Integrating Gender Issues into the Teaching of Art Appreciation at University Level

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Abstract

The aim of the present study is to integrate gender equality education into the university art appreciation curriculum. Through a process of pedagogical research, the study explores how the incorporation of gender issues into the curriculum can help to enhance both students’ gender awareness and their art appreciation capabilities. During the process of implementing the research, use was made of analysis of students’ learning sheets and feedback forms, along with class observation, interviews and reflective journal writing, to examine the effects of integrating gender issues into university-level art appreciation teaching and the impact on students.

The research results - both in terms of the quantitative questionnaires and qualitative data and reports - showed that there had been an improvement in both students’ awareness of gender issues and their art appreciation capabilities. With regard to awareness of gender issues, students were able to: understand how traditional gender roles affect individuals' learning and development; appreciate that housework responsibilities should be shared; realize that, when faced with gender discrimination in the workplace, one can choose to use one's actions and attitude to demonstrate one's capabilities; recognize the need to work through the family, the media, the legal system, the education system etc. to change people’s preconceptions; realize that compensation should be based on ability, not gender; demonstrate respect for transgender people. The students felt that it was important for the curriculum to give them the opportunity to reflect, to change, to progress, and to not be constrained by gender, in order for everyone to be able to develop their full potential. In regard to art appreciation, students were able to use description, analysis, interpretation and judgment to appreciate art works, films etc. of different types. Finally, the students were also able to utilize the methods of art appreciation to analyze short films that embody or challenge gender stereotypes, and to identify examples of gender stereotyping. The students reported having had their awareness of gender stereotypes raised, and were able to compile reports that demonstrated an enhanced awareness of gender issues.

Keywords: Gender Equality Education, Gender Issues, Art Appreciation

1. Introduction

The promotion of gender equality education in Taiwan began many years ago, but it is questionable whether these efforts have succeeded in inculcating appropriate gender equality concepts in students’ minds. In the course of teaching, the researcher has heard students making jokes with classmates that were based on outdated gender stereotypes, has seen students ostracizing transgender students because of a lack of understanding, and has seen students who were discouraged from pursuing their dreams because they were constrained by conventional gender stereotypes, and who subsequently regretted this very much.

Unger (1989) noted that, viewed in terms of new gender studies and gender psychology perspectives, both sexes are social constructs that have been positioned within the existing gender order because of idealized views of gender characteristics and social roles. Sociocultural factors such as individual background, other people's expectations, society's appraisal, socialization, etc. can all affect an individual's gender awareness. The researcher believes that, if school or university education is to be able to inculcate in students appropriate attitudes to gender equality, so that students are not misled by gender stereotypes into adopting simplified, generalized or fossilized ideas of what gender is, the first priority is to tackle deep-rooted gender stereotypes. Gender stereotypes embody the individual's beliefs and attitudes with respect to gender roles and behavior; they are closely linked to cultural and social expectations during the socialization process, i.e. gender stereotypes are learned, not inherent (Wang, 2016), making it vitally important to provide students with suitable gender equality education.
The researcher therefore decided to use artworks, films, etc. to incorporate gender equality education into art appreciation classes, and to undertake research to determine whether this approach succeeded in strengthening students' art appreciation capabilities and gender awareness. The aim of the present study was thus to explore whether, after an instructor began incorporating gender issues into the art appreciation curriculum at university level, the students' gender awareness and ability to appreciate art would be enhanced as a result.

2. Review of the Literature

The present study explores the incorporation of gender equality education into the teaching of art appreciation, so the review of the literature begins by examining the content of gender equality education and the methodology of art appreciation, so as to establish a model for incorporating gender equality education into art appreciation teaching that can serve as a reference for the present study.

A. The Meaning and Content of Gender Equality Education

(A) The meaning of gender equality education

Voorhees (1994) defined gender equality as giving equal respect to people of different genders. Klein (1985) used four perspectives - social, political, economic and philosophical - to explain how the key to implementing gender education lies in: (1) stimulating the individual's potential, pointing the way forward to the future, and preventing the individual from being constrained by traditional gender stereotypes within contemporary society; (2) fostering understanding of the fundamental rights of different groups and the need for mutual respect, so as to reduce and eliminate prejudice, discrimination and conflict between genders; (3) ensuring the appropriate, equitable sharing of resources, to create a society in which the different genders can live in harmony; (4) taking ethical and humanist interpretations as the basis for building gender equality.

Hsieh (1998) pointed out that the essential aspect of gender equality education is to ensure that, during the learning process, students are able to examine and deconstruct their own subconscious gender prejudices and misconceptions, and develop awareness of the similarities and differences between the sexes in physical, psychological and social terms; in this way, it should be possible to build a new cultural environment in which both sexes can develop and grow in an atmosphere of mutual respect, thereby realizing the core values of gender equality education. Bai and Ho (2006) suggested that the essence of gender equality education lies in fundamental analysis of gender prejudice; they held that social constructs are the single biggest cause of disparities between men and women in terms of how they express themselves and how they develop. They proposed that a proactive effort should be made to use the process of education to demolish the firm boundaries between gender roles, and to destroy gender stereotypes and misconceptions; this would facilitate the overhaul of social systems and the legal framework, helping to cultivate respect for diverse values and promote gender equality and gender-equal development.

(B) The content of gender equality education

Gender equality education has as its main content the overturning of gender stereotypes and cultivation of gender awareness, as outlined below:

(1) Overturning gender stereotypes

Shaffer (1996) saw gender stereotypes as constituting external and internalized rules that govern how men and women are expected to express emotion and how they are expected to act. In most cases, gender stereotypes are found to derive from fossilized, stereotypical concepts that are generated by the individual's response to society's expectations. Weinraubet al. (1984) noted that gender stereotypes arise from a given culture's shared expectations regarding the personality traits, capabilities, activities and roles of men and women. As a result of the rapid transformation that has taken place in social (and cultural) structures and values, and of the diversification of family composition, there have been dramatic changes in the internal attitudes, values, concepts, speech, clothing and roles of both men and women, with the majority of people in contemporary society needing to simultaneously play multiple gender roles; there is therefore an urgent need to move beyond stereotypical gender roles, do away with the conflict between gender roles and the pressure that results from this, and develop new, appropriate gender roles.

