci, Matisse, Van Gogh, Renoir, Monet, Miro, M. S. Lee（李梅樹）, C. H. Kuo（郭雪湖）, C. P. Chen（陳澄波）, T. W. Chen（陳德旺）, Y. S. Lin（林玉山）, C. S. Liao（廖繼春）, T. C. Chang（張大千）, etc. Question 2 asked whether being a man or a woman affected one's chance of becoming an artist. 30 students answered no, citing talent, interpret, aspiration, effort and training as the deciding factors. One student said sex might play a role in one's artistic achievement, but did not explain why. Another explained that "women in the past did not have much time for creating artworks." A third one said yes and no, as "women in the past were not as valued as men, and thus prevented from developing their artistic talent; but today's society is one of sexual equality.... Anyone with the talent will be able to become an artist. So the impact of sex on becoming an artist depends on the values and attitudes of the time." One student said the answer would depend on local environments, as "the impact would be smaller in a place of greater equality between men and women." Question 3 asked "Do you feel that women are less talented artistically? Why were there no great female artists in history?" Most students were able to point to the influence of social values, as shown below:

Table 3: Answers to Question 3, Worksheet 1

Student	Answer
A	No, I don't. Because the differences between men and women are primarily physical; talent is not decided by sex. The fact that there were few female artists in history is a result of social values. Men are expected to make a name, and receive all the education or training; women, on the other hand, only have a place in the home. There is even a saying: "Having no talent is the best virtue for a woman." So who would be willing to educate women?

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4 Early Taiwanese painters were introduced before "Sex Matters" units, and most students have learned of Ching Chen（陳進）19 out of the 35 students mentioned her in their answers.

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Student	Answer
B	No. In fact, men and women have the same imagination and creativity, I think. But the traditional attitude of valuing men before women makes people think less of women's achievement. And also self identify, and because women have less opportunities for education.
C	No. If she makes an effort, in addition to her talent, a woman can be an artist too. It was probably because men and women were not equal in the past, and women believed that they could only become housewives. And there was less education opportunities for women.
D	I don't think so. It is because women have always been seen as inferior to men, and once married have to take care of all the household duties. There is little time and energy left for developing their talent. That is why women are less successful than men on all fronts.

Some of the students did not think women less talented, but their reasons were superficial or only descriptive, as shown in Table 4.

Talbe 4: Answers to Question 3, Worksheet 1

Student	Answer
E	I think many women in the world may have painting talent, but have yet to be discovered.
F	Actually women have a lot of artistic talent, but maybe they want to go into other professions.

III. Who Is Screaming?

This unit examined feminist artist Sally Swain's Scream (Picture 2), and guided the students to write a story to interpret the image. Their stories were then analyzed for any gender role stereotypes they might have. Students' responses to the picture include death, helplessness, confusion, anxiety, unease, and fear. Interpretations of the scene include:

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Table 5: Answers to Question 1, Worksheet 2

Student	Answer
D	I think she is Screaming over the burden on women unable to balance their career and family life.
G	It is a maid who is resentful at her fate, a volcano ready to erupt anytime.
H	Give vent to her impatience.
I	Forgot to do grocery shopping and did not know what to do.

The answers show that Sally Swain's image succeeds in conveying anxiety and helplessness, but the location is moved to the kitchen. Because of stereotyped concepts, most answers decided that the person in Picture 2 was a woman. The stories they wrote also reflected similar messages. They were then asked to analyze the stereotypes in their stories.

Table 5: Answers to Question 2 and 3, Worksheet 2

Student	Answer
J	Q 2: Probably a housewife Scream when she saw a cockroach or mouse.
	Q 3: Yes, as it is women who are usually in the kitchen.
F	Q 2: It should be Sally Swain, a woman. She was panic-stricken. She was cooking one day when a very talkative woman called and kept her on the phone for an hour. When she realized that all her cooking was burned, she gave a desperate scream.
	Q 3: Yes. Women are talkative and always on the phone.
K	Q 2: A woman from a rich family was newly married. She never did any chores around the house before her marriage. But her husband wanted her to do just that. One day she was home by herself, and remembering the request of her husband, she walked into the kitchen. She cried out at what she saw: the dirty kitchen was taken over by roaches and mice.... When she woke up, she divorced her husband and returned to her life as a rich lady.
	Q 3: Yes. Most people think that women belong to the home, while men belong to the world out of the house. The husband in the story was one with stereotyped concepts and expected his wife to do all the work. Actually man and wife should share household duties.

