Toward a pedagogy for teaching feminist literature through a cultural perspective: a qualitative action study of Taiwanese undergraduates in an American university literature class.

Hsiu-Ling Lin
University of Massachusetts Amherst

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TOWARD A PEDAGOGY FOR TEACHING FEMINIST LITERATURE THROUGH A CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE: A QUALITATIVE ACTION STUDY OF TAIWANESE UNDERGRADUATES IN AN AMERICAN UNIVERSITY LITERATURE CLASS

A Dissertation Presented

by

HSIU-LING LIN

Submitted to the Graduate School of the University of Massachusetts Amherst in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

September 1994

School of Education
TOWARD A PEDAGOGY FOR TEACHING FEMINIST LITERATURE THROUGH A CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE: A QUALITATIVE ACTION STUDY OF TAIWANESE UNDERGRADUATES IN AN AMERICAN UNIVERSITY LITERATURE CLASS

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ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I would like to offer my deep-felt appreciation and gratitude to the following, whose assistance and incentive led to the fulfillment of this study:

Professor David Bloome, for his expertise, guidance and valuable comments;

Professor Judith Solsken, whose for her enlightened ideas, steady support and valuable suggestions;

Professor Chisato Kitagawa, for his deep knowledge and enthusiasm;

Anne Wood, Paul Copp for their help in editing this manuscript;

Mary Gorman, Robert White and Tom Nicoletti for their friendship, inspiration;

My students, without whose help there would have been no research and no progress;

My parents and my husband for their support and for their believing in me; and my daughters, for their infinite patience.
ABSTRACT

TOWARD A PEDAGOGY FOR TEACHING FEMINIST LITERATURE THROUGH A CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE: A QUALITATIVE ACTION STUDY OF TAIWANESE UNDERGRADUATES IN AN AMERICAN UNIVERSITY LITERATURE CLASS SEPTEMBER 1994

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The study has two major related goals. The first is to develop a pedagogy with which to teach feminist Chinese literature to female Taiwanese college students. The second is to develop a pedagogy within the context of a feminist Chinese literature class which raises students' feminist consciousness.

There are two research questions related to the main goals:
1. What elements constitute an effective pedagogy for teaching feminist Chinese literature at the college level to Taiwanese students?
2. How does studying feminist Chinese literature within the context of a course in question # 1 affect Taiwanese female students' feminist consciousness?

The design of the research centers around the teaching of a course on feminist Chinese literature from a cultural perspective, with detailed examination of student reactions to both the pedagogy and content of the course, gathered from various sources. The study involves implementing
planned instructional strategies in an effort to incorporate a whole language pedagogy and then systematically submitting the strategies to observation, reflection, and change.

The data collected in this study consists of several different components: students interviews, papers and journals, questionnaires, transcripts of classroom discussions and my own personal journal containing my observations and reflections on my decisions as a teacher/researcher.

Findings basic to the success of this research were:
1. Students became less dependent on the teacher.
2. Students became more responsive over time to classroom discussion and interaction as a method for learning.
3. Student participation was enhanced indirectly by showing respect for them as individuals and for their ideas; and directly by praising their participation in class and by grading them for class participation.
4. Students beliefs did not change radically but they become more receptive to other student's ideas.
5. Students were influenced by feminist pedagogy.
6. Prior knowledge can be built upon through the sharing of experiences.
7. The teacher's attention to student self-esteem and confidence had a significant impact.
8. Students experiences some degree of conflict in trying to reconcile their feminist consciousness with their individual lives.

Finally, I propose to adjust these findings to traditional teaching style currently in use in Taiwan, specifically with regard to changes in the
process of learning, moving from a teacher-centered process to one in which the students are more actively involved.
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This study has two major related goals. The first is to develop a pedagogy with which to teach Chinese feminist literature to Taiwanese women college students. The second is to develop a pedagogy within the context of a feminist Chinese literature class which raises students' feminist consciousness.

The rationale for these goals is to overcome shortcomings in traditional Chinese literature instruction at the college level (i.e. authoritarian teachers, passive students and a lack of critical, creative thinking in the classroom). Although Taiwanese women college students are liberated in the sense that they are modern women pursuing a college education and ultimately careers of their own, many of them are still shackled by the influence of centuries of oppression. The pedagogy to be developed in my dissertation study is intended to raise feminist consciousness and increase the familiarity with feminist Chinese literature of Taiwanese students.

The traditional style of teaching Chinese literature at the college level in Taiwan holds that students are empty vessels, waiting to be filled with knowledge. However, to teach feminist literature, students need to be seen instead as pools of water, waiting for new perspectives to shatter their calm like pebbles, each causing a new series of ripples in their realm of experience. With a topic such as feminist literature, it is inconceivable that the students are truly empty vessels, for each of them has already had relevant experience in their
own lives, and the lives of their mothers, fathers, friends and others, as well as with some of the core issues raised by feminism and by feminist literature. Thus, it is necessary for the teacher to consider students' experiences.

The pedagogy to be developed in this study can be viewed as a feminist pedagogy. This kind of pedagogy challenges the traditional view of classroom authority and power and attempts to provide a space where students and teachers can cooperate, collaborate, and struggle to understand and combat various forms of oppression. Feminist literature teaching, then, creates ways of learning where learning is designed to allow students to be critical of, and reflective about, the knowledge that they are acquiring and the conditions under which they are acquiring it.

It must be noted that in most societies existing learning theory was developed for men by men, since historically, at least in Chinese society, education has been reserved for men and, in consequence, they have been both the scholars and the teachers. Often, women are conditioned to expect to exert less power or exert power in different ways. Women's influence may be manifested by caretaking or service to others such as family, as occurs in Chinese culture.

Historically, effective college teaching in Taiwan did not concern itself with differences of gender, race, or age. Although frequent attempts to strengthen and improve the methods of teaching have been made, most attempts have remained either gender neutral or covertly male oriented. In fairness, the primary reason for this deficiency is probably due to the fact that neither questions of gender bias nor a commitment to a gender-neutral pedagogy occurred to those who created the pedagogy. As we consider the needs of
learners other than males, it becomes increasingly clear that pedagogy is not
gender neutral.

Modern Chinese feminist literature offers insights into the plight of
women in Chinese society, regarding their social status, rights as citizens,
political power (or lack thereof), and their sexual oppression. As such it
describes Chinese culture as unfavorable to women. Through a study of this
literature, students can become aware of this, and thereby begin to develop a
feminist consciousness. Feminist consciousness is an awareness of what it
means to be a woman; to be aware of the inequality and victimization of women
and to oppose them are part of the feminist consciousness. Feminist
consciousness entails an awareness of the social plight of women (e.g.
economic disadvantages, oppression and sexual victimization in all forms) and
that awareness is a first step toward a change that will benefit women.

One approach to these issues is to provide a pedagogy which allows for a
meaningful dialogue, not just between teacher and students, but also among
students. By discussing different aspects of feminist literature, students can
involve themselves in the learning process. The role of the teacher thus becomes
more of a facilitator than that of an authoritarian imparter of knowledge.
Understanding will be obtained and recognized in a variety of ways; perhaps in
an excited gesture, a tone of voice, or the look in a student's eyes. In this way,
learning will be more vivid and vigorous than it would be in a traditional-style
classroom. Although a meaningful dialogue is a prerequisite for a feminist
pedagogy it is not the only one; but because it is a necessary condition, it is a
step toward a feminist pedagogy.
My dissertation research involves a study of a Chinese feminist literature course that I am teaching at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst campus. The study involves Taiwanese college students who received at least eight years of formal schooling in Taiwanese elementary and/or high schools and are now studying in the United States.

The design of the study borrows from several research traditions: qualitative research, action-research studies, and case studies. These approaches provided appropriate theories and methods for describing and analyzing the learning environment and the learning process in the classroom under study. As part of the research methodology, I conducted pre-course, mid-term, and post-course interviews with the students, asked students to write response papers to the class exchanges, and asked them to write journals. One of the issues examined is the kinds of internal conflicts which arise in students' expectations of themselves both in terms of pedagogy and feminism, and as Taiwanese women and readers of feminist literature. I also explore how they believe this learning will be incorporated (or if it will be incorporated) into their lives outside the classroom. Details about the design of the study and research methods are provided in Chapter Three.

**Background of the Taiwanese Educational System**

Since most of the students I teach in the course come from Taiwan and are more or less products of the Taiwanese educational system, it seems useful to describe the current state of that system. In Taiwan, administrators and educators treat students like empty bottles. When the "bottles" don't become sufficiently full, the administration puts pressure on the teacher, who is held
accountable for filling his or her share of the bottles. As a result of this style, teachers instruct in an authoritarian fashion, seeking strict obedience and the memorization of specific information without any concern for the value or importance of developing an inquiring active mind. Students always wait for the teacher's guidance and accept whatever they are told without question. Consequently, students become passive recipients of information.

The Taiwanese educational system is thus characterized by discipline, respect for authority and a teacher-centered methodology. This outlook is reflected strongly in the opening routine of each class. When the teacher enters the classroom, the students usually stand and offer a formal greeting. In addition to the greeting, the teacher also finds a cup of tea that the students have prepared. Once the class has begun, the students are generally very quiet and attentive while the teacher presents a formal lecture. Discussion is not often encouraged. When the bell rings, marking the end of the class, the students rise, bow and say "thank you." This ritual occurs even at the university level.

Although there may be slight variations, the basic format, where the teacher has absolute authority, tends to remain similar from one class to another. The following are a few examples provided to demonstrate my point:

I once encountered a professor, who would, before the class started, ask a student to write all of the concepts that pertained to the day's lecture on the large blackboard for him. The students were expected to arrive approximately twenty minutes before the beginning of class to copy the information into their notebooks. The assumption was that once the class had begun, the students would pay full attention to the teacher, undistracted by their notebooks or a textbook. A second professor dictated his lecture notes to the class sentence-by-sentence, with the expectation that the students would copy, verbatim, his
lecture into their notebooks. Another professor taught poetry and usually referred to many related sources when explaining a given poem. He expected his students to carefully copy the numerous citations he wrote on the blackboard but never challenged his students to engage in discussion. His students felt that with the amount of references he could cite, he must have a mind like an encyclopedia. These examples are representative of current teaching techniques in Taiwan.

In the above examples, the professors expected to transmit specific knowledge to a class of highly attentive, yet passive, students. The emphasis in education is thus still on the value of the dictation of specific information from teacher to students. This approach, I believe, is encouraged by a recently instituted teacher evaluation, practiced by most universities in Taiwan. These evaluations, filled out by students, tend to presuppose the teacher as dispenser of information with questions such as, "Was the teacher well prepared for the lectures" and "Was the content fruitful or not?"

It is clear that from the traditional standpoint of Taiwan's education system, professors are viewed as the powerful ones, the ones with the special knowledge and training which allows them to control and to provide instant answers to students' questions. There are many teachers who hold this belief and base their practice on the notion that the teacher's role is "to fill the students by making deposits of information which the teacher considers to constitute true knowledge" (Freire, 1971, p.63).

According to a 1990 study by the United Nations Organization of Culture and Education, 46% of Taiwan's female population are college-educated, giving it the highest percentage of college-educated women in all of
Asia, twelfth world-wide (Adult Education Weekly, 58, Feb. 23, 1993).
Although the rate of higher educated women is quite high, Taiwan's women, hindered by a tradition of male dominance, are nonetheless very limited in their options once they leave school. Some feminist groups would like to change this by helping women to become conscious of their oppression and help them to embark on more goal-oriented careers.

One way this may be achieved is through the teaching of women's literature in colleges. These classes can lead women to question their own place in society, and to ponder how their lives can be changed.

In the 1980's, women's literature in Taiwan flourished due to the increased education of women and the influence of the Western feminist movement. Women writers became conscious of their second-class status in society and began to react against their traditional roles through their fiction. These writers deeply considered the relationship between traditional and modern value systems. In their writings, they go below the surface level of gender-based expectations, gender roles, etc., and explore women's situation in more depth. Like their male counterparts, these women assess the impact of western culture on Chinese society and its transition from a traditional, agrarian society to a modern, industrial one.

In Taiwan, the influences of the West encouraged some feminist groups to stage public demonstrations against policies and social conditions which they considered to be unfavorable to women. They argued that a culture where women are oppressed is not legitimate.

Their struggle has paid off to the degree that today Taiwan's colleges and universities offer courses in feminist literature, but even so this is only a transition step toward bringing about equality for women.
Focus of the Study

Teachers of literature who want to improve their pedagogy must give up the notion that students have learned merely because they have done everything they were told--completed a course, read the text, attended class and regurgitated the information they were fed. Knowledge is acquired through an active process of construction and reconstruction. Good teachers find ways to motivate students to become "active" learners, for they know that learning requires active engagement between the students and subject matter. Teachers should seek to create a classroom environment where the students take a more active role in their own learning. The teacher's role is to channel students' expressiveness in positive directions rather than simply lecturing and directing. The students should then become more active, self-directing, and expressive. Most importantly students can receive help from each other, fostering greater self confidence and deeper exploration.

As mentioned earlier, I propose to develop a pedagogical framework for a course on modern Chinese feminist literature. Whole language, schema theory, and research on instructional scaffolding will provide a knowledge base for exploring potential theoretical constructs to increase the level of student involvement and understanding. In addition, changes in the texts selected for study are examined as part of the pedagogical framework. Each of these areas is discussed in the next chapter.

The research methodology employs an action-research model. The action research centers around my observations of the effectiveness of the pedagogy and to what extent the students' feminist consciousness was affected.
by the course. Data for observations comes from interviews with the students as well as my own notes and analysis of audio tapes of class discussions. The pedagogy will be evaluated and modified based on identified needs.

The Centrality of a Cultural Understanding of Literature to a Pedagogy for Teaching Feminist Literature

Earlier I stated that a pedagogy based on a meaningful dialogue was a necessary first step in the development of a feminist pedagogy for teaching feminist literature. Another important and necessary condition is a cultural understanding of literature. Thus, an important aspect of this study is to provide an opportunity to increase students' knowledge of feminist Chinese literature by offering an in-depth understanding of feminist Chinese literature through a primary focus on cultural understanding. Approaches to teaching literature are usually slanted towards linguistic and aesthetic aspects. The importance of a cultural understanding of literature is often neglected or given minimal consideration. This study will endeavor to promote the importance of cultural understanding in the teaching of literature. Cultural understanding of literature, as I will use it in this study, is a method of interpreting literature through the study and understanding of the culture(s) involved. A more detailed definition can be found in Chapter two.

By employing cultural understanding as a means of teaching literature, teachers can convey an appreciation of values that might not otherwise occur to students. Literature can teach students that perspectives other than their own exist. It can foster empathy and open-mindedness toward other cultures, genders, races, and so on. Through literature, a man can be introduced to a
woman's world, a rich person can discover what it is like to be poor, and an American can learn what it was like to live in ancient China. For students whose major is not literature, the study of literature can inspire them to develop new perspectives in their own fields.

In the literature courses I have taught in Taiwan, I have tended to draw the attention of the class to such topics as plot, setting, characterization, symbolism, theme, etc. and to place emphasis on the aesthetic value—the beauty of the writing. These concerns are traditional ones. In the future, I would like instead to begin examining literature from a cultural perspective, that is, to have students use cultural knowledge in the interpretation of literature. As Forster (1941) put it, "If one takes the inclusive view, he does not deny aesthetic value in literature, but asserts, coexistent with it, other values; and in his judgment of literature he either blends the ethic-political and aesthetic or makes a double judgment" (p.85).

Students often misinterpret or fail to understand stories which come from cultures that are foreign to them. In my own teaching experience, I have had difficulty in conveying the meaning of works from eras and cultures that were not familiar to my students. In the ancient Chinese folktale, "The White Snake," for example, a white snake transforms itself into a beautiful woman and marries a mortal man. Later, a monk discovers the true identity of the "woman" and tosses a bowl into the air to break the spell and return the snake to its original form. In folklore, it was believed that animals such as snakes and foxes could sometimes take human form in order to live amid human society. Many viewed such creatures as inevitably having evil intent. They also saw such unions between humans and transformed animals as a form of entrapment, even if no obvious malevolence had taken place. For an
animal to aspire to become human would upset the natural order of the universe. Since in ancient China people thought the emperor ruled by divine right, animals were meant to be subservient to humans by the same decree. Therefore, for an animal to make on human form would be seen as a gross and presumptuous act. My class of American college students could not understand why it was necessary for the monk to interfere. If the couple was happy, why change things? They could not grasp the reason because it was implicit in a culture that was foreign to them. Their lack of knowledge about ancient Chinese culture prevented them from understanding the story.

In another example, the ancient story of "Qiu Ran Ke Zhuan" (The biography of a hero), the hero, Qiu Ran Ke, fought a battle in an attempt to overthrow the emperor. However, the author, Du Guangting, described it in a disapproving tone. My students could not understand the reason for the author's tone. They did not understand that in feudal China emperors ruled by divine right—to overthrow an emperor was to go against the natural order of the universe. Again, the students' failure to understand the culture prevented them from more fully interpreting the story. The students in this case were Chinese, which illustrates the degree to which their culture has evolved over the centuries. With adequate preparation and a knowledge of ancient Chinese culture, the students in these examples could have better grasped meanings of the story.

It is important to mention here that one concern of this study is to use knowledge of culture to help students better understand literature. To better understand a literary work, there needs to be in depth cultural knowledge, obtained from the students' direct exposure to the culture and/or from ethnographic and historical records about the culture. Such knowledge obtained
outside the novel can often help students understand the cultural codes employed in the literature. Relevant cultural theories can help students sort out and relate the cultural messages inside and outside the novel. Finally, a careful comparison of such messages may help students discover the author's particular way of perceiving or portraying the culture, and thereby gain insight into the author's intention, style, and point of view. All of these tasks fall largely in the domain of literary study.

**Research Questions**

One of the two main goals of this study involves the development of a pedagogy for teaching feminist Chinese literature. The emphasis will be on teaching literature through a cultural perspective. The second major goal of this study is to develop a pedagogy within the context of a feminist Chinese literature class which raises students' feminist consciousness.

Connected with the goals are two main research questions, each with a series of related sub-questions:

1. What elements constitute an effective pedagogy for teaching modern Chinese feminist literature at the college level to Taiwanese students?
   1.1 What motivates students to involve themselves in classroom discussion?
   1.2 How can a teacher involve students who might be reluctant to participate?
   1.3 How can students’ prior knowledge be ascertained and augmented in a classroom situation?
1.4 How will students with a history of passivity in learning react to open-ended questions?

1.5 How do students adjust when the teacher goes from the expected role of "omniscient imparter of knowledge" to that of a facilitator?

1.6 Will critical/creative thinking result from a class where students are expected to be active participants in the learning process?

1.7 How do students respond to the approach of teaching feminist literature in the context of culture?

2. How does studying modern Chinese feminist literature within the context of a course as in question #1 affect Taiwanese female students' feminist consciousness?

2.1 How can the feminist consciousness of female Chinese students be assessed?

2.2 Do students' beliefs change as a result of their increased awareness of their own cultural backgrounds?

2.3 How are inner-conflicts in beliefs addressed or resolved?

2.4 Are there issues which female students from Taiwan may be less likely to discuss openly in class? Is this a cultural response?

2.5 How do the three sources of cultural understanding, personal, mutual, and institutional understanding, described by Cushman and Whiting (1972, See Chapter 2, p.40), operate in the context of a course on feminist literature? To what extent and in what ways, do they affect each other?

The research questions above are broad ones that can only be fully answered by many studies over a long period of time. Thus, the approach in
this dissertation is to begin addressing these questions by generating grounded theoretical constructs that can provide initial guidance and initial directions for research.

**Pedagogical Goals**

As mentioned in the previous section, this course taught feminist Chinese literature using a cultural perspective as an approach for a deeper understanding of the literature. On a practical level, whole language theory served as a general philosophy for the teaching of this course. The use of whole language theory in the classroom allowed for meaningful dialogue. By discussing different aspects of the subject matter, students involved themselves in the learning process. In other words, students learned from classroom discussions, where knowledge is socially constructed. Students "constructed" their own understanding of the subject matter through social classroom interactions.

In order to investigate how learning occurs and what leads the students to a deeper level of understanding, I developed a process which allowed me to describe the desired results (product goals) and the classroom activities to be employed in order to accomplish these results (process goals).

The product and process goals of this study, I believe, fit into the framework of the action research model, as described by Kemmis (1983) as follows:

Action research is a form of self-reflective inquiry undertaken by participants in social (including educational) situations in order to improve the rationality and justice of (a) their own social or educational practices, (b) their understanding of these practices, and (c) the situations in which the practices are carried out.
In other words, it is a research approach designed to "develop new skills or new approaches and to solve problems with direct application to the classroom or other applied setting" (Isaac, 1971).

The goals set forth below are designed to offer an example of how this model was put into use in the classroom. They functioned to provide a clear set of guidelines with which to collect, organize and evaluate the data from investigating the course. However, they were only initial guidelines; the course of the research itself naturally suggested other approaches, as well as ways in which the initial methods could be modified to meet the emerging needs of the classroom. This is the nature and method of action research.

The teaching goals employed in the classroom were product goals designed to help students gain a knowledge of Chinese feminist literature; to develop cultural understanding through literature; to make students aware of the complexity of cultural levels beyond their limited awareness of their society and their role in it; and make changes in their own lives in light of what they have learned. In order to achieve these product goals, process goals were created.

The process goals break down into student/classroom process goals, and teacher/classroom process goals. Included among the student process goals were:

1. Students' background knowledge is shared so that knowledge can be broadened.
2. Students assume responsibility for their own learning.
3. Students progress from passive recipients to questioning knowledge seekers.
4. Students develop an interest in the subject matter.
5. Students decide on topics to investigate.

These student/classroom process goals created ways of learning designed to allow students to be critical of, and reflect about, what they are learning.

In order to meet the student process goals, the teacher/classroom process goals directly paralleled them, which in practice translated into a dynamic interaction. Included among these process goals were:

1. The teacher provides prompts for students to explore ideas that interest them.

2. The teacher encourages students to assume responsibility for their own learning.

3. The teacher encourages the class to include their real life experiences in interpreting the texts.

These goals were intended to challenge the assumptions in the traditional view of authority and power and to provide a space where students and teacher can collaborate.

Some Representative Instructional Activities Related to Target Process Goals

Included in the process goals are certain instructional techniques which may be employed by the teacher. These include the following:

Instructional scaffolding. To illustrate, consider a class discussion among students about the material which is to be studied. If the students are having difficulty in understanding and discussing the general material, the teacher can step in and provide guidance if necessary. This provides the foundation on which the rest of the lesson will be built. As each new plateau of
comprehension is reached, it becomes the foundation for the next, more complex level. The instructional interactions build upon and recast student efforts without rejecting what students have accomplished on their own. The final goal is for students to internalize—to ensure that the control of the interaction is gradually transferred from the teacher to the students.

**Student Journals.** For example, students write a one to two page reaction paper, identifying one issue covered in the assigned readings. They describe what was useful and what had special significance for them. These papers together can constitute their portfolios. These papers are reviewed by the teacher and returned with comments for the students, who are encouraged to share their observations based on their portfolios, with the entire class.

**Debating.** For example, the teacher may ask students to form an opinion on a certain issue related to the following week’s subject matter (such as, "Who here believes that abortion is acceptable?") and then selects a volunteer to represent one side in an organized debate on the subject. A student whose hand is not raised can be chosen to represent the opposing side. If all of the students seem to hold the same opinion on a subject, then the teacher can randomly select persons to argue pro and con. As the activity progresses, perhaps a third student could be selected to act as moderator. This kind of activity requires that the students take responsibility for the subject matter; they will be active participants, taking leadership roles in the classroom. The benefits of a well organized debate between students include: ownership of the issue, leadership on the part of the students (particularly the debaters and the moderator), and increased class participation as the teacher steps back to become a spectator. Along with all of these benefits is the potential that the interchange, questioning
and point/counterpoint will lead to a deeper level of understanding on the part of the participants, the observers or both.

**Discussion Groups.** Students are divided into groups which will inquire into the central problems/issues presented by the subject under study. Each student will be responsible for reading and reporting on an issue important to them from the reading. The student will also discuss the significance of the issue based on personal experience.

**Group Project.** Small group members will accept greater responsibility for their own learning by selecting a topic to investigate; the group then decides how each member will contribute to an oral presentation and written paper, and how to communicate what they have learned. This activity will be assigned as a final project for the three groups to be formed.

**Student Support.** Students may be praised in a strong positive way for contributing to the process. This, I believe, will be especially effective in encouraging certain students to become more involved.

**Student Feedback and Evaluation of the Teacher.** The teacher develops a mechanism for students to provide feedback on teaching approaches and how they are benefiting from the approaches. Data is obtained from formal and informal interviews with students, students' journals, writings, questionnaires, teacher/facilitator observations, and teacher's personal journal.

Finally, to maintain students' interest the teacher should inquire about what students hope to achieve in the class. If successful, the teacher can more effectively address those needs. One aim would be to use their real-life experiences in classroom discussions.
Limitation of the Study

This study may be limited by the following factors:

The Methodology

A potential limitation of my methodology was that, since I both designed and carried out my research, I didn't have the benefit of insights from others directly involved with the course of the study. However, this was also a beneficial situation, as there was no possibility of disrupting tensions due to disagreements among researchers and practitioners. As a teacher of many years experience I was confident of my ability to carry out this study on my own.

The Student Participants

The students who participated in this study were exclusively female. While the feminist nature of the course was probably more directly appealing to female students, it should be noted that the study might have been better balanced if the class had included a number of male students as well. Unfortunately, only one male opted to enroll. Furthermore, all of the students in this study had already been exposed to western-style classes as students at the University of Massachusetts. Consequently they may have been more open to western-based pedagogy than students who had never been outside of Taiwan. The next step beyond this study would be to attempt to introduce elements of a western teaching style to college classrooms in Taiwan.
By focusing solely on Chinese literature, it is possible that the opportunity to gain a better understanding of the Taiwanese culture by comparison with other cultures will be lost. Feminism is a global issue, and Taiwan represents only a small segment of the world. The students might acquire a better sense of their culture, and how it is defined by both themselves and others, if they were allowed a broader range of literature that included other cultures. But due to the brief amount of time allowed for the class (one semester) this was not possible.

Teaching Methods

Although the goal of this study is to identify usable elements of a particular western style of teaching for a Chinese classroom, I have to acknowledge the fact that I am a product of the very teaching style I am seeking to replace. Consequently, it is quite possible that some aspects of the traditional style of teaching may creep into both my performance and my analysis. I made a conscious effort to avoid this and tape recorded my class sessions to gain a more objective view of the way the class was conducted.

Chapter Outline

Chapter 1 conveys background information pertinent to the proposed study, "Toward a pedagogy for teaching feminist literature through a cultural perspective: A Qualitative Action Study of Taiwanese Undergraduates in an
American University Literature Class." Accordingly, Chapter 1 includes the following: (1) A Background of the Taiwanese Educational System; (2) Focus of the Study; (3) The Centrality of a Cultural Understanding of Literature to a Pedagogy for Teaching Feminist Literature; (4) Research Questions; (5) Study Outcomes; (6) Some Representative Instructional Activities Related to Target Process Goals. (7) Chapter Outline; (8) Definition of Key Terms.

Chapter 2 is the literature review of the scholarship for teaching feminist literature from a cultural perspective. This review covers five areas: (1) a cultural understanding of literature, (2) whole language, (3) schema theory, (4) scaffolding theory, (5) feminist pedagogy, and (6) selection of texts.

Chapter 3 describes the design and methods used in this study in great detail, and includes the data collection methods used.

Chapter 4 presents the description of the students' life stories. It includes excerpted transcriptions of the students' interviews during the participation period, from June to September, and transcriptions of interviews inside the classroom at the beginning of the course.

Chapter 5 deals with the description of the classroom participation period, from September to December, 1993.

Chapter 6 focuses on a small number of students, in an attempt to further explore key issues.

Chapter 7 applies pattern analysis and dilemma analysis to my research findings in order to complete my understanding of the results of my pedagogy.

Finally, in Chapter 8 the implications and significance of the findings are discussed.
Definition of Key Terms

**Action Research.** A system of research that focuses on actual on-site research rather than on that which takes place under controlled situations. It is a systematic means of learning through experience. In terms of curriculum, it means changing what is taught in school or how it is presented and then studying the effects of that change (Isaac & Michael, 1977). In this study, it describes a dynamic and ongoing interplay between the students and teacher, where the teacher repeatedly reexamines the effectiveness of the current pedagogy in light of the classroom experience. In this way the pedagogy evolves in an organic and relevant way.

**Cultural Understanding.** Culture is dynamic and constantly evolving. Culture can be viewed as code, conversation and community (Philipsen, 1987). When culture is discussed in terms of "code" the focus is on the system of cognitive and moral constraints represented in a world view or value system, such as beliefs, values, and images of the ideal. Culture as "conversation" emphasizes a patterned representation of a people's work, play and worship. Culture as "community" draws attention to a human grouping whose members have a shared identity. In other words, communities are the concrete settings and scenes where codes are learned and where the communal conversation takes place. These three perspectives, taken together, afford a view of culture that is useful for the purpose of this study, namely, to promote the importance of cultural understanding in the teaching of literature.
**Feminism.** Feminism is an ideology having to do with the advocacy and encouragement of equal rights and opportunities for women, politically, socially, psychologically and personally.

**Feminist Consciousness.** Feminist consciousness is the awareness of political, economic, and social factors which affect the status of women. In other words, the feminist apprehends certain features of social reality as intolerable, and rejects them in favor of a transforming project for the future.

**Feminist Literature.** In this study, I define feminist literature as comprising three possible categories: works in which women write directly about the issues affecting them as a group; works in which men write directly about the issues affecting women; and works written by either men or women which do not directly address feminism, but deal more directly with issues of humanity in general, and into which women's issues are intricately woven.

**Feminist Pedagogy.** Pedagogy is a specific approach to the science of teaching. It can include learning environments, teaching strategies, materials employed, evaluation methods, etc. Feminist pedagogy challenges the assumptions embedded in the traditional view of authority and power and attempts to provide a space where students and teachers can cooperate, collaborate, and understand and combat various forms of oppression.

**Teacher Centered.** Teacher-centered describes a traditional mode of teaching, that of the lecture, which presumes that an expert will present to students an objective, rationally derived and empirically proven set of information.
**Teacher as Facilitator.** Teacher as facilitator assumes that students have legitimate rights and potential contributions to make to the subject matter. The students are allowed to analyze their own performance in the classroom. The teacher is a major contributor, a creator of structure and a delineator of issues, but not the sole authority.

**Whole language.** Whole language is a way of bringing together views of language, of learning, and of people; in particular two specific groups of people: students and teachers. Whole language programs make a connection between language, culture, community, learner, and teachers.

**Schema theory.** Schema theory is a theory about knowledge. It is a theory about how knowledge is represented and about how that representation facilitates the use of the knowledge in particular ways. According to schema theories, all knowledge is packaged into units. The units are the schemata.

**Western Pedagogy.** It can be difficult to generalize about western teaching styles, however, for the purposes of this study, "western pedagogy" refers to a style of teaching that seeks to incorporate student discussion and the notion of "active" learners. Of course, in practice, western style teaching methods can also include a more rigid teacher-centered style, which is almost without exception employed with Taiwanese students from kindergarten through the university level.
Chinese/Taiwanese. For complicated political reasons (which are not directly relevant here), the governments in Taipei and Beijing each claim sovereignty over the other's territory. In reality, however, they are distinct political entities: The Republic of China (Taiwan) and The People's Republic of China (Mainland China). This split occurred in 1949, when the Nationalist Party moved to Taiwan after the Communist takeover of China. Culturally, however, Taiwan and China draw from the same historical, social and ethnographic background. This includes similar systems of education. It is this cultural common ground that I am focussing on, and in this respect Taiwanese culture is the same as that of China's. In this paper, when I say "Chinese", I mean "Taiwanese".
CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The review of literature will cover six areas: (1) a cultural understanding of literature, (2) whole language as a philosophy for teaching literature, (3) schema-theory as a perspective on knowledge acquisition, (4) instructional scaffolding as a perspective on teacher-student interactions, (5) perspectives on feminist pedagogy, and (6) selection of texts. The first area—a cultural understanding of literature—will consist of three subareas: (a) the relationship of literature and culture, (b) the interpretation of literature and (c) definitions of culture.