(2) Cultivating gender awareness

You (2008) suggested that the general public in Taiwan tended to ignore many examples of inequality. Ordinary people in Taiwan failed to see the existence of gender issues, and in some cases even denied the operation of gender-based power, seeing the differences between men and women as natural and inherent. Even when discrimination was obvious it was "rationalized," with people demonstrating an unwillingness to engage in self
reflection or critique, in a classic example of "gender blindness." The cultivation of gender awareness thus requires an exploration of the forms taken by gender awareness and the related issues, in order to establish an appropriate gender relations value scheme. This means using discussion of gender issues to eliminate prejudice and discrimination relating to gender roles in daily life, becoming more perceptive in regard to gender issues, and using self-reflection to enhance knowledge, so as to rebuild gender relations in a more appropriate manner, and establish a suitable gender relations value scheme (Yang, 2016).

B. Establishment of a Model for Incorporating Gender Issues into Art Appreciation Teaching

The researcher examined how gender equality education could be integrated into the key aspects of art appreciation education, i.e. the appreciation of artworks and films, so as to establish a new model that would incorporate gender equality education into the teaching of art appreciation.

Feldman (1967) was the first scholar to identify the four levels of art appreciation: description, analysis, interpretation, and judgment. Wang (1998) proposed a more detailed implementation framework for the four-level structure of description, analysis, interpretation and judgment, which included: (1) Using what can be absorbed by the human senses as the content of description; (2) Implementation of simplified description focused on the topic, subject matter, shapes and forms, as well as the "atmosphere" of the work, and the feelings, impressions etc. it evokes; conducting analysis through: (1) Exploration of the materials and techniques used in the process of creating the work, and of the work's special characteristics; (2) Exploration of the formal aspects of the work, including its color, shape, lines, texture, etc.; (3) Examination of the descriptive aspect of the work; (4) Analysis of the relationship between the component parts of the work, and between the parts and the whole; (5) Consideration of the aesthetic principles used to organize the individual elements into a coherent whole; (6) Examination of the work's style; implementing interpretation through: (1) Exploring the relationship to the work of factors connected to the social, cultural, political or economic background; (2) Examination of how the artist's personality, thinking, artistic vision etc. is reflected in the work; (3) Discussion of the work's content, i.e. the atmosphere, emotions, thematic meaning, concepts and ideas that the work embodies; (4) interpretation of the symbolic meaning of the work through an iconographical approach; exercising judgment through: (1) Utilizing the knowledge and concepts learned through the three-stage process of description, analysis and interpretation as a foundation for making reasonable judgments regarding the quality and value of the work, while being able to explain the reasons for the judgments; (2) Being able to make judgments that reference experts' critiques and evaluations of a work. In his 1986 work "Educating for Art," Taylor defined four basic elements: content, form, process, and mood, which can be used to explore art and develop a methodology for teaching the examination of art from the four perspectives of content (What is this work about? What does it mean?), form (How is the work constructed, arranged and designed?), process (How is the work created? What does it become?), and mood (How does the work affect the viewer? Why?), to encourage students to engage in dialog with artworks. Films are also a form of art, but they encompass the element of time that other artworks lack. Film content includes not only the express of the theme, but also (1) the plot, (2) the roles, (3) the background, (4) conflict, and other elements. In terms of form, besides the formal elements that apply to other types of art, appreciation of film also needs to consider time, shots, camera angles, lighting, film editing, sound, etc. (Yang, 2015).

Synthesizing the literature outlined above, the researcher established the model for integrating gender issues into the teaching of art appreciation that is shown in Table 1, to serve as a framework for teaching implementation that can be used in combination with dialog, discussion, learning sheets, reports etc. to realize art appreciation teaching.

To summarize, the significance of gender equality education lies in the ability to use education to overturn the gender stereotypes and prejudices of traditional society, so that gender becomes less constraining and is able to develop along appropriate lines, facilitating people's efforts to develop their own potential and achieve self-realization. The curriculum developed for the present study uses the process of art appreciation - including description of the viewer's initial reaction, analysis of form, interpretation of content, and the making of value judgments - to appreciate artworks and to use related questions to reflect on gender stereotypes. The term "gender stereotypes" is used to refer to the fossilized, stereotyped concepts that arise from shared cultural expectations regarding men's and women's personality traits, capabilities, activities and roles, and the from the individual's response to society's expectations. The curriculum makes uses of the appreciation of artworks and films, linked to students' own life experience, and incorporates discussion and reflection on gender issues with the aim of challenging the stereotypical ideas that students hold and cultivating gender awareness.

3. Research Methodology

The present study makes use of a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods, including observation, interviews, documentary analysis, questionnaire surveys, etc., to analyze the effectiveness of students' learning.
The following sections discuss the participants in the research, the research flow, and data collection and processing.

**A. Research Participants**

The research participants were first-year students at a university in Northern Taiwan that aims to cultivate students' digital media creative and design skills. The students had graduated from senior high schools throughout Taiwan, but students from Northern Taiwan accounted for the largest share. Most of the students had achieved scores in the 30s or 40s on their university entrance examination, representing a moderately high level of academic achievement at high school level. Gender issues education was incorporated into the Freshman Year Art Appreciation curriculum; the total number of students was 69.