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The second part of the unit was for each team to act out their story in front of the class, and did an analysis of their performances. The themes of the playlets included murder, domestic violence, discord between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law, superman, etc. The storylines showed a clear impact of mass media. The class raised many interesting questions such as "Why are rape victims usually women, and police officers men?" "All the victims in the playlets were women." "Why is the superman character always a man?" "Why are women responsible for household duties?" "Why do mothers have to prepare the meals while fathers and sons just sit and wait?" "Why are women pretty? Men can be pretty too." "Why are men free to go to the bar when women have to stay home and do the chores?" Discussion and reflection on these questions and relevant visual images help develop students' judgment and critical thinking, which in turn leads to a healthy society.

IV. Collecting print advertisements

As Duncum (1999) points out, the visual culture in our daily life is full of ambiguous and negative messages. This unit asked the students to collect advertisements in newspapers and magazines, and investigate the different images of men and women in them. Students found that men and women bring out different products. Cars, real estate, insurance, newspapers, Internet, mutual funds, watches, alcohol, cigarettes and sport drinks are presented by actors; actresses are seen in advertisements of cosmetics, clothing, ornaments and accessories, kitchen decors, foods, baby products, diet drugs,. In general, women are often associated with daily supplies, while men's advertisements are of a more professional nature.

V. Sex And I

This unit concluded the curriculum with creations of multimedia collage. A variety of themes could be found in the works of the students, including apparel, sports, polygyny, physical strengths, inequality of men and women, violence, shopping, sex equality, homosexuality, and job equality. Creation of a work of their chosen theme and for their own reasons was a very meaningful activity for the students. And to make the work effective and appealing required all the knowledge and skills of artistic creation (Picture 3 to Picture 7).
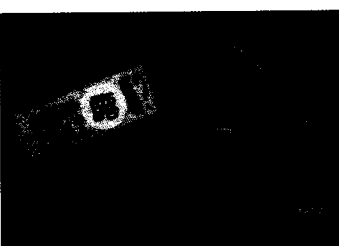
Picture 3: Student work and rationale

Are men still considered more important than women? School uniforms have skirts for girls, and pants for boys. But did it ever occur to them that sometimes girls do not like skirts. Pants are more convenient. In this time of sex equality, girls and boys should have a choice instead of being told what to wear.

Student L

Picture 4: Student work and rationale

TV commercials often features beautiful women scantly dressed to attract the audiences, especially men. I think this is belittling of women. Many men judge a woman by her appearance and figure. Is appearance so important for women? That's why I switched the roles of men and women to give men a taste of what women have to endure.

Student K

Picture 5: Student work and rationale

In today's society, the idea of seeing boys as more important than girls has become outdated. For the new-generation parents, girls are as good as boys. So I have designed a couple with many daughters. To their joy, they have found that girls have many merits that boys do not have.
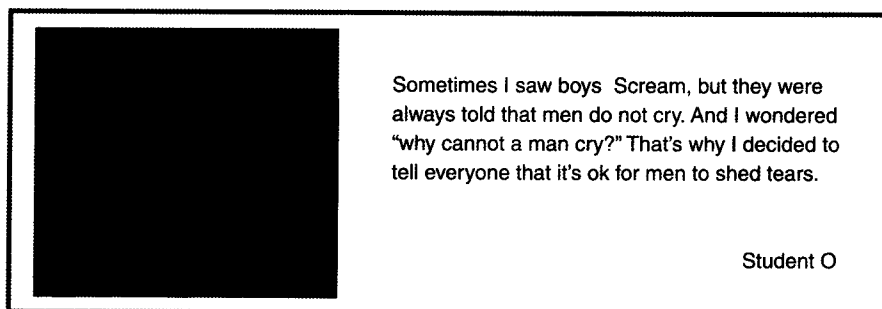
Student M

Picture 6: Student work and rationale

Men in the past could have many wives. Why couldn't a woman have more than one husband? Women have their rights too. If a husband cannot accept his wife having other husbands, why can he have other wives?