The various areas that will be covered in the review of literature are related to the goals of the study as shown in Table 1 and Table 2.

Table 1 Product Goals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Product Goals</th>
<th>Area in Review of Literature</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>to develop cultural understanding through literature</td>
<td>the relationship of literature and culture; selection of texts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to help students gain a knowledge of Chinese feminist literature</td>
<td>the interpretation of literature; selection of texts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to deepen students' awareness of female culture and their roles in it</td>
<td>definitions of culture; selection of texts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to help students make changes in their own lives</td>
<td>perspectives on feminist pedagogy</td>
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</table>
Table 2 Process Goals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Process Goals</th>
<th>Area in Review of Literature</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>to share background knowledge</td>
<td>schema theory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to help students take responsibility for their own learning</td>
<td>whole language; perspectives on feminist pedagogy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to help students decide on topics to investigate</td>
<td>whole language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to help teacher serves as a facilitator (teacher goals 1-3, see chapter 1 p. 17)</td>
<td>instructional scaffolding</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The purpose of the literature review is to provide a knowledge base, for an initial design of the course, for ways to later revise this design, for direction for initial pedagogical action, and for data collection and analysis.

A Cultural Understanding of Literature

The relationship between culture and literature is similar to the relationship between whole and part: a whole can exist in its entirety without being divided into parts, but a part cannot exist unless it once belonged to the whole. A culture can exist and still be divided into literature, music, etc., but literature (or any other art form) cannot exist without a culture to portray and illuminate, and to be influenced by. Thus, a reverse relationship is no less meaningful: culture is an important component of literature. Such categories of literature as African-American fiction, Asian-American fiction, and women's literature, etc. can be treated as records of culture. Also, people often try to
gain an understanding of the cultural fashions of the medieval, Renaissance, Baroque, neoclassic, romantic, realistic, and modernist times through the study of literary works from these periods. Since literature and culture are closely related, the interpretations of literature and culture will be illuminated in the first part of this section.

Literature and Culture

Influenced by the west, some Chinese scholars have started to do literary research through a cultural perspective. Bai & Wang's (1988) *Cultural Spirit and the Concepts of Fiction* examines the ideas of consciousness and culture in Western and Eastern literature. They examine the ideas behind philosophies, myths, tragedies, sex and gender roles, and events that preoccupy and threaten both Eastern and Western worlds. Modern Chinese literature has been strongly influenced by the West, but still consists of Chinese authors dealing with Chinese issues, so while style and themes were inspired by the West, the final product was uniquely oriental. In this book, the authors employ comparative literary techniques, but are not limited in scope to strictly comparative methods; they also provide a form of synthetic research in order to achieve a deeper exploration of cultural phenomenon.

Wang Youqin's book *Lu Xun and Modern Chinese Cultural Vibrations* (1991), attempts to explain Lu Xun's works via cultural critique. For example, Lu Xun opposed the incorporation of ancient Chinese works into the literary canon because he saw them as archaic and not having to do with the modern world. Wang Youqin explains the reasons for this point of view. In addition,
she explains Lu Xun's understanding and description of Chinese culture in his literature, and then critiques Lu Xun's ideas.

In this chapter, reviews of the definition of literature and culture are presented. The purpose of these reviews is to examine and illustrate how to teach literary texts by enhancing, and/or resorting to, students' relevant cultural understanding.

Interpretations of Literature

J. Cocklereas and D. Logan (1971) have related the following story which metaphorically explains how literature can be interpreted. I will paraphrase it here: Suppose that you have several friends. Their occupations are: a historian, an architect, a philosopher, a psychologist, and an artist. They have invited you to visit a certain city that they feel is worth your while to see.

When you arrive at the city you climb a mountain that overlooks it, and see that the city consists largely of cramped, dilapidated, nearly collapsing buildings. You ask yourself, "What piqued my friends' interest in this place?"

With this question in mind, you go down the mountain, and enter the city. Walking through the city you find that it is an altogether ordinary place, without a special defining features. But after careful observation, you do find a few things of interest, and this helps you to understand the place a little better.

When you learn more about the history of this city, You understand that this was built by escaped slaves in the middle of 19th century. Now you realize why your friend, the historian, was interested in this place. No doubt, your friend, the architect was interested because, although the city was built in the American Midwest, the style is southern colonial. The philosopher and the
psychologist were interested in how the citizens were able to live in peace and harmony. When the sun sets and you see the buildings with their peeling walls in the golden light, you understand why the artist was interested in this city.

Just as this fictitious city can be viewed from a variety of perspectives, the same situation holds true for literature. There are many different perspectives from which to find meanings in a literary work. Readers from diverse fields can each appreciate a work from their own unique point of view. For example, some readers believe that if they understand the author's background--such as his or her religion, married life, career, political opinions, etc.--they will better understand the work itself. Some readers might also feel that the work can be better understood if they know something about the author's psychological state at the time the work was written. In addition, some literary works give clear pictures of the social customs and moral standards of the time. Readers with an interest in the cultural aspects of literature will be interested in exploring the relationship between art and society.

Literature has been defined in many different ways throughout time. Almost every textbook or theoretical work on literature begins with the question: "What is Literature?" So far, no one answer has been given that satisfies everyone. Generally speaking, literature is "writings having excellence of form or expression and expressing ideas of permanent or universal interest." (See Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary) We conceive of literature as being comprised of plays, short stories, novels, poems, and so on.

Eagleton (1983) says that in the 18th century the concept of literature meant the whole body of valued writing in society: philosophy, history, essays and letters, as well as poetry. The modern application of the word "literature"
began to evolve in the 19th century during the Romantic Period and was then confined to "creative and imaginative writings" (Welleck & Warren, 1942).

The Russian Formalists saw literature as "a particular organization of language, which has its own specific laws, structures and devices that are to be studied in themselves rather than reduced to something else" (Eagleton, 1981), in contrast to the "ordinary language commonly used." To the Phenomenologists, literary works are "only aesthetic objects which exist only in the consciousness of the perceiver" or which "only exist in the reading of readers" (Holman, 1980). H. Morley (see Wellek & Warren, 1956, P.252) conceived of literature as "the national biography." L. Stephen (p.252) regarded literature as "a particular function of the whole social organism" and "a kind of by-product of social change."

T. Eagleton also offers a useful definition of literature. In his book Introduction to Literary Theory (1983), he claimed that literature is vitally engaged with the living situation of men and women; it is concrete rather than abstract and it displays life in all its rich variousness, and rejects barren conceptual inquiry for the feel and taste of what it is to be alive.

All in all, literature has acquired many descriptive labels: "imaginative fiction," "human expression," and "social phenomenon," among others. Theoreticians have differed and will always differ in their effort towards a comprehensive definition. Those definitions based on historical interpretation such as Eagleton's and Stephen's may serve to guide literature teachers to acquire cultural understanding of literary works. Literature is a social institution, a cultural creation using language as its medium. Indeed, literature has usually arisen in close connection with particular cultural institutions. An example is primitive society, where we may even be able to discern ritual,
custom, attitude, and life style from the poetry. Thus a large majority of the
to this end, the study of literary materials can illuminate important cultural
themes that underline people's thoughts and actions. Because this paper deals
with the interpretation of literature based on the understanding of culture, it is
important to keep this relationship in mind.

**Culture Defined**

G. Philipsen (1987, p.249) says that "a culture can be viewed from many
perspectives, each of which provides one partial but important glance at the
nature of things cultural."

Indeed, the term "culture" has acquired numerous meanings and
definitions in the past one hundred years, reflecting people's different ideas
about, and kinds of interest in, "things cultural." What underlies Philipsen's
statement is an important implication that it is more meaningful to ask in what
way a view of culture is heuristic than to examine whether the view is correct.
In fact, many of these views on culture mark important developments in the
field of anthropology.

The most comprehensive definition I have seen is one provided by R.
Fletcher, who sees culture as

The "social heritage" of a community: the total body of material artifacts
(tools, weapons, houses, places of work, worship, government,
recreation, works of art, etc.), of collective mental and spiritual
"artifacts" (systems of SYMBOLS, IDEAS, beliefs, aesthetic
perceptions, values, etc.), and of distinctive forms of behavior
(INSTITUTIONS, groupings, RITUALS, modes of organization, etc.)
created a people ... in their ongoing activities within their particular life-
conditions, and ... transmitted from generation to generation. (Bullock &
Trombley, 1977, p.195)

Perhaps because this definition reflects the inclusiveness of the concept
of culture itself, a student of "things cultural" may sometimes feel the need to
reduce culture to the specific aspect in which he or she is interested. Such a
practice, as we may learn from the implication of Philipsen's statement, is both
rewarding to the student her/himself and academically justifiable.

This paper deals largely with literature as a product of the second part of
Fletcher's definition ("collective mental and spiritual 'artifacts'") which often
actively responds to the third part ("distinctive forms of behavior"). I will
therefore pay particular attention to making use of the contributions to the
understanding of culture from two perspectives, especially the second
perspective.

E. Tylor, the founder of social anthropology, offered in 1871 what might
be considered a classic definition: "culture...taken in its wide ethnographic
sense is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law,
custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by men as a member of

From his definition, we derive the implication that culture is learned,
rather than inherited biologically; it is something socially shared rather than
property monopolized by the individual. In other words, Tylor recognized that
social life is learned and shared, two of the most important variables necessary
to comprehending the nature of human endeavor in any society. In this view,
culture is less the behavior itself than the shared understandings that guide as
well as are expressed in the behavior.
At the end of the 19th century, F. Boas began using "culture" to refer to
the distinctive body of customs, beliefs, and social institutions that seemed to
characterize each separate society (Stocking, 1968). Instead of attributing the
differences among societies to different stages of cultural development, Boas
maintained that each society had a culture of its own. Here, culture was still
seen as corresponding to Tylor’s definition, but Boas suggested that each
society’s particular practices, beliefs, and life style were to be examined as a
unique entities.

Looking at culture as a product of human learning, W. Goodenough
states that "culture, then, consists of standards for deciding what it is, standards
for deciding what can be, standards for deciding how one feels about it,
standards for deciding what to do about it, and standards for how to go about
doing it" (1963, p. 259). Generally speaking, Goodenough views culture in
terms of "knowledge," which features a system of guidelines for social-psychic
orientation inside a community. He writes that "culture does not consist of
things, people, behavior, or emotions. It is rather an organization of these
things. It is the forms of things that people have in mind, their models for
perceiving, relating, and otherwise interpreting them" (Goodenough, 1964).
This seems to be also what R. Keesing (1974) refers to in his notion of
ideational theory of culture.

A recent development in the theory on culture is the "theory of cultural
models" proposed by Holland and Quinn (1987). They believe that "a very
large proportion of what we know and believe derives from these shared models
that specify what is in the world and how it works." Their theory is built upon
"a new (anthropological) view of culture as shared knowledge--not a people’s
customs and artifacts and oral traditions, but what they must know in order to
act as they do, make the things they make, and interpret their experience in the distinctive way they do." (p. 4) The theory emphasizes that "culture is an internal mechanism for organizing and interpreting inputs."

Another definition and theory of culture can be found in the writing of C. Geertz. This anthropologist stresses that human behavior must be viewed as "symbolic action," and culture is what the action means (Geertz, 1973). "Culture," he says, "is public because meaning is" (Geertz, 1973). Knowing how to wink, Geertz asserts, is not the same as the physical act of winking. It is not the same, either, as knowing how to interpret winks as symbolic acts. Rather, it is the existence of our knowledge of how to interpret them, that makes winks symbolic acts. For Geertz, culture is both the acts as symbols and their meaning. G. Robinson (1985) also proposed that culture is shared and can be observed. He writes that

>cultural understanding is an ongoing, dynamic process in which learners continually synthesize cultural inputs with their own past and present experience in order to create meaning—a synthesis between the learner's home culture, the target culture input and the learner as an individual. (pp. 11-12)

From the definition cited above, we find that most of these anthropologists, although implicitly, associate culture with communication. Tylor and Goodenough both look at culture as the object of human learning. Geertz views culture as a symbolic action. Robinson stresses that culture is shared. Culture, then, is a name these anthropologists give to the "code" (Carbaugh, 1990, P.9) and symbols that are learned and shared by members of a group. Also, these codes and symbols are taken for granted in the communication within a certain society.
In recent years, more and more attention has been given to the idea of culture from the viewpoint of communication. This is of special interest to literature teachers, since communication is a feature common to both literary and educational activities. Among advocates of this approach, E. Hall (1959), for one, claims that "culture is communication and communication is culture." A. G. Smith (1966, p.1) looks at culture as "the way people communicate." Kim (1982) writes, "communication is our primary means of utilizing the resources of the environment in the service of humanity." Gudykunst and Kim (1984) say: "Communication is a symbolic process involving the attribution of meaning." B. Haslett (1989) also defines culture as "a shared, consensual way of life, and that sharing and consensus are made possible only through communication." The consensual aspect stressed here is developed by the communication scholar, D. Carbaugh, who observes that "a culture is being put on display as people symbolize a common identity." (1990, p. 1)

J. P. Spradley (1980) defines culture as "acquired knowledge people use to interpret experience and generate behavior." Here, "the acquired knowledge people use" can be viewed as a set of symbols whose meanings are shared in a community through communication. Spradley's definition may lead us to examine through what channel and by what means these symbolic meanings are shared. Also, this definition draws our attention to two other components different from what previous definitions suggested, namely, "interpreting experience" and "generating behavior." Using Carbaugh's (1990, pp. 7-9) framework, one may say that, in social life, "interpreting experience" depends upon "codes" and "generating behavior" upon "norms." Therefore, Spradley's definition can be viewed as including activities that profoundly involve two essential elements in communication.
The communicational aspect of culture is emphasized in the definition by Harris and Moran (1979, p. 4) that culture is the unique life style of a particular group of people...communicate knowledge, learned behavioral traits that are shared by participants in a social group and manifested in their institutions and artifacts.

Also highlighting the communicational aspect of culture is G. Philipsen's (1987, p. 249) view of culture as code, conversation, and community. When culture is discussed in terms of "code," the focus is on the system of cognitive and moral constraints represented in a world view or value system, such as beliefs, values, and images of the ideal. Culture as "conversation" emphasizes a patterned representation of a people's work, play and worship. Culture as "community" draws attention to a human grouping whose members have a shared identity. "Code is a source of order, the lived conversation is a source of the dynamism and creativity of culture" (Philipsen, 1987, p. 249). Communities are the concrete settings and scenes where codes are learned and where the communal conversation takes place. Thus, cultural communication is the process by which a code is realized and negotiated in a communal conversation. Of all the definitions of culture described above, I find Philipsen's to be the most valuable and practical for this study, namely to promote the importance of cultural understanding in the teaching of literature. In his model of culture, which I will use in my teaching, culture is an organic combination of the three levels (community, conversation, code), with code as the essential, defining element: Within any community, the cultural "conversations" operate within, or under, a regulatory code.
I suggest that literature is a means by which a writer communicates culturally. In this sense, communication can be regarded as the basis of the relationship between literature and culture. Teaching viewed from the perspective of communication is also basically a speech situation, which Hymes (1972, p. 56) describes as a situation within a community that is "associated with (or marked by) the absence of) speech." Examples of such situations are "ceremonies, fight, hunts, meals,..., and the like" (1972, p. 56). Thus, effectively teaching literature through culture is largely a matter of communicating successfully. But how does a teacher know whether he or she is communicating successfully?

Inspired by Cushman's and Whiting's (1972) definition of culture as "the successful transfer of symbolic information," Cushman and Kincaid point out:

Human beings can depend on psychological, social or institutional processes and criteria, or combinations of all three to arrive at coherent, meaningful interpretations of experience based on their shared patterns of information. Defined thus broadly, "success" is a question of how understanding is taught as a consequence of communication (1987, p. 3).

Based upon these "shared patterns of information," they propose these criteria for judging whether communication has been successful:

(1) **Personal Understanding**

"First, successful communication can be claimed to have taken place when an individual can subjectively make sense out of his perceptions of experiences and incoming messages" (p. 2).
(2) Mutual Understanding
"Second, successful communication can be said to have occurred when two or more individuals interactively arrive at a common set of interpretations for patterns of information" (p. 2).

(3) Institutional Understanding
"Third, successful communication can be said to have occurred when some institution of authority provides a criterion for the correct interpretation of patterns of information" (p. 2).

If teaching literature through culture is largely a matter of communication, it can be beneficial to think of the teaching in terms of these criteria. As discussed earlier, culture is an important component of literature. Literature is a means by which the writer, as a member of a given community, communicates culturally. We have noted that culture--be it "unique life style..., communicable knowledge, learned behavioral traits..." (Moran, 1979), or code, community, and communication (Philipsen, 1987) -- is extensively "shared by participants in a social group and manifested in their institutions and artifacts" (Moran, 1979). This being the case, individual community members' personal experience of the culture is often a medium which the writer uses to reach his/her audience. This cultural experience is by no means limited to direct witness to or actual practice of activities endemic to the culture. It includes the experience of reading texts (Kress, 1989, pp. 11-12)--artistic or otherwise--that are pertinent to the culture as well. Cushman and Kincaid (1987, p.2) point out that the criterion of personal understanding "represents an individual's own subjective estimate that the symbolic patterns confronting that individual have
been interpreted correctly." They add: "Such personal understanding occurs when one reads a poem or practices meditation, from either external or internal experiences" (1987, p.2). Drawing on students' memories of relevant cultural experience and enriching these experiences thus seems to be an effective method of bringing about such understanding. This kind of understanding is an initial step towards the understanding of a literary work.

As to the criterion of **mutual** understanding, Cushman and Kincaid said:

Such a conception of successful communication focuses on agreements between individuals. It is communication rooted in social consensus and represents two or more individuals' estimates that the information pattern confronting them has been interpreted correctly as a consequence of their interaction (p.2).

Using their own personal understanding, students often need to "compare notes" among themselves as to how to understand the text. Once again, the cultural experience they share plays an important role at this stage. To enhance the students' understanding of the text, a teacher, as a supposedly "more experienced" reader of literature, often needs to participate in discussion by sharing with students his or her own personal understanding of, and his or her own cultural experience pertinent to the text. Here again, one can see the importance of a cultural (and communicational) approach in the teaching of literature.

Cushman and Kincaid (1987, p. 3) define institutional understanding as "communication rooted in institutional authority and representing imposed standards or conventions for interpretation." They further point out that "examples of institutional conventions for correct interpretations of symbolic patterns are found in various religious ceremonies, cultural conventions for
greeting others, and ideological interpretation of government policy” (p.3). In a literature classroom, the teacher often needs to define both personal and mutual understanding in relation to institutional understanding. Whether one accepts or doubts the institutional interpretation, and regardless to what extent he or she does so, one should not be unaware of it. For example, in the study of certain Western literary works where a cross and the color white are frequently mentioned, the reader may either accept, or challenge the conventional notion in the culture that the cross symbolizes Christ and white signifies innocence or chastity. With enough reason, he or she may choose to ignore the symbolism, but at the risk of missing the author’s meaning. Also, the reader may either fail to recognize the significance of the cross and the color white in the work or may devise some erroneous interpretations about them. Herein lies both the importance of institutional understanding and the advantage of defining our personal and mutual understanding relative to the institutional understanding.

Since culture is essential to all three of these criteria, one may conclude that cultural approach is important in the teaching of literature.

**Whole Language**

In a traditional Chinese literature classroom, the text is treated as an object of deep respect by teacher and student alike. Literary works are thought to contain "real meaning" intended for the reader to grasp. This way of looking at works of literature often leads to the notion that there is only one correct interpretation of the text. If there are a variety of opinions, at most only one can possibly prove to be "correct." Other opinions may easily lead to doubts about
the competence of those students who hold these opinions. Thus, the only people who are thought to know the "real meaning" are "experts" on literature. In the classroom, only the teacher can claim such authority. But in the end, this teaching method is often harmful to students' enthusiasm for learning and their creativity.

I believe that an open discussion of the text is valuable, if not critical to exchanging ideas and to the practice of persuasion through arguing about and examining various interpretations. Through verbalization, students can get a better grasp of, and better refine, their own thoughts. In addition, whole language philosophy implies the reader's freedom of interpretation, that there is no one "right" way to interpret the meaning of a text. This shifts the focus from the text to the audience, and can consequently stimulate the students' interest in critical thinking and give them the chance to evaluate their own judgment, thus enhancing their analytical abilities. Another benefit is to boost the students' self-confidence.

Whole language is a way of bringing together views of language, of learning, and of people; in particular two specific groups of people: students and teachers. Whole language programs make a connection between the language, culture, community, learner, and teachers (K. Goodman, 1986).

Goodman (1991) claims:

Whole language brings together modern, scientific knowledge of teaching, learning, language, and curriculum and puts it into a positive, humanistic philosophy, which teachers can identify with and which offers them strong criteria for their professional decisions and teaching practice. (p. 10)

Whole language is not a single program or approach to teaching. Instead, it is a "theory of instruction and learning based on knowledge learning
and language use as well as knowledge of people of whatever age (children and adults) and how they learn" (J. W. Woodley, 1988). The teacher can apply this theory in selecting activities and materials, evaluating student's progress and shaping the educational program within a classroom.

In most elementary whole language classrooms, one major focus of instruction is on learning language--learning to read and write, and learning to share with others through both oral and written language. Language use is an integral part of every activity. Language is at the core of learning; indeed, without language there would be no learning. Based on this belief, the whole language approach must include literature teaching.

In addition, whole language emphasizes the "wholeness" of language--not its parts. "Whole language is whole" (K. Goodman, 1986, p.27). "The whole is always more than the sum of the parts" (p. 19). If you reduce a wooden table to the elements which compose it, it is no longer a table. By the same token, language is language only when it is whole. When teacher and students look at words, phrases, sentences, they do so always in the context of the whole.

In literature, it is necessary to consider the relationship of whole to part. For example, you cannot isolate a piece of the story and ask students to grasp the appropriate meaning. They have to see the whole story as an entity. In other words, everything in a story belongs to the whole, and no individual piece can be determined, evaluated, or understood without reference to the whole of the entire work.

Whole language also emphasizes the use of "authentic" resources. In the literature classroom, every work should be considered authentic by its readers. The concept of "authenticity" in literature is based on the idea that story must
be experienced in the entirety—abridged works are not acceptable. Also the work was not invented simply for the purpose of teaching language.

Reading is a process of interaction between text and reader, and as mentioned earlier, the whole language approach implies a freedom of interpretation. Readers from different cultural backgrounds will likely have different interpretations of, and reactions to, texts. In the preface to the third edition of her book, *Literature as Exploration* (1976), L. Rosenblatt writes: "Literature is thus for him (the reader) a medium of exploration. Through books, the reader may explore his own nature, become aware of potentialities for thought and feeling within himself... (and) he may explore the outer world, other personalities, other ways of life." The text thus serves as a stimulus that links elements of the reader's past experiences with literature and with life.

Although the whole language approach may be more common in the elementary or secondary level, there are great similarities among whole language teachers and teaching in all levels and subjects, even in college and university teaching. Of course, there are differences as well. Whole language must be modified so that the appropriate elements are adapted to college instruction. Specifically, it is important to develop instructional strategies and curricula which are appropriate for the college level. Outlined briefly here are some key principles for teaching and learning that are based on the whole language theory:

1. Literature studies must build on utilizing the intrinsic motivations of students. This can be achieved by working together with students to select texts of specific interest.

2. Teachers not only provide knowledge to students but more importantly serve as facilitators. They do this by providing prompts and letting
students explore tangential ideas that interest them, allowing students to raise questions, and occasionally providing answers that cannot be found through student explorations.

3. Differences in understanding are to be accepted and even valued. Each student learns as an individual, and students should have mutual respect for each other. Each may have an understanding different from the other students or from the teacher. In addition, teachers should respect each of the students, and they, in turn, should extend the same respect to the teacher.

4. Much of the success of a class depends on individual responsibility. Both teacher and students are responsible for learning to take place. The role as teacher is to provide an environment for learning and to serve as a facilitator and source of knowledge. It is the students' responsibility to bring an active willingness to participate in the learning process. Teachers can influence their students' learning, but they cannot make it happen without the cooperation of the students. Similarly, students can influence the environment and means that the teacher uses to guide them, but they cannot control the instructional strategies used or the subject matter presented. Both the teacher and student must live up to their individual responsibilities in order for learning to take place.

**Schema Theory**

Another important concept for teachers to understand is schema theory. A schema theory is a theory about how knowledge is represented and about how that representation facilitates the use of the knowledge in particular ways. According to schema theories, all knowledge is packaged into units. These
units are the schemata. Schemata are collections of concepts and associations that occur together repeatedly and act as unitary, higher-order concepts (Thorndyke & Hayes-Roth, 1979). These clusters of knowledge have variables and exist at various levels of abstraction. Schemata can represent knowledge in our experience at all levels—from ideologies and cultural truths, to knowledge about what constitutes an appropriate sentence in our language, all the way down to the meaning of a particular word. Our schemata are our knowledge. All of our generic knowledge is embedded in the brain as schemata.

In addition, schemata are assumed to be guiding forces behind remembering as well. Rumelhart and Ortony (1977) suggest that the process of remembering is essentially similar to the process of perceiving. To quote,

There is thus a kind of continuum between understanding and remembering where in the former we have the imposition of an interpretation primarily on incoming "sensory fragments," and in the latter we have the imposition of an interpretation primarily on "memorial fragments." In both cases schemata are employed.

Schema theory is not an instructional model in the sense that whole language is, but it helps to build an appreciation and understanding of the whole language theory. Schema theory is a kind of model that can help in bridging cross-cultural groups because it encourages communication and the sharing of ideas between all members of a class. Schema theory is especially helpful to teachers and students because it encourages them to really listen and hear what the students are saying.

Rumelhart and Ortony (1977) list four major characteristics of schemata:

1. Schemata have variables.
2. Schemata can be embedded, one within another.
3. Schemata represent knowledge at all levels of abstraction.
4. Schemata represent knowledge rather than definitions.

In addition to these features, there are at least two more features of schemata (cf. Thorndyke & Hayes-Roth, 1979, P.84).

1. Schema theory is vaguely specified and able to explain any set of available data.
2. Schema theory is not sufficiently well-specified to be used predictively.

This unpredictable feature is, I think, due to what Anderson and Pearson call "allocation of attention," which they explain by the following (1984, P. 38):

1. The schema to which the text is being assimilated, already-processed text information, and an analysis of task demands provided a gauge for judging the importance of upcoming text elements.
2. As it is encountered, each text element is processed to some minimum level and then graded for importance.
3. Extra attention is devoted to elements that surpass a criterion of importance.
4. Because of the extra attention they receive, important text elements are learned better, and because they are learned better, these text elements are also remembered better.

In other words, this theory predicts that a reader will best remember the information that seems most important to her or him and each reader may find a different place of information that he or she thinks is most important. But it is not possible to predict to what extent a reader can comprehend that information. Thorndyke & Hayes-Roth (1979) indicated that schema theory has two principal shortcomings, namely, vagueness and unpredictability. However, I think that these
can be positive features and that in any case the positive aspects of schema theory outweigh the negative.

According to F. Bartlett's (1932) hypothesis, an individual who reads a story that presupposes the schemata of a foreign culture will comprehend it quite differently from a native. By the same token, it stands to reason that readers who bring different schemata to a study will develop different interpretations. The schemata embodying his or her background knowledge provide the framework for understanding the setting, mood, characters, and plot. Due to schema theory's vagueness and unpredictability different readers can focus their attention on different pieces of information they consider important. Therefore, through discussion, schemata can be shared and knowledge can be broadened. In this way, schema theory can be used in the classroom. Interaction between teacher and students and among students themselves should serve in the broadening of knowledge. Also, students can share their experience and learn from each other, and thus enhance their understanding. Through this process, students can also develop the critical thinking to become independent readers and learners.

**Instructional Scaffolding**

Just as a scaffolding is used to help construction workers complete the next phase of building projects, scaffolding in the classroom is used to help students move from one level of understanding or competence to the next. The concept of instructional scaffolding was discussed by Langer and Applebee (1986) as an important strategy of effective instruction in reading and writing. It deals with the instructional interactions between the teacher and the students,
basically the teacher's role as mediator between the text and the reader. Langer and Applebee base their ideas on Vygotsky's theory of cognitive development. Vygotsky thought that all higher psychological processes originally stem from social processes shared between people, particularly between children and adults. A. Brown and R. Ferrara (1985) point out:

The child first experiences the active problem-solving activities in the presence of others but gradually comes to perform these functions independently. The process of internalization is gradual; first the adult or knowledgeable peer controls and guides the child's activity, but gradually the adult and the child come to share the problem-solving functions, with the child taking initiative and the adult correcting and guiding when she falters. Finally, the adult cedes control to the child and functions primarily as a supportive and sympathetic audience (p. 281).

In their theory of instructional scaffolding, Langer and Applebee (1986) introduce five components: Ownership, Appropriateness, Structure, Collaboration, and Transfer of Control or Internalization. Their intent is to develop:

The concept of instructional scaffolding as an important component of effective instruction in reading and writing, functioning much as the adult in the mother-infant pairs: simplifying the situation, clarifying the structure, helping the student accomplish tasks that would otherwise be too difficult, and providing the framework and rules of procedure that the student will gradually learn, so that the instructional support will no longer be necessary (1986).

In order to demonstrate how these five components are related to Vygotsky's theory, let us look at an example from literary instruction: Teaching the concept of symbolism to a college literature class. First, by asking and helping students to answer a series of questions, the teacher, working as a
mediator, establish an interaction between students and the passage. Through the interaction, the teacher, knowing that he or she understands or "owns" the concept of symbolism, decides that this topic is appropriate for a given class. The teacher gives students the opportunity to explain symbolism in their own words, but they are, as expected, unable to fully express all of the concepts surrounding symbolism. After this, the teacher can develop a structured mini-lecture used to guide the students to the next level of competence. In my teaching experience in Taiwan, for example, through the interaction in the classroom, the teacher noticed that most of the students thought that Lu Xun's essay, "Autumn Night", described what the author thought and felt on an autumn night. Actually, underlying these impressions is a deeper symbolism of society. But without my providing extra information and a thorough explanation, it was difficult for students to grasp the deeper symbolic meaning. Generally, students need some kind of assistance in order to understand the author's meaning. Thus, the teacher can provide variety of resources, such as biographical information or explaining the author's writing style. This extra information serves as scaffolding for understanding the writer's intentions.

After demonstrating how symbolism functions in several sample pieces of literature, the teacher could then work with the students in a cooperative exercise in which the teacher allows students a high degree of autonomy in their literary analysis but also provides students with suggestions to help guide them toward an understanding of symbolism.

Having passed this phase of the process, the teacher should arrive at the level of transfer of control. In other words, the students should have internalized the knowledge of symbolism that the teacher has intended to convey.
It is commonly understood and documented in the literature that instructional scaffolding theory involves a conversational back and forth. This element rarely occurs in the Taiwanese educational system, because students are not encouraged to have verbal exchanges with their teachers in the classroom. They look to the teacher for the "correct" response, which they internalize and try to incorporate in their future written and verbal responses. The classes I taught in Taiwan exhibited very limited student-teacher exchanges, but a kind scaffolding took place nonetheless because the students internalized the teacher-generated information, which was then incorporated into, and deepened their own understanding, then added to that understanding in an attempt to take the next step in the process of learning.

Although this does not represent the ideal model of scaffolding, it leaves a considerable amount to be desired, and it is a step moving toward a true form of scaffolding, and helps to move Taiwanese instructional modality in this direction.

The scaffolding actually takes place during the phase of Brown and Ferrara's (1985) model of the learning experience in which the students and the teacher cooperatively engage in a problem-solving process. The teacher allows the students to attempt the problem-solving activity with a considerable amount of autonomy. He or she offers suggestions and constructive advice to help guide the students' problem-solving strategy but without totally dictating and taking charge of the learning experience.

During the interaction, the teacher can help students by focusing or narrowing the field of consideration, so that the students can focus their efforts more directly on refining their own responses. Sometimes, the teacher can use hints or bits of ideas to elicit expected or possible answers. Finally, at the end
of the process, in order to summarize and conclude the entire discussion, it is also important for the teacher to review or reiterate the ideas stated by the students.