**Table 1. Model for Integrating Gender Issues into the Teaching of Art Appreciation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Four Steps for Appreciation</th>
<th>Key Aspects of Appreciation</th>
<th>Artworks</th>
<th>Films</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Direct description</td>
<td>Simple description of content</td>
<td>Describing how the work looks to the viewer, and the feelings and impressions it evokes, etc.</td>
<td>Giving a general outline of the plot, and describing how the story is structured (i.e. how the story progresses, including any conflict), roles, and background</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpretation of meaning</td>
<td>Examining the work's themes and meaning</td>
<td>Explaining the artist's background, motivation, etc., and the main themes and meaning of the work, etc.</td>
<td>Discussing how the text (i.e. the film's content) or material objects in the film express their content, meaning or purpose</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Analysis of form            | Examining form and technique, etc. | 1. Materials, techniques, etc.  
2. Formal elements (color, shape, line, texture, etc.) and principles  
3. Composition: Analysis of the relationship between the parts and the whole  
4. The work's style | 1. Temporal and spatial aspects  
2. Lighting and color  
3. Shots and camera angles  
4. Editing  
5. Sound |
| Evaluation and reflection   | Putting forward one's own personal response to, views on, and evaluation of the work or film, and explaining the reasons. | Reflecting on the issues relating to the gender equality education content (demolishing gender stereotypes and cultivating gender awareness) | |

**B. Research Flow**

The researcher began by collecting data and reading the relevant literature, and selected artworks and films that were relevant to the chosen topics; supplementary learning sheets were designed in accordance with the curriculum, to facilitate guided learning and discussion. Before beginning to implement the curriculum, a questionnaire survey was used to obtain a clearer picture of the students' past experience, to serve as a starting point for the teaching. After each class, the students were asked to fill out a learning sheet; every week, after class, the researcher would make an entry in the "Researcher's Reflective Journal," to review the curriculum and facilitate curriculum revision prior to the next instance of curriculum implementation. The researcher also carried out interviews with several students, to develop a better understanding of how effectively the curriculum was being implemented. Subsequently, the students' learning sheets and reports were used to examine the students' learning outcomes, and the students were asked to fill out another questionnaire and feedback forms, to compensate for the limited number of students who participated in interviews, and get a better understanding of the effectiveness of the teaching and of the students' learning outcomes. Finally, the researcher collected together the relevant materials and carried out collation and analysis, to clarify the results of curriculum implementation and provide a reference for future research.

**C. Data Collection and Processing**

The present study made use of in-class observation, after-class interviews, and a reflective journal, supplemented by learning sheets, students' reports, questionnaire surveys and feedback forms; these materials were analyzed and interpreted to obtain the research results. The data collected from classroom observation included in-class observation records, in-class video recordings, and transcriptions of in-class audio recordings. After-class interviews can be a useful supplement to in-class observation, helping to make up for deficiencies in other types...
of data (Lin, 1999). After every class, the researcher selected four students to hold one-to-one interviews with. The content of the interview discussions included the students’ feelings about the curriculum, the topics addressed, the learning sheets, etc., with the aim of using students’ perspectives to clarify any concerns or issues relating to the gender issues teaching.

In order to present the data in a systematic manner and realize efficient data management, so that it would be clear to readers what the source of each item of data was and how it was generated, a data numbering system was devised, as shown in the table below:

Table 2. Data Numbering System

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code Number</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>Researcher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S</td>
<td>Student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R reflective - 4</td>
<td>(Reflective Denotes the reflections written in the Researcher's Reflective Journal following the 4th class of the course.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R observation - 8</td>
<td>(In-class Denotes the researcher's observation during the 8th class of the course.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheet (Student learning sheet)S-30</td>
<td>Denotes views recorded on the student learning sheet by Student S-30.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview (Interview)S-08</td>
<td>Denotes the content of an interview held by the researcher with Student S-08 in order to learn about the student's response to the curriculum.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback (Feedback form)S-38</td>
<td>Denotes views expressed by Student S-38 on the student feedback form.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

D. Data Analysis

The researcher undertook comparative analysis of the teaching plan, in-class observation, Researcher's Reflective Journal, etc., supplemented by the interview records, learning sheets, student feedback forms, etc.; on the basis of the research objectives, the researcher classified the data using the data analysis framework shown in Table 3, before going on to collate the data and obtain the research results.

Table 3. Data Analysis Framework

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspect</th>
<th>Item</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender Awareness</td>
<td>Understanding the impact of traditional gender roles on individual learning and development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Being aware that housework is a responsibility that should be shared by everyone in the household</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Adopting the correct attitude towards gender discrimination in the workplace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Demonstrating respect for trans-gender people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art Appreciation</td>
<td>Basic description of the work's content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Analysis of the formal aspects of the work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interpretation of the work's meaning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Evaluation of and reflection on the work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Other items not included in the above</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. Teaching Implementation Process

Teaching implementation comprised three main elements. The first part involved introducing the methods of art appreciation and getting students to practice using these methods, so that the students would have the basic foundational knowledge that they needed. The second part involved the integration of gender issues into the implementation of art appreciation targeting important works from the history of Western and Chinese art. In the third part, gender issues were incorporated into the implementation of film appreciation. The teaching approach utilized a gradual progression from the relatively easy to the more difficult. The students' fundamental knowledge was gradually extended into the realm of more specialist expertise, with a "distributed learning" approach, while
ensuring that students had opportunities for repeated practice and application. The overall teaching design begins with introducing the basic elements and principles of art appreciation, as well as the key characteristics of artworks and films, and the four levels of the appreciation methodology, so that students can acquire the basic knowledge they need in advance. Next, the art appreciation teaching model is applied to analysis of specific artworks and films, with reflection on and discussion of gender issues incorporated into the appreciation process. Students then fill out learning sheets, to confirm their familiarity with the appreciation model and their understanding of the real meaning of gender issues. The implementation process is explained below.

A. Basic Art Appreciation Knowledge

At the beginning of the first class, the students were asked to fill out a questionnaire form, in order to develop an understanding of the students' initial attitudes. Next, the instructor explained the key elements and principles of art appreciation, the special characteristics of artworks and films, and the four-level approach to art appreciation. Following on from this, the instructor focused on a famous Chinese artwork and a famous Western artwork – the "Mona Lisa" and "Quietly Listening to Soughing Pines" – as well as a TV commercial for HUGO BOSS fragrance, with the students being asked to use the learning sheets to practice implementing art appreciation with the four-level approach.