Student N

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Picture 7: Student work and rationale

Sometimes I saw boys Scream, but they were always told that men do not cry. And I wondered "why cannot a man cry?" That's why I decided to tell everyone that it's ok for men to shed tears.

Student O

Some works by the students showed a breakthrough of gender stereotypes, while others manifested extreme opinions or repetition of stereotypes. Judging from the works, the teacher would know the students perceptions and, if necessary, facilitate further reflection through dialogues on equal terms.

Conclusion And Suggestions

As students' experiences come primarily from life, an integrated curriculum of gender issues allows them to connect what they learn in school with their personal experiences. This helps enhance their motivation for learning and critical thinking, as well as provides them with an opportunity to express their opinions in their artistic creation. Several findings have been reached from the implementation of the curriculum:

1. A critical teaching approach of discovery, dialogue, analysis and reflection not only develops basic competences, but also improves learning of concepts that allows students to connect isolated, irrelevant fragments of knowledge and experiences.

2. Team activities help students to learn teamwork and the social nature as a member of the group.

3. Analysis of visual culture can improves students' perception and judgment of visual images.

4. Gender issues in the curriculum raise students' awareness of gender stereotypes. It is more than knowledge of art, an ability that they can put to use in real life.

5. The teaching activities include art history, art criticism, studio art and

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aesthetics, while the contents come from visual culture. Both elements can co-exist.

This curriculum development provides a model for art curricula. It affirms the characteristics and functions of visual culture, which the author believes provides a teaching content for students to build their knowledge and competences. As Duncum (1999) observes, the significance of visual culture in education lies in the fact that it occurs where there are most learning events, that is, in daily life. But the arts remain the core of art education, and other disciplines, be it sociology, education, psychology, languages, can be integrated with art education. Walker & Chaplin (1997) also comment on visual culture, emphasizing its post-modern, diverse, compromising and popularized nature. Visual culture embraces fine arts too. Many materials in visual culture are relevant to the arts, and can be used as contents for art education. The author believes that visual culture is included in art education, and suggests an art curriculum that centers on the disciplinary nature of art, within a framework of curriculum integration and drawing on visual culture for its contents. When developing the curriculum integration, teachers need to turn away from traditional curriculum development models and force themselves to learn more knowledge, participate in more brain-storming meetings, and overcome all the difficulties and setbacks along the way. However bumpy the road ahead may be, there is no turning back, as the study clearly shows that an integrated curriculum provides students with experience and knowledge that cannot be found in separate, single disciplines.

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II.Appendixes

Appendix 1

"Sex Matters" Worksheet 1

Art Examination

1. Please write down the name and sex of three artists that you know of.

2. Do you think that sex is a factor in whether one becomes an artist and why?

3. Do you feel that women are less talented artistically? Why do you think there have been so few female artists in history?

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Appendix 2

"Sex Matters" Worksheet 2

Who Is Scream?

1. Munch's *Scream* depicts the fear and anxiety in the face of death and illness. What do you think Sally Swain's *Scream* tries to express?

2. Who do you think is the character in the picture, a man or a woman? What happened to him or her? Please write a playlet explaining the story behind the picture.

Sally Swain's *Scream*

3. From the story you have written, do you detect any gender stereotypes? Why did you describe them that way?

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"Sex Matters" Worksheet 3

Best Playlet evaluation sheet

1. Dear class, after enjoying the performance of all the teams, please record their strengths and things to be improved.

Team	Strengths	To be improved
Team 1		
Team 2		
Team 3		
Team 4		
Team 5		
Team 6		

2. To whom would you give the following awards?

	Winner	why?
Best Actress		
Best Actor		
Best Story		
Best Playlet		

3. Do you like the performance of your team? Do you have any suggestions to make it better?

4. Do you detect any gender role stereotypes in the performances of the other teams? Please cite one team and explain.