**Feminist Pedagogy**

The recurring theme of Simone de Beauvoir's *Second Sex* is that, historically, very little attention has been paid to women intellectually. There has been very little written concerning women or gender differences until recently. Hertmann (1984) defines patriarchy as a social system characterized by "the systematic dominance of men over women" (p.194). It emerges as a "set of social relations between men, which have a material base, and which, though hierarchical, establish or create interdependence and solidarity among men that enable them to dominate women" (p. 197). He goes on to say that "patriarchy is not simply hierarchical organization but hierarchy in which particular people fill particular places" (p. 199). This can refer to the educational system, because, originally, only males were allowed to participate in formal education. When women were first allowed to attend school, the concern was whether or not they would be able to succeed and not whether or not the pedagogy and curriculum met their needs. The specific learning needs of female students were not a concern. Male-oriented pedagogy has remained in place into present years.

The traditional mode of university teaching, that of the lecture, presumes that an expert will present to the students an objective and rationally derived set of information. This mode, no matter how complete, will necessarily reflect the personal bias of the lecturer. It does not necessarily hold personal meaning for
all students—they may simply memorize it for a grade. This kind of learning is "for the test" not "for oneself." Moreover, the traditional version of education is often discriminatory against women because its content often ignores or demeans them.

Some may find the terms "masculine" and "feminine" to be misleading; indeed there are aspects of each in every individual, but most cultures tend to impose that certain traits be expressed or repressed to suit the cultural norms. Generally speaking, men are encouraged to be aggressive, taciturn, and not openly expressive of their emotions, while women are encouraged to be more passive, nurturing and openly expressive of their feelings. But traits ascribed to one gender are present in the other, even if they are not openly expressed. Most men, for example, have a strong capacity for nurturing that is rarely allowed to express itself, while more and more women are being given the opportunity to express their more aggressive, masculine tendencies since the advent of the Women's Movement.

When I discuss a "feminist pedagogy," I don't strictly mean a pedagogy designed for and about women, although that is a part of it. What I mean, more broadly, is a pedagogy that is designed to take advantage of the tendencies found in everyone which are commonly referred to as "feminine"--that is, one designed to encourage open expression and to allow the students, both male and female, to explore their own personal feelings and beliefs. The emphasis is not on competition, but on cooperation, collaboration, open expression, intuitive knowledge and personal understanding. These are all traits which were lacking in the traditional, male-oriented teaching style.

F. Maher (1993) suggests that a pedagogy appropriate for voicing and exploring must be collaborative, cooperative and interactive. She claims that
each student has legitimate rights and potential experiences to build a
satisfying version of the subject. Its goal is to enable students to draw on
their personal and intellectual experiences to build a satisfying version of
the subject, one that they can use productively in their own lives. Its
techniques involve students in the assessment and production, as well as
the absorption, of the material. The teacher is a major contributor, a
creator of structure and a delineator of issues, but not the sole authority
(p. 566).

Thus, the process of relating subject-matter to student needs and interests
depends upon the active participation of all students, whose experiences and
voices have, until recently, not been considered legitimate. Such a process
draws on the "feminine" modes of collaborative interaction. In addition, the
content of major disciplines is being reshaped to accept multiple viewpoints as
equally valid. Therefore, student contributions can enrich interpretations within
the discipline as well as in their own learning. The role of students is not only
to answer questions, but to pose them; to become creators and constructors, as
well as learners, of knowledge.

In interactive teaching modes the most common form of communication
is discussion, not lecture. F. Maher (1993, p.573) suggests that in conducting
discussions, teachers need to encourage students to listen and react to each
other's statements, and relate them to their own experiences. She claims,

To gain maximum participation, discussion on specific topics can be
arranged in small groups, with results reported to the class as a whole
and emphasized by the teacher. In general, habits of inferiority and
passivity, of looking to the teacher for the answer, have to be deliberately
challenged to be broken. We can be explicit that a course relies on
student contributions and formulations, but we must also arrange
classroom discussion so that this reliance is genuine. With women
students (especially silenced) and Women's Studies (until recently not
considered a legitimate field of inquiry) such new patterns should be particularly emphasized.

According to Hale and Sandler (1982), in their research on college women's classroom experiences, "feminine" styles might be more conducive to the notion of discussion as a "cooperative development of ideas" rather than as "competition from the floor." They describe women's tendencies to end questions with a questioning intonation, encouraging the next speaker to elaborate (p.10). Simply in terms of interactions, we can suggest that teaching practices which stress cooperative participation rather than competition may encourage more students to actively question and examine the implications of the material they are learning in their own experience and educational needs.

In sum, we can draw several components from this pedagogy: (1) There needs to be more than one single voice; (2) There is no one right answer; (3) Material should be related to students' experience; (4) The discussion should validate the experience of the ordinary person; (5) It should encourage student ownership of the subject matter; (6) The students need to take responsibility for their own learning; (7) Students need to challenge the teacher's ideas; and (8) There should be a cooperative development of ideas rather than competition for the floor.

Snoek (1985) argues that a feminist pedagogy means teaching in the context of awareness of female oppression. Course content is of equal importance to the educational methods employed. In the case of a feminist pedagogy, the traditional, male-dominated canon is inadequate. The voices and opinions shared need to be balanced, in order to provide students with a deeper, more reality-based view of the world at large. Women's voices, both in writing,
in interpreting and in discussion both need and deserve to be heard. Similarly, male voice should not be excluded simply because they are male—male points of view are of equal validity to female viewpoints. Even if the male student tends to be conservative, that is still an aspect of the world which the students will encounter outside the classroom and need to incorporate into their personal understanding; the key is for it to be made clear that each particular view is but one of many views. In other words, a feminist pedagogy is one of tolerance, sensitivity and understanding, which is not addressed in the old pedagogy, but is sorely needed in the modern world.

Selection of Texts

The key to success in teaching literature, to a large degree, lies in the literary texts one selects. The chief criterion in choosing texts is "whether students are likely to read them, work with them, and learn from them" (K. E. Eble, 1990, p. 126). It is good to choose a text that can be read and understood without the help of the teacher. "A text that stimulates the students' interest is usually better than one that merely satisfies the instructor" (p. 126).

Here, I would like to discuss briefly the issue of the canon. "Canon" is a term which makes the value of its contents seem unquestionable. An important feature of the canon is its "authoritativeness". In the West, the Bible has been in the canon because, in the dominant culture, its authority has been unquestionable and it largely prescribes human behavior in this culture. In the Western Han dynasty (206 b. c.-24 a.d.) in China, Confucianists compiled the Six Classics, and identified them as the canon. One of the Classics, The Book of Odes, is the earliest compilation of poetry in China. It was held in high
Esteem by Confucius (551 b.c.). This poetry compilation is generally regarded as the earliest entry of the Chinese literary canon.

In the West, the word "canon" descends from an ancient Greek word. It is a rod used as an instrument of measurement. The term later developed the second sense of "rule" or "law". In the fourth century A.D., the word "canon" was used to signify a list of texts or authors, specifically the books of the Bible. As time passed, the canon came to be defined as the books deemed more worthy of preservation than others. It was not until the birth of the modern feminist movement in the late 1960's that people began to take a new, critical look at the content in the literary canon. Up until that time, there had been an almost total lack of works by women authors, even fewer writers who were minorities and of lower-class origin.

Today, the literary canon is sometimes straightforwardly defined as the body of texts used in the classroom (Guillory, 1990). It includes the literary works mentioned or recommended in the annals of literary history and criticism, and other literary works in one way or another related to the topic of the class.

In a Taiwanese college classroom, when literature is being taught, teachers are often inclined to teach classical literature instead of the modern genre. In Chinese literature, there are a great many wonderful classical works, but most of them are too difficult for adolescents or young adults to read. Students can read them but usually cannot understand them well. For example, classical literature was written basically for the entertainment of the educated upper classes. It was both linguistically and culturally inaccessible to the "common people". Also, the language of classical literature, known as "wen yan wen", is a classical style of writing, where one word can have many meanings. The job of the teacher is to interpret the meaning of a work
through rigorous linguistic analysis. For most students, this process is both difficult and boring. Therefore, after a number of vain attempts to read these great but difficult works, students will be discouraged and give up reading. Indeed, these classical works are part of our nation’s language heritage, and it is important from the society’s point of view for students to inherit this cultural legacy. But the students’ inability to understand this literature prevents them from inheriting this legacy.

Therefore, I would say that for introductory college courses in literature, it may be more effective first to read modern literary works that can spark the students’ interest in literature. These literary works will likely be more accessible and comprehensible, and closer to the students’ lives, because this literature comes from a cultural and linguistic background that is similar to that of reader. Also, literature is a reflection of culture, and modern literature can help readers to better understand the culture in which they live.

Many teachers choose to emphasize works from the canon of classical literature because they have stood the test of time. They have been held in high esteem for many centuries. Also, teachers will avoid modern literature because they feel that it is difficult to maintain a position of objectivity when the author of a work is still alive. To praise a work may be interpreted as seeking personal gain. Conversely, to criticize a work could be interpreted as an attempt to harm a writer’s career.

In Taiwan, there were specific political reasons for not teaching modern Chinese literature. Before 1987, modern Chinese literature (including Taiwanese literature) was neglected in Taiwan in favor of classical Chinese literature. This was in reaction to the Mainland Chinese literary movement, following the May 4th revolution, when modern literature was written to
espouse communist values. The government in Taiwan thought that for people to read literature in which communist ideas were disseminated was "unhealthy." It could have potentially threatened their political power. Taiwan lacked its own literature for many years as well because the political refugees from Mainland China who ruled Taiwan hoped for an eventual reconciliation between the two nations. They saw the separate Taiwanese literature as a potential obstacle to reunification, therefore they forbade it. If a teacher taught mainly modern Taiwanese literature, the government might be likely to interpret this as support for independence of a "Taiwanese nation," which was contrary to their political orientation. In addition, the modern genre tended to emphasize the dark and unpleasant aspects of Taiwanese society, and thus was frowned upon by the government. This situation has changed, however. At present, due to the Taiwanese government's lifting of martial law in 1987, the political situation is becoming completely liberal, and teachers now feel free to select from the modern genre.

Thus it is time for the literature specialist to draw on collective wisdom and to absorb all useful ideas to make a new canon, especially a modern Chinese literary canon.

Usually, such canons can be divided into two kinds. One is institutional canon, the other non-institutional. (Jing-Tien Xu, p.21) An institutional canon is one selected, published, and censored by the government. Its influence is far-reaching and its formation arbitrary. Neither students nor the rest of the society, such as the students' parents, have much choice other than to passively accept it. A non-institutional canon, by contrast, comes under little control from the government. It is outside the system of the institutional canon. It usually represents a system of cultural values different from the one advocated
by the government (though the two systems may sometimes coincide in part). Generally speaking, in terms of cultural values, institutional canons feature a single-voice while non-institutional canons are many-voiced. As people saw the need for a canon of literature, they began to wonder what features such a canon should have. P. Hyland (1986, pp. 3-4) says that

The canon of literature should be defined by those who wish to break down its boundaries, to open it up to the subordinated, ignored, or silenced forms of "popular" literature, historical documents, autobiography, women's writing, black literature, song, TV and film. They wish to relocate literature in a truer perspective its claims to transcendent value.

I would argue that those experts who vigorously object to teaching the institutional canon while enthusiastically advocating teaching modern literature are those who will become the future canon makers of modern literature.

When creating the canon, the experts need to take into account the ability of their students, the ideology that they wish to convey, the extent of the texts' popularity in the market, and the nature of the curriculum. The canon makers should hold conferences where they discuss the various merits and faults of the works being considered.

In addition, in order to have a canon that is truly representative, the canon makers should come from the widest variety of backgrounds possible in order to achieve a most balanced perspective, instead of judging by a secret and exclusive ballot that a certain elite group gathers.

P. Hyland (1986, p.5) points out that

Literary excellence (if, indeed, we can get agreement on quite what this is) may be one element in our judgment, but works may have other sorts of value as well: historical, sociological, moral, psychological,
therapeutic, values of commitment, honesty, and, above all, of relevance. Indeed, it may well be that "literary excellence" is no single quality, but an accumulation of their qualities; without, therefore, wishing to discard the notion of value in literature, we must get away from the idea that it is fixed and certain.

Considering this point, canon makers need to examine texts' cultural quality in addition to their aesthetic quality.

The Modern Chinese canons should include popular as well as scholarly texts in order to create a more authentic whole language experience. For the same reason, the canon should include both contemporary and older works from Taiwan and the Mainland.

**Conclusion**

The overall goal of this chapter based on a review of research and scholarly literature, has been to suggest ways in which teachers could change passive, docile students into active partners in the learning process. Teachers should realize that they are not always called upon to perform. An ideal classroom is something like a symphony orchestra, and a teacher its conductor. It is the conductor's job to control the rhythm of each piece and see to it that no one voice dominates and that none are drowned out. He or she quiets the sounds that would overwhelm others, and brings out the sounds necessary to create melody and harmony. Without the conductor the symphony would degenerate into cacophony and the beauty of the individual voices would be lost; but under his/her guidance, the special quality of each is enhanced by its
fellows. This is essentially the role of the teacher—to control the rhythm of the class and the timbre of the voices, so that what results is a meaningful experience for all concerned. In this sense, it is vital that the teacher has the respect of her students, not only for her own knowledge but also in order to gain their support and to motivate and maximize their growth. The pedagogy thus requires the teacher to know thoroughly the subject matter, to understand when students are not prepared, be knowledgable and accepting of new ideas brought to the classroom by students, and be able to discern when those ideas are not pertinent to the discussions at hand.

In this scenario, it is important that teachers provide students with the opportunity to make contributions to class activities. Only sufficient communication in the classroom can transform passive students into active ones. The pedagogy I have developed differs from the traditional, masculine-oriented pedagogy. The traditional pedagogy inspired a competitive, product-oriented classroom; my pedagogy is designed to encourage sharing and interaction among the students in the classroom. The traditional classroom is teacher-centered with the teacher's role as that of an omniscient or, at least, authoritarian figure; my pedagogy is designed to encourage cooperation and collaboration among students with the teacher taking the role of facilitator and with class discussion being more of a dialogue than an interrogation.

It is also important to mention that the teacher must gain the respect of the student for knowledge, student support, flexibility, willingness to motivate and maximize the growth of students. The pedagogy thus requires the teacher to know thoroughly the subject matter, to understand when students are not prepared, be knowledgable and accepting of new ideas brought to the classroom
by students, and be able to discern when those ideas are not pertinent to the discussions at hand.
CHAPTER 3

DESIGN OF THE STUDY

Introduction

As mentioned in Chapter 1, the course I have developed teaches about Chinese feminist literature using cultural understanding as an approach for a deeper understanding of literature. There are a large number of literary works whose themes are centered on socio-cultural topics and issues. Without insight into such topics and issues and into culture in general, one can hardly expect to gain much insight into the works themselves. Specifically, my class concentrated on feminist literature, a deeper level of comprehension would be achieved if the students could gain an understanding of the social expectations of women as well as get a firm grasp of cultural norms and codes that concern women within the realm of the text.

In the classroom, whole language theory served as a general philosophy for the teaching of this course. As a teacher, I believe learning occurs as a result of the students' ability to organize their thoughts. Instead of the traditional approach which values students' performances insofar as they conform to the criteria of the discipline, I value students' commitment to interpreting reality, so that criteria arise as much from the students as from the teacher. In addition, I perceive an important aspect of the teacher's task as facilitating a dialogue in which students can reshape their knowledge through interaction with others. In this study, I developed in detail several aspects of a whole language theory, such as: students working in large and small groups to
make connections, re-arranging, reconceptualizing, and internalizing their collective experiences, ideas, and learning offered in the class subjects.

If an approach can be found to stimulate and enlighten developing young minds to the systematic and intellectual bondage constraining Taiwan's secondary and post secondary education system, I believe we would then be able to strengthen our ability to examine the present shortcomings of the status of women. I can think of a no more compelling reason for inquiry into the general area of an effective pedagogy in which feminist Chinese literature can be studied. An effective pedagogy would serve many purposes including increasing the awareness of Taiwanese women and men about the effects of the institutionalized treatment of women, such awareness being the first step toward changing the current views.

The research design of my study involved the collection of data to determine the attitudes, behaviors and responses of a relatively homogeneous group of students toward an evolving student-centered pedagogy. These data were collected through the use of observations, questionnaires, interviews, and student reaction/feedback.

The two major related goals of this study were: (1) to develop a pedagogy with which to teach feminist Chinese literature to female Taiwanese college students, and, (2) to develop a pedagogy within the context of a feminist Chinese literature class that raises students' consciousness of those issues that negatively impact on the opportunity for females to develop. To accomplish these research goals, this study involved the development and teaching of a course on feminist Chinese literature to female Taiwanese students at the University of Massachusetts. The following are the two research questions related to the main goals:
1. What elements constitute an effective pedagogy for teaching feminist Chinese literature at the college level to Taiwanese students?

2. How does studying feminist Chinese literature within the context of a course as in question #1 affect Taiwanese female students' feminist consciousness?

In order to accomplish the goals outlined above, the roles of students and teacher must first be established. The development of these roles is based on initial assumptions and discussion found in the sources as described in the "Literature Review" section. It was quite likely that the roles of student and teacher might need to be redefined, perhaps several times, during the course of my research. It was also important to establish that my understanding of the learning process was redefined periodically based on the course of the research. Thus, this study was designed as a qualitative action research project. The flow of the process provided a continuous feedback loop for evaluative purposes as well as corrective action.

For the purpose of this research, I developed a model that attempted to depict this action research. The action research model provided essential steps, in terms of pedagogy. These steps involved the development or use of an existing pedagogy, implementation of the proposed pedagogy into the actual classroom practice, followed by a period of evaluation and reflection, and finally, the development of a more effective pedagogy which contributed to attaining the goals of this study. The process in practice revealed shortcomings as a result of evaluation. After analysis of data and reflection, modifications
were introduced which will complete the loop. Instead of the creation of a pedagogy, however, such a model leads to modification of the pedagogy, resulting in a revised version of the original pedagogy. Thus, the process repeats itself.

The process can be modeled in this way:

![Diagram of Action Research Model]

Figure 3.1
Action Research Model

In addition to the action research conducted in the classroom, I focused on a small number of students as case studies, in an attempt to explore key issues of this study in depth. I focused on questions such as how students define feminism, whether or not the class influenced their way of thinking, how they perceived the teacher's role and whether or not they were comfortable with the manner in which the class was conducted. Findings from the study were used to propose changes in the traditional teaching style currently in use in Taiwan, moving from a teacher-centered style to one in which the students are more actively involved.
The research design was based on the teaching of a course on feminist Chinese literature, with a detailed examination of student reactions and class discussion. The study involved implementing planned instructional strategies in an effort to incorporate a "whole language"-like pedagogy and then systematically submitting the strategies to observation, reflection, and change. For the purposes of my study, I used an action research model, as described in the previous section.

It is important to note that this model not only applies to the method of developing new pedagogy, but also to how the key issues in the course were explored by the teacher and students. In other words, the "problems" to be identified and then solved relate to both pedagogical approaches and feminist issues in Chinese literature. In terms of pedagogy, the "problem" might be how to devise a pedagogy that will encourage Taiwanese students to become more active participants in the learning process. A combination of elements from various existing teaching approaches that seem suited to the needs of Taiwanese students might be synthesized into a new pedagogy, which then might be tested in actual classroom practice, then evaluated to determine its effectiveness. The outcome of this can be used in the "re-creation" or redefining of the pedagogy in terms of improving it and beginning the cycle again. In terms of feminist issues, it might mean coming to a mutual definition of a term used in feminist literature--a process that would challenge existing ideas and cause communication and negotiations among the class. For example, in reaching a definition of the term "feminist" itself, the use of the action research model allows for constant exploration and a dynamic classroom interaction. As the class progresses, the definition may come into question or need expanding, prompting a mutual evaluation with the possible creation of a new working
definition. The same process could be used to arrive at mutual working
definitions and potential resolutions to other feminist issues.

**Setting /Population**

The setting in this study was an undergraduate seminar on Chinese
feminist writings (both male and female writers). The course was offered as a
three credit independent study in the Asian Languages and Literatures
Department at the University of Massachusetts. The class met every Monday
for two and half hours during the fall semester of 1993. The entire course was
conducted in Mandarin.

The population consisted of 14 Chinese students including 13 females
from Taiwan and one male from Mainland China. They were approximately in
the 19 to 22 year age bracket and included both immigrants who have been in
the U.S. since high school and individuals who were residing this country only
to pursue their college education. The class was open to both men and women,
but because of the nature of the course, only one male student chose to enroll.

**Data Collection Methods**

The data collected in this study consisted of several different
components: Students interviews, papers and journals, questionnaires,
transcripts of classroom discussions and my own personal journal containing
my observations and reflections on my decisions as a teacher. For the purpose
of analyzing the data collected, the study will essentially be divided into five
phases: pre-course interviews, focus group interviews, audio-taped in-class
exchanges, teacher's journal, and post-course interviews. The data from pre-course and post-course interviews provided the information for my case studies, and exposed some key issues.

Pre-course Interviews

In the first phase, I conducted individual pre-course student interviews (early in the semester) in order to establish and assess students' beliefs and responses as they existed before the class. The interviews were with individual students and were intensive, lasting for more than an hour.

Approximately one half of the students were asked to do a series of 90-minute, pre-course interviews, conducted in Mandarin Chinese. The students were selected randomly. The interviews were conducted between July 1, 1993 and August 31, 1993; and were audio-taped. The transcripts were translated into English as needed. These audio-taped interviews allowed me to hear what the students had to say in their own words during and after the interviews. I replayed the tapes and listened to the voices and perspectives of the students.

The process of in-depth interviews was similar to the methodology developed by Seidman (1991). The interview structure was adapted as follows:

1. Life story--what made them come to study in America? The interviewees were asked to describe their life stories prior to when they became UMASS students.
2. Contemporary experience--What was it like for them to be students at UMASS? What were the details of their thoughts and lives at UMASS?
(3) Meaning—What does it mean to them to be a student? How do they see their roles as modern women students and how do they choose to play their gender roles?

The procedure was for the participant to review the constituent factors of their lives and their experiences as women students. They were asked about the meaning that their educational experiences had for them. Each interview began with the question, "What made you come to study in America?" and proceeded gradually at the woman's own pace to questions concerning self-image, education and learning, real-life decision-making and moral dilemmas, accounts of personal change and growth, perceived catalysts for change and impediments to growth, and visions of the future. I tried to pose questions that were broad but understandable on many levels.

Student Interviews

During the first few class sessions, I conducted focus group interviews for the first thirty minutes of each class. These in-class interviews were conducted in front of the other students and were relatively brief. The students were asked to conduct interviews of each other. Then, they shared what they had learned about their classmates with the rest of the class. This procedure took about four weeks, with the interviews taking place during the first week, and students reporting in the next three. Because their experiences are all reflections of culture, they were able to use their combined stories as a backdrop against which to assess their individual lives. As their stories unfolded during the semester, different issues were raised for discussion.
The assigned topics for the focus group interviews explored personal beliefs and experiences concerning both pedagogy and feminist issues. I wanted the students to get to know each other through this sharing of ideas and experiences in order to determine the extent to which these students were prepared to take risks in sharing their ideas and thoughts concerning the conduct of the class. Because, as my study presumes, Taiwanese students should remain uninvolved in classroom activities and dependent on the instructor for ideas, I expected my class to consist of docile students who would merely make very polite and predictable responses during this phase. I believed that their responses would test my assumptions.

During the last two weeks of the course, the same student interview questions were re-administered. The intent of repeating the student interviews questions was to determine the amount of change in the students' classroom involvement by the end of the semester.

Audio-taped In-class Exchanges

The primary mechanism for capturing in-class conversational exchanges was through audiotaping, which was later transcribed. While a transcript is a severely edited version of the original scene, it is nevertheless a powerful research tool. I wanted to pay particular attention to the exchanges among students and how they engaged in classroom discussions. For example, would ideas about traditional women's roles influence either their ideas or their conduct in class? What form or pattern would student exchanges take? I was also interested in their response to universal feminist issues raised in class, e.g., attitudes towards rape, economic opportunities, abortion, marriage roles, etc. It
was my hope that through these exchanges, I would be able to assess students' perceptions of self and levels of feminist consciousness.

**Teacher's Journal and Students' Response Paper**

As a teacher, I established a practice of dialoging with each individual student through their journals and used these entries to gain important sources of insights into students' experiences and concerns dealing with course content and process. In the journal I reflected on the observations I made during the course of the class, about the group dynamics, students' ideas and my own performance. For example, I was interested in the way in which the female and male student interacted, especially the manner in which the female students reacted to the more traditional views of the male student. The journal gave me an opportunity to consider how to revise the pedagogy in light of my observations, and a chance to analyze and gain a broader perspective on the data. I recorded my thoughts in the journal both during and after class, usually trying to write immediately after a significant event had occurred, so that it was fresh in my mind. For example, if I had a conversation with a student after class, I would immediately upon leaving the student record my impressions of the exchange.

I asked students to write a response to the day's exchanges toward the end of each lesson. Student writings could address either the content or teaching method of the class or both. I used these response papers to help me conduct post-unit interviews during the third and final stage of my study.
Post-course Interviews

The final stage consisted of post-course interviews and an analysis of the class. Many of the questions concerning values and beliefs which were asked in the first interview were repeated, along with questions dealing with class content, influence levels, style and effectiveness. As was the case in the first set of interviews, these interviews were tape-recorded. The students interviewed during the pre-course interviews were contacted for the follow-up interviews.

Since one of the main goals in this study was pedagogical, I wished to evaluate the students' response to western pedagogic practices, in which students are expected to raise issues, question ideas, and generally be active participants in the educational process, as opposed to the traditional Chinese style of education. The following is a sampling of the questions that were asked in the post-course interviews:

* How do you feel about the method in which this course was conducted? If you could change anything about the class format or style (to better suit your needs) what would you change and why?

* How did you feel about class discussions?

* Were there ever any occasions when you hesitated or declined to take part in class discussions, and if so, why?

* Given a choice, would you prefer to attend a class which is conducted as a seminar with open discussion or one that is given lecture style? Why?

Another important goal in this study concerned content. I asked the students such questions as the following:
*What did you think of the texts we read? Which one did you find the most useful? Why? Which one did you find the least useful? Why?

*How do you feel about feminist Chinese literature now? Will you read more feminist literature? Why or why not?

* Has what you have learned in this course caused you to want to change your own life? If so, how?

* Has this course changed the way you think about yourself or the world?

* Are there things this course doesn’t provide that are important to you?

* Are there things you would like to learn that you don’t think you can learn here?

I focused on a small number of students as case studies in an attempt to further explore key issues, and to determine the success of the pedagogy, and the course itself.

Data Analysis and Evaluation

I applied different methods of data analysis: goal analysis, which attempts to assess the degree to which the process and product goals of the study were met; pattern analysis, which examines the evolution of speaking patterns over the course of the semester and explorations as to their significance.

The data to be analyzed includes audio-tapes of classroom proceedings, students' writing, journals and interviews, as well as my own observations and
impressions as recorded in my journal and field notes as events unfolded. I took care to include all forms of student interchange, specifically, whole class and small group discussions and organized classroom debates. I also took care to look at both process goals, how the students learned and the evolution of my pedagogy, and the product goals, exactly what the students learned and how the pedagogy stood at the end of the study.

According to Altrichter et al. (1993), pattern analysis can be defined as a creative process in which a teacher begins a so-called "conversation" with the reality of teacher/student interreactions based on lessons. Using pattern analysis, I investigated patterns of interaction which emerged from the transcripts of the classroom exchanges. In addition to identifying the patterns, I explain the significance of the pattern and the effects on students' learning. For example, I discuss what effect these patterns had on the class atmosphere, and what effect they had on learning. Also, in cases where the effects of the patterns in classroom interaction do not match my original pedagogical intentions, I discuss which action strategies should be developed to refine my teaching techniques to direct them more accurately at my teaching goals.
In order to assess students' beliefs prior to the beginning of class, I conducted interviews with the students during the period of June to September, 1993. This chapter will include excerpts from these interviews. Since Taiwanese students are taught to respect teachers and view them as authorities, it seemed likely that they might view me as such an authority figure and would not speak freely or feel comfortable during the interview. After the first few interviews, it became evident that my concerns were unfounded. Students seemed to talk freely to me and to enjoy the experience. Many even continued to contact me after the interviews, to recall things they had forgotten to tell me. In a sense, my discussions were not bounded, but were rather the beginning of an ongoing dialogue that preceeded and continued beyond the framed event itself.

In this chapter, I will describe the shared stories of the women students who immigrated to the United States as high school students, and also those who are in this country only to pursue their college education. The interview process encouraged them to relate the stories of their lives, especially their educational experiences and their conscious awareness of themselves as women.

This chapter includes two sections. One deals with the students' educational experiences; the other is concerned with their feminist consciousness.
consciousness. The first section compares Taiwanese and American educational systems, including classroom discussion, memorization, and educational disciplines. The second section examines the students' views about their roles as women and their ideas about family and career, premarital sex, divorce, and filial piety. In addition, there is accompanying commentary and analysis, based both on my personal experience in Taiwan and on discussions with other teachers, both here and in Taiwan.

Educational experiences

Three out of the five students I interviewed said that they are in the United States for a university education. Ms. W, a 21-year-old student, is a double major in music and accounting. Her arrival in the United States gave her ambiguous feelings about being caught between two cultures:

I came to the United States in August, 1991. Even though I had a green card, my parents always emphasized that we were here to study, not to work. At first I thought I was just coming to study, but recently I feel as if I am more and more of an immigrant here. Although we study here and have immigrated here, my parents have always said, if you want to go back to Taiwan, okay; if you want to stay here, that's okay, too.

Another woman, Ms. S, has also straddled two cultures for the sake of her education. She was born in Pennsylvania, spent the first seven years of her life in the United States, and moved to Taiwan with her parents when she was seven years old. She returned to the United States alone for her middle school education and would visit her parents and study Chinese in Taiwan during summer vacation. She said:
My father graduated from the University of Massachusetts. My parents are both professional people. My father is a law professor in Taiwan and my mother manages a large Taiwanese chain of bakeries. My parents decided that their economic and professional success could be best realized in Taiwan, but they did not believe that the quality of education could compete with the American educational system. They felt that the Taiwanese educational system trained students to do well in school, while the American system encouraged students to develop their minds, independent of doctrine.

Ms. Y came to the United States after finding the Taiwanese higher educational system too confining. She studied in the National Art College in Taiwan, majoring in music for a year. She loved music very much, but found it extremely difficult to become a professional. She didn't want to become a music teacher, because she felt there was no challenge in that. She said:

In Taiwan, it's difficult to change one's major, and my college offered only art courses. And I learned that studying in America it would give me the opportunity to study something besides music. My father was very supportive of my studying abroad, thus I decided to come here for study.

All of these three women believed, whether implicitly or explicitly, that the United State system of education is superior to that of Taiwan. However, though this opinion is generally held, the reasons for holding it are quite different. Ms. S, or at least her parents, was attracted by the American philosophical emphasis on critical thinking; Ms. Y by the system’s administrative flexibility. Ms. W seemed most compelled by work opportunities facilitated by college attendance at an American University. What is important to keep in mind is that though they were superficially united by their choice to study in the United States, these three Chinese students have
subtly different motives for that choice. Thus, generalizations about such students can be quite tenuous. In addition, the other two students from immigrant families were also content with the education they have been receiving here in the United States.

**Self Expression in the Classroom**

In Taiwan, every teacher and student has experienced both the frenzied pace required to get through the material and the fear of falling behind. The rapid pace of the curriculum and the amount of material that teachers cover leave little time for questions and discussions.

Another very important factor is the entrance examination system. The school entrance exam system allows everyone an equal opportunity to succeed; advancement is based solely on test scores, not on social standing. Standard texts are used for entering senior high and college and entrance examinations are based on these texts. The result is the wholesale memorization of each of these textbooks. This limits individual creativity and inquiry, and the connection between text and reality is not always clear. A student's day typically consists of regular public school during the morning and afternoon hours, and a private cram school in the evening to help students prepare for the all-important entrance exam. Quizzes and tests are given daily. Time is not allowed for thought, discussion or exploration because all must be spent preparing for the entrance exams.

The students, in their desire to succeed, never question what they are taught, and thus the ability to think critically is never developed. They are not given the opportunity to ask questions or to take part in a group discussion.
Consequently, they don't know how to exchange ideas. Self expression is not encouraged, so even if students had an interesting thought or idea, they wouldn't know how to express it. This is true at the college level as well as other grades.