B. Gender Images in the History of Art

In this section, the teaching addressed the paucity of female artists in the history of art, and the students were introduced to a large number of outstanding female artists. In addition, an attempt was made to use “Great Housewives of Art” by Sally Swain to build a connection with students’ own home life experience, to serve as the main focus of the teaching. Through learning about Chinese and Western art history and through small group discussion, the students were able to discover the real facts regarding the apparent scarcity of female artists. The instructor proceeded to guide the students in learning about the life stories, artistic careers and artistic style of a number of female artists, and encouraged the students to think about the relationship between the content of the female artists’ work and their contemporary social and cultural background. Discussion of the gender images and gender roles seen in "Great Housewives of Art" by Sally Swain was then used to link to students' experience of home life, to explore the question of stereotypical gender roles and the gender-based division of labor within the household.

With the students already having learned something about Chinese and Western art history, the researcher put the following questions to them: How were men and women portrayed in artworks in the past? What kind of gender meaning did this portrayal embody? Why are there so few references to female artists in conventional histories of art? After the students had been introduced to some outstanding female artists and their work, the students were asked the following questions: What do you think of the artistic expression of these female artists? How did traditional gender roles affect the individual development of these artists? After introducing Sally Swain's "Great Housewives of Art" to the students, the researcher asked the following questions: Can you describe how the division of labor for household tasks works in your family? How do you feel about this division of labor?

It was noticeable that the students displayed a high level of interest in this part of the course; in particular, the humorous aspect of Sally Swain's ironic take on the style of famous masterpieces in her "Great Housewives of Art" was much appreciated by the students, and it was clear that linking the discussion with students' own experience was an effective stimulus for student learning (R Reflective - 4).

C. Gender Images in Film

The main focus in this section was on using film and animation to explore gender image issues. The animated movie "Zootopia" was used to deconstruct gender stereotypes. The film "The Danish Girl" was used to help students develop a better understanding of transgender people.

"Zootopia" is set in a city inhabited by anthropomorphic carnivores and herbivores. Judy (a rabbit police officer) and a fox collaborate to solve a case in which carnivores have been disappearing, and succeeded in uncovering the devious plot that lies behind the disappearances. The story incorporates issues relating to prejudice and stereotypes. Questions that the researcher asked the students in relation to this animated movie were: Judy wanted to be a police officer ever since she was a child. As a grown-up, she finds that stereotypical attitudes in the workplace almost make it impossible for her to realize her dream. If, in the future, you were to encounter a boss or supervisor like Judy’s, how would you deal with the situation? If gender stereotypes obstruct us from pursuing our dreams, how can be go about challenging those stereotypes? The earliest form of gender stratification was the concept that men were inherently superior to women, which was found in many traditional societies. Although there have been
significant improvements in gender relations, gender stratification can still be seen in many occupations. How do you think this situation can be improved?

The film "The Danish Girl" is about one of the first people in history to undergo gender reassignment surgery. The film depicts, in great detail, the emotional challenges that the process of transformation presents. Questions that the researcher asked the students in relation to this film were: If you were living in the same time and place, and somebody you loved was faced with the decision of whether to undergo a major transformation in order to achieve self-realization, would you support them? How would you go about making the decision?

The researcher was surprised, and moved, by a comment that one of the students made during class while this film was being discussed. He said: "Everyone has their own self that they are born with. We cannot take responsibility for other people's lives, so we shouldn't criticize them. If, motivated by a desire to achieve greater self-worth, a person is transformed in a way that makes them a better person, then we should support that person with love and trust, and should wish them well as they boldly forge ahead along the path they have chosen to create a life that is truly their own." (R Observation - 8).

The researcher support the process of artwork and film appreciation with learning sheets designed according to the four-level approach to art appreciation; the research also incorporated questions about gender issues that were connected to students' own life experience, to get the students thinking for themselves. In some cases, the filling out of the learning sheets was preceded by a group discussion. During the teaching process, the researcher played a guiding, encouraging role, working to create an environment of mutual trust, and demonstrating acceptance of different viewpoints, interpretations and comments.

D. Third Part: Reflection and Reporting

Following the classes and reflection outlined above, the researcher asked the students to choose a short film that either embodied or challenged gender stereotypes, and to analyze the film using the four-level art appreciation approach; the results of the analysis were to be presented in the form of a written report. In class, students were asked to present their own reports so that other students could ask questions; the instructor provided supplementary explanation where necessary. Finally, the instructor made a summing-up, and asked the students to fill out feedback forms and questionnaires, so as to be able to develop a better understanding of students' overall learning outcomes. In the feedback form, the researcher also utilized a question to encourage students to engage in self-reflection. The question used was: What have you discovered or experienced from the learning and thinking that you have undertaken in this class?

5. Research Results

A. Analysis of Student Questionnaire Survey Results

The researcher made use of the Likert scale (where 5 points are awarded for a "Strongly agree" response, 4 points for an "Agree" response, 3 points for a "Neither agree nor disagree" response, 2 points for a "Disagree" response, and 1 point for a "Strongly disagree" response) in collecting data on students' views. The questionnaire survey results were then analyzed using SPSS software. The paired-samples T-test was used, with the level of significance set at .05, to compare the scores obtained in the survey administered at the beginning of the course and with the scores obtained in the survey administered at the end (n = 69), so as to be able to examine the students' learning outcomes. The analysis results have been collated in Table 4 below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Average score in the survey at the beginning of the course</th>
<th>Standard deviation in the survey at the beginning of the course</th>
<th>Average score in the survey at the end of the course</th>
<th>Standard deviation in the survey at the end of the course</th>
<th>t-test result</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Being aware of the key elements and principles of art</td>
<td>3.41</td>
<td>.90</td>
<td>4.20</td>
<td>.63</td>
<td>6.731</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Understanding the special characteristics of artworks and films</td>
<td>3.18</td>
<td>.89</td>
<td>4.06</td>
<td>.68</td>
<td>7.108</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Understanding the impact of traditional gender roles on</td>
<td>3.18</td>
<td>.91</td>
<td>4.16</td>
<td>.70</td>
<td>8.141</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
individual learning and development

4. Being aware that housework is a responsibility that should be shared by everyone in the household 3.27 .94 4.25 .69 8.621 .000

5. Adopting the correct attitude towards gender discrimination in the workplace 3.27 .90 4.25 .72 8.371 .000

6. Demonstrating respect for trans-gender people 3.24 .97 4.08 .74 7.679 .000

7. Basic description of the work’s content 3.35 .82 4.14 .75 7.402 .000

8. Analysis of the formal aspects of the work 3.55 .76 4.43 .64 8.529 .000

9. Interpretation of the work’s meaning 3.69 .76 4.47 .61 7.402 .000

10. Evaluation of and reflection on the work 3.65 .80 4.45 .61 6.958 .000

Total score 33.78 7.27 42.49 5.49 9.445 .000

*p<.05

1. For Item 1, the average score obtained in the survey at the beginning of the course was 3.41, and the standard deviation was .90; the average score obtained in the survey at the end of the course was 4.20, and the standard deviation was .63. The t-test value was 6.731, which was statistically significant.