Furthermore, in Taiwan, students are very dependent on their teachers, because they are taught from a very early age to believe that the teachers' expertise is instrumental to their intellectual development. Students often cling uncritically to the teacher's ideas. In the United States, by contrast, many teachers encourage their students to express their ideas and to make independent inquiry.

We can gain some insights about the problems of Taiwanese education from the students' reflections on their experiences in elementary and secondary school. Most of the students in my interviews talked about their difficulty raising questions and participating in discussions in the classroom.

When Taiwanese women students come to the United States, they encounter many cross-cultural conflicts, including the tremendous difference between education in the United States and in Taiwan. What follows are descriptions of students' feelings and reflections about the American and Taiwanese educational systems.

Ms. H, who came to the United States when she was in eleventh grade, said:

When I first came here, my impression of American classes was that the students are not only allowed but encouraged to ask questions. At that time I was scared to death just at the thought.

This is a common response among the students who must cope with a system which is so different from their own, especially in student/teacher interaction.
In America, teachers listen to their students and typically encourage them to ask questions. Ms. W talked of trying to adjust to this new environment:

Whenever I have a question, I always think, it's a stupid question. Even when I have a question, I think, I'll ask when I'm more prepared, or if I keep thinking about it, maybe I'll figure out the answer myself. I'm afraid of what people will think of me if I ask a question.

In Ms. W's account, we can see one cause for the "quiet" Chinese student so common to many classrooms. Such reticence may be a result of the Taiwanese education system. It is also important to note that Ms. W's determination to find out the answer herself is not only culturally but also sexually based. Taiwanese women are socialized to be even more reluctant to speak in public than men.

Ms. R's reaction was similar. When she was in Taiwanese middle school, occasionally there would be test questions in literature classes designed to initiate thought and discussion, but she and her classmates very seldom encountered these kinds of thought-provoking questions in regular class lessons. When she came to the United States in the tenth grade, she was accustomed to being a passive listener in the classroom, and when her classmates would vie for the floor to speak, she was frightened. Even as a college student, Ms. R's fear of asking questions was rooted in her middle school experience and her fear of public ridicule. She found that her American classmates "ask very simple questions." She said:

I wonder if the reason they ask such simple questions is because they are not as smart as I am. Sometimes I tell my American friends how I feel about raising my hand in class and they try to encourage me. They say, "You pay tuition, why shouldn't you ask the professor questions? It's
part of the professor's job to answer questions." So now I ask questions once in a while, but I still don't feel comfortable doing it.

Ms. R's reaction to other students' questions is what might be expected from a student who is a product of an excessively competitive environment which encourages continual crises of confidence, i.e. "are they stupider than I am?" The Americans' justification for asking questions shows that they view education less as competition than as commerce, and the professor is more a salesperson than a mentor to them.

Ms. Y offered a clear view of the Chinese attitude, which is that students in Taiwan don't engage in discussion in the classroom because they view teachers as authoritarians. In Taiwan, teachers have absolute authority, and students are discouraged from asking questions, because to do so might suggest that they are challenging the professor's ideas.

The professors look at it as if they are the only ones who have the knowledge and the students are there merely to receive this knowledge. Now that I'm grown up, I sometimes wonder if maybe the teacher was wrong. But in Taiwan, if we were to address our thoughts or feelings to the teacher, maybe s/he would say, "I am bigger than you. I know more than you. I'm older than you. My path is longer than yours. I have more experience. What gives you the right to question me?"

Although most of the subjects interviewed expressed anxiety about speaking in class, this was not the case with everyone interviewed. Ms. Y, quoted above, was an exception. She was a particularly outgoing individual, who said:

Because my major is science, the professors do a lot of lecturing, and we are often given the opportunity to ask questions. I act the same as the
American students and take advantage of the opportunities to ask questions. I thought that we had few opportunities to be in contact with the professors, so we should take advantage of the chance to ask questions immediately. I am very appreciative of this style of teaching. Here, professors and students discuss together and learn from each other.

Memorization

Earlier, the Taiwanese system of private "cram schools" was mentioned. These schools were, indeed, developed to cram as much information as possible into students to enhance their entrance examination scores. This situation leads to a lot of rote memorization, a superficial understanding of the material. In this "cramming" style of education, students are supposed to memorize teacher-generated information so that they can win a prized place in a university.

Education as a means of social advancement has a long history in China, since it is rooted in the imperial examination system and also in the ancient Chinese conception of learning as the most noble of human pursuits. Even today, many teachers and parents still urge their children to compete for places at the university by learning their studies by rote. These students are usually dependent, both financially and spiritually, on their families and have little option but to spend as much time as possible studying each day. Unless their families are very poor, students are discouraged from taking part time job that would divert them from their task. If a student manages to earn a doctoral degree, relatives and friends put congratulatory notices in the newspaper to publicize the success. Because of the intense competition for academic honors and success, Taiwanese administrators, teachers, parents, and students ignore what I see as the real purpose of education, e.g., to foster critical thought. This is especially true now, because family connections are no longer sufficient to
secure a good job. Instead, the job seeker must have the right training and qualifications. This is also true to qualify for promotions. Thus, more and more people pursue higher education to achieve success.

All the students interviewed had been, to a large degree, dependent on memorization techniques to get through school. Most were ambivalent about this training, because they saw advantage in both memorizing and analyzing. Some like Ms. S, were very critical of rote memorization in Taiwanese schools. In American high school, she said, she used her Taiwanese memorization techniques, even though such memorization was not required to the extent she expected. She believed that she lacked imagination, and didn’t know how to design or create a project, because she lacked the requisite training.

Similarly, Ms. H’s only skill was memorization when she first arrived here in senior high school. She said, "I couldn’t finish reading a whole story in English; what I could do was memorize a lot of vocabulary." She compared the two systems:

The progress is much slower and much looser here, though, and the subjects are taught in a much simpler fashion. In Taiwan, there was a tremendous pace and pressure, so that as much knowledge as possible could be absorbed by each student.

Ms. H’s observation showed how the Taiwanese system’s emphasis on memorization creates set goals at regular intervals. This goal setting gives the impression of a swift and measurable progress, in which knowledge is an object to be gathered, not a thought process in which to be engaged.

In some ways, Taiwan’s educational system was a good preparation for some students. Ms. S found that the fast pace of Taiwan’s educational system gave her a head start. Having already learned geometry in 6th grade, she found
herself reviewing it in 10th grade in the United States. She said, "my math was very good here, because I had already learned it."

Ms. W offered a good summation of the students' reaction to both systems:

In Taiwan, you need to be able to recite from the teachers' lectures and your notes. Every time the teacher gave you handouts along with the textbook, it was your job to integrate and memorize the two. When I came here, I felt that my store of knowledge was richer than that of other students, because I memorized a lot when I was in secondary school in Taiwan. I don't know what goes on in college classes in Taiwan, whether the college teaching style is exactly the same as it was in secondary school. If it is, then I would say that you have a deeper learning experience here.

Ms. R elaborated on this theme, saying that the Taiwanese methods of education during the early years were very helpful in advanced studies. As a child attending Taiwanese schools, she felt a tremendous amount of pressure, but she realizes now that the experience gave her the discipline and motivation to succeed at a university. Like most students in the survey, Ms. R saw advantages to her Taiwanese education, which U.S. education would not have provided.

**Discipline**

Teachers in Taiwan are accorded respect, because they are considered to be the heirs of Confucius himself, the great sage and teacher. The ultimate goal in Confucian teaching philosophy is to learn to govern oneself, so that, in turn, one successfully may govern one's family, one's nation and, ultimately,
make the world a peaceful place. The teachers' duty is to dispense their knowledge clearly and to pass along concepts from their field of study to their students. Confucian society holds teachers in such high regard, that Taiwan has a national "Teacher's Day," during which students express their respect and appreciation for their teachers. The five entities which command the most respect, according to Confucius philosophy, are heaven, earth, royalty, parents, and teachers. Accordingly, the only people whose authority exceeds that of teachers are parents and the government. As a result, students have a combination of respect and fear where their teachers are concerned; respect for the teacher's ability to impart knowledge, and fear of the authority that they wield. Few professions are accorded with more respect in Chinese society. The respect given them is on a par with what is typically accorded priests in Western society. A teacher is never addressed as "Mister" or "Mrs." but instead is always called by their professional title, "Teacher", the way that priests and doctors are called "Father" or "Doctor". A teacher is never openly challenged or criticized by the students. Traditionally, students bow when the teacher enters the room and always have a cup of hot tea waiting on their teacher's desk at the beginning of each class. For students, the teacher is comparable with their parents in terms of authority, and this respect for the teacher remains constant even into adulthood. With such an attitude towards teachers, Taiwanese students find Americans students disrespectful of their teachers, even though this disrespect may exist only in the minds of the Taiwanese students.

One of the students, Ms. H, said that her perception of American classes was that they were not well organized. Nothing seemed to be in order, the students were allowed walk around in the classroom, and she was shocked.
American students didn't have homework, unlike Taiwan, where every night there was a lot of homework. She said, "Students here lacked respect for their teachers; in Taiwan the teachers are highly respected." When I followed up on her comment and asked, "What does it mean that students here lack respect for their teachers?", she gave me an example. She said American students will hand a paper casually to their professor or teacher with one hand, while in Taiwan, papers must be placed into the professor's or teacher's grasp with two hands, usually with a bow and always with a polite, formal style of speech.

Some students expressed fond memories of the rigorous discipline in Taiwan, as described by Ms. S:

I enjoyed the morning meetings, where all of the students met in the stadium. All of the students were required to attend at the start of the day to listen to the principal or teacher give a fifteen-minute lesson on morality. The topics would change from week to week and might be on respecting teachers one week, and being helpful the next. Every day, things would happen that you could relate to the subject of the morning meeting, like, maybe, you'd have a disagreement with a friend; the teacher's lecture could give you direction on how to proceed.

Other students, like Ms. W, spoke with some resentment about their early training in elementary and secondary school. As an example, every other week students' hair would have to be checked to see if the length conformed to school policy: Girls' hair had to be no longer than the ear lobe; boys had to have their hair in a crew-cut. Anyone whose hair was too long was pulled aside until some one from the school came to "help" them cut their hair to a conforming length. Rest time was also an ordeal--any student caught with their eyes open would be reported, even if they had not made a sound. Even in elementary school, students were often required to assemble in neat rows in the auditorium
in 10 minutes or less as an exercise in military-style discipline: No speaking or movement was allowed.

From their stories, it is obvious that their childish impulses were thwarted, and that individuality was squelched as a matter of routine. Under this system, both respect and fear of authority figures were cultivated. Because conformity was the only accepted norm, any individual thought or expression was discouraged. However, it is important to note, students reacted differently to this discipline, since some approved of it and others did not.

Discipline was practiced in school, and it was also strictly maintained in the family, often by corporal punishment. There is a Chinese proverb that says jade must be cut and chiseled to make it into a useful vessel, meaning that a person must be both disciplined and educated in order to become a useful citizen. But there are many ways to shape an individual. Referring to this proverb, Ms. Y said:

Just as there are many different ways to cut jade, I think that there are many different ways to discipline kids, and beating them is not a good way. I suspect that at some time in history, this method of discipline worked in some cases, but I think that they took a few examples to be representative of all individuals. Because they lacked a scientific approach, they thought the beatings worked, but I think that they were definitely wrong. Since Americans are less strict about disciplining their children, Taiwanese parents and teachers could benefit from this approach. The approach American parents and teachers take toward discipline involves discussing problems with children, helping them to understand and accept responsibility. I have experienced this approach by observing my American friend interact with her children when problems occur. The way that American parents and teachers communicate with their children impressed me. But I do think that Taiwan is better than United States in the way children are disciplined to be polite from the time they are very young. I appreciate that now. For example, students here will put their feet upon the tables. That's not
right. So I would rather be a teacher in Taiwan. They have more respect there for their teachers.

Ms. Y’s perception that American students are disrespectful may be a culturally shaped interpretation, however. In my experience, American students do respect their teachers, but it is a respect that differs in expression from that of the very rigid codes of manners required by Taiwan’s etiquette.

Indeed, respect is subject to cultural perception. The students’ perceptions of the Taiwanese and American educational systems are naturally shaped by assumptions and interpretations that are deeply influenced by their native culture. In the interviews, students vacillated between welcoming learning by discussion and also fearing it.

Throughout the interviews, I noted that these students have already acquired a schema for their expectations of the teacher’s role, and that they were comfortable with it. Nevertheless, since modern society is becoming increasingly multifaceted and competitive, Taiwan’s educational system is becoming increasingly antiquated and obsolete. It is imperative to cultivate creative thought in Taiwan’s students, which cannot be done through rote memorization under conditions of high pressure. Substantive engagement in their own education gradually will have to be implemented in Taiwanese schools.

**Taiwanese Cultural Impediments to Conscious Feminist Awareness**

According to Lu Xiu-lian (1990), in Taiwan’s society, a woman’s destiny is determined by the need to continue the family line by producing a male heir.
This is a reflection of the moral norms and principles of the male-dominated society, and it creates severe impediments to equality between the sexes.

The pressure to produce a male heir results from the fact that males are more highly prized than females in Chinese society. By law, the children of a family, both sons and daughters, must bear their father’s surname, even though the mother retains her maiden name after marriage. The only possible exception to this would be if a family had no male heirs, in which case they would be allowed to search for a potential son-in-law (usually from a less financially advantaged family) who would be willing to assume his bride’s name, so that her family name might be perpetuated. For this reason, male children are considered essential to family pride, since daughters will perpetuate only someone else’s name. Thus, a woman’s basic function is to be a "son-maker" for her husband. Her own family views her as "spilled water," because, once she has married, she belongs to her husband’s family and can do no more for her own family name. Once her dowry has been paid, she and her future children belong to her husband’s family. If she fails to produce the desired son, her new family will hold her in contempt, and her husband eventually may use her failure as an excuse to take a concubine.

Because daughters eventually will be given over to another family, some families spare themselves the expense of educating girls, choosing to send sons to higher education, but training daughters only to be good housekeepers. If women do work outside the home, it is often as domestic help, and their wages may be used to help finance their brother’s schooling. Very desperate families sell their daughters into prostitution, sometimes in order to finance a son’s schooling. The result is many sad stories of young girls ending up as prostitutes or factory workers.
Because a daughter will no longer belong to her family after marriage, the family will often give gifts for her own personal use, in addition to the dowry to her husband’s family. A married daughter cannot inherit her family’s property, nor can she offer any financial assistance to her parents, since her husband’s family may suspect her of using their wealth to benefit her own family.

According to the Chinese concept of the "three obediences," women must be subordinate to men at every stage of their lives: obedient to their fathers in childhood, to their husbands in marriage, and to their sons in old age. According to this philosophy, men, by virtue of their sex, are more intelligent and better equipped to deal with society than are women. Unsurprisingly, men often regard women's ideas as insignificant.

Because men are seen as superior to women, and are, in consequence, usually better educated, when it comes time to choose a wife, the man is always better off than his bride. In Lu Xiu-Lian's book, New Feminism (1990), she points out that, though many women outscore men on their school exams, in society, it is the-lower scoring males who will succeed. Lu Xiu-Lian contends that this is because, once married, the women receive little or no encouragement from their husbands to succeed at anything, whereas men will be supported and encouraged to succeed by their wives.

Women are expected to maintain the household, because their realm is the "inside world", the home and the family, as opposed to the "outside world", the world of business and commerce that is men's territory. Lu Xiu-Lian notes it is a great waste when time, money, and effort is spent to educate a woman, who then marries and drops out of the work force to maintain a household.
Worce, these educated women are frustrated at having to give up their careers, and this causes tension within the home.

Since the 1970's, there have been some significant changes in social attitudes about gender rules, although sons are still more valued than daughters. Rapid economic development has been taking place, and education has become more and more universal. Women now are able to receive more education than their mothers and grandmothers, and many women go abroad for advanced study.

When Taiwanese women students come to the United States, they encounter many cross-cultural experiences and conflicts, and their Chinese background influences their self perception. The following accounts, from interviews with students, are broken down into categories of family and career; pre-marital sex; divorce; and filial piety.

**Family and Career**

As described above, it is obvious that in traditional Chinese culture, women were considered often to be something close to men's slaves. The social structure was rooted in a philosophy that associated males with heaven and strength, and females with the earth and gentleness. Men were expected to demonstrate initiative, women were expected to exhibit passivity.

**The traditional view**

Chinese women studying in America may respond conservatively to the new culture. Traditional cultural values are neither altered nor abandoned but
confirmed. Contrary to what might be expected after four years in a U. S. institution of higher learning, some women students choose family over career with little or no hesitation. Ms. R, for example, said she will feel quite comfortable in the traditional role of wife and mother. After briefly working, she intends to marry and devote all her time to her children because she feels that:

Educating and raising your children is more important than working outside the home. If you do a good job at this, then I think your children will be better off than children who are left in a day care while their parents work.

For Ms. R, the family remains paramount and she retains opinions on family and career that are well within the conservative mainstream of Chinese society. In this respect, she seems little affected by exposure to American ideas. However, hers is but one end of the spectrum.

The Non-traditional View

If Ms. R's convictions remain unchanged, Ms. Y's have been radicalized by her educational and cultural experience in America. She holds many opinions which are not only at odds with tradition, but openly critical of it. Her view on the division of labor between husband and wife is a representative example:

If a man and a woman both work outside the home, they should take turns at doing the household chores. The traditional idea that the men's realm is outside the home and the woman's is inside needs to be changed. Since both husband and wife now work outside the home, why should the woman be expected to do all of the housework alone? It's very
unfair. I think that husbands and wives should generally help and respect each other. If one partner cooks, the other should clean, because cooking makes you tired. After cooking, you really don't have the energy to clean.

Ms. Y's statement is significant not only for its unconventionality, but also for its "vehemence" compared to the other Taiwanese women. Her directness and willingness to condemn traditional male behavior reflects another way in which American attitudes have been internalized by some Chinese female students: Open disagreement has replaced passive acceptance.

Ms. Y went even further by challenging the basis for sexist assumptions of all sorts as they exist in her society. Since the way she expresses her ideas is at least as significant as their content, I will quote her in full:

When I went back to Taiwan, many people asked me why I studied abroad. I thought this was ridiculous; as if only men have the right to do anything that interests them. In modern society men still think that they are superior than women— I think that it's terrible that this idea should be perpetuated from generation to generation. As an intellectual I think that we should help other women to become aware of this oppression. To be buried in a family is not the only way for a woman to live. I have some friends who still hope to find marriage and a meal ticket after they get a degree. We need to convince these women that they need to develop their own personalities. If they get married, that's fine, but they need to be able to resume their own independence in the event of a divorce. At UMass last winter, we had a ski outing and one woman decided not to go because her husband was coming from another state and she wanted to cook him lunch and dinner. I felt funny about this. Even though she was independent enough to live on her own, in truth, she is still very conservative. I told her as much, and all of the men scolded me. They said that though I am a Chinese woman, I am too Americanized and lacked the values of traditional Chinese society.
The response of the men to Ms. Y reveals the conviction of Chinese conventional wisdom that radical views are American and incompatible with being fully Chinese. Of equal interest is the context in which Ms. Y raised her objections. She eschewed safe and simple silence and went out of her way to offer her opinions to the woman in question and, more importantly, to the men. She did not fear censure from either side, and was willing to argue with several men at once. Whether or not such behavior can be termed "American," it can certainly be labeled un-Chinese and, therefore, radical.

Ms. Y's experience nicely illustrates the obstacles that a radical view of relationships, family and career encounters in Chinese society. Her views were dismissed automatically by the other students, and their source denounced as foreign. The Chinese have a term for such a denatured person, "jia yang guizi", or fake-foreign-devil, someone who categorically rejects all Chinese culture in favor of a superficial and uncritical acceptance of all things Western. It is precisely the employment of this tactic, with its implications of ethnic betrayal, which vitiates the effectiveness of the radicalism as an effective vehicle for consciousness-raising and positive social change in Chinese society. It is in response to this challenge that a third reaction to inter-cultural conflicts emerges.

The Eclectic View

Between the conservatism of Ms. R and the radicalism of Ms. Y, lies the practicality of Ms. W, who avers initially that she would like to be a good wife and mother whose role "is to make a comfortable home environment for the family." This entails "allowing children to be free from those responsibilities
which might interfere with the development of their minds." So far, this attitude has little to differentiate it from the conventional, conservative one. However, when her attitude fully elucidated, the influence of American culture on it is clearly visible and considerable.

Ms. W would like to relate to her children as a friend in the American manner, rather than as an authority figure, in order to encourage them to seek out and rely on her advice. She said: "I realize that this role is a departure from the traditional role, where the parent is an authority figure. However, in order to be a successful mother, I believe it is important to know my children as a friend." Ms. W's ideas on childcare blend conventional, full-time parenting with an unconventional type of parent/child relationship. This is the essence of the eclectic approach.

This pragmatic blend of East and West is also reflected in Ms. W's view of parent division of labor. While she "ideally" believes both parents share responsibility for child rearing, "unfortunately, the reality is that my future husband will no doubt be busy with his career and avoid any involvement in (that) responsibility." Consequently, Ms. W expects that "the traditional role of child rearing will rest squarely on my shoulders." Furthermore, while freely acknowledging that, "if forced into the role of a full time mother/housewife, I believe I would suffocate," she concluded that she nevertheless would choose a family over a career.

Ms. W's submission to conventional Chinese women's responsibility tends to obscure her actual awareness of the importance of personal choice and her acute awareness of the limits on her choices. She has plainly absorbed much of her outlook from her U.S. experience, but, at the same time, she understands that this experience may not transform her own life. Ms. W's
stance encompasses the tensions inherent in the bicultural experience, which is neither free of internal contradiction, nor afraid to confront and creatively resolve it.

Premarital Sex

In traditional Chinese culture, women were expected to remain chaste before marriage and faithful afterwards. Even today, society still holds that any unmarried woman should be chaste, and it is taboo for a woman to engage in sexual relations under any circumstances outside of the marriage.

Asked about extra- or pre-marital sex, the students exhibited some of the influences of America culture, since they were not embarrassed to answer. Some of the answers were conservative, but it is still clear that each woman made a personal decision about her sexual behavior, rather than permitting society to decide for her. Although many of the women students interviewed feel pressured by American culture to reject chastity, many still feel the need to remain chaste. For example, Ms. H said:

I'm a very conservative person, and so premarital sex is out of the question. But I won't hate my friends if they choose to have sexual relations before they are married. I think that they will carefully consider it before doing it. That's okay for them, but I'm a deeply traditional person, and I know that it would not be the right decision for me.

Ms. H had already been changed by American culture, since she is willing to accept that others may make different choices than she did. Ms. Y generally concurred but her view was even more traditional:

I'm a Christian, so I don't think it's all right to have sex before marriage. It's just my opinion, and other people may have other ideas, but I think
it's stupid to sleep together without being married because the man may not want to have anything to do with you afterwards, and when you do marry, you may be unhappy for the rest of your life. Also, I think many men are selfish and want to fool around, but they expect the women they marry to be virgins. If you have sex before marriage and go to marry another man, I think that this will be a cause of great resentment and of many fights and much unhappiness.

She supported her traditional views with an appeal to Christianity, which is a non-Chinese religion. However, not all of the students interviewed frowned on pre-marital sex. For example, Ms. Y said:

Premarital sex is not a big issue, the important thing is how you view it, and how you feel about it. In my mind, I have my own criteria about what is right and what is wrong; what I should do and what I shouldn't do. When I came to America I didn't worry about how to deal with boys, because of my outgoing personality.

This view is not unusual among Americans and shows that Ms. Y, in this respect, has absorbed and accepted American attitudes. Some people, however, are made more conservative or traditional by their experience in the United States. Ms. W, who was once fairly liberal in her views, has found herself becoming less open-minded on sex as she gets older:

Prior to coming to the United States, I thought that cohabitation or sex before marriage would allow a couple to get to know each other and ultimately strengthen the marriage. Since coming to the United States, I have observed a certain casualness about premarital sex which has resulted in my feeling that sex before marriage may be destructive to a long-term relationship.

Here, we see a reversal of view from liberal to conservative views which demonstrates that residing in the United States is not always a liberalizing experience for Chinese female students.
Regarding the issue of divorce, Ms. H thought that for incompatible couples, divorce is the best choice. If children are involved, she said communication and reconciliation should be tried. Ms. R said that husband and wife should concentrate on mutual respect, communication, and consideration for each other. She said:

In America, children are trained to be very independent from a very early age. They strongly demand to be respected. A husband and wife also need to have mutual respect. I think they often want to be respected more than they want to respect their partner. They ask for favors, but don’t consider doing favors in return. In Taiwan, we always say that it’s better to give than to receive. In Chinese families, the concept of giving is very strong. I think, in American families, there is too much interest in what others can do for you. I think this results in the high rate of divorce. Chinese people emphasize patience, but if you have patience without communication, then a lot of resentment will build on the part of one or both members of the couple, and the frustration will build and tighten like a noose, strangling the relationship. Patience is a good first response, but at a certain point, you must begin to communicate. Patience is necessary for both partners. This is the criteria I hold in my own relationships.

Ms. R mentioned that patience and communication are both important to the marital relationship. However, in Chinese society, women are expected to be tender, obedient, and patient, regardless of the behavior of their husbands, in order to keep the marriage stable. The result is often resentment and the recognition of the wife of her unequal status in the relationship. Hence Ms. R’s statement that "patience is necessary for both partners," is innovative, since she recommends that men adopt the patience long demanded of women.

Ms. Y said the husband and wife both need to take responsibility for divorce. If they can’t get along together, they should try separation first. If they
have children, they must consider their steps more carefully, because the children of divorce are the victims of their parents' actions. If the children are old enough, then the parents should explain the situation carefully to them, making it very clear that the problems between the mother and father are not the children's fault and that their parents still love them. Ms. Y believes divorce is preferable to staying together for the children's sake, if the couple constantly fights. Generally, most of the students agreed with Ms. S, who said that divorce was not necessarily a good thing, but it is, nonetheless, a possible solution to marital problems.

**Filial Piety**

According to the Chinese concept of the "three obediences," women must be subordinate to men at every stage of their lives. Most of my students thought this idea is nonsense, especially obedience to their sons. They all agreed to obedience to the father. Ms. R said filial piety was a necessary recompense for parental sacrifice, and should include living with parents or visiting them often, and supporting them financially.

Ms. S noted that she used to complain about visiting her family in Taiwan, about studying, etc. She now understands, though, how much her parents gave up for her during her childhood, and she vowed to do her best to honor her parents after she graduated. Thus, after a short period of rebellion, Ms. S has returned to her native tradition of filial respect.

Ms. W was raised in a very strict family and she has always obeyed her father. She said, "If we kids say anything that counters [our father], then we will be scolded." While away at boarding school, she felt compelled to call her
father for permission to go to concerts, and she still tries to be very obedient to
him. If her father offers advice, most of the time she follows it. Her obedience
is deeply ingrained, as it is with most of the women.

Ms. Y generally agreed with the others, but she made a distinction
between obedience to her parents, which she considered desirable, and
obedience to her spouse, which she rejected. Ms. Y's philosophy was: "I can go
out when I'm in the United States, but in my parents house, it is my duty to
respect and obey my parents. This is done without anger or resentment."

All the women, then, shared a filial piety, which seemed to be very
important to them, and which identified them as still very Chinese.

For most of the students interviewed, family would come before career.
Most of the students said that being a good wife and mother was more
important than success in the work place. Many of the women in the study
expressed a feeling of conflict between the feminist demand that they be equal
to men in career, status, and economic advantages, and their personal desire to
devote themselves to home and family. It is a constant tug-of-war for Chinese
women to find a balance between a public persona and a family/maternal one.

In summation, because Chinese parents wield such authority and
discipline, parents dominate their children's lives, and their children remain
under the influence of their parents opinions, even after they grow up and move
away. Most students interviewed were to be obedient to their families,
particularly to their fathers. Indeed, this was the single strongest similarity they
shared.

As for premarital sex, most of the students rejected it. Gender role
definition and expectations were still yoked to feudal conceptions, with men
dominant over women by virtue of their sex alone. This point of view remains
dominant in modern Chinese society and seems little affected by exposure to
more liberal cultures.

**Conclusion**

I learned about my subjects through the pre-course interviews. Just as
the sculptor must first know his media -- its hardness, texture, shading, hidden
faults or cracks--before he can begin to shape it, so did I need to know my
subject: my students and their personal and educational histories, tendencies
and opinions. Because learning is a two-way process of communication,
knowing my students helped me to find meaningful ways to meet their needs
and to help me design the curriculum of the course.

When students first come to the United States from Taiwan, they know
they will encounter a very different educational system. At first, this frightens
or confuses them, but they gradually become used to the Western style and, as
they adjust, many of them come to prefer it. As a result of this study, I will
seek to find ways to ease the transition from one style of teaching to another,
and when I return to Taiwan, I will have some solid, practical suggestions to
ease the transition for my students there.

This pedagogy will be general enough to be applied to a variety of
educational goals, but for the moment, I will focus only on a pedagogy for
teaching Chinese feminist literature in order to see whether the pedagogy is
effective in making students more aware of their thinking and beliefs. I
conducted interviews before, during, and after the course, to see if and how
students were influenced by my pedagogical approach. The influence of a
pedagogy is usually quite subtle and subjective, but I will attempt to approach
the question scientifically, and put my observations and intuitions into concrete
terms.
CHAPTER 5

EXCHANGES IN CLASS

Introduction

This chapter is an account of my attempts to teach feminist Chinese literature via a feminist pedagogy in an undergraduate literature class. The purpose of this chapter is to explore the process goals of this study, as outlined in Chapter 1. The process goals, separated into student/classroom goals and teacher/classroom goals, describe an ideal communication dynamic between the teacher and students. The following examples of class exchanges between students illustrate the degree to which the goals were met or not met during the course of the semester, in the context of such questions as: Was the students' background knowledge shared in class? Did the students take responsibility for their learning and become active, interested knowledge-seekers? Did they present topics for investigation? Did the teacher meet her goals by facilitating the successful achievement of the students' goals?

This chapter is more than a mere description of events that occurred as we moved through the semester. It is a personal (and partial) narrative of what I encountered as a teacher/researcher. It includes an account of the in-class interviews conducted at the beginning of the semester and a description of the two main phases of the course--teacher centered, and teacher facilitated--in the evolution of the pedagogy used in the course.

The data were collected through observation, questionnaires, student interviews, and student reactions/feedback. These classroom happenings were
carefully recorded in my journal. In addition, I asked students to write, before class, a summary of what they read. This was done in order to determine whether or not they had read the material. They were also asked to choose a topic that interested them and write a response paper following each class. This was used primarily to determine students' responses to the issues raised by the discussion. All of this material was used in my research and to determine the class's progress to date. These methods were essentially a way to evaluate and reflect on the pedagogy.

My class consisted of 13 Taiwanese females and one Chinese male, all of whom spoke Mandarin Chinese. At the time of my first meeting with the class on September 13, 1993, I attempted to structure it in such a way as to encourage students' participation, while allowing me as teacher to serve as a facilitator. The students were seated in a circle in order to encourage more participation and involvement. The students, however, proved to be very reserved: They were accustomed only to lectures. To counteract this, I used a combination of lecture/discussion and initiated a review of the assigned readings, identifying major issues for the students and asking them for their input.

The first phase of the course lasted approximately three weeks. I found that, for the most part, the students did not respond actively when I asked them for their ideas and comments. This was the most difficult phase for me: Since I was providing students with everything to which they had been accustomed in traditional Taiwanese classrooms, there apparently was no need for them to participate in discussions or offer any input.

Initially, I attempted a teacher/facilitator role for myself, counting on the students' involvement and encouragement. However, it was, in fact, a teacher-
centered approach. The lack of participation of the class made it very clear that this was not the pedagogy that I should stay with. For the second phase of the project, then, I attempted to design some activities which would be more student-centered.

Thinking it would be appropriate for students to gradually assume more responsibility for their own learning, I developed a number of activities to encourage students to participate more actively in class. These activities included student leadership of group discussions, and dividing the class into small groups for the purpose of discussions and debates. I asked the students to identify issues that intrigued or interested them prior to class and to bring those issues to class for the whole class to discuss. In this way, I succeeded in becoming a participating facilitator, and continued this phase for the remainder of the semester. I realized, after reviewing my field notes and journals, students' opinion papers and interviews, that, essentially, I had withdrawn much of my involvement from the class. In short, I had given up completely the lectures that I used in the first phase, which had identified all of the issues, principles, and other learning points for students, with little demand for or emphasis on students' input. I had become primarily a facilitator, charged with helping students move along through the material and assisting them in the classroom discussions. In the beginning of this phase, some students were comfortable with the way the class was conducted. They thought the teacher should be a facilitator, not a direct lecturer. Other students felt that I should have summarized the class at the end of each meeting and given my own opinions. I decided to ask students to lead the discussions at the beginning of each class period. Sometimes, I acted as a facilitator, and made the students aware of perspectives that they seemed to have missed; and sometimes I
brought in other points of reference, such as other works of literature, in order to give the students an opportunity to compare the readings.

**Class Exchanges**

I would describe the events that occurred as we moved through the semester chronologically. The events included the students interviews, and the two phases of teaching -- teacher centered and teacher facilitated -- as described above.

**Student Interviews**

At the beginning of the first four class sessions, I asked the students to take thirty minutes to interview each other and share what they had learned about their classmates with the class. The assigned topics for the interviews were their personal beliefs and experiences concerning both pedagogy and feminism. Students made comments on the student interviews. While some students seemed enthusiastic about the interviews, most of them were reserved. The first student interviewed, Ms. C, stated that she, personally, did not aspire to be a "super woman," because she believed such a woman could not be really happy without a romantic involvement. She also said that, if women had higher status than their husbands, either educationally or professionally, the relationship would suffer because men would feel that they had lost face. She felt that, eventually, high status women would disdain lower-status men, which would disturb a society which supports male superiority.
Mr. N, the only male student, attended his first class session in the second week. His presence won the attention of his female colleagues, all of whom expressed an eagerness to interview him. He had some reservations, because he was the only male amidst so many females. His opening comments concerned educational pedagogy rather than male/female relationships. He said he believed that teachers should hand out class materials beforehand, and then ask students for their opinions at the beginning of class. Teachers should offer students some main points for consideration, and follow the points with classroom discussions. He felt the teacher's conclusions were essential to class success.

It is interesting to contrast his views with those of the other students. On feminist issues, he said: "Equality between men and women basically does not exist. I don't think it's an issue. Everyone is an individual and can do what they can do." Despite his acceptance of gender inequality, he claimed that both men and women can have their own careers, and that both can do housework together. He said this was his real opinion, not one he gave because he was surrounded by females. On premarital sex, he had no opinion. On cohabitation, he said, as a Chinese male, that this was a hard idea for him to accept, although he didn't oppose it. He disliked divorce, but said he could accept it. He said that divorce results when people look at marriage as an experience, instead of a commitment, and that, ideally, marriage should be a commitment.

A female student, Ms. D, reported a different view of divorce. She rejected divorce as a way to solve marital problems. She said, "If your marriage and husband don't suit you, divorcing him to clear the way for another marriage and another husband will just cause another failed marriage--if your first
marriage didn't suit, a second one won't either." She insisted that marriage should be considered carefully before it is undertaken. A divorced woman would be obliged to lower her standards to find a second husband, because of her previous marital failure.

Ms. S disagreed. She thought that a divorcee had more experience with men and marriage which would lend her better judgment in a second marriage. Divorce can be an experience of growth. She did not believe that divorce was necessarily good, but it does offer a possible solution to a problem.

Mr. N described marriage as a matter of fate, which can bring a couple together or separate them. He said, "If I ever marry, it will be because fate will bring me to the right woman and right circumstances."

Many students agreed with his view of marriage as fate. They believed that everyone has a certain destiny of which marriage is a part. For a person to meet another person, considering how many people and obstacles there are in the world, suggested to them that some sort of overwhelming force must be at work.

Some students told me that they were shocked by student interviews in class. As Chinese, they had supposed that the course would be conducted according to traditional Chinese methods. The 13 Taiwanese women were surprised that they were permitted to speak Chinese in class and that the class included a male student. By the third week, though, they began to get used to this format. As Ms. Y said:

During the interviews, because we were talking to unfamiliar people, we all felt a little uncomfortable. I could not tell some one I am not familiar with about myself. I think this is common. I don't really like to talk about my family background and my own experiences in front of others, because if someone has had a sad life, and I tell my story, it might
remind them of their pain and make them sad, because they will think, "why has she been so fortunate?" and think I was showing off. Also, in Chinese there is a saying "A family's ugly side should not be shown," so people do not discuss their personal things.

Ms. W said, when she interviewed her partner, the responses she received were very curt. Each time Ms. W would ask a question, her partner made little response. In addition, many students lacked a clear conception of "feminist issues," so their ideas on the subject were not well conceived. Ms. W also felt that her responses were very general and superficial, adding that often personal opinions are difficult to articulate in front of a comparable stranger.

This reluctance to discuss personal opinions is not common to many American classrooms. Certainly, not every American student wants to reveal their family experiences, but there is much more support for such revelations within the popular culture. Sharing problems with strangers in America takes place: in therapy, in recovery groups, even on television, where people daily discuss their most private tragedies in front of millions of viewers of programs, such as on "Oprah," or "Donahue." This voluntary self-revelation does not happen in Taiwan. There is a strong cultural discouragement of personal disclosure, as Ms. Y remarked, so it is natural that students should be unenthusiastic about personal interviews in a public setting. Nevertheless, since I believe that an important part of feminist pedagogy is the relationship between the issues raised and personal experience, I persisted with the interviews.
The students were very reserved during the first class session. Given the opportunity to ask questions, only two were raised: one concerning whether or not tests would be administered, and one about the language in which the assignments were to be done. Since I believe in the whole language classroom, literature studies must build on the intrinsic motivations of students. This can be achieved by working together with students to select texts of specific interest. However, when offered a list of possible texts for the class and asked where their particular interests lay, no one in my class ventured to voice an opinion. They were passive, content to let the teacher make all of the decisions. Even arranging the classroom seats in a circle did not seem to promote more interaction in the class. The students sought teacher leadership, as though classical Chinese literature was too difficult a subject to tackle by themselves. To encourage student participation in the class, I even factored participation in as an element in their final grade, and this tactic was effective.

The following are excerpts from the dialogues about women's status in classical times:

T: What do you think of women's status at that point in history?
St1: They could not study, they could not hold a job that involved being out in public, because that was not something a decent woman did.
St2: They stayed at home, cooking and sewing.
T: How long ago are we talking about here? (Teacher has period from 1066 to 22 B.C. in mind)
St1: Very ancient times -- their sole purpose was to be a good wife and mother, cooking and sewing.
St3: In ancient China women were very obedient--they had to follow the three obediences.
T: Could they date or hold friendships with men?
Several students: No.
T: How do you know this? What's your source of information?
Several students: We read about it.
T: In the poem "Piao You Mei," we see an example of how women were viewed. Can someone explain this to me?
Several students: We don't understand it.
T: Seventy per cent of the fruit still on the tree, the rest is on the ground -- what's the metaphor here?
(No response)
T: Is the fruit ripe?
St3: Not yet.
T: Some is on the tree, the rest is on the ground -- what kind of metaphor is this?
St2: The woman is still young.
T: Yes. How about the second line of the poem?
St3: The fruit symbolizes that the girl is reaching marriageable age, so the men should come to her now.

The above interchange shows that the students' responses to the teacher's questions were relatively brief and cursory, prompting my attempt to lead them to an interpretation of the metaphor within the poem. I felt that without an understanding of the metaphor and unstated themes, students would lack both an appreciation for and comprehension of the work at hand. I also hoped that the students eventually would begin to grasp the idea that there were possible interpretations of the text beyond the obvious, surface level meanings; I wanted them to grasp the ideas of metaphor, allusion, and the multiple meanings, believing that there were certain things that they needed to know. In traditional terms, I was "in control" at all times. However, I prized my ability to structure a lesson and a class session so that the students would be working in ways that I had predetermined to discover and learn what they would need to know, but I did not see my role as actually controlling student learning. Rather, I preferred to think of myself as a facilitator, carefully designing situations so that students could move toward their own greatest potential for understanding. As a
teacher/researcher, I needed to make the students aware of their responsibility to participate in their own education. In this case, students didn't actively participate because of their background: They had been trained to be passive. In addition, after having a brief conversation with students during the break time, I discovered that the problem was that the subject matter was too difficult for them. Thus, at the end of the class, I told the students that they should come to class better prepared, having read all of the assigned texts beforehand.

On September 20, I began the class by having the students do some "free writing" in their notebooks. I also divided them into small groups to discuss the questions they had raised. I took time to work with them on really listening to each other in their groups. Later, the class reassembled to report on their group discussions and to reflect together as a whole group. The result was a more productive interchange of ideas than happened previously. The following are parts of the second class exchanges:

Group A

St1: This poem describes a woman who was divorced by her husband. They later met and talked. The woman asked the man how his second marriage and wife were. He told her she was better than his current wife and that made her sad. She thought, "Even though I was the better wife, I was divorced." Our group can't understand why her husband divorced her, if she was a better wife, and why she is kneeling throughout their conversation.

Group B

St2: In this poem, the man regrets divorcing his wife -- why did he do it? Was it because she didn't bear him a son? And why does she herself stay kneeling down to talk to him? Is it because of the authority? Was he a playboy? Did she commit adultery?
St3: This poem describes a man who misses his ex-wife. It seems like the moral of the story -- you don't know what you've got until it's gone.
Group C

St4: We think this poem is about an old woman meeting the husband who divorced her. They meet years later and have a heartfelt conversation. She regrets having been divorced, but she's very polite and accepting. Because of this we know that the woman's status was very low. We think she's very generous because, even though he divorced her, they are still friends.

St5: I think she kneels down as a greeting, but that's all.

St6: I think he divorced her, so women's status must be very low. But if we look at it from the women's point of view, maybe we'll think she has pride, and so her status really isn't all that low.

T: Any comments on these discussions?
(Students silent)

T: Each group raises its own questions and perspectives -- lets talk about each one respectively. The first question is about the wife's pride -- is this evident in this poem? If it is, how so?
(Students silent)

T: Do you think the woman has pride?
(Students shake heads)

St6: I think women's status is very low. They didn't have pride.

T: So why does she kneel? Okay, at the time this poem takes place, women did not sit down in front of people with their legs stretched out. To sit with the legs out straight would have been considered impolite. If a woman wanted to rest, she would sit in what you would call a kneeling position, with knees bent and shins on the ground. Now, we don't know implicitly that she was resting, but we are told that she has just come down from picking leaves in the mountains, so it makes sense that she might have been resting under the tree. When her husband or anyone else would come, she would rise in greeting out of politeness, but only as far as straightening her hips, her knees would remain on the ground because it would have been difficult for her to rise and still keep her modesty. Does this explanation make sense to you?
(Students nod silently)

From the excerpt, the students' summaries of the three group discussions show that they have achieved basic comprehension of the main themes of the material and have begun to raise questions of their own. The next step, according to scaffolding theory, is for the teacher to evaluate the
appropriateness of their ownership. As a teacher, I then would structure the rest of the lesson according to my assessment of the level and validity of the class's ownership of the material, in the sense that they respond to the material with a recognition of the relationship of the material to their own experience. This shifts the focus of the lesson from me to the students, and thwarts the students' desire to remain silent and passive as they traditionally have done during teachers' lectures in Taiwan. I tried to follow up Group B's questions by asking "The first question is about the wife's pride—is this evident in this poem? If it is, how so?" But students offered no active response. A mini lecture then followed, in which I filled in the gaps and resolved the questions left unanswered.

In the context of this pedagogy, an understanding of the culture under study is a vital part of the groundwork for the course. This point is underscored by the large percentage of the students' questions in the early part of the course dealing with cultural concerns.

At the beginning of the third class meeting, on September 27, I made a connection with the previous week's lesson by asking a student for a summary of the last class's work.

T: (Points to student for a summary of the last class's work)  
St1: The story was one about a beautiful virtuous woman who was divorced by her husband because her mother-in-law forced him to, so she had to move back in with her family.  
St2: After she moved back with her family, two men approached a matchmaker about arranging a match with her.  
T: What's the tone when the matchmaker discusses the offers with the woman's family?  
St3: The matchmaker is a confident that the woman will remarry, because two very good men have made offers for her.
St4: (Raising hand): I have a question. The men are young, rich and eligible. Why would they want a divorced woman to take to wife?
T: Think about that. Why does she suddenly seem to have a sudden rise in social status after her divorce?
St5: Because she's virtuous.
St6: She is beautiful.
Mr. N: Because the matchmaker is so eloquent, so persuasive.
T: That's a good point.
Mr. N: If a marriage is struck, then the matchmaker will make a profit, so he makes the men seem very desirable.
T: These are good points. In our own lives, we have all had experiences like this. People who have something to sell -- like the matchmaker -- only talk about the good points of their wares and play down the bad. So his tone is a sort of exaggeration. Are there any other reasons?
(students silent)
T: I can think of another reason. What if the author used a sort of artistic exaggeration? That way, by telling you she is a beautiful and virtuous woman, he already has the reader sympathizing with the woman.
St7: Is this a true story or a folk tale?
T: (Gives mini lecture on the story's archetypes and explains how the author puts it down in written form).

It was always the first student to raise her hand, I found, who generally had the greatest opportunity to offer her answers. In my field notes, I wrote that the class sat in a circle, but it seemed as if only those students who sat opposite the teacher (and thus were in line for direct eye contact) participated actively. Those students who sat to the left and right of me, out of the periphery of my vision, raised their hands less frequently. I thought I needed to change my position in order to have better eye contact with different students. One of the students mentioned in her response paper that she wanted more equal participation by the students in class. In response to her suggestion, I developed the strategy of occasionally selecting a quiet student whose hand was not raised and kindly encouraging her to answer, to promote participation by a large number of students.
When students raised questions, I tried to avoid giving a direct response and would invite the class to suggest possible answers instead. For example, when the students asked why these rich young men would want to take a divorced woman as a wife, I tried to get them to think of the question in another way, and asked why the woman in this story seemed to have a sudden rise in social status after her divorce. When students contributed ideas, I praised their responses as "good points". I also cited examples from life experience. I believed the text to be a vehicle through which students could consider issues of importance to their own lives.

Nystrand & Gamoran (1991) mention that, if the teacher responds to the students' answer substantially, they can weave the students' answers into the fabric of an unfolding exchange. In hindsight, instead of continuing the discussion after the students' statements, I think I should have asked follow-up questions to clarify, expand on, or challenge the students' contributions, thus creating more of a dialogue and less of a pre-planned lecture-style interchange.

Student Centered

Three weeks later, although the students were more comfortable with each other, with me, and with the sharing process, still I often struggled to decide what to do. I asked myself, what is the role of a teacher in a student-centered classroom? My strong initial reply was that I had to join with the students. Yet, I asked myself, "Isn't it my job to teach them?" My strong inclination was to acknowledge and nurture the students' abilities to construct meaning with each other, without direct instruction from me. Also, I was more interested in what the students themselves thought, and not in whether they
could reproduce what I or any other "authority" thought. I decided to let students lead the class discussions.

Since, in the pre-class interviews, some students felt that what they thought had no importance, they were fearful of participating in class. They remembered what it was like to be wrong in front of their teachers and peers in Taiwan, and they knew what it was to be humiliated. It is a kind of a feeling of "Once bitten, twice shy." In consequence, I worked very hard to create the kind of atmosphere where no one would be hurt, humiliated, or left out. I required that students show respect for each other in the classroom. I always spoke to the students in a respectful tone of voice. I smiled frequently and maintained direct eye contact, listening with full attention to whomever was talking to me inside or outside classroom. I also frequently assured students that differences in understanding are acceptable and even valuable. I believe that, in a whole language classroom, the teacher should respect the students, and they, in turn, should extend the same respect to the teacher.

On October 13, the students were asked to generate questions, which were written on the board by a class member. Sometimes it was difficult for the students to articulate their questions and the student who was leading the class had to ask the teacher to step in and to help get to the root of the question. One of the questions was:

**Were the characters in the story "Regret for the Past" happy during their cohabitation?**

St1: They weren't, because they didn't know each other well before they moved in together. They couldn't afford to live together -- their finances were not large enough.
Student Leader: I had the same feeling. They only knew each other for six months, then lived together for a year. That's not enough time to make that sort of commitment.

St2: That's not the reason. Some married couples live together for 20 years and still don't know each other very well.

St3: I think they really didn't know each other very well. The story describes the male character, Juansheng, as speaking freely, while female character, Zijun, sits and listens quietly. On the surface, this seems very harmonious and sweet, but you have to realize that it also means that the discussion is all one sided -- they are not mutually communicating and that's bound to figure into the success of their cohabitation.

Student leader: Teacher, whose idea was it for them to live together in the first place? I think this is important because the one who did the asking will be the one who's more responsible for the success of the relationship.

T: Does any one have an answer to this?

Student leader: I think they still love each other very much. Even when Zijun leaves him and goes back to her father's house, Juansheng still tries to visit her.

St3: I don't think so. On page 163, he says "Honestly, I don't love you any more." On page 167, he says, "I should not have told her the truth? We used to love each other. I should have let her go on believing it."

In my journal, I wrote that the student leader often turned to me, rather than asking her fellow students for assistance when she had a question. This suggests that she still thought of the teacher as the source of all knowledge and viewed me as an authority figure. I made a conscious effort to direct the questions to the class instead, to encourage student discussions and to keep the class student-centered, by saying "does any one have an answer to this?" After this, students did share their different opinions. As a result, students' responses began to be longer and more complex.

Here is the other question they discussed:

**Why did they separate?**

St1: Because they couldn't afford to stay together.
St2: I think he complains that she's always too busy to keep up her appearance. You can't say that it's her fault, but I think it's important to always try to look your best.

Student leader: He thinks she changes after he gets fired, she feels displaced and so he thinks she's changed--she's acting very traditional--the opposite of what attracted him in the first place, and so he gradually stopped loving her.

T: You said, "he thinks she changed after he gets fired." Do you think she changed and why do you think that way?

St3: I don't think she changed -- I think that all the pressure just took its toll and influenced her mood.

St4: No, she changed a lot. Before they moved in she was very spirited -- like Nora in "A Doll's House," but after, she turned into a regular housewife.

St5: She's right. After they lived together she never had time to read -- she never had time for anything but housework. That stifled her spirit. She wasn't the same after that.

Here, I quoted part of the student's response (he thinks the female character changed after the male character got fired) and followed up on the student's question. This is what Cazden (1988) called an "uptake" question-answer approach. Thus, the discussion evolved from one question to another, became more dynamic in nature, and moved beyond the simple answering of a question.

At another point in the discussion, the students disagreed with the theory I put forward that suggested that there are three distinct stages of feminist consciousness raising. Zijun, the female character, regresses backwards through these stages, from full consciousness, to ambiguous feelings toward feminism, and, finally, to having difficulty accepting the basic tenets of feminism, rather than progressing from difficulty to full acceptance. Because feminist pedagogy encourages students to challenge existing ideas, I see the students' disagreement with my theory as a step in their developing awareness of the teacher as something other than an authority figure.
After three weeks of the student-led discussions, a second series of questionnaires indicated that most of the students felt that such discussions were good practice, because most students had a chance to express themselves in the classroom, and because the discussions helped them to understand the text and to communicate their ideas. Nevertheless, although students were assigned to lead the discussions, sometimes I saw the need to give the class hints that helped them to clarify their ideas. This did not stop them from sharing in the discussion, however. One student said, "it would be better if everybody could take part in the class discussion, because everyone's ideas are equally important." Another student said that, because they had a different leader for each class and each leader had different abilities, some class discussions were more interesting than others. She wrote, "I think we need to have several different methods of exchanging ideas -- class discussions, group discussions, films. It keeps the class active and interesting." In other words, students like to have a variety to keep the class lively.

On November 8, the class divided into two groups. One group discussed a reading which dealt with an adulterous husband from the wife's point of view; the other group discussed a different reading that dealt with the same topic, only from the concubine's point of view. Rather than just observing, I participated in each discussion to help the students see me as a peer, rather than an authority figure. Instead, I found to my chagrin that most of the students in the first group hadn't read the assignment. In their defense, they said that the reading, which was an English translation, was too difficult for them to read or that they had mid-term exams and were too busy to read the assignments. I then raised some questions and offered suggestions to help those students who had read the text make a summary of the story. Moving to the second group, I found that the
students had mostly completed the assignment, but failed to understand the key points. Even though the second story was in Chinese, they felt that the plot was too contrived and that the main idea was too elusive for them to grasp.

When the whole class reconvened they discussed both stories. The first, "The Pleated Skirt of Golden Carp," was summarized by a student as divided into three sections:

St: This story has three sections:

The first tells how the pleated skirt came into the family's possession.
The second tells the main story of the skirt, and of the concubine who originally owned it. The concubine belonged to a man who desperately wanted a son, but whose wife had only given birth to daughters. When the concubine gives birth to a son and he grows up and marries, she tries to wear the pleated skirt, which as a concubine she would not be entitled to wear, and so the man's wife doesn't let her. This breaks her heart, and her son's too. He leaves home for Japan to study, and for 10 years has no contact with his mother. He returns when he learns that she is very ill, but she dies the day after he arrives.

After she dies, the family at first refuses to allow her coffin to go out through the front door, insisting that they must take her out the side door. It is only through the intercession of her son, and a heated argument, that she finally is allowed to leave the house through the front door.

The third part takes place years later. In the next generation, the son's daughter finds the skirt, and asks her father about it, but he is unwilling to discuss it.

The students discussion went as follows:

St1: The story is pretty superficial and is written in a dull, flat style.
(Students silent, teacher looks around in an attempt to encourage students to speak)
T: Even though the plot seems to be told in a simple, straightforward way, that doesn't mean that the ideas behind it aren't profound. Let's analyze whether or not it reflects reality. Think about the roles of the wife and the concubine. Are they happy? Do you know of any real-life examples of concubines?
St2: My brother's girlfriend's father has a concubine. She always tells us the sad story of her family. I can understand how both the wife and concubine feel.
St3: My neighbors in Taiwan have the same situation. Outwardly they get along, but who knows what goes on behind closed doors?

T: Let's get back to this story. What do you think the author's motivation was for writing it?

St1: To compare different eras. In the third part of the story, the author seems to tell us that in different eras it is meaningless to talk about the skirt again.

St2: To expose the cruelty of the traditional marriage system.

St3: To describe these women's sad lives.

T: Why does this system of concubines exist?

St1: Males are more powerful than females.

St2: Because society thinks males are more important.

T: Why do you think society holds these ideas?

St4: Because the male carries on the family name.

T: Because the children will carry on the father's line. If this so, what is the female's social status?

St4: Continuing the family name is important; daughters are like spilled water.

St5: Sometimes they will have a dozen daughters before they get a son, because the son is so important.

St6: The family gets a betrothal fee when they marry off their daughters. It's like they sell her.

St7: Daughters who need a dowry will not perpetuate their family's name after marriage.

T: Since the women are seen as being less important, how could society's perception be changed?

St1: It seems reasonable that the children should have both last names.

St2: If some kids had the father's last names, other kids the mother's, it would be too confusing. [In most Asian countries, including Taiwan and China, the woman retains her family name after marriage, but her children all bear their father's surname.]

St3: Try to marry a man with the same last name as you.

St4: From the genetic point of view that might not be a good idea--you might marry a distant relative.

St5: I don't think that's very likely to happen.

T: I think we should hold this thought: a tradition may exist in a society, but that doesn't mean it's reasonable. Like binding a girl's feet--it was traditional, but not reasonable. At this point, if carrying the father's last name may cause such problems, one needs to think about what's reasonable.

St2: As long as we understand that a family name is a symbol, not a reason for being.
T: That's a good point. The blood line continues whether the name does or not. If one keeps this in mind, one can change the perception that men are more valuable than women.

In this discussion, I contained myself to facilitating only as needed, helping the students make the connection between reality and fiction, while keeping to the story as a starting place. Again, it was difficult to consider all of the implications of the text, when so many of the students had failed to complete the reading assignment, but this became less important because the discussion that did occur related to their own experiences and opinions. The students interacted with the teacher and each other, supporting each other's answers with their own observations and real life examples. In this respect, the classroom exchange was a success, rather than a failure, although I had to facilitate more than I wanted to do.

This exchange also demonstrates a success in terms of students' application of schema and scaffolding theories. They approached the discussion of literature with individual sets of schemata and levels of awareness (of current practices in marriage, maintenance and use of family surnames, and the value of male children in Taiwan), and they shared their individual schemata and experiences to benefit each other. They listened, reacted and modified their own beliefs. This was demonstrated when Student #3 suggested marrying a man with the same surname and Student #4 raised the question of genetics. Student #3 did not argue the point, suggesting that she had modified her own individual schema on the matter as a response to the input of Student #4. This is what the schema theory suggests will occur in an open classroom forum. As for scaffolding, a similar occurrence took place when students questioned the reasons for women's lower social status. The knowledge that the
students already possessed — that sons are considered to be more important in Chinese society than daughters — was challenged. Alternatives were sought in response to the teacher's question, "how could society's perception be changed?" This led the students to ponder the implications of tradition and society that they might not have considered before, and then to build on their existing knowledge of all three (female status, society and tradition) to come to a new level of understanding: That women should not be thought of as "spilled water," and that society and tradition possibly can be changed. This was a new and relatively subversive way of thinking for Chinese females brought up to believe that their greatest role in life would be that of wife and mother of sons. How much of this idea they actually incorporated into their own reality would vary from individual to individual, but to acknowledge such a possibility was to add another level to their schemata of personal knowledge.

Group Two's story dealt with the plight of a wife whose husband has taken a concubine. Two students introduced the story. They said the story was a series of uninteresting conversations and without the depth to stimulate a profitable discussion. At that point, I wrote the modern Chinese poem, "Mistake," on the board to compare the two narrators' views of love.

Because the students complained that they had trouble figuring out the main idea of the story, I chose to direct the course of the discussion with a view to lead the students to a deeper level of understanding by comparing the two texts. Then I asked the students to relate the material to their own lives, and to modern society.

T: Why is this story called "The Candle?"
St1: A candle is like the old woman--it burns to nothing and she dies.
T: Any other ideas?
(Students silent)
T: How much light does a candle give off?
St2: It flickers.
T: Could this flickering be a metaphor for something else?
St2: It's like the life of the old woman; dark and lonely—one tiny candle against a big darkness.
T: So, the candle could represent her fate or her mood. Could it also represent anything else?
St3: Her circumstances are dark, so her situation is very bleak.
T: The reason for the man having a concubine is different than in the story we just discussed. What is the reason in this story?
St4: He is always looking for someone new and discarding the old one.
(At this point the teacher puts the poem on the board. It's about a woman who looks out the window waiting for her lover, but sees a stranger instead. A passerby sees her peering out and calls her action a "beautiful mistake."
T: Why does he call it a "beautiful mistake"?
(No response)
T: Is it a "beautiful mistake" from the male or female point of view?
St5: The female's.
T: Why do you say that?
St5: Because she has hope in her heart, even though she's disappointed again and again.
T: Does anyone else have a comment?
St3: It's the male's point of view.
T: Why do you say that?
St3: Because all of the action in the poem is from the male's point of view—he approaches the house, sees the woman, and makes the remark.
T: Can we interpret it this way? From the male narrator's point of view, love is just a fun game, so he narcissistically romanticizes the encounter into a "beautiful mistake." Because the "beautiful woman" is hopelessly waiting for her lover, from her point of view the mistake could hardly be considered "beautiful". Instead, it is a painful disappointment, and a reminder that her waiting is becoming meaningless. Do you have any other opinion or observations?
(silence)
T: The poem is an example of the male chauvinism inherent in traditional Chinese culture. But now we can look at it from other perspectives, and examine the place of the woman in the poem. Now let's return to the story, and compare the two male narrators' views of love. Why does the narrator of "The Candle" have a concubine?
St3: His consciousness represents the male-centered, selfish nature of the society. He is not committed to his marriage, and cares nothing for his wife's feelings. He gives her only material support, and goes about satisfying his desires with a younger woman.

T: What do you think our modern society's definition of love is?
St4: Communicating with each other, and caring for each other.
St6: I feel there must be honesty, communication, and equality. In the story and the poem, we can see that in the past there was no equality between men and women. But now there must be equality in our love relationships.

After the class, the students were asked to write comments on the teacher's role and students' role following the November 8 class. Some students wrote:

* I like it when the teacher leads the discussion, because she can give us perspectives that we students miss. The teacher can always bring in other points of reference, like other works of literature, to help us understand the readings better. (Ms. S)

* The teacher should lead the discussion to stimulate the students' ideas. She also needs to lead us to conclusions at the end of class. (Ms. J)

* I like it when the teacher leads discussion and the students participate. Because the teacher specializes in the subject, she can always lead students directly to the main idea. The teacher should summarize the discussion at the end of class. (Mr. N)

* The teacher should lead class discussions. Sometimes students have trouble figuring out the main idea in a piece of literature; the teacher can direct them to it when they summarize the lesson. If we can't understand the point of the lesson, how can we express our ideas about it? (Ms. D)

* Sometimes when I read an article, I can be inspired by what I read, but I don't know how to analyze it. I need the teacher to light the fire and illuminate my thoughts. It is important for the teacher to lead the students to the key points. When it works, it's very exciting, and understanding comes like an unexpected gift. (Ms. R)
* I like the interaction between teacher and students, but the teacher needs to keep control in the classroom. If the teacher can settle students' arguments, it will save a lot of time instead of letting the discussion go around and around over the same points. (Ms. T)

Other students wrote:

* I don't think it's necessary for the teacher to lead the discussion, since college students should be able to figure what's what. Sometimes students should lead the discussions; this helps them to analyze the topic on their own. Instead of the teachers raising the issues and controlling the discussions, students need to be given the opportunity to think for themselves. The teacher should be only a helper to help students develop their ideas and give alternative perspectives. (Ms. P)

* Basically, students leading the discussion is a good idea, because the teacher can discover where the difficulties lie in students' thinking by listening to their discussions. It's the students responsibility to be well prepared for class and show the respect to the class as a whole. (Ms. W)

* The teacher should be a facilitator to conduct the class, not a direct lecturer, but rather, to make us think and guide us to reach our own conclusions. Students need to respect the teacher and others. In class, basic politeness is important. When other student expresses their ideas, one should keep quiet and listen. (Ms. Y)

* The teacher should help students out when they have questions. It is important that teacher give hints when necessary. (Ms. L)

* Students should ask questions in the classroom, not just sit there. (Ms. B)

On the fourth week, having successfully participated in student-led discussions, some students came to class ill-prepared and their discussion rapidly disintegrated to the point where I had to intervene. The class reverted to a teacher-centered style. As shown above, in a class of fourteen, opinions ranged from strong support for teacher-led classes to concessions that student-
led discussion to be a good idea for college-level classes. In their response papers to the way the class conducted, two students said they "liked" the teacher to lead the discussion; two students said the teacher "should" lead the discussion; one student said she liked the interaction between teacher and students. Another three students agreed that it is important for the teacher to lead the students to the key points. Out of 14 students, only five thought students leading the discussion was a good idea, since college students should be able to determine important points, and student-led discussions help students to analyze literary topics on their own. This frustrated me: I felt that the student-centered approach probably is an approach best used as a short-term teaching method. Students can listen to each other, can be more responsible for their own learning, can raise questions to meet their own needs. But it was a new experience for many of them, and they still felt that they lacked the experience and depth of knowledge of the teacher who knew more about the subject and thus was better able to offer insights and make connections. They perceived the benefits of a teacher-led class as outweighing those of the student-centered one.

Later, I gave a lot of thought to their perceptions and believed they were a result of the students' upbringing. Raised to accept the teacher's authority in Taiwan, many students are left insecure about their own abilities. Faced with a difficulty, such as lack of sufficient preparation to have a meaningful dialogue, the students rapidly reverted to the belief that the teacher should take charge again. Many students also acknowledged their own failure to come to class prepared, and promised to do better in the future.
On November 15, I decided to continue to use the student-centered method of instruction, since it was the pedagogy in which I was interested. I believed the role of a teacher should be both participant in and facilitator of the learning process of the students whom I admired and respected. I divided the students into two groups, which discussed two separate stories: One discussed "Sayonara, Good-bye"; the other, "The Day to See the Sea." The first story is of a Japanese man who comes to Taiwan to sleep with a prostitute. The man hired to pimp for these Japanese business men thinks that it's a shame that these men come to degrade Taiwan's women, because a local problem (prostitution) has become an international disgrace. The second is about with an adopted daughter sold into prostitution by her family. Prostitution turns her into a tough woman, who, nonetheless, gives all her pay to the family. In the end, she intentionally gets pregnant, because she thinks that, as a mother of a son, she will raise her status.