2. For Item 2, the average score obtained in the survey at the beginning of the course was 3.18, and the standard deviation was .89; the average score obtained in the survey at the end of the course was 4.06, and the standard deviation was .68. The t-test value was 7.108, which was statistically significant.

3. For Item 3, the average score obtained in the survey at the beginning of the course was 3.18, and the standard deviation was .91; the average score obtained in the survey at the end of the course was 4.16, and the standard deviation was .70. The t-test value was 8.141, which was statistically significant.

4. For Item 4, the average score obtained in the survey at the beginning of the course was 3.27, and the standard deviation was .94; the average score obtained in the survey at the end of the course was 4.25, and the standard deviation was .69. The t-test value was 8.621, which was statistically significant.

5. For Item 5, the average score obtained in the survey at the beginning of the course was 3.27, and the standard deviation was .90; the average score obtained in the survey at the end of the course was 4.25, and the standard deviation was .72. The t-test value was 8.371, which was statistically significant.

6. For Item 6, the average score obtained in the survey at the beginning of the course was 3.24, and the standard deviation was .97; the average score obtained in the survey at the end of the course was 4.08, and the standard deviation was .74. The t-test value was 7.679, which was statistically significant.

7. For Item 7, the average score obtained in the survey at the beginning of the course was 3.35, and the standard deviation was .82; the average score obtained in the survey at the end of the course was 4.14 and the standard deviation was .75. The t-test value was 7.402, which was statistically significant.

8. For Item 8, the average score obtained in the survey at the beginning of the course was 3.55, and the standard deviation was .76; the average score obtained in the survey at the end of the course was 4.43, and the standard deviation was .64. The t-test value was 8.529, which was statistically significant.

9. For Item 9, the average score obtained in the survey at the beginning of the course was 3.69, and the standard deviation was .76; the average score obtained in the survey at the end of the course was 4.47 and the standard deviation was .61. The t-test value was 7.402, which was statistically significant.

10. For Item 10, the average score obtained in the survey at the beginning of the course was 3.65, and the standard deviation was .80; the average score obtained in the survey at the end of the course was 4.45, and the standard deviation was .61. The t-test value was 6.958, which was statistically significant.
For all 10 items combined, the average total score obtained in the survey at the beginning of the art appreciation course was 33.78, and the standard deviation was 7.27; the average total score obtained in the survey at the end of the course was 42.49, and the standard deviation was 5.49. The t-test value was 9.445. The disparity between the average total score obtained in the survey at the beginning of the course and the average total score obtained in the survey at the end of the course was statistically significant (p<.05), indicating that the course had been pedagogically effective.

B. Analysis of Qualitative Data Relating to Students' Learning Outcomes

On the basis of interviews, documentary analysis, the researcher's reflective journal and in-class observation, the students' overall learning outcomes were analyzed as follows:

(A) Art Appreciation Component: Students were able to appreciate artworks and films

1) Students were able to describe the content of artworks and films

Examination of the students' completed learning sheets showed that they were all able to give an adequate description of what they had seen. For example, one student's description of the 《Mona Lisa》 was as follows: "She has a kind, dignified expression, and is attractively dressed. Regardless of which angle you view the painting from, her eyes seem to follow you, and she appears to be smiling at you. In the background there is a winding road, a valley, and a river." (Sheet S-43). They were also able to give a rough outline of the plot of the films that they had viewed, describing how the film was structured and who the main characters were. For example, a student described 《Zootopia》 in the following terms: "Plot outline: In a city in which carnivorous animals and herbivorous animals live together, a female rabbit police officer and a fox collaborate to investigate a case in which carnivores have been disappearing, and uncover a sinister plot. The plot incorporates issues that relate to prejudice and stereotypes. Opening scenes: The female rabbit who is the main character in the film develops a strong ambition to become a police officer. Development: The rabbit realizes her ambition of becoming a police officer and starts work in a police station, but suffers discrimination because of her gender and her 'ethnicity'. Transition: The rabbit meets the other main character, a fox, who has also been negatively impacted by prejudice. Denouement: By exposing the truth about a series of cases in which animals have been disappearing, the rabbit and the fox are able to demonstrate their worth to others. Role analysis: The rabbit - The rabbit is not as weak and timid as she appears at first sight; she is unwilling to give up or to compromise, and demonstrates her worth through her bravery. Meeting the rabbit brings out a protective side in the fox. Eventually, he is able to get his life back on track and give his life meaning." (Sheet S-22).

2) Students were able to analyze the formal techniques used in the artworks and express the meaning of the forms