When the class came back together, they shared their impressions and thoughts on these works, and critiqued each other's observations. The discussion, happily, was extremely student-centered, with minimal teacher participation:

Q: Should prostitution be legal?
St1: No, because it's immoral.
T: Could you please elaborate on that.
St1: Prostitution influences families and society--it is not just a problem for individuals, it's a health problem and so a social problem.
St2: I think it should be legal. Everyone's curious. If you tell people they can't, then they just want to do it more. I think it's like American teenagers, who like to drink because they are underage--it becomes a challenge for them to try to drink. Once they are legal, it would not so tempting in the first place. Like in Taiwan, there is no drinking age, for example my young brother is not curious at all. I went to Holland, pot is legal, and so a lot of Taiwanese go there just to
buy it because it's illegal in Taiwan. Holland has a low crime rate, because for the people that live there, there is no big attraction to this drug. So I think, prostitution should be legal.

Q: A man pays the prostitute, like a business--it's like the concubine getting their material desires satisfied--isn't that a sort of prostitution?
St3: The concubine didn't get paid every time she put out.
St4: But he supported her, that's a kind of payment, an exchange.
St5: According to your definition, being a wife would be a sort of prostitution.
St6: A prostitute has sex without marriage, that makes her different from a wife.
St2: A concubine is a different sort of prostitute.
St3: I know a lot of concubines and they all started out as prostitutes.

As teacher, I tried to follow up their questions by asking them to elaborate on their answers. They had now improved so much that they could discuss the subject successfully without me. Now, I have learned that I never underestimate the students' abilities. When the class discussed prostitution, the conversation evolved from the topic of prostitution to society to health to politics. The students' comments were very insightful, and they brought many of their personal experiences and opinions to the discussion, which made for lively and enlightening exchanges. Some of the students initially felt that prostitution was immoral, but by the end of the class, they had decided that, under certain given sets of circumstances, it might be acceptable. As a result of this stimulating discussion, I definitely believe students can do well when the teacher retires and gives them more responsibility for their own learning. At the end of the class, I did share my opinions with the students and raised some questions of my own for them to consider. The following are students' comments on the November 15 class:
Ms. Y:

Today, we students controlled the whole class. I think this is a good way to encourage students to express their opinions and points of view. It's not necessary to come to a definite conclusion, or debate each other. I think the main object of this is "sharing," rather than just arguing. This is the most important thing that everyone must understand.

I definitely think that this is a positive thing. From these discussions we are exposed to different points of view. I could tell that everyone was very serious about addressing society's problems. Now we know the problems that our society faces; the next step is to work to change the situations. This is the direction we must make more effort in.

Ms. R:

I think everyone was very excited and enthusiastic about our discussion today, because everyone had the chance to express themselves and practice brainstorming. Not like in Taiwan, where the students just sit quietly and listen to the teacher, and don't have to use their brains. I think today's discussion was very lively and beneficial. Although I still think the teacher is our leader, and that because of the teacher's vast knowledge she "transmits the knowledge, teaches, and solves problem," still I can't deny that students' participation stimulates thinking. Although we sometimes wander off the subject, we nonetheless are, from our own thinking and experiences, learning things that are interesting and also necessary.

Ms. B:

Today we learn a lot. For example, I didn't know that marijuana is legal in Holland. This made me change my mind about the legalization of prostitution. I used to think that it should be illegal, but now I don't think so. I absorbed many different opinions and ideas. The student-led discussion are a good idea. Because we're all the same age, we understand each other. But though we are the same age, our backgrounds are different, and so we have different ideas about things.

Ms. H:

Today's class is good. Especially the second part where we talk together about our small group discussions. Everybody had different ideas, which we all
digested and absorbed. At the end the teacher raised a few questions which we all had different opinions about, and which raised still other questions.

Mr. J:

I like this kind of discussion very much. We heard many constructive ideas, and if we had had more time it would have been even better. I also like to hear the teacher's ideas about each story, because my ideas after reading a story are often different than those she gives us. So I like to have both the students' discussions and the teacher's comments about the story.

Ms. D:

I think the way we did today's class was excellent, because everyone was very excited to take part and we learned a lot, not only about the text, but about our own lives outside of class. I can't think of any way it could have been improved. This method of holding class isn't bad, and would never be boring. I feel everyone participated, and the teacher gave us many new ideas, and questions, which made our discussion more interesting.

Ms. P:

I think today's class was very lively, because we didn't limit the topics (although we did stick to the subject of prostitution), this allowed us to explore a broader range of issues. Today I learned a few things I didn't know, for example, that prostitution is legal in Holland. I think we should come to some conclusion about this issue.

Ms. W:

It's very enjoyable when people whose thinking is clear, whose experience is broad, and to whom one doesn't have to put repeated questions as to their meaning, discuss their ideas in class. Because not only can you receive a lot of information, but you can also learn verbal skills from them. In addition, to hear those ideas that oneself holds, but cannot properly articulate, spoken well by another, is in itself enjoyable......Although most of the time students control the class, sometimes the teacher need to raise questions in order to stimulate us, which is very proper.
Ms. T:

I think the method in today's class was very lively, and allowed everybody to express their ideas. As for me, I enjoy this kind of method. Especially at the end, when the teacher expressed her own personal opinion, and raised questions. Because, after all, the teacher is older than us. Because both her education and experience are greater than ours. Through the teacher we can come to understand different opinions.

One thing that I think could be improved: the teacher could, before the discussion, give us a brief introduction to the author's background, because there are some authors whom I have neither read nor ever heard of, so it is difficult for me to understand their motivations.

My instinct was to take the next step of trusting the students, moving through my own struggles. I think that I am willing to accept that they can take responsibility for their own learning. I trusted that, when the students had talked enough about an issue, they would arrive a clear understanding of a text and also of themselves. They considered their own, narrow assumptions, and found themselves changing.

The class on November 21 was a make-up class, because I missed a class on account of illness. I invited the students over to my house for class, with a potluck to follow. The students sat on the floor of my living room in a circle, which lent the class a cozy atmosphere, and made the students feel more relaxed, and better able to discuss personal experiences than they would have been in the classroom.

One student related her Chinese friend's personal experience with a gynecological exam that left her feeling violated, especially since her doctor refused to believe that she could be a virgin at age 21. This particular individual had gone to the Health Center because of painful menstrual cramps. The doctor told her that he thought the cramps were caused by too frequent
sexual intercourse. She denied this possibility, and told the doctor that she was still a virgin. He didn't believe her, because she was already 21 years old. The doctor insisted on doing an internal examination, because her cramps had been going on for over 30 hours at that point.

The woman was upset that the doctor wouldn't believe that she was a virgin, and because he wouldn't respect cultural differences, even though she had tried to explained them to him. She also was very upset because the procedure might have taken her physical virginity, something that would be a considered a disgrace in her culture. She felt that she had been raped by the doctor.

After the student told the story, she said that she had a similar experience with a doctor disbelieving her virginity.

Although the story was not the teller's own experience, her admission that she, too, had had a similar experience, counts as "ownership". This student took a giant step toward ownership of a traumatic personal experience, although the inhibitions imposed by her background would not let her take full possession of it. This step was an important one in spite of its limitation because one of the important features of a feminist pedagogy is that the students relate the subject under discussion to their own experiences, and then share these private experiences during the class discussions.

Ms. W, Ms. D, and Ms. H in their journals and in the mid-class interviews, said that they enjoyed being the leader of classroom discussions. After success at leading class discussions, they felt more a sense of accomplishment and thereafter felt more competent and confident in speaking out in the class.
On November 22, in the first part of class, one student volunteered to act as secretary and write students' questions on the board. When she was able to get the gist of questions from students who had difficulty in articulation, the rest of the class would applaud her. After discussing several of the questions, I divided the class into two groups in order to debate the question: "Women should be tough and aggressive, yes or no." The students were allowed to decide which side they wanted to be on in the debate.

During the debate, each side was given approximately 20 minutes to discuss their strategy, and a team captain was appointed to act as a spokesperson for their side. The others would pass notes to the captain, reminding her of points that could be argued to their advantage.

The side that favored aggressiveness argued that both men and women should be free to lead their own lives and that neither sex should be dependent on the other. Women should be independent, smart, straightforward and upright, and equipped to lead their careers. They gave the examples of Margaret Thatcher and Corozon Aquino as "tough" women who met their potential.

The opposition argued that women need to exhibit tenderness and that a soft woman is not, necessarily, ignorant or dependent or obedient. They argued that tenderness is an innate characteristic of females, and to be gentle and caring is part of what it means to be a woman. A society is made up of both males and females, and the characteristics of women are socially different from those of men, resulting in a natural balance. They argued that the nature of women affords them a knowledge that eludes men and that nurturing is a necessity only women can give. They also suggested that Thatcher and Aquino might have their softer sides, outside the public eye. The same might be true of Hillary
Clinton—the president deals with war, foreign policy, and economics, his wife is worried about health care, education, and family values—all softer, caring kinds of thing. Tenderness and softness just means that women are more in touch with emotions than men and that women deal with issues that never even occur to men.

After this, the class continued to discuss the questions that they had raised. The following is part of the discussion:

Q: Why doesn't Xinghua want her mother to know that she helped her brother?
St1: Because the mother has such high expectations for the brother, and she doesn't want her mother to be disappointed.
St2: She really didn't want to help him, because they both had begun to depend on her, so she didn't want her mother to know. But she had to help him—she couldn't say "no".
T: The shadow of the patriarchal society is everywhere, even on Xinghua herself. She may be a very capable woman, but even she can't escape the patriarchy. It's too big an obstruction to bypass. Her brother is like the father figure in the family, so she has to maintain his dignity, so she doesn't want her mother to find out.
St3: I think the most important thing is that she doesn't want them to get too dependent on her. If her mother finds out, then she'll expect Xinghua to be responsible for bailing him out every time. If her brother would at least try his best, then she wouldn't mind; but he slacks off, expecting her to fix things for him.
T: That's a good point.

This may seem like a typical classroom exchange to a Western observer, but to a Taiwanese onlooker it is quite extraordinary. Seldom has a Taiwanese student followed up a teacher's comments with her own observation, particularly one phrased so emphatically ("I think the important thing..."). This is an excellent example of the new pedagogy at work, changing the traditional, passive demeanor of Taiwanese students.
I believe positive reinforcement is an important incentive in encouraging student expression in classroom. However, praising of student contributions tended to disrupt the flow of conversation. The transcripts reveal multiple instances where the topics for discussion changed abruptly if I said, "That is a good point." Another occasion, the class discussed "gendered" and "ungendered" in society, that is, whether the ideal would be for women to be perceived as innately different but of equal value to men biologically, emotionally, and cognitively, or whether women should be seen as equal to men in every way but physically. This very intriguing discussion came to an abrupt halt after I interrupted to praise the discussion. Neither side evolved speak further on the subject, and I was left with the impression that had I not interrupted, the exchange of ideas might have proceeded further.

The students, according to their comments also approved of debate as a class activity, because it stimulates students' discussion. Both sides engaged in the debate and learned a lot from each other's opinions.

St N: The debate was good, but we needed more preparation time. We needed to bring more real-life cases into the arguments, though. It's a good idea to bring people's personal experiences into the class. The discussion after the debate seemed dull. It was the most boring discussion all semester.

St S: I think the idea was pretty good, because students are getting more into the class and they seem to understand a lot more. I also think that we should have had more time to support our ideas. One person would say what they thought, but not enough support came with it. I mean, more sources of support.

St T: Discussing the questions in the order they are written on the board seems formulaic and stifling: it needs to be more lively and connections need to be made between related questions. Generating the questions and discussing them in the order they are written on the board seems formulaic and stifling. It needs to be more lively.
St W: The debate was a good method, because it forces you to think and to form an opinion. But it seemed to have no resolution at the end, it just sort of dangled. Because all our energy went into the debate, everyone felt burnt out for the second half's discussion.

In short, students thought that the debate was interesting and a good tactic for stirring them up so that they would offer their opinions. The two groups were able to express their ideas and argue their points. Some students mentioned that it was good to be able to express their opinions and use facts to back them up. When students combined the groups together to discuss the material, the forum was open to discussion and development of ideas. In the second half of the classroom discussion, the students were tired and less willing to participate, so I had to ask more questions to draw them into participation. Ideally, the class should be structured so that the debate occurs in the second half of the class to maintain students' interest.

In Taiwan, where students are dependent on their teachers to tell them what to think, only a few students would dare to answer questions, the rest feeling it was safer to let other people do all the talking. Now, with the questions written on the board and with small discussion groups, no student could escape expressing some opinion. As for the complaint about the formulaic and stifling quality of discourse based on questions written on the board, the student, Ms. Y, told me:

I have heard other classmates say that, in the beginning, we had trouble understanding the texts, so it was difficult to come up with one question, but gradually we became more able to find and express our questions. You could tell that we understood better by the way we phrased questions and by the looks of interest on our faces. Sometimes, some of us would get bored by addressing each question, time after time, but I think that is something we needed to get through. You cannot say that
we got bored because the procedure was too monotonous, because we needed the prompts to generate our questions.

My purpose throughout had been to encourage students to engage themselves in the learning process. As a teacher, I used whatever means were appropriate, such as group discussion, student-led discussion, debates, and project presentations. Even in whole-class discussions, I helped students to categorize all the questions generated, and then discussed the questions with them by categories.

On December 6 and 13, pairs of students were assigned to give presentations on either *The Butcher's Wife*, or *The Color Purple*. Unlike the traditional way, the teacher told the students that "These are important points you need to think about." Students were encouraged to generate their own "important points." Generally, the presentations went very well. One pair of students, for example, wrote an outline of their topic on the board, which provided their classmates with a skeleton of the report for reference. Their outline was as follows:

I. Introduction
II. *The Color Purple*
III. *The Butcher's Wife*
   A. Lin Shi's Mother
   B. Lin Shi
   C. The Neighborhood Women
V. Comparison of Fictional World and Actual Society
VI. Conclusion

After the presentation, the class began to argue among themselves. The discussions covered a wide range of subjects, although not in particularly great
depth. Meanwhile, I was restraining my urge to intervene and to allow the students to control the discussion. It was pleasing that the students listened to each other, they engaged seriously with the literary problems presented in terms of their lives. This has convinced me that the teacher's role is to guide students through processes that enable them carefully read texts and really listen to each other, without the necessity of having so-called right answers imposed on them. Whether or not the teacher agrees with students' interpretations, the interpretations are valid. Once they really start thinking about what they think, students often have great ideas.

On December 13, the last day of the semester, the students continued their projects presentation. One pair of students discussed the American novel, *The Color Purple* and why Celie and Shug were ultimately able to support each other, while in Chinese society, women frequently seem to be at odds with one another. In *The Butcher's Wife*, Lin Shi’s greatest enemy turns out to be the women in the neighborhood. In order to discover the cause of this, the students discussed a series of issues about Chinese society. They thought that Lin Shi received little support because of the singularly competitive nature of Chinese society. One student suggested two possible explanations: The first is that Taiwanese students are trained to be fiercely competitive, and so will never aid a fellow student. This is quite unlike America, where students form study groups and are happy to help each other. In Taiwan, by contrast, everyone needs to be the best on the entrance exams, or they might not be admitted to the university. The second reason for Lin Shi’s difficulties is that Chinese women like to gossip behind other people’s backs. It is only a pretense to care about people, since, given the opportunity,
such women might stab anyone in the back. The characters in the story are only happy when they see somebody else who is worse off than they are.

The students traced this attitude back to the ancient China, where in feudal times, the emperor was supposed to be intellectually superior, so the courtiers were careful not to outshine him. Since they could not risk the emperor's jealousy and retribution for their own talents, they could achieve a higher status only by sabotaging their colleagues by slandering them behind their backs. In modern times, the relationship between the sexes is similar to the relationship between the emperor and his court. The men have all the power and the women are anxious to win their approbation, so they have to be passive aggressive in their dealings with each other, instead of offering other women their support. This is very sad, particularly since women's status will never rise if they undermine each other.

The following dialogue is an excerpt from the same class, when the class discussed another pair of students' presentation on the lesbian love scene, between Celie and Shug, in *The Color Purple*:

St1: Taiwan also has lesbians, this has been discovered. They feel inferior, and aren't willing to talk about it, not like lesbians here, who are even on TV.
T: What if, today, a relative or friend of yours told you she was a lesbian and asked you to help her organize a support group? How would you react to that?
St1: What do they want me to do? I am not a lesbian.
St2: I have a friend who is lesbian; she studies in another state. I want to say that I am straight. They have very painful lives. They know that people always are talking behind their backs. (Talking about gay man she knows)..... They are very pitiful, they are afraid to tell their parents. Every time he talks to me, he cries. I don't know how to help him. Afterward that man's parents found out. The parents of the two lovers fought. (This was in Taiwan.) I think the least guilty party was the parents. My feeling is that the fact that their being gay doesn't hurt me in any way. I should give them basic respect.
St3: If it was legalized [in Taiwan], does this mean that we support it? Because some people are not born homosexual, but later choose to become so. Even if it is a conscious choice, if we legalize it, would that be encouraging it?
St2: I think that no one would be willing to choose to change into a lesbian, although my friend said she did.
St4: I don't think this is supporting it, just give them space to be who they are, since they do exist. Their sexuality is their own business.
St1: But what if it was your brother or sister!?
St4: He is still your brother, whatever he is. I am definitely not encouraging him to be gay, but if he is going to be, I can't say no. This is a private matter.
St5: Isn't it true that all gay people get AIDS?
St4: No. That's wrong.....
St2: It's usually people who act very irresponsibly who get AIDS. I think it should be legalized, but they can't have children. Because if they have children there will be problems with their education. The children's education is very important. They can get married, but we shouldn't let them adopt children. It would affect their development.
St3: I think that it's very important to realize that there are only two sexes in our norm. If you have an inborn dislike of the other sex, this is understandable, because we are all born different. We can't look at them as being especially different. But we can't help them to organize, because that would be glorifying them. Because, realistically speaking, many people change during their lives. Perhaps if someone is feeling the pain of breaking up, and a same sex friend sympathizes with them and tells them that they can find the same kind of love and care with someone of their own gender, it is very possible that person would become a homosexual. I think that this is not proper.
St2: But I think everyone has natural rights, you can't just tell someone you can not be a certain way. Like that friend of mine, I once asked her if she had ever been with a person of the opposite sex. I am very much against pre-marital sex, but in this situation, I would encourage them to give it a try. You could consider it a kind of therapy. If they are born that way there is nothing you can do, but most of them just try it because they think it's fun.
St6: Many people broke up, and just made the mistake of trying homosexuality before coming to their senses and going back to normal. Because in this society, it is only normal when men and women are together.
St2: But they can still have their own organizations.
St7: I know an old man, he is gay. But in the '60s society wouldn't tolerate him, so he got married. But he really didn't love his wife. His life was very unhappy. In the end he got divorced. Later he had a lover. That lover also not accepted by the society, and he was beaten to death in Northampton because he was a gay.
St5: I have a question, how was AIDS initially transmitted?
St4: Nobody knows where AIDS came from.
St7: I heard it was from monkeys.
St4: I heard that too, but you can't be sure.
St7: I don't know where it started from either. But it has been said that homosexuals, especially gay men, because they have anal sex and that is the dirtiest part of the body, are most at risk to get AIDS. The virus grows there. But if they don't have sex, then the virus will not spread. But it will spread if they do, especially if they are bisexual.
St5: My thought is don't hurt the homosexuals, but don't spread these ideas.
St2: I think you shouldn't spread these ideas. Instead you should speak out to give people proper information about sex. Once I heard an Asian person talking about homosexuality. I don't support homosexuality, but I do support people addressing the issue. When people misunderstand something, then they will have an incorrect impression of it. Like that gay man in Taiwan who stood up for gay rights, and provided information for health centers, so that gay men could get health exams. Although people were very negative about him, it's still very difficult to stand up for yourself. It's immoral that people attacked him like that. Because with things like this, you have to first understand before you can accept. Everybody has their own life, we have to respect this.
St3: But to what extent are we to accept it?
St5: Accept them as human beings or accept them as homosexual?
St4: That question is sick! Do you mean if you accept them as gay then you don't accept them as human beings?
St3: Then what is your limit?
St4: Have you thought about it from their perspective? In your view, their behavior is wrong, from their perspective, they can't accept your idea. Have you thought about that?
St5: From what you have said, everyone has a right to do whatever they want. If that's true how does the world continue?
St7: Right! How does the world produce new generations?
St2: (St4's) ideas are that we can't always say that other people are wrong, just because other people will think we are wrong.
St7: But the question is how to convince other people that your behavior is reasonable. Only if people understand your behavior will they respect you.
St4: So, I think education is important to allow you to understand why it happens. Like when she just asked if it isn't just gay people who have AIDS; I am sorry, but I have to say something you don't want to hear. I can't blame you, because your education has been very narrow, and that's why you can ask such a question. This is an uneducated question; it's ridiculous! You can learn about
it from newspapers and from books. It's a failure of your education, you haven't been given the information. That's why you have to ask that question.

St5: I know that non-gay people also have AIDS; my question is how did it start?

[every speaks at once, no one student is clearly audible on the tape]

[Some students try to calm everyone down]

St4: Chinese people don't like to argue, that's wrong. My point is that she just asked me if only homosexuals can get AIDS. This is because our society isn't educated. If you were educated, you would know that's not true.

St5: I know! I just want to ask where it came from!

St2: [gesturing for calm, tries to change the subject] I think this school handles it well, putting them together in one dorm. They respect them. But I am against people wearing T-shirts that say things like "I am gay, did you know that?"

This is just showing off.

The issue of social acceptance of homosexuality generated a very intense debate. Afterward, in private conversations with some of the students, Ms. W said:

I almost didn't want to listen, some good points were raised, but one person's attitude was so pushy that I found myself being turned off by her.

Another student, Ms. Y said:

The argument didn't escalate intentionally. I think we needed to stay focused on the issues more than on personalities. People's fuses got too short. The teacher needs to train people to keep their personalities out of it.

Ms. S said:

I just wanted to express my beliefs as quickly as possible, so my attitude was like that of a steam roller. I was not out to offend anybody, but that's how I came off. I thought that the other people were asking superfluous questions and I said so. I think broad bases of knowledge are important in college.
This exchange seems to be a good example of many of the ways in which my pedagogy succeeded in stimulating thought and discussion, but it also reveals the ways in which the pedagogy needs refining. It is too bad that this sequence occurred on the last day of class, because there are many questions still to be addressed by the students.

On the positive side, then, there was a vigorous discussion with a minimum of teacher input, a far cry from the early teacher-centered classes, where students offered no reply to teacher questions. The students themselves raised questions and helped each other to find the answers. The conversation included real life examples, which gave the students a sense of ownership of the subject matter. The dynamics were so fluid that the conversation expanded beyond the characters in the novel, and evolved into a discussion of current events, thus showing that the students made the connection between the ideas they were reading about and their own personal lives. All of these are indicators of the pedagogy's success.

On the negative side, however, several drawbacks are apparent. At one point, the discussion disintegrated into an incomprehensible babble of voices, which suggests the need for some sort of facilitation, either from a designated student facilitator, or from the teacher. There was also a glut of conflicting or incorrect information. This problem may be more difficult to overcome, given the dynamic nature of the discussion. A solution may be to anticipate the turns the conversations may take and to assign topics for pre-class research, although such a tactic may prove to be very difficult, unless the conversation is extended over several days to allow more time for student research. The apparent lack of respect for the opinions of others is a more serious difficulty, since such respect is a basic tenet of the whole language theory, on which this pedagogy is
partially based. The solution again may lie in stronger facilitation, more practice at classroom discussions; reminders to practice diplomacy; debates where teams are penalized for "unsportsmanlike conduct"; or asking the strong-minded speakers to take the opposing viewpoint to maintain the conversation.

At first, I felt that I would avoid such confrontations in the future. Later, though, I came to the conclusion that the classroom is the place where students must confront themselves and each other, sometimes passionately, and the very difficult realities of the world of which they are already a part. I asked myself what the fundamental issues behind such confrontations were, and how to approach discussions so that students would not feel personally attacked or desire to attack others. It seemed likely that after the kind of heated argument that occurred in the last class, some of the less-confident students would be discouraged from expressing their ideas for fear of ridicule. Hence, learning to be a better facilitator, who can create a cooperative and empowering space in the classroom, and avoid such negative situations, is a prime concern for me now.

Conclusion: Review of the Process Goals

In the classroom, communication is usually of two types: One-way, in which the teacher presents information that the students passively accept; and two-way, in which the teacher facilitates discussion and lectures. Over the course of the semester, in the class I taught, the classroom dynamic went from the one-way to two-way, that is, we began with me lecturing passive students, and ended with me facilitating student discussions. This, evolution in teaching method, was the overall aim of the process goals. The eight specific goals
described in chapter 1 are evaluated below to determine to what degree the goals were met:

**Process Goal 1: Students' background knowledge will be shared, so that their knowledge can be broadened**

The students all acknowledged that, through class discussion, knowledge could be shared and broadened, because students shared their own experience and learned from each other, thereby enhancing their understanding, not only of classroom material, but of life.

Most of the students agreed that class discussions and debates comprise on effective teaching technique. One of the students observed that she learned the most when she led the class discussions, because she had to concentrate more on what the other students were saying. Another student found the debates very helpful, because they aired both sides of an argument and thus helped students to integrate the ideas. A third student commented that:

Everyone had their own, individual experiences to share in the classroom discussions, such Ms. S, who traveled a lot and so had many varied experiences, such as a familiarity with legalized drug use in Netherlands, or Ms. Y, who had a variety of different acquaintances, including gays and lesbians, and so the broad base of experiences shared in the classroom discussions was well beyond the experiences of any single individual.

It should be mentioned that, since the students were Taiwanese, they grew up within an educational model that force fed their knowledge via the teacher; and it was necessary for them to take time to make the adjustment from a teacher-centered to a teacher-facilitated classroom. At the beginning of the semester, as teacher, I spoke more and I asked students questions, receiving only
short answers from them. After several weeks with students leading the
discussion, they became better and better at developing their own ideas and they
became more adaptable. This was because the class was small and everyone
became acquainted easily. The students who were willing to talk openly
stimulated the thinking of the other students and encouraged them to speak out.
Still some students in this class were very passive; they didn't like to speak. At
the beginning, the only way they would speak was if they were called upon.
Afterwards, the students were more willing to talk, and were less worried about
other students laughing at them. One student remarked that, at the beginning
when the teacher asked the students to talk, she felt uncomfortable; but since
everyone had to do it, after a while, she became more comfortable.

It is obvious that Taiwanese students are shy about speaking in class, and
that the teacher must help them to understand that what they say is worthy of
respect to build up their confidence. I also found that, when small group
discussions occurred, it was best if different students were together each time.
When everybody was more comfortable with each other, then they were brave
offering their opinions. In addition, at the beginning of the semester, many
students were unaware of their own ability to analyze material. After they had
been guided on the path of discovery and self-confidence, they began to
appreciate their own ability. Some students, of course, are just naturally quiet,
because it is their personality. I didn't expect such students to participate very
actively. I was surprised that, though my impression was that certain students
were very quiet, they turned out to be willing to talk, to get involved, and to do
a good job on their project presentation. This made me wonder if, perhaps,
teachers should ask some students for permission to share their written work
with the rest of the class, anonymously if necessary, because some individuals
are more articulate on paper than they are verbally. Also, others have experiences that they might be willing to share if it were not known that they were directly involved. (Examples of this might be experiences of a highly sexual or personal nature, such as rape; harassment; the sex act, premarital or otherwise; or some use of their sexuality for advancement in the workplace). Reading papers aloud would have the advantage, as well, of serving as a form of public praise, thus benefitting students' sense of self-esteem and accomplishment.

**Process Goal 2: Students will assume responsibility for their own learning**

Most of the students in this course chose to take it because they were interested in the subject, so most of them would be likely to be willing to assume responsibility for their own learning. Thus the class discussions were often enthusiastic. On a few occasions, however, it became obvious that some students were less well prepared than others, although that did not seem to inhibit them from trying to take part in the discussions. By eavesdropping, I knew that these students sometimes asked for a summary of the reading before class began, showing that they had not prepared, and sometimes their comments in the class proved that their ideas were not well thought out. Their lack of preparation was also apparent in their assigned writings. Such students, fortunately, were the exception and not the rule. One student wrote that "It is the student's responsibility to be well prepared for class. Today I wasn't. Next week I promise to be well prepared."

Ms. D thought she took great responsibility for her learning. She said that she took this course, because she heard it would be a seminar class in which everybody would need to share their ideas in the classroom. She thought
she could use this sort of training. Her expectations for herself were to try to speak in front of the class as best as she could. She said,

I need to think before I speak, so I always tried to develop my ideas outside of class each week before we met. Before I took this class, when I waited for bus, I'd idly stand at the bus stop not thinking about anything in particular, but after I started, I'd stand there and try to analyze different issues related to the reading.

Another student, Ms. S, vehemently agreed that the most important thing is for the students to meet their responsibility to come to class prepared. She said no matter how well versed the teacher is, unless the students have done the readings and thought about the text, no meaningful dialogue can result.

Process Goal 3: Students will progress from passive recipients to questioning knowledge seekers

In the beginning of the class, the students were quite passive in their learning. Later on, they were able to discuss issues about which they were curious or didn't understand entirely. Some students said they used to read a story and then just forget it. They never thought very deeply about what they read. But now, they claimed that they could think about things from many different perspectives. The final project presentation, in fact, proved that they could pursue important issues on their own without the teacher interpreting everything for them.

One student said she had never questioned why events happened, what the causes and reasons were. For example, she had never considered the practice of foot-binding. She thought it was just something women did in the culture. It never occurred to her that it could have anything to do with women's
low status in a patriarchal society. She said, "Before, I took everything for
granted, but now I have started to question how and why things happened."

**Process Goal 4: Students will develop an interest in the subject matter**

Most of the students arrived at the first class expressing a curiosity about
feminist issues, but with only a vague idea of what the term "feminism"
entailed. When they were asked "How do you define feminism?" Many of the
students' answers were not really to the point. Students' responses included:

* In certain ways, women should be in a feminism way. For example, women
  should be gentle, dress in some kind of feminism fashion, care for other people,
  and be soft. (Ms. P)

* Basically, equal rights with men, but based on the nature of the difference of
  the sexes. For example, we can't ask females to do heavy labor, but they should
  have the same rights and respect. Both sides should be treated fairly. (Ms. R)

* Feminism is the study of women from a sociological, economic, educational
  point of view. It should study the development of women through history and
  the changes women have encountered. (Ms. S)

Each student ultimately has to achieve her or his own individual
understanding of feminism. One student, Ms. Y, responded at the first class:
"Feminism has to be set up from both male and female point of view. In today's
society, it is necessary to strengthen the women's consciousness, but not by
doing too much propaganda." By the end of the semester, her idea of feminism
had grown and crystallized. She perceived its benefits as including a strong
self-image, high motivation, and independence (see Figure 6.1). Another
student, Ms. W, experienced a particularly interesting and clearly expressed
development of ideas regarding the subject. As the class began, she defined
feminism in very broad and abstract terms: the awareness of issues concerning women and a raising of consciousness concerning the low status of women. As the class went on, her definition became more concrete, until the last day of class, when she drew a diagram with "feminism" in the center and 24 different aspects of feminism (such as power, sex, divorce, superwomen, generational and marital relationships, employment opportunities, etc.) branching off from it (see Figure 6.2). As her definition became more and more concrete, she was able to distinguish which aspects particularly intrigued her and to pursue those topics in more depth. At the end of class, she expressed a preference for works in which she was able to make connections with issues that affected her as a single, young, Chinese woman. According to her own words, she had viewed novels purely as sources of entertainment before taking the class, "like soap operas," but once she was able to make connections with her own life, they took on a new significance.
Figure 5.1

Ms. Y’s Feminist Consciousness Diagram
Figure 5.2

Ms. W's Feminist Consciousness Diagram
Process Goal 5: Students will decide on topics to investigate

As mentioned in previous sections, students in this class were given the freedom not only to raise their own questions, but also to bring up topics for discussion without necessarily having any specific questions in mind. Very often, the discussions evolved from question to question and were very dynamic in nature. For example, when the students read the work "A Day to See the Sea," they discussed the causes of prostitution. Students then raised a series of questions to discuss, such as: Should prostitution be legal? If not, who should be arrested, the customers or the prostitute? If a prostitute is defined as someone who will have intercourse in return for personal gain, would a concubine be considered a prostitute? Is a prostitute more acceptable in an established brothel than on the street corner?

Students were also asked to choose any area that interested them as a starting point for a final project. Such freedom of choice allowed for an open, dynamic forum, as well as making room for personal interests and inquiries. In order to foster cooperative learning, students chose partners for the final projects. Ms. S particularly liked project presentations by pairs of students. She said "I learned a lot about my partner's attitudes about things. It was a good training for exploring things in depth, as well as getting a broader perspective."

Ms. W was of a different opinion:

I think the partner was a very pivotal feature in the class project. My partner didn't always have a lot of input and often just seemed to repeat what had already been said in class. I always had to raise the questions and coax her to express her own ideas, and even then, most of the time she'd just agree with what I said. I got very little feedback from her.
Although Ms. W complained about her partner, she admitted that she learned a lot from the negotiations during the project's preparation and presentation. The investigations for the final projects progressed through several consecutive stages, such as identifying the topic, planning the learning task, carrying out the investigation, preparing and presenting the final report. The partners determined subtopics for investigation, gathered and analyzed information, and reached conclusions. They also decided on the content and format of their presentation.

Process Goal 6: The teacher will provide prompts for students to explore ideas that interest them

Most of the students liked the way the teacher tried to draw out their reasoning and followed up with related questions, a teaching method can help to develop students' ideas. Nystrand & Gamoran (1991) claim, "when teachers do this [follow up question], they work students' answers into the fabric of an unfolding exchange, and as these answers modify the topic or affect the course of discussion in some way, these teachers certify these contributions and modifications." Thus, it is important for the teacher to consider the relationship between the quality of the instructional discourse and substantive student engagement.

Most of the students thought it was very important for the teacher to provide prompts in order to stimulate their ideas. Ms. D said:

A lot of ideas in this class never occurred to me before; they occurred only because the teacher led us to explore the topic from different angles,
and to ask "why?" If we gave superficial answers, she would guide us to think more deeply through her questions and observations.

Ms. D also claimed that since they were all new at class discussions, the teacher needed to nurture them in it. Sometimes the teacher would give them hints or handouts in order to give them a better understanding of the culture. Sometimes they had trouble understanding or missed the depth of the text, so the teacher recognizing this from the discussions, guided them in the right direction so that they could discover the layers of meaning for themselves. Ms. H said that, if they had questions, they could get responses immediately through the discussion, and then the teacher would follow-up and build upon these observations. If they missed something in their discussions, the teacher could go back and cover the material later. She also found it interesting when the teacher provided poems related to the stories they had read. I had found that the students needed more than brief prompting by the teacher. They needed structured ideas and information that interested them, so that they would like to continue to explore.

During the mid-term interviews, one of the students, Ms. S, said the literature classroom should be a combination of traditional and Western teaching styles. The teacher should provide the author’s background and motivation, as well as her own opinion and comments, and should try to choose very carefully the most opportune moment to provide this information—not at the beginning of class. She said, "I used to have literature courses, where the teacher would start off with her interpretations, and I always felt inhibited after that. Like it limited what the students could say." Thus, it is the responsibility of a teacher to decide what and how and when to introduce the groundwork for each lesson.
According to students' comments, the ideal pedagogy would be some sort of middle ground between a completely teacher-centered and totally student-centered pedagogy. In the former, the students become passive and the presentation of knowledge is limited to one point of view (the teacher's). In the latter, there may be difficulty in finding a sense of direction and key points of knowledge may be missed. In their pre-course and post-course interviews, students mentioned the shortcomings of the teacher-centered pedagogy, but also expressed a desire for the teacher to function as a leader and to transmit knowledge and insights that they might miss on their own. The conclusion, then, is that there is a need not for a student centered pedagogy, but, rather, for a "student-oriented" one. However, since the major goal of the pedagogy is to encourage students to think creatively/critically, it is necessary for the teacher to offer some contradictory ideas to allow students to gain different perspectives.

Process Goal 7: The teacher will encourage students to assume responsibility for their own learning

As mentioned in chapter 2, the whole language philosophy implies the reader's freedom to interpret, the notion that there is no one "right" way to interpret the meaning of a text. Thus, teachers in whole language classrooms are freed from the omnipresent task of lecturing and directing. Instead, teachers should encourage students to take direct responsibility for their own learning, especially learning from each other.

Students in this class stated that the teacher's response to the students answers was very important. Ms. Y said:

Before, in Taiwan, when a student said something was not to the point, the teacher would very clearly say "wrong." Because of this, Taiwanese
students tend to be shy and cowardly, and revere their teachers. The students, when they hear "wrong," will not dare to say anything further. Especially since people all love their "face" and cherish their sense of self respect, although this is really not a big deal, but when you feel publicly embarrassed, it's like having cold water dumped on you. The teacher's attitude makes a deep impression on the students.

In other words, if what the student said was not really to the point, the teacher could still be encouraging instead of cutting, because it is better to be encouraging than directly negative if students are to be cajoled into thinking for themselves. Instead of simply pronouncing an answer wrong, the teacher should prompt the student to further thought by saying something like, "with this in mind, how would you account for..." and offer a conflicting piece of information. Then student can think about the material and look at it from different perspectives. Similarly, when the student says something particularly good, the teacher should praise the student. Ms. D said:

The thing I liked most about this class is how accepting and understanding the teacher was. We could say what we wanted and she wouldn't publicly scold us or reprimand us the way Taiwan's teachers do.

In other words, in encouraging students to take responsibility for their own learning, the teacher should be on the same side as the students, serving not to dam up their natural expressiveness, but, rather, to channel it in positive ways. As Ms. S said the most important thing is for the students to meet their responsibility to come to class prepared. No matter how well versed the teacher is, unless the students have done the readings and thought about the text, there is no way they can have meaningful dialogue without proper preparation.
Process Goal 8: The teacher will encourage the class to include their real life experiences in interpreting the texts

I was very concerned about understanding how the students and I negotiated the process of developing feminist pedagogical styles. My task as a teacher was to enable students to set aside their narrow expectations of getting "the point," "mastering" the literature, or out-doing their fellow-students for "the best grades". Instead, my aim was to use life experiences as a starting point for the class and to empower the students so that they could form their own points of view. I hoped to show students that it is important to understand how life experiences have been contoured by factors such as gender, power, class, age, and sexuality.

The actual practice of these ideas was not as easy as I had anticipated. A few weeks into the semester, it became clear an important aspect of a feminist pedagogy, the sharing of personal experiences, was not occurring in the classroom. There was some sharing of personal experiences in the classroom, but it was much less than I had expected. The reason for this probably resulted from a combination of several factors, not the least of which were the young age and relative lack of experience of the students, and the strong influence of Chinese culture, discourages airing personal problems in public. In Chinese there is a saying, "A family's ugly side should not be shown," so it was natural that the students were unenthusiastic about discussing personal experiences in a public setting.

In their writing, the students would summarize the main point of the story, briefly discuss their thoughts, or discuss abstract principles, rather than some pertinent examples from their own personal experience. An example of this is an excerpt from Mr. N's essay on marriage:
To go deeper, I feel the influence of marriage on the individual is extremely, extraordinarily important. Society consists of individuals, and individuals are fostered in a family. Marriage is the support structure of a family. The break-up of a marriage affects individuals, families, and society. I can't bear to think about it further, it's too frightening.

I attempted to discover what he found frightening, but he did not continue to discuss his personal feelings.

From L's essay on the film, "The Color Purple":

In this movie, we see the love triangle between Celie, her husband and Shug. The relationship that Celie and Shug have with each other is extremely close and supportive. If we take this relationship to China for comparison, we have to wonder why American women can help each other, while Chinese women cannot.

Now is the time for young women to wake up, and open their hearts, to stop comparing themselves with others and find their own direction.

So how should we solve this problem? How to improve? The most important thing is that we must start with ourselves: one must not speak badly of others behind their backs. (Don't invade others' privacy or spread rumors).

This certainly sounds good, but it is still abstract. It seems the student is still reluctant to relate specific examples from her own life that deepen her relation to the text. Although I made it clear that I encouraged the students to describe their reflections on the issues and illustrate them with concrete examples from their own experience, not one student did so.

Another example of this kind of abstract discussion is from Ms. C's essay on the novel The Blind Spot:

When there is a problem in the family, each member must bear some responsibility. If each person would agree to consider the others'
positions and not insist on their own, then good communication could occur, and the problem could be solved. Only if each person recognizes the importance of smooth family relations can problems be resolved in a satisfying way.

Again the student makes a good, if abstract, point, but fails to deepen the discussion with specific examples.

In this course I tried to use a feminist pedagogy, an aspect of which was to relate texts to personal experience. On this point, however, it was not successful. There are several reasons why this may have been so: The students may have been too young to have had enough experiences to relate to the material. It also possible that the cultural pressure not to divulge their private thoughts stopped them from being more explicit. It may be that with more practice and encouragement, they would become more willing to be more personal in their discussion.

However, there is no doubt in my mind that my experiment with teaching this course using a Western-style pedagogy has been worth the effort. One student concluded her essay by writing: "This course was well run, the teacher knew our needs and understood us. The course helped me understand that things need to change. It has opened new doors for understanding ourselves from received ideas." The next step for me is to apply what I learned from this experience in my future courses in Taiwan.
CHAPTER 6

POST-CLASS INTERVIEWS

Introduction

This chapter is an attempt to analyze to what extent the product goals outlined in Chapter 1 were met, based on my post-course interviews with the student participants. In order to examine the process and progress of individual students over the course of the semester, five case studies are presented in this chapter. The five students who were selected as case studies were the five students who pre-registered for the class the semester before, thus allowing for the pre-course interviews. After presenting the student case studies, I discuss the product goals (described in Chapter 1) in light of the case studies. Because these students had the most complete files by virtue of these pre-course interviews, they are the ones who served as case studies.

The post-course interviews were conducted with individual students on a one to one basis over the course of the two weeks immediately following the last class session. Because many of the students were going to be taking final exams during the week following the last class session some post-class interviews were conducted during the final week of classes, while others occurred during finals week. The interviews took 45 minutes to an hour each and were conducted on campus at UMASS. The interviews were conducted in Mandarin Chinese and tape recorded for later translation and transcription into English. Although some of the questions were impromptu in order to allow for a varied and dynamic interview, prepared questions fell into three general
categories: Students' perception of the classroom pedagogy; their degree of acquisition of the subject matter (i.e. Chinese Literature); and their perception of their own lives and culture as compared with the backdrop of the readings. (Most of the responses regarding the pedagogy were reported in chapter 5.)

In addition, students' reflection papers and pre-course interviews were also referred to as needed to help assess the process and the success or failure of the pedagogy to meet each of the product goals. From the interviews, narratives were constructed representing as close as possible the "voice" of each person. This allowed a deeper understanding of how and why the product goals were achieved to the degree they were.

**Case Studies: Texts of the Interviews**

Ms. W:

Ms. W came to the U.S. in August, 1991. In the pre-class interview, she said she was afraid of what people would think of her if she asked a question in the classroom. Whenever she had a question, she always thought it was "a stupid question." She felt dependent on her teachers because she thought their expertise would help her.

Before she took this class she was a conservative woman. She wanted to be a "good mother and a good wife" after graduating from college. She believed that both parents should, ideally, assume responsibility for child rearing. However, she realized that the unfortunate reality is that her husband would no doubt be busy with his career and avoid any involvement in the responsibility of raising children. She believed that the role of child rearing would rest squarely on her shoulders. She also felt that while her love for her
husband to be would be 100%, she would receive less than 100% in return. In
addition to this, she believed that sex before marriage might be destructive to a
long term relationship.

The following is Ms. W's narrative in the post-class interview:

After I took this course, I began to read Chinese feminist
literature. Previously I had always read foreign novels in translation. I
had not read anything by Taiwanese writers since I read children's stories
and adolescents' books. I had very limited exposure to adult Taiwanese
literature, and that came only in the form of school text books.

I learned about the culture through the books we read in class and
this prompted me to think about a lot of social issues I hadn't thought
about before, like the roles of concubines and prostitutes; the role of
husbands, wives, mothers and children; the question of homosexuality
and its acceptability, etc. Before I was very innocent, and always
thought the world was peaceful and beautiful, but now, after reading
these literary works, I have seen how complicated society is. I am more
prepared to live in society.

I think that Taiwanese students don't have much courage when it
comes to speaking out. We are not used to talking in public; no one has
taught us how to do that. Sometimes I have questions, but I think they're
really stupid questions and I'm too embarrassed to ask them in front of
the American students in the class. In my other American classes I don't
contribute much, but in your class I am more involved. This is because
in this literature class I feel there is more of an opportunity to train
myself to take part. In the beginning, when I spoke in class it was only
because my ideas were different from the other students, but now I think
that it's OK to say whatever I think, because I'm used to the other
students, and am comfortable in discussions. In this Literature class, I
could feel myself blushing every time I'd start to speak at the beginning
of the semester because I was so nervous. Now I feel more comfortable
and I don't blush any more because we're always encouraged by the
teacher to speak and I think that it's a good place to practice speaking out in class. But I'm still embarrassed to speak sometimes when I think I've got a really stupid question. Whenever I ask a question in this class, I have an answer in mind, but I want to get other opinions about it, so I ask it.

Students leading discussion is a good idea because some students are shy and this would make them participate and then they would feel more comfortable speaking. Besides, the teacher can discover where the difficulties lie in students' thinking by listening to their discussions. The teacher should summarize the class at the end and give her own opinions. In discussions, the teacher should express personal opinions because its her area of specialization and her experience is more far reaching than the students is.

Sometimes some students lost their concentration and start giggling I don't like that. Students need to respect the teacher and others. In class, basic politeness is important.

I think my teacher and my father are my elders, though they are not of the same generation, but I think that what they say is relevant. I wouldn't argue with them. But I am able to accept my teacher's ideas more than my father's, because her age is closer to mine, and her ideas are newer. As long as the teacher's ideas are at the forefront of contemporary thought, her words will have a great impact on students.

I always used to view everything as black and white--life was very simple, but now so many things seem complicated. I used to think all I needed to do was find a man I liked to marry, but now I realize how complicated such a commitment would be--I'll have to consider his background, his family, my family, how well we get along, how well we can communicate with each other. I am basically an optimist, but I know I'll have to consider a lot of things. When the time and the right man come along, though, I'm sure it will all work out. Ideally it will all resolve itself, but I'm not sure how, exactly. I think communication will be the key. That will be true with my mother-in-law as well as my husband. I don't know if I'll be able to do this or not, or if we'll fight or I'll swallow my feelings and be miserable or if I'll have to move out. These are all things I never considered before.
Sometimes I think that I'll accept anyone's ideas, even if I don't really agree with them, because I am easily persuaded. But until I actually encounter a situation, I won't know to what extent I have been influenced by these ideas. For example, I used to think that family was more important than my career, but now I think that they are equally important. But until I am married and actually have to choose, I don't know if I'll just follow the old way of putting the family first or not. But now I know I have been influenced by these ideas, and if I continue to develop my thinking about them, their influence will be even greater. I greatly desire to have a job because I believe more than ever before that independence is very important. This class has had a strong impact on my thinking about my future, and I am actively thinking about what road I will follow.

Before this class, novels were like soap operas to me, just like another form of entertainment, but now it's different. I read the story and try to think of questions, like what is the author doing in this part? And this helps, especially when I'm writing. At the end of each lesson we had to write a paper, and that encouraged me to ask questions as well. If you don't have to write it down, everything gets jumbled in your head, but having to write forces you to organize your ideas. After I finish a paper, I know that I've got a really clear grasp of my idea.

Now I think I'm really starting to develop my critical and creative thinking. For example, rereading the novel *Blind Spot* for class was a very different experience for me. I read it during the summer. At that time all I could do was admire the beauty of the descriptions, but now I can raise questions about it. I used to read without thinking, but now I question a lot; I am developing my creative and critical thinking.

Today I heard a lecture on the Chinese feminist movement that gave me more insights into the readings. In class we discussed the cultural perspective and tried to find deep structural meanings. That's not bad, but if we could get some statistics involved like they had at the lecture on the Chinese feminist movement I went to, that would make it even better and more meaningful for me. I think concrete information like that gives us more insight into the feminist situation.
After reading about "superwomen" I decided that women should have more equality with men and each individual should be free to reach their own potential and be true to themselves, not to try to become exactly the same as the other sex. Before I always thought that if I could marry a rich man and lean against him and become a housewife, I would be all right. I had this idea, but only vaguely. After doing the readings and listening to classroom discussions, I realized that it is important for me to be my own independent self.

In the case of divorce, I didn't really know what to think. I didn't think it was a very complicated issue. In truth, I never really considered the question, so this class has been a real impetus for thought to me.

Regarding premarital sex, I still hold my original opinion that it's wrong to do it, although I had a short period when I thought it might be okay. Now I persist in my belief that it's wrong. It would just cause too many problems, and there's AIDS, so why even consider trying it? As I think more carefully, I think that the risks outweigh the benefits. I used to think maybe it would be all right to try it before you married a man, to see if it would be good between the two of you, but through the classroom discussions I realized that it could just cause a never ending series of problems. I think virginity should remain something to be cherished. Maybe I feel that way because I realize that it's a gift I'll bring to my future husband, or maybe it's just because of societal pressure, but more than anything, I think I'm doing it for my own sense of self-respect. A lot of men still want virgins as their brides, so I think I will respect that. Talking about sex in class was not kind of embarrassing for me since we viewed it as a serious issue. Many of my American friends would talk in great detail about their personal lives, but I thought they were too forward, so I wasn't willing to talk about it myself in public. I think that personal things should remain private, though I also realize that this is a taboo in my culture. However I think we need to be more conservative in talking about these things in public settings.

When we talked about The Butcher's Wife, there was a lot of sexually explicit content, but I didn't think I could not talk about it. It dealt with rape. The author described the man's sexual desire and tried
to present the woman’s status as being culturally low; the man had the right to sex, but the woman had no rights. I was a little curious and wanted to talk about women’s sexual desire, but I was too shy to bring up the subject.

I think this class helped to develop my feminist consciousness. Before I took it I was very conservative and aspired to be a good housewife and mother; but now I know that it was the influence of my culture that pushed me toward that decision. This course has made me more aware of my position as a woman and helped me to rethink my goals. Besides this, I never realized before that you could burn out as a wife and mother, but now I have a clearer outlook on what my future might be. Even though I may still become a housewife, I will be more than "just" a housewife. I am considering things I hadn't thought of before.

The texts we read emphasized women’s problems. There was one short period of time in which I felt we were stuck on one issue, and just repeated it over and over. But afterwards, the discussion, perhaps because the students were involved, were more and more insightful. The most useful readings for me were The Butcher Wife, Superwoman, and the poem "The Untethered Boat", because through discussion of them I was able to be more certain about what I want for myself now. The least useful was Blind Spot, because it talked about the relationship between daughter-in-law and mother-in-law, and that is something I haven't experienced, and it's difficult for me to imagine.

If in the future I still have the opportunity (because it's difficult to get Taiwanese fiction here) I will definitely read more, because these problems are all very pertinent to me. I feel Taiwanese women author's have a lot of space in which to develop. And as for us readers, we have a clear direction in which to develop our thinking.

In this narrative, Ms. W mentioned that earlier when she read, she only focused on the aesthetic aspects of the stories, but now she is able to analyze them to see underlying issues and deeper meanings. She thought the reflection papers were very helpful because writing them helped her to focus more and
organize her thoughts where they had been jumbled before. The teacher was less outspoken, so when the teacher did speak in class, the students heard what she said more than they usually would. The consequent exchange of voices was much more stimulating for her than a single voice and a single point of view would have been.

She was clearly changed by the class. She is no longer as shy about speaking in front of others, no longer afraid of being laughed at or mistaken, and thus she can express herself more freely now. Furthermore, her request that the teacher remain up to date on the latest ideas and interpretations, which I interpret as a call for the teacher to continually adapt her opinions to fit the current understanding, shows an appreciation for change which her formerly conservative attitude precluded.

To a certain extent, she defines learning as obtaining knowledge from the teacher. The teacher’s responsibility is to communicate knowledge appropriately. She also expected peers to ask questions, discuss and share ideas, and to be quiet when not speaking. In other words, she expected the teacher and the students to engage in a mutual effort to master the material.

This class has been an impetus of thought for her and has helped her to develop her feminist consciousness, due to the fact that it forced her to consider many new issues. Her views on marriage provide an excellent example of this. Her conviction that women should have equality with men and that each individual should be encouraged to reach their own potential stems directly from this newly raised consciousness. Her attitudes toward premarital sex remains unchanged although she had a short period when she thought it might be permissible. This serves to define the limits of her transformation and perhaps provide further stimulation for change. At any rate, her new mental
framework will not permit an automatic dismissal of such alternatives from consideration. Indeed, it is because of her new framework that she is aware a serious alternative exists.

Although Ms. W is developing a strong sense of feminist awareness, she finds that ideology is often at odds with reality. It remains to be seen to what extent her future actions will be influenced by this consciousness, although she realizes that if she continues to develop her feminist thought, its future impact on her life will be even greater.

Ms. W sees a conflict between the way she was raised and what her new feminist awareness dictates. The traditional set of norms dictate that she conduct herself modestly, concern herself with the household and put the needs of others before her own. Her new-found set of feminist norms imply that she should have equal status with members of other generations and gender, act aggressively to maintain that equality, and not define herself solely in terms of her role as wife and mother. Ms. W feels that she will eventually need to find some sort of balance between the two norms, but at this point in her life she is unable to say where that balance will ultimately be achieved.

Ms. W expressed curiosity about women's sexual desires, but did not raise the topic in class, because of fear of what her peers might think of her. Another student, Ms. C, in the post-class interviews said she has a desire to share her own personal experiences, but lost her nerve when push came to shove. She had had a relationship with a married man that made her uncomfortable, and she eventually quit her job to avoid him. Because of Taiwanese societal mores, she did not feel that she could share this story in class, even when the class was discussing "the other woman" in martial relationships. Although students want to contribute pertinent personal
anecdotes or concerns to the discussion; on the other hand, personal anecdotes may be embarrassing to relate.

Ms. Y:

Ms. Y was a music major in Taiwan. She learned that studying in America would give her the opportunity to study something besides music. After getting support from her father, she decided to go abroad to study. She adjusted to life in the United States very easily. She acted the same as the American students and took advantage of the opportunities to ask questions. She is very appreciative of the teaching style here.

She thought that in modern society, if her role were only to play the good wife and mother, she would feel very strange, because that life is very limited. In the pre-course interview, she mentioned that in the case of divorce, both the husband and wife need to take responsibility. If they cannot get along together, they should separate at first, but not divorce, and if they have children they need to consider their steps more carefully because Ms. Y considers children of divorce to be the victims of their parents’ actions. Ms. Y doesn’t think that couples should stay together for the children’s sake if they constantly fight.

Ms. Y doesn’t think it is all right to have sex before marriage. If one has sex before marriage and goes on to marry another man, she thought this would be a cause of great resentment and of many fights and much unhappiness. She told me in the pre-course interview that she wants to learn how to play a woman’s role in this modern society. She wants to learn the reason that conservatism has survived for so long, because it persists even among college students in America.
The following is the narrative of Ms. Y post-class interview:

In the past my studies of literature focused on Taiwanese regional literature in the 1950's; I had studied very little feminist literature. Now I'm studying contemporary Chinese fiction dealing with divorce, prostitution, concubines, mother-in-law/daughter-in-law relations, and women's economic independence. So only now have I begun to think about how aspects of the culture developed, what are their elements, and what problems they cause in society.

Lu Xun's work were very elegant and literary, and implied themes rather than stating them directly. Contemporary works were more straightforward. I prefer the newer works, because they are more direct. However, both in their style and presentation they caused me to think deeply about the societal problems they described. Not like before when I was ignorant like "a frog in a well." [It is a Chinese idiom, meaning a person of very limited outlook and experience.]

When I hear different ideas expressed during the course of the discussions, my inclination is always to confine the discussion to the matter at hand. Sometimes I stick to my ideas, because my ideas come from both my experiences and reading -- they're not just abstract ideas. The readings support my ideas. If I hear something that opposes my ideas, I try to explore the argument and get more information with which to make a judgment. I learned how to do this when I was in Junior High, watching people relating to each other. Someone would say, "I like or don't like so and so," and so I learned to look at people for myself and make my own judgments. I'm not easily influenced by what other people think. The teachers' ideas are usually taken to be the correct ones, but sometimes my ideas differ from the teachers, and so I will speak out. In that case, who's wrong and who's right is not as important as communicating the different ideas. The teachers are older, more specialized and more experienced than we are, so they are worth listening to, although their ideas are not necessarily the last word, just a comment.
Sometimes my disagreements with what was said in class gave me
the impetus to speak out. I don't mean that I criticized my classmates' ideas, I just wanted to get my views stated. If they could explain their ideas with real-life examples, they could persuade me to rethink my positions. But sometimes I persuaded them to come around to my way of thinking, too.

After each lesson we were asked to reflect on or evaluate the class. I think that allowing this to influence the teaching methods was a good idea. Sometimes the class discussions were good, but other times they dragged. When that happened, I think that the teacher should have become active rather than remaining passive. But the teacher should just stand by and offer assistance when the discussions are very lively. I liked it when the teacher would try to draw out students' reasoning and follow up with related questions. It's important for the teacher to help develop students' ideas. That's what I mean when I talk about a facilitator.

I used to read short stories, novels and essays, but I would only focus on the plot and writing techniques and styles. I'd try to figure out how the author used the vocabulary to describe their ideas. Before I took this course, I never thought to explore the author's motivation or how social issues could be reflected in the texts. I never thought about it before, how people around me could be in the same situations described in the stories. Now I can take issues out of the texts and apply them to my own situation. I think that it helped to have to write questions and comments, but sometimes I couldn't ask all my questions or get satisfactory answers in classroom discussions. But I think when I'm older, I'll find all the answers. In this course I learned about different social issues that I was naive about before. Now that I recognize these issues, it will help me deal with the world after college.

When I study feminist issues, I never find much conflict with my own beliefs, but I find a lot of support for them instead. I feel sad when I read about the historically low status of women, and I understand the reasoning behind it. I still think premarital sex is bad, and our discussions support my idea on this. The only topic I've changed my mind about is divorce. Before I thought it was a bad idea because each
partner needed to tolerate the other’s shortcomings, but now I think that if all the couple does is fight, then it’s not good for the kids. If divorce can stop the fighting and allow two other, happier marriages to take place, then it’s a good thing. I still can’t talk about sex in a public setting. I sometimes hear American female students get together and enjoy talking about sex. I think that they have no sense of morals. I think if they discussed it seriously, then I could accept it, but if they treat it like small talk or joke about it, I think that’s sick. Yet I think Taiwanese society is too conservative. They don’t teach their children, so even if their daughter gets pregnant, she has no idea how it happened because there is no sex education in Taiwan. They won’t even discuss it. Taiwan is too conservative; America is too liberal. There needs to be a balance.

This class helped me to enhance my ideas that women should be more independent. I don’t mean they need to take the males’ place, but they need to be able to live their own lives, to survive on their own. Sometimes, when I’m tired I’ll think, ”Why am I doing this? Why don’t I just find a husband to lean against. But right away my conscience kicks in and tells me it’s a bad idea, but it’s still a daydream I have sometimes. This class taught me the value of independence, and also how to communicate my ideas better. Feminist issues are closely related to communication issues. Different tones and expressions have different effects in both.

The texts we read during the semester are very useful, I think. Generally speaking, I think all of them are useful, as well as the chronological presentation that allowed us to know what women’s situations have been from ancient to modern times.

In the post-course interviews it was apparent that she came into class believing that women should be able to lead independent lives. Her ideas were readily compatible with modern feminist tenets. Because of this, the class only cemented her ideas more firmly in place, rather than persuading her to change her ways of thinking. To her way of thinking, the class was a logical and
rational extension of her existing beliefs. The only adjustment to her outlook, in the area of divorce, seems to have only served to further alter her thinking to conform with the feminist paradigm.

She defined learning as thinking for oneself and sharing viewpoints with others. She made a comment during the semester on the teacher's role. She wrote that the teacher should not directly lecture, but rather, make students think and guide them to reach their own conclusion. She also defined learning as understanding rather than acquisition. She expected classmates to have active exchanges in the class. She listened to them and related their ideas to her personal experience.

She mentioned that she prefers newer works to Lu Xun's. This is a clear preference for contemporary language rather than more archaic and literary Chinese of older works, which also cannot compete with contemporary fiction in its treatment of many different aspects of modern society. Because many educators/teachers in Chinese society venerate classical literature as unassailable and pure, they question or reject contemporary literature. People like Ms. Y automatically respond to the critical voice in contemporary literature which echoes their own. This reaction prevents them from taking the time to appreciate the older tradition with its many unconscious assumptions. In reality, both classical and contemporary literature are of equal importance in enhancing the reader's understanding of literature as a subject because one is the heir of the other. One cannot understand the evolution of classical literature unless one reads contemporary works; nor can one understand many of the subtleties or allusions of contemporary literature without having read the classics.
Ms. S:

Ms. S was born in Pennsylvania and moved to Taiwan with her parents when she was seven years old. She returned to the U.S. for her middle school education and visited her parents in Taiwan during summer vacation.

She said that she didn't like the degree of memorization Taiwanese schools required and the fact that students were always too dependent on the teachers. But she said this training from Taiwan left its mark on her. She always felt that you had to do exactly what you were told, educationally, and so even now, when it comes time for her to pick classes, she has no idea what to pick. She cannot even make up her mind about what major to declare.

She thought that the class based on student discussion was not a good idea because the teachers have their own backgrounds and specialties, and they could tell you things that the students could not even begin to consider. The teachers can illuminate the way for their students. She had an experience in a literature class last semester which was held in a discussion format, but no one wanted to speak. The teacher then raised some questions, and that got the students more focused and a real discussion followed. But because that course was basically just student discussion, she didn't really get any helpful ideas out of it. She thought there should be a balance between the teacher's instruction and the students' discussion. And since the classroom time is limited, it should be reserved for teacher's lectures and themes.

With regard to feminism, she would like to be a career woman and have a family. She thought that in this day and age it was absolutely necessary for a woman to shoulder the dual burdens of home and career. But she would appreciate it if her future husband would help her with the housework.
She also thought that it was the mother's responsibility to carefully nurture the children. She liked the way her parents raised her, but there are aspects of the job that she thought she would change. For example, her mother always told her that she didn't need to be the top student in her class. She never understood why she did this when she was a child, but now she does. She used to think she had permission to slack off and so she wouldn't study as hard as she might have otherwise. When she has children, she will set a very high standard for them—she'll tell them that if they can't meet her standards, that's okay, but she wants them to try to be the best.

The following is the text of her post-class interview:

Every time I'd read something, I'd ask questions about the parts I had difficulty understanding. For example, when I'd hear something in class that differed from my own ideas, I'd try to think about it and reconcile it with my idea, although I don't think that there are really any definitive ideas in literature.

When I do the readings, I always relate what I read to my daily life. If everybody could do this, it would be more interesting. Coming to class prepared also helps class discussions, because it lets you ask more insightful questions. I think that I raise very meaningful questions, but some of the other students seem to pull their questions out of thin air. My questions always relate to both the text and reality; there's always a link, even if you don't see it at first.

This class helped me a lot in developing my critical thinking. Like I said, every time I'd read something, I'd try to relate it to my own life. For example, after we watched the film of "The Color Purple" in class, I went home and watched it again. The main character in that movie became independent, but in reality, I think women's achievements are very limited. Clinton's wife is the first wife out of 42 presidents' wives to have a real job. America seems to be a very advanced country on the surface, but it's really not that advanced when it comes to
women's roles. I wonder how far women can really go here. It's getting better, but it's still a male-dominated society, and I wonder if men and women can be real equals. I feel sad that feminism has such a long way to go.