Examination of the students' learning sheets showed that all of the students were able to analyze the formal techniques used in the artworks and to recognize the significance of different techniques. For example, one student gave the following analysis of the traditional Chinese painting 《Listening Quietly to Soughing Pines》: "Materials and techniques: This is a traditional Chinese ink brush painting on silk, made using the ink wash technique. Formal elements and principles: The human figures in the painting are depicted with natural-seeming postures and realistic proportions. The trunks of the old pine trees are depicted using long, thin linear brush strokes, while the pine needles are painted using a clearly-defined layering. The "ax-cut stroke" technique and variation in ink color tone have been used to portray the texture and three-dimensional solidity of the large rocks; the effective use of lighter tones gives the painting an elegant, harmonious feel. Composition: The twisted old pine trees and the mountains in the background set one another off to good effect; the use of blank space in the upper and lower portions of the painting enhances the sense of the trees' towering height. Style: The Southern Song Academy (Court) style of painting attached great importance to the creation of atmosphere through the effective use of human figures and through the depiction of the natural environment." (Sheet S-34). Another student analyzed the 《HUGO BOSS》 fragrances TV commercial as follows: "Time: [The student provided a sequential overview of the commercial's content]. Space: The scenes showing the female character are set in an urban landscape of city streets and skyscrapers. The male character is shown near a waterfall, with its connotations of danger and challenge, in a way that evokes purity and freshness. Lighting and color: The lighting emphasizes a sense of inner self-confidence, with romantic pink tones and fresh blue tones. Shots and camera angles: Full shots (FS) are used to show the street scenes; medium shots (MS) are used to show the man's body; close-up shots are used to show the woman's movements in detail. Editing: Cuts are used to transition between scenes; in the final scene, the man and woman are fused into the fragrance. Sound: Soft, gentle music is used for the scenes advertising the women's fragrance, while fast, dynamic music is used for the men's fragrance." (Sheet S-09).
The students also noted on their feedback forms that they felt that they now had a better understanding of how to analyze artworks and films. Students' comments included: "... When looking at a painting, I am able to analyze it using the key art appreciation techniques that I learned in class ..." (Feedback S-18); "... Rather than just watching films, I have started to learn how to analyze them in detail ..." (Feedback S-29). Students also felt that their ability to analyze the techniques used in creating artworks or films had also improved: "... I feel that I have moved up a level in terms of my ability to analyze a work." (Feedback S-32).

(3) Students were able to interpret and understand works' themes and meaning

Examination of the students' learning sheets showed that students were able to explain the themes and meaning of artworks and films. For example, regarding 《Zootopia》, a student commented that "The key theme is the need to discard stereotypes, prejudices etc., and promote harmonious diversity; the meaning of the film lies in encouraging people to look beyond external appearances and the labels of gender, species, class, etc. to demonstrate mutual respect for one another." (Sheet S-31). Another student noted, with regard to 《The Danish Girl》: "The theme of the film is the story of the first recorded person to undergo gender reassignment surgery. The meaning of the film is in its encouragement of acceptance of transgender people; the underlying meaning is the importance of respect and tolerance." (Sheet S-07).

Students also noted on their feedback forms that they felt they were now better able to think about the meaning behind artworks and films. For example: "When I am watching a film now, I think more deeply about its meaning ..." (Feedback S-38). Students had also learned to consider works from different perspectives: "... I am able to think about works from a wider variety of different angles." (Feedback S-05).

(4) Students were able to evaluate artworks and films and express their own response to and views of the works

Examination of the students' learning sheets showed that the students were able to evaluate artworks of different types and express in writing their response to the work and their insights into it. In the case of 《The Danish Girl》, the main reason given by the students for considering this to be a good film was that it addressed an issue that had not been given due importance in film before, "giving everyone the opportunity to discuss and learn about something that society hasn't tended to take seriously in the past." (Sheet S-50. Some of the students felt that, besides the power of the story itself, the "emotional roller-coaster" effect generated by the director's painstaking attention to detail was another factor behind the film's success. "It's a very good film; although there isn't much action ... the careful camerawork expresses a great deal of emotion and sentiment, bringing the emotional turmoil of the characters into the viewer's heart ..." (Sheet S-40). Several students felt that what made "The Danish Girl" a good film was that it encouraged viewers to reflect on the issues addressed in the film. "This film has helped me to understand transgender people better ... living in a very conservative era, the main character has had to conceal what they feel to be their real gender ... in the end the main character decides to change their external, physical gender so it matches what they feel inside in order to win acceptance from others ... the film got me thinking about why human rights have to be trampled on by stereotypes and preconceptions ..." (Sheet S-15).

(B) The process of reflecting on gender issues enhanced students' gender awareness

(1) The students felt that the main characters in the artworks were shown as authority figures, while the female characters were depicted either as objects of the male gaze or as people in need of protection Students developed an appreciation of the symbolic meaning of gender in relation to attitudes that value men over women. They became aware of how, in traditional patriarchal societies, women tended to be ignored, and of how the history of Western art has been written from the perspective of white males.

After providing an introduction to Chinese and Western art history and selected famous artworks, the researcher asked the students to consider the question How were men and women portrayed in artworks in the past? What meaning did these portrayals embody in terms of gender? Why do so few female artists appear in overviews of art history?

Examination of the students' learning sheets showed that students felt that, in images of men and women in artworks from the past, men tended to be portrayed as authority figures; Women, by contrast, were often portrayed as weak and in need of protection. These images showed how meaning was attached to gender in a way that valued men over women. "In artworks from the past, women were often painted in the nude, being depicted in an objectified manner, or else shown as weak beings in need of protection. Men were more likely to be portrayed in portraits as possessing power or authority. These images reflect gender meaning that privileges men over women." (Sheet S-44). Students also realized that the main reason for the paucity of female artists in histories of art was that, in traditional patriarchal society, women tended to be ignored, and because histories of Western art were
generally written by white males. "Western art history has all been written from the perspective of white males. In the patriarchal society of the past, talented women had no opportunity to make art their career, and their works often had to be displayed under their husband's name ... Female artists had no opportunity to have their work displayed under their own name ..." (Sheet S-30).

(2) Students realized that female artists often adopted a feminist perspective, making bold efforts to use painting to challenge traditional constraints; they were also able to understand how traditional gender roles sometimes made it impossible for people to fulfill their ambitions or develop their full potential

After introducing several female artists and their work, the researcher asked the students to discuss the question How do you feel about the artistic expression displayed by female artists? How do you feel traditional gender roles affected the development of the individual?

Examination of the students' learning sheets showed that students were aware that female artists frequently adopted a feminist approach, working boldly to challenge the constraints imposed by tradition through their art. "... their art emphasizes women's self-identification ... and also satirizes or hints at the way women are oppressed by unfair social values, etc. ... They were able to use bold creative experiments with form to move beyond traditional constraints, and the resulting art is very striking." (Sheet S-65). The students also showed themselves able to understand the impact that traditional gender roles could have on the individual's learning and development, often making it impossible for people to do the things they wanted to do or to fully develop their potential. "Long-standing customs and society's expectations acted, on a subconscious level, to affect the choices that individuals make regarding gender roles; people who wanted to break free from the bonds of tradition would find themselves subjected to distrust and incomprehension, effectively making it impossible for them to do what they wanted to do and to show what they were capable of." (Sheet S-25).