Women's roles and their status are defined by the culture, so of course you need to explore women's issues from a cultural perspective. When I read literature, I always ask "Why?". Some people say this makes me sound like a two year old, always asking "why", but I can't really explain why I do it. Society can be seen from many different points of view, but all of them were created by men; women are just an afterthought. Like the communication theory says, the society was set up by men, from men's point of view. Women in this society have a hard time just surviving. It's like a Frenchman in China -- he'd have a hard time adjusting, because everything is set up according to the Chinese way of thinking. It's not like what he's used to at all, and so he doesn't understand. Similarly, in a society set up by and for men, a woman will have a hard time getting along, and her status will be quite low.

Because I'm a woman, many of the experiences we've read about will apply to me; if not now, then some day. Like marriage; I need to consider the woman's role within a marriage because it may be my role one day. Literature relates to social issues, so I find it very interesting. This class helped me develop my thinking ability because we talked about so many different aspects and things relating to feminist issues. In class I can learn a lot from listening to the other students, even when their ideas are completely different from mine. It makes me think. My first reaction is, "That's another way to think about it," then I'll ask them why they think that way and share my idea with them. For example, once a student said that she thought prostitution should be illegal, so I responded by telling her that when I was in Holland I saw how well run the legalized prostitution was and how prostitution is the world's oldest profession open to women. Society looks down at these people, yet they still are in business. If everyone is so against it, how could it still exist? It seems like there must be a demand for it, so why not make it legal and keep it safer? The government could probably even
find a way to tax it. I try to ask for the reasoning behind people's thinking now, instead of just asking "why?" all the time.

This course helped me learn how to analyze things. My first reflection paper was all about my way of thinking. But there was a lot I left out in my haste to finish the assignment, but as time went on I started to think more about what I put down, and to bring in the real world more as I tried to interpret the text. I don't think there's anything I would be too embarrassed to talk about in class; sex is just another part of life.

You need to consider many different aspects when you look at feminist issues. You can't talk about marriage without talking about sex: that would be leaving out a big part of it. Marriage, sex, divorce, pornography, and fornication are all interrelated topics in feminism. It's like a chain of issues, and all of these are parts of culture. You have to get through all of the layers before you can achieve complete understanding. It's like a machine, it won't go if there's a cog missing from a wheel. We have to talk about everything in class.

I think that the texts were quite useful. There wasn't one that was more useful, though I found the old poetry quite boring. it really didn't make sense.

I found the Color Purple and The Butcher's Wife quite good because they were comparable and related well. I think Taiwanese feminist literature is quite good. I will try to read more in the future because I find it interesting.

Ms. S has a skeptical attitude and she is not optimistic about how far women can go toward equality. In contrast, Ms. Y has a firm belief in women's equality and this course strongly reinforced her belief. Such opposing reactions demonstrate the range of feelings feminist literature can evoke. Yet both pessimist and optimist will continue to seek questions and answers from feminist texts. It is this common quest which forms the basis of their dialogue.
Ms. H:

Miss H came to the U.S. when she was in the eleventh grade. She stated in the pre-class interview that her impression of American classes was that the students were not only allowed but encouraged to ask questions. At that time she was scared to death just at the thought of doing so. Now she is a college student here. From a feminist point of view, in the pre-class interview, she characterized herself as a conservative person. She thought that premarital sex was out of question and planned to have and raise a family in the future. But she also wants to have a part-time job. The following is the text of her post-class interview.

I think that assigning different students to lead class discussions is a good idea. I also thought that the debates were very helpful, because it let us hear both sides of an argument so that we could integrate the ideas for ourselves. Maybe it would be a good idea to have games -- each student could draw a question that was printed on a slip of paper and then have to answer that question. In discussions, sometimes it might be a good idea to let a student call on a classmate to answer a particular question. I think most students were well prepared when they come to class; only one or two would be busy with studying for other classes and not be able to participate in class.

When I hear many different ideas, I can accept that. If my ideas differ from the other students, I'll express my ideas. Sometimes I ask other students to explain their ideas again, and I'll be persuaded by them.

Before I'd always forget stories after I read them. I always thought that the stories were fake, but now I agree that literature can reflect culture, so I ask why the events in these stories happened. I have other classes where there are discussions, but I seldom take part, but in this class I feel more comfortable because we're speaking Chinese, so I participate more readily. I don't want to speak in the other classes.
because I think my questions are stupid to an American, so I seldom speak out.

In my family, my parents are so conservative I can't stand it sometimes. For example, I have a friend from Japan who went back home last year. I could drive her to the airport, but hotels in Boston are expensive, so she asked me if she could sleep over at my house for the night with her boyfriend. When my mother heard about this, she had a fit. I wanted to tell her that it was okay, that there was nothing to worry about, but I couldn't bring myself to argue with her, because she's my mother. It was a big conflict for me. Another conflict happened because my mother thinks her son is more important than her daughter. She's always asking my brother to have a son. I always tell her that two daughters is enough for my brother--any more than that would be too many to put through college. But I still cannot change her ideas. In addition, my sister-in-law has big arguments with my mother; that's the way things go in my family. I think these are all conflicts that we discussed in class. I won't talk about this in class, though, because I'm afraid my family will find out about it and my mother will kill me. (She laughs.)

A lot of Chinese people like to talk about other people behind their back; I know it's not good, but my mother does it. She likes to compare herself with other people, like a competition -- who's richer, more educated, etc.. I think because we're in America I don't need to compete with other people, I just need to do my best. I try to tell my mother this, but she just ignores it.

This class has helped me to learn a lot of things that I never thought about before. I think that the more I learn, the more open-minded I become. Because I have conflict with the older generation, I am asking myself how I will deal with my own kids someday. I am trying to refine my beliefs so that I'll be able to incorporate them into my own life. I still think family is more important than career, because family is the basis for society. But I think I would like to have both a career and a family; maybe take a part time job while my children are young. I think this course would have been more balanced if there were
a larger number of male students in the class, so that we could get to hear both sides of the issues.

In class, traditional Chinese reserve prevailed with Ms. H and inhibited her discussions, but in our private interviews she talked a lot about the differences in outlook between her generation and her mother's and she was critical of her mother's old-fashioned positions. For instance, when Ms. H debated with her mother over the issue of her friend and her friend's lover, Ms. H exhibited a modern and liberal outlook on cohabitation and race (the lover was black of which her mother also disapproved). But tradition remained strong enough with her for her to ask her mother's permission and accede respectfully to her mother's denial of hospitality.

Ms. H had a similar degree of conflict of her own when it came to feminist concerns. For herself, she desired not a career, because she felt the traditional female role of wife and mother to be most important, but a part-time job, because she saw that staying home all day would be boring. Thus, she has stopped halfway in the transition from traditional woman to modern, liberated woman.

Ms. R:

In the pre-class interview, she said even though she was in college, she was still scared to raise her hand to ask questions because it simply wasn't done in her classroom experience. She said she was very conservative even though she had been influenced by this new American culture. She also said that husbands and wives should concentrate on mutual respect and communication, and should be considerate of each other. She thought Chinese people emphasize patience, but if you have patience without communication, then a lot
of resentment will build on the part of one or both members of the couple, tightening like a noose, and strangling the relationship. The following is the narrative of Ms. R post-class interview:

This was a very lively teaching style. Everyone was able to express themselves freely, even their innermost experiences and knowledge. All this discussion reflected the different aspects of the society we were reading about. We had a lot of differences of opinion, but it was still interesting to hear other points of view. In Taiwan there was nothing like this in the classroom, so I found it is very interesting. I didn't always agree with what the other people in class had to say, but it's good to broaden your horizons by listening to others ideas and experiences. I think that it would be helpful if we related all of the feminist issues to our own society and talked about how to go about changing the world and improving the women's situation after we finish talking about the applications and interpretations of the literature. Because we're studying abroad, we have a better opportunity to import foreign ideas and improvements when we go back to Taiwan. We would benefit from discussing the possible applications of feminism to the real world of Taiwanese society.

Because I'm a Christian, I think my outlook is quite different from that of the other students in the class. Everybody thinks that the modern woman should be more liberated, but in matters like divorce, I don't think that it's acceptable. In the same way I oppose extramarital sex and prostitution; it's just too self indulgent, and that's wrong. We can't always place blame when these things happen, but in my own life I have to insist that they are not always acceptable. Like in The Blind Spot, the story ends with their divorce, but I think that if the female character had been more able and willing to communicate with her mother-in-law instead of holding everything inside and keeping a good face, then maybe she and her husband could have avoided the divorce. She was never happy in ten years of marriage, and saw her mother-in-law as the
enemy; how can she go about her life with a glad heart under those circumstances? She needed to communicate her true feelings.

Of course, in a very abusive marriage, divorce can give the woman a second chance at life. She can shed her pain. But I think a broken home is a terrible thing. Of course, if my marriage was very dysfunctional and I found myself being abused, I would get a divorce. (She laughs). You have to do everything possible to try to preserve and improve the marriage. Divorce should only be a last resort. Marriage is very important, and should be entered into with fidelity and all due seriousness. Divorce is becoming common in our society, because it's easier to throw away the whole relationship than to work at saving it. I think this is wrong. People need to take responsibility for their marriage. If they don't, then it's their fault if the marriage fails. In the case of real personality conflicts, however, divorce may be the best option.

In class, you need to have a certain amount of reserve as to how much and what you are willing to talk about in front of everyone else. It's important to have a certain sense of tact and scruples, particularly when discussing sexual relations.

I liked the classroom discussions. Before I always experienced the "cram" style of teaching with students who came to class, but didn't listen very carefully. It's hard not to let your mind wander when you're being talked at on and on and on. The discussions, the dialogue format helped the students to think for themselves and relate the material to their own personal experience. This is how real learning occurs.

I found the material we studied in class to be very interesting. I never knew that we had this sort of fiction in Taiwan; although I had heard of the titles and the authors, I had never read any of these books. It was a wonderful discovery for me. I was surprised to realize the depth of these works. At first we studied classical Chinese Literature. Those works were not as impressive to me, maybe because modern Chinese Literature is easier to relate to real life. I like that. I think the book Superwoman was very inspiring to me personally. It gave me an ideal to aspire to. The book, The Blind Spot, was less real to me because I'm not married and so I don't have any first hand experience with in-laws, but it gave me something to think about anyway. I don't want to be like the
daughter-in-law in the way she treated her husband’s mother. Basically, I bring my own personal experience to my interpretations of the text. Like the wife and the concubine, I want to be able to listen to other people and maybe help them by listening and comfort them, even if I can’t solve their problems for them. If these things were to happen to me, I would rather die for principle than to live in disgrace. Sometimes divorce is the right thing to do despite the marriage vows. (She laughs). It’s a conflict. I was taught that the Bible says divorce is wrong, but sometimes I think it’s the right thing to do. A lot of my standards were set by the Bible, but a lot of times it conflicts with the world as I see it. I think it’s very important to enter a marriage with open eyes, but after that you need to work at the relationship, and keep it going as best you can.

Maybe because there’s more freedom of expression now, but it seems to me that Taiwanese authors are more honest and critical now than they ever could have been in the past. There just aren’t the same potential consequences for talking about subjects that may be politically or socially imprudent. They can write the naked truth now, and relate it to social issues. I think that’s a good thing, because the Chinese people have always paid particular attention to surface morals, but never took deep looks at the dark side or societal shortcomings in literature. I think that because the words can reflect many different social phenomena, that we as intellectuals need to understand many different social issues and problems as they are reflected in the readings. I think I developed a strong sense of nationalism after I came here. I want to go home after I graduate and contribute my ideas toward the development of Taiwanese society. This literature has broadened my sense of the world.

I never considered any feminist issues before I took this course. I had only heard that men and women were unequal, so I thought that that meant men were always to blame, but now that I’ve read these works, I realize the weaknesses of men and how they are the result of social expectations. In order to change this situation, women need to stand up together and demand a new set of expectations, one more in line with the real nature of things. For a business to succeed, for example, there needs to be a certain amount of socializing -- business lunches, cocktail parties and the like. In Taiwan, there is a practice of arranging
prostitutes for your clients' pleasure. That's an example of men's weakness getting in the way of equality because of social expectations. Parental obligation is another example of the same thing. The children are expected to always be subservient to their parents, but if the mother-in-law and daughter-in-law don't get along, the husband/son gets caught in the middle, and he will often do what his parents want, rather than what is fair or good for his marriage. Females oppress other females as well, like the virtuous wife in The Butcher's Wife. I think our generation needs to have awareness; we need to keep from undermining and attacking each other. This course helped me to think. Although I already knew all this, I never really considered it before. I didn't realize how much harm we could do to each other by gossiping and trying to sabotage each other. I think we have to treat each other better in order for things to change.

Some people in class were very active participants while others seldom spoke. I think that the teacher should call on the students at first, to get them used to speaking out in class. Every time I listened to other students' ideas, I filtered them through my own way of thinking. Some of what they said was very valuable; it raised points that never occurred to me.

Ms. R has clearly been affected by her religion which holds an extremely conservative view of marriage, even for the West. Yet she clearly has doubts. The new perspective provided by feminist literature may contribute to these doubts and cause her to have the courage to leave behind both traditional Chinese and Western patriarchal ethical systems.

Also in contrast to traditional Christianity, Ms. R holds that modern women should be fully independent intellectually and socially and mutually sympathetic and supportive. In our interview, Ms. R said women must be able to perceive men's shortcomings. That is, women have to make a bigger effort than men toward achieving social harmony. Ms. H thought that by having men
come to a class like this, the imbalance would be partly redressed. If such a demand is not supported by her Christian beliefs, she may turn to feminism for ideological support. In this way, an individual's narrow perception of Western thought is broadened and blended.

Ms. R also had very decided opinions on literature and on the conduct of this class. She also had a strong and clear concept of herself and her individual needs. Such self-assertion elucidates another effect of the pedagogical method employed in the course.

**Conclusion: Review of the Product Goals**

As mentioned in Chapter 1, the product goals were designed to (1) help students gain a knowledge of Chinese feminist literature; (2) to develop cultural understanding through literature; (3) to make students aware of the complexity of cultural levels beyond their own awareness of their society and their role in it, and to help students become open to changes in their own lives in light of what they have learned.

It should be understood that, in each situation, my intention was to achieve my pedagogical goals by employing a pedagogy consistent with whole language philosophy, schema theory, instructional scaffolding theory, and feminist pedagogy. In addition, the cultural context for Chinese reality served as the foundation of academic analyses and discussion. The products goals and the degree to which they met are reviewed below.
Product Goal 1: Gaining knowledge of Chinese feminist literature

In order to teach Chinese feminist literature well, a historical perspective is necessary. Such a perspective must focus on significant events in the history of women's literature so that students understand the root causes of women's subordination, and achieve an educated perspective. We spent three weeks in class discussing classical Chinese literature before the students had a background adequate to discuss the development of the Chinese social orientation with regard to gender. The students had to acquire a background knowledge of ancient Chinese literature before we could discuss modern Chinese literature.

Most of the students reported that they had read very little feminist literature prior to taking this course. Given that many of these students had come to the United States to study during their high school years, it seems unlikely that they would have had any exposure to the genre. As for the other students, modern Chinese feminist literature is not a subject frequently addressed in Taiwan's schools, and then only briefly in anthologies. Indeed, this group of students, whether educated in Taiwan or the United States, had little or no experience with feminist literature. Many of them said that after they took this course, they began to read Chinese feminist literature on their own.

Some students said they found the classical Chinese literature quite difficult but they enjoyed reading it. Ms. R wrote in her journal that she was surprised to learn that women's roles in Chinese society before the Han dynasty were more open than she had thought. In the post-class interview, she mentioned that the classical works did not impress her as much as modern Chinese literature, which was easier to relate to real life. A second student,
Ms. S, wrote in her journal that she found the old poetry quite boring and she did not learn from it. Another student, Ms. Y, wrote in her journal:

[This] class helped me to understand clearly that the low status of women in traditional China began in the Han dynasty. The Shijing (Book of Odes) shows that before the Han dynasty, male-female relations, and emotional expression were both very open and free.

In the post-class interview, she said she preferred modern works to those of Lu Xun's, which she found to be too elegant and literary, because modern literature is more direct. The language of the contemporary works is more colloquial than literary Chinese, which Ms. Y found made them more accessible. (Classical Chinese, or wenyan, is a very stylized, literary, and difficult form of Chinese, in which most literary works were written in prior to the Qing dynasty. It is quite different from colloquial Chinese, or baihua, in both its grammar and usage. Almost all modern Chinese literature uses baihua. Lu Xun's baihua works are heavily influenced by wenyan.)

Contemporary Chinese literature is culturally and linguistically familiar to the students, so contemporary literary works are naturally more accessible and comprehensible to the modern reader. Also, contemporary fiction deals with many different aspects of society and is a reflection of the culture; thus, studying it helps students think about society's problems and can help them better understand the culture in which they live.

In general, I was pleased with the students' progress in studying Chinese feminist literature under the proposed pedagogy. Although at first they were reluctant to express themselves, once the students became accustomed to the open format, their progress was impressive. They became increasingly proficient as the class went on and I found their responses, observations and
questions to be increasingly insightful and articulate. In class, responses increased from an average of only a single word or sentence at the beginning of the semester, to much longer statements at the end. In addition, student-generated questions increased over the semester.

Some students had difficulties reading classical Chinese literature, but, by the semester's end, they demonstrated that they had, as a class, gained a good working knowledge of modern Chinese feminist literature.

Product Goal 2: Developing cultural understanding through literature

There is a Chinese proverb which says that you cannot know where you are if you do not know where you have been. This is particularly apt for this class, which began with a brief survey of classical Chinese literature which revealed the root causes of many Chinese cultural phenomena. As we moved into the modern era, feminist literature was broken down into three categories: works in which women write directly about the issues affecting them as a group of people; works in which men write about issues affecting women; and works written by either men or women, which do not directly address feminism, but deal with issues of humanity in general, into which women's issues are intricately woven. These categories allow for a greater variety of voices and ideas to be heard and offers students a richer, more complex view of culture.

As for the subject matter, the works selected dealt with such topics as: domestic roles, marriage, prostitution, homosexuality, education, and employment opportunities. For instance, when we talked about marriage, we looked at: pre-marital sex, extra-marital sex, concubines, conjugal abuse and harassment, divorce, child custody, and relationships with ex-spouses and their new spouses. The wide range of topics was expected to jar the students from
their familiar perspectives and to cause them to re-evaluate the culture of which they were a part and their own personal roles within that culture.

Most students had a positive attitude about discussing literature from a cultural perspective. For example, Ms. S said:

We need to consider many different aspects when we look at feminist issues. We cannot talk about marriage without talking about sex. Marriage, sex, divorce, pornography, and fornication are all interrelated topics in feminism. It's like a chain of issues, and all of these are parts of culture.

Ms. Y said that she is now studying contemporary Chinese fiction on divorce, prostitution, concubinage, and how women support themselves on their own. In her journal she wrote:

Before, although I liked to read modem fiction, I just read whatever I felt like reading, and didn't put much thought into themes and genres. Now that I am studying feminist literature, I have a clearer idea of themes and developments in feminist culture from reading those literary works, and I realize that modern fiction is deeply concerned with issues relating to female culture.

In other words, it is only now that she has begun to think about how her culture has developed, what its elements are, and what are its the implications for Taiwanese society.

Ms. W said that she was very innocent, and always viewed things as peaceful and beautiful. But, after reading these literary works, she saw how complicated society really is, and has learned about the culture. She has started to consider social issues which before she had not considered.
Ms. S emphasized that it is necessary to delve into all of the layers of meaning before complete understanding of the literary works can be achieved; it is like a machine that will not go if there is a cog missing from a wheel.

In order to teach literature using a cultural approach, I employed cultural communication theory (e.g., cultural communication codes, norms, symbols) that I has found appropriate for the study of literary works. Cultural communication theory, then, was used to analyze and interpret the concrete existence of the culture as represented in the story. The intention was to expose students to different methods of approaching literary works from a cultural perspective.

Once the students were familiar with the theories of communication, I attempted to raise their level of consciousness by applying cultural theory to their reading. I also attempted to ask them "Why are things the way they are?" My purpose was to go beyond the mere transmission of knowledge to become a catalyst for thought and to have the students become active participants in the evolution of their world. It is too soon to predict the impact of this course and this pedagogy on students' lives, but I hope that they will be the catalyst for thought, which is the first step toward change. It was apparent in the classroom discussions, particularly the debates, that the students had begun to think both critically and creatively about cultural issues, which, in many cases, they admitted never having considered before.

The first step for students in gaining a deeper understanding of their culture is the simple observation of cultural phenomena and the development of initial, subjective interpretations of the nature and causes of those phenomena. This understanding is not very reflective and also heavily influenced by the standard, institutional understanding. For example, one student's immediate
response to the crippling practice of binding women's feet was that it was just to make them more attractive to men. This is merely a reflection of the standard Chinese interpretation, and it shows no evidence of careful consideration of the deeper issues surrounding to this practice.

After recognizing pre-existing beliefs about a cultural phenomenon, the next step toward a deepened understanding is to examine the reliability of these beliefs in the light of a rational investigation of more complex issues. This is done in the classroom context by means of discussion between the teacher and students. The discussion aids understanding and may lead to a modification of opinion, based on exposure to the perspectives of others. Ideally, as a result of exposure to a variety of personal views through class discussion, and to the "correct" institutional interpretation from the instructor, a student is able to develop a clearer and more reflective understanding of cultural phenomena.

As an example of employing "institutional understanding," during the class I introduced a discussion on prostitution in Taiwan. This is a social issue that has received considerable attention in recent years. In discussion about why there is so much Taiwanese literature regarding prostitution, I supplied information on the subject by Xie Kang in his book, The System and Problem of Prostitution in Taiwan. According to this book, the Taiwan Ministry of Justice studied the phenomenon of legal prostitution in Taiwan in 1967 by following the stories of 474 female prostitutes in Taiwan. All but two of them were aboriginal Taiwanese; the great majority operated out of bars and coffee shops. The ratio of pimps to prostitutes was as high as one to 50. According to Xie Kang, the reason for the prevalence of aboriginal and Taiwanese prostitutes was their socioeconomic background. Many economically-stressed rural families sell their daughters as prostitutes. This information served as
"institutional" facts and enabled me to impress upon my students the reality and scope of the problem. Although the students were already familiar to a degree with the prostitution issue in Taiwan, the classroom information reinforced their understanding. They raised questions about the information, but they accepted the "facts" without significant debate; they said they looked to the teacher to provide this kind of "institutional understanding" to further their knowledge adding that they themselves had difficulty accessing this kind of material.

As illustrated in the above example, institutional understanding influences both mutual understanding and personal understanding. In addition, mutual and personal levels of understanding influence each other. (See Figure 6.1) Through communication and discussion, one individual considers another's opinion and chooses whether or not to accept it and modify it to suit his or her own thinking. Similarly, if the individual's understanding agrees with that of another's, this bolsters that individual's ideas.

Figure 6.1
Three Aspects of Understanding
This is essentially the model used in my version of feminist pedagogy. It emphasizes the personal and mutual kinds of classroom communication and questions the standard, patriarchal assumptions. In this way a feminist pedagogy may counter the methods traditionally employed in Taiwan, in which institutional interpretations are implanted intact and unquestioned in the minds of students, who sit attentively, but passively, at their desks. In a feminist pedagogy, it is precisely the personal and mutual understandings that undermine institutional and patriarchal doctrines. In traditional pedagogy, traditional understanding overrides personal and mutual understanding.

Product Goal 3: Cultural awareness and consequent change

In the post-course interviews, all five of the students used as case studies reported that class discussions helped them to raise their feminist consciousness and develop their critical/creative thinking. In reality, though, the process was much more complex. Based on what I observed in the classroom, I see this process of education as being comprised of three steps: (1) conscious awareness of a problem or situation; (2) creative thinking about possible implications and resolutions; and (3) dealing with conflict which may be a product of creative thinking and with the question of how to adjust or defend a personal schema confronted with contrary information. Posner et al.'s (1982) ideas regarding conceptual change and "conditions of accommodation" would appear to support this kind of framework. Learning is described as a process in which a person changes his or her conceptions by adopting new ones or exchanging existing conceptions for new ones. Posner et al. suggest that there are several important
conditions which must be fulfilled before accommodation of new ideas is likely to occur:

(1) There must be dissatisfaction with existing conceptions.
(2) A new conception must be intelligible.
(3) A new conception must appear initially plausible.
(4) A new concept should suggest the possibility of fruitful further investigation.

To apply these four points to the teaching of feminist literature:

(1) When students examine Taiwanese culture, at least some of them are dissatisfied with some existing conditions.

(2) The feminist literature presents them with new conceptions or alternatives to society as it now exists, conceptions that are both intelligible and plausible.

(4) The new concepts to which students were exposed in the class could incite them to engage in ongoing thought or even research that might prove helpful to them in the future.

Returning to the three points I made previously concerning the process of educating students in feminist Chinese literature, the first step is to establish conscious awareness of a situation.

(1) Conscious Awareness of a Situation

Before critical thinking can take place, it is necessary to comprehend the circumstances to be analyzed. Awareness must expand beyond mere knowledge, which can be defined as individual possession of information. Awareness, on the other hand, suggests a level of comprehension that is more
sophisticated than mere possession of knowledge. Knowledge can be and often is rote; awareness must be internalized and given personal meaning. Knowledge tends to be finite; awareness is more amorphous. Conscious awareness implies that awareness is at the forefront of the thought process. An individual may know about a certain set of circumstances within a given society, for example, but without being conscious of them, because they are so much a part of the individual’s norms. Unless there is conscious awareness, no further thought process can follow.

Ms. W said that she had been influenced by the traditional culture. She described herself as conservative, and she aspired to be a good housewife and mother. Now, however, she has started to develop her feminist consciousness and is beginning to have second thoughts about whether her future should take place inside or outside of the household. The seeds of feminist thought have been planted in her mind, and even though she may still become a housewife, she said she will be more than "just" a housewife. She will keep thinking about feminist issues, no matter what road she follows.

Ms. R said she had never considered any feminist issues before she took this course. She had heard only that men and women were socially unequal, so she thought that that meant men were always to blame. She also found the book, Superwoman, encouraging. Having acknowledged the reality of the pressure to marry and devote their lives to their families and the feminist ideal of achieving success outside the home, she viewed the book as a sort of Utopia, a place where a compromise between career and the family-oriented woman’s life could be reached. She found the possibility of this compromise very exciting.
On the issue of whether "prostitution should be legal or not," Ms. S remarked that, "if everyone was against it, how could it still exist? It seems like there must be a demand for it, so why not make it legal and keep it safer?" She tries to discover the reasoning behind other people's thinking now, instead of just asking "why?" all the time. Through this new inquisitiveness Ms. S is developing a deeper, cultural awareness. She has progressed beyond the stage of passive acceptance and beyond the stage of conscious awareness. She is beginning to ask questions that may alter her present personal level of understanding. In fact, she is beginning to think critically.

(2). Developing Creative/Critical Thinking

Conscious awareness of fact is merely a first step in the thought process. To be consciously aware of something is valuable, but, if the awareness is never challenged, then it will stagnate and eventually recede into the individual's unconscious mind again. For an individual's conscious awareness to grow and develop, it has to be challenged. This challenging results from external changes or else questioning individual concepts. In the latter case, if questioning occurs internally, that is, if it is the individual herself/himself who generates the questions, then this is called critical thinking. As the thinkers modify their conscious awareness of a subject in the process of critical thinking, either by expanding or narrowing personal understanding, the process that results is termed creative thinking.

In the pre-class interview, Ms. S rejected a class based on student discussion, because teachers have specialized knowledge to share which students could not even begin to consider. In the post-class interview, she
admitted that this class helped her develop her thinking ability and that she learned a lot from listening to the other students. When she heard different opinions, her first reaction was to think, "that's another way to think about it," and then ask them to explain. Listening to other people's ideas and opinions and asking them for explanations, was the process that Ms. S adopted to reconcile the different ideas with her own personal schema. Presumably she either altered her own understanding or dismissed the other person's ideas, not because it differed with her own (if that was the case she would not have asked for an explanation), but because she found some flaw in the logic. This is a good example of critical/creative thinking which she would not have experienced if she had continued to insist blindly that the teacher interpret the text for her.

At the beginning of the class, Ms. S was dependent on authority to hand down the "right answers" to her. Gradually, she became more aware of a diversity of opinions and a multiplicity of perspectives, and she transcended her preconceptions and may continue to do so in the future.

By contrast, Ms. R enjoyed the teaching style in which students were able to express themselves freely, and accepted that the discussion reflected many different aspects of the society. Ms. R thought she has a rudimentary feminist awareness, but, as a Christian, should not think that modern women should be more liberated. She viewed divorce, extramarital sex, and prostitution as self-indulgent. In her mind, the world is divided between right/good and wrong/bad. Holding this view, she makes judgments and takes stands. But the stands she takes are not really hers, since they are dispensed by a higher, and non-Chinese, authority, the Bible. The Bible dictates her sense of right and wrong, and provides the criteria by which she criticizes the world.
Her own ideas are subordinated, and so she cannot fully develop her creative thinking.

(3). Dealing with Conflict

Based on my interpretation of my data, it appears that conflict results when an individual's personal schema encounters an obstacle which he/she is not able to overcome by using critical/creative thinking. When this happens, the individual must either abandon his personal schema and replace it with a new one which will include and explain the new and conflicting information, or, if he is unable to do that, then he must live with the conflict. This is important, because not all conflicts have resolutions, and it is naive to assume that resolutions are always possible.

In the post-class interview, we found Ms. Y's ideas were readily compatible with modern feminist tenets. She did not find much conflict with her own beliefs, finding instead support for them, while most of the other students had more or less conflict with their feminist consciousness.

Ms. W came to the realization that her family and career were equally important to her. Until she actually encounters a conflict between them, she won't know how she will resolve them, whether she will choose to follow the old way or not. She believed that, if she continues to develop her feminist thinking, its influence will be even greater.

Ms. H faced a great deal of generational conflict with her mother since she has a more modern and liberal outlook on cohabitation and racial matters than her mother does. This conflict broadened her thinking, rather than impelling her to follow the traditional way and to respect her mother's wishes.
Not surprisingly, Ms. H experienced some conflict of her own when it came to feminist concerns. She agreed that being a good wife and mother at home was important, but at the same time boring.

Ms. W and Ms. R manage to compromise and to have both a career and a family in the future. They are likely to find that they are excelling at one or the other but not both, since it is extremely difficult to have enough time to meet the demands of the job and the needs of the family. If they opt to work exclusively inside the home, they leave themselves open to criticism that they are being exploited because of their sex and prevented from living up to their fullest potential. If they work exclusively outside the home, they will risk the permanent loss of family life and being left with nothing but memories and, perhaps, a pension when they reach retirement age.

Ms. R is a Christian, and has encountered many contradictions in her thinking. One day, during a small group discussion, she said:

I want to go back to Taiwan when I graduate, but I am afraid of the narrow expectations that Taiwanese culture imposes on a woman. This doesn't mean I cannot go back, but, because I am educated, I have my own set of ideas and priorities. I don't want to go back to the traditional lifestyle.

She has been living in the American culture for so many years that she is now an independent woman with a strong desire to have a career in the future. It worries her that she may not be able to adjust if she goes back to Taiwan. She recognizes the conflict inherent in the situation in Taiwan, where women play a dual role and must function under traditional norms of subordination, ancillary to and dependent on men.

Even though these three women were all trying to resolve different, albeit related, issues such as future career, generational differences, and cultural
expectations, all three are essentially dealing with the same basic question: how to define their roles as women in society. The societal pressure to succeed according to feminist doctrine vs. the traditional, conservatism of Chinese culture naturally create a great deal of internal turmoil. The root causes of the conflict must be considered and resolved individually and personally.

Many women in this class responded to questions in the pre-course interviews with traditional and conservative views. During the course of the semester, however, they confronted ideas that ran counter to their traditional culture. This new feminist consciousness acted as a catalyst for critical thought and resulted in frequent experiences of a sense of conflict about future roles by the class end. How this conflict will be resolved ultimately remains to be seen and will vary from individual to individual, but three steps of the process: raising of conscious awareness, critical/creative thinking, and conflict are all in evidence as a result of this class.

These women students were more enlightened in gender issues than any generation before them, but they are still susceptible to the pressures of traditional, societal expectations. One of the strongest of these expectations is the individual’s obligation