(3) Students were able to understand that housework is something that every member of a household has a responsibility for, and that although it is not always necessary for housework to be equally divided, it should be allocated in a way that creates a win-win situation and generates maximum value

After introducing Sally Swain's 《Great Housewives of Art》, the researcher asked the students to consider the question Think about how the division of labor with respect to housework operates in your home. How do you feel about it?

The researcher's examination of the descriptions and views expressed by the students showed that, in the case of more traditional-style families where the students were living together with their grandparents, the grandparents would often insist that girls should do housework, whereas the boys were not expected to do any. "Grandparents think that girls should cook and do the washing up, whereas for boys it's left up to them; I don't like this kind of stereotypical thinking." (Sheet S-45). In most dual-income households, it appears that housework may be done by either the father or mother, depending on who has time to do it. "In my family, whoever isn't busy doing something else does the housework ... I think this is a good approach." (Sheet S-49). All of the students felt that housework was not something that was only the parents' responsibility, and that everyone in the family should share the responsibility. This did not necessarily imply striving for a perfectly equal division, but rather, achieving a win-win situation that created maximum value. "I feel that every member of the family should do at least some of the housework ... it doesn't necessarily need to be divided up equally, it can be allocated based on people's habits and lifestyle, in order to achieve the optimal effect, so that everyone can work together to build a harmonious household." (Sheet S-03).

(4) The students felt that, when faced with gender-based discrimination in the workplace, one should use action and attitude to demonstrate one's capabilities; they also felt that more effort needed to be made to challenge stereotypes in the home, the media, the legal system, the education sector, etc., and that compensation should be based on ability rather than gender, to conform with the principles of social justice

Regarding the animated film 《Zootopia》, the researcher posed the following questions: Judy wanted to be a police officer ever since she was a child. As a grown-up, she finds that stereotypical attitudes in the workplace almost make it impossible for her to realize her dream. If, in the future, you were to encounter a boss or supervisor like Judy's, how would you deal with the situation? If gender stereotypes obstruct us from pursuing our dreams, how can we go about challenging those stereotypes? The earliest form of gender stratification was the concept that men were inherently superior to women, which was found in many traditional societies. Although there have been significant improvements in gender relations, gender stratification can still be seen in many occupations. How do you think this situation can be improved?
Examination of the students' learning sheets showed that, in response to gender-based discrimination in the workplace, students would choose to use action and attitude to demonstrate their own capabilities. "Like Judy, I would use my own actions and my attitude to show what I was capable of." (Sheet S-51). Students felt that it was important to target the family, the media etc. when working to change stereotypes. "I feel that, in order to challenge this kind of stereotyping, the process of change needs to begin in the family and in the media ..." (Sheet S-47). As regards the challenge of improving gender stratification in regard to careers, students felt that new legislation could be introduced to protect people subject to unfair treatment. "New laws should be formulated to combat discriminatory behavior, in order to protect people who might otherwise be treated unfairly." (Sheet S-15). Students also felt that the most important thing was to use education to change attitudes, and they felt that compensation should be based on ability, not gender, in order to meet the demands of social equity. "I feel that we should make use of education to change people's views ... to be in conformity with social equity, we need to consider what kind of skills people have, and what represents fair compensation for using these skills ... " (Sheet S-59).

(5) Students did not necessarily approve of transgender people, but they respected their right to make their own choices, and felt that they should not be viewed in a disparaging light

Regarding the film 《The Danish Girl》, the researcher asked the students to consider the following questions: If you were living in the same time and place, and somebody you loved was faced with the decision of whether to undergo a major transformation in order to achieve self-realization, would you support them? How would you go about making the decision?

Examination of the students' learning sheets showed that most of the students would respect the choices made by transgender people, and that, if you love someone, then you you should be willing to accept their decisions. "If you love someone, then you have to accept every aspect of them, and continue to respect them no matter how they change ..." (Sheet S-36). Some students felt that, even if they personally did not agree with the other person's decision, they should still respect that person's individuality. "Everyone is unique. No matter how our values differ from those of others, we should continue to respect and show tolerance to other people, as long as they are not doing any harm to others." (Sheet S-04). Although some students felt that they might have difficult adjusting, as long as the other person was happy, they would opt to respect that person's decision. "If someone I was very close to decide to make a big change, I would have difficult getting used to it, but I hope that I would be able to let them live their life the way they want to, and be happy in their own skin! I would choose to respect their decision." (Sheet S-24). The majority of the students felt that not treating people differently was a form of basic respect. "The biggest way you can demonstrate respect is to not look at people differently, or think about them differently," (Sheet S-12). It just so happened that there was a transgender student in the same department that the students in this class were in. In an interview with one student, he commented that he greatly admired his transgender friend. "It is great to have a friend like this. I deeply respect transgender people and admire their courage; he is always willing to share his feelings with us, which I think is truly brave ..." (Interview - S28). Some students felt that they understood the situation transgender people were in, and supported them, because they had a member of their family who was LGBT. "I support them because my own brother is homosexual ..." (Interview - S08).

Before teaching this unit, the researcher was concerned that students might be resistant to the material studied. In the event, one student came up to the researcher after class and explained that, while he had previously tended to dislike transgender people, taking this class had helped him to understand the problems they face, and he didn't feel the same sense of dislike towards them anymore. In the case of this student at least, the researcher's teaching objective had been achieved (Reflective R-8).

(6) The students felt that this type of course was effective in encouraging them to think, to change, and to progress as individuals; they felt that a person can only fulfill their potential if they do not allow themselves to be constrained by gender

In the feedback form, the researcher posed a question to encourage the students to reflect on their own learning in the class: What have you discovered or experienced from the learning and thinking that you have undertaken in this class?

Examination of the students' feedback sheets showed considerable diversity in terms of what students had discovered or experienced. Some students felt that the course had encouraged them to think about gender stereotypes and to recognize their own thinking needed to change in order for them to achieve personal growth as a human being. "The questions addressed in the course were very complex, touching on the relationship between gender and art, stereotypical attitudes to work in traditional societies, the division of labor in the home, etc., but thinking deeply about these questions was definitely worthwhile; pondering these questions can also lead you to
make changes in your own behavior, so you can progress as an individual, which I think is a very good thing." (Sheet S-06). Students also commented that if they witnessed gender-based discrimination in the future, they would stand up to it. " ... If in the future I see anyone laughing at another person and calling them effeminate or a sissy, I will stop them." (Sheet S-21). Some students noted that, whereas in the past they tended to be afraid of transgender people, in the future they would be more respectful and make an effort to get along better with them. "... getting along with transgender students in a way that demonstrates respect for them would, I feel, represent personal growth for me as an individual." (Sheet S-01). Some students commented that in the past they were not usually willing to help with the housework, but that in the future they would make a proactive effort to help with it. "... From now on I am going to help with the housework without waiting to be asked ..." (Sheet S-67). Students felt that it was only by casting off the constraints of gender that each individual could realize their potential. "Everyone is different. If you decide that someone can't do something just because of their gender, then you are blocking their ability to fulfill their potential, which is a great shame. If it was possible for everyone to be in a position where they can maximize their potential, then the world would be able to achieve real progress." (Sheet S-17). Other students noted that they were grateful for the fact that there is less gender discrimination now than in the past. "... I am very happy that I am alive now, in an era when women aren't seen as inferior beings." (Sheet S-13).

(C) Having selected short films to study, the students were able to analyze them according to the four-level art appreciation methodology, and were able to point out which aspects of the films embodied stereotypical attitudes, or contributed to the enhancement of gender awareness by challenging stereotypes

It was clear from the reports that the students submitted that they were able to select films that displayed stereotypical attitudes or that challenged stereotypical attitudes, and were capable of using the four-level art appreciation methodology to analyze these films. In the case of films that contained gender stereotypes, the students were able to identify which parts of the film displayed these stereotypes, and were able to suggest how the film could be improved. " ... This TV commercial uses very pronounced gender stereotypes. All of the housework is being done by the mother, while the father does nothing to help; it is as though the father has no responsibility to help look after the children. I feel that this is a very poor commercial, which sends the wrong message to the public. We should put a stop to TV commercials like this, to prevent the dissemination of wrongheaded ideas." (Report S-69). In the case of films that challenged stereotypes, the students were able to identify the points in the films where this was done, and the lessons that could be drawn from the films. " ... This film uses the actual performance of a female athlete to present an image of female willpower and courage. Nobody should have their potential constrained by others because of their gender; everyone should work hard to realize their own dreams." (Report S-11).

6. Conclusions and Recommendations

A. Conclusions

Recognizing the importance of gender equality education, the researcher used artwork appreciation and film appreciation to guide students towards an understanding of gender equality education issues and art appreciation techniques. On the basis of both the quantifiable data from the questionnaire surveys and reports and other qualitative data, it was apparent that the students' capabilities had been strengthened in both of these areas. In regard to gender issues, the students' reflection on questions set by the researcher helped to enhance their awareness of gender issues. Students developed a better understanding of how traditional gender roles can affect personal learning and personal development; they came to appreciate that household responsibilities should be shared; they realized that, when faced with gender discrimination in the workplace, one can choose to use one's actions and attitude to demonstrate one's capabilities; they recognized the need to work through the family, the media, the legal system, the education system etc. to change people's preconceptions; they realized that compensation should be based on ability, not gender; and they understood the need to demonstrate respect for transgender people. The students felt that the course had helped them to reflect, change, and progress, and to appreciate that individuals can only fulfill their potential if they are not constrained by gender. In regard to the art appreciation component of the course, the students were able to make use of the four-level art appreciation methodology - description, analysis, interpretation and judgment - to analyze artworks and films. Finally, the students were also able to utilize the methods of art appreciation to analyze short films that embody or challenge gender stereotypes, and to identify examples of gender stereotyping. The students reported having had their awareness of gender stereotypes raised, and were able to compile reports that demonstrated an enhanced awareness of gender issues.

B. Recommendations

(A) The incorporation of gender issues (or other issues) into the teaching of art appreciation can, besides enabling students to practice the techniques of art appreciation, also help them to develop the ability to engage in in-depth reflection on particular issues
By adopting an approach to the teaching of art appreciation that incorporates particular issues into the teaching, besides providing opportunities for students to practice actually using art appreciation techniques, instructors can also get students thinking about and applying the knowledge relating to these issues, which in turn will help the students to think more deeply about the significance of the issues and add more depth to the art appreciation learning process. The present study is a case study of this approach in action. In the present study, the incorporation of gender issues into the teaching made it possible to use artworks and films to guide students in examining, reflecting on and critiquing some concepts and ideas that many of us tend to take for granted, thereby helping them to challenge gender stereotypes. The ability to add greater depth to the learning process that this approach embodies makes it appropriate for more widespread adoption.

(B) When incorporating gender issues into the teaching of art appreciation, the instructor can pose questions to guide students’ discussions and help them start thinking about the issues in greater depth

With a traditional expository approach to teaching, students are more likely to forget the material, and it is more difficult to get students engaging in sustained thought over an extended period. For the present study, therefore, the researcher adopted a teaching approach that emphasized the use of questions to guide students' discussions and reflection. This approach was found to be significantly more effective in ensuring that the material covered by the course had a real impact on the students. As the process of answering a question involves reflecting on and restructuring the question, this process, in and of itself, helps the students to clarify their thinking regarding the question. Johnson (1988) and Lapacinski (1988) both noted that a teaching approach that emphasized the use of questions was conducive to effective art appreciation teaching. Instructors should try to reduce the amount of time that they spend "lecturing," and instead make more use of questions to guide students’ learning, so that they can develop discussion-based activities that get students thinking; providing students with more opportunities to think and to express their ideas will help the students to learn the concepts covered by the course more thoroughly.

References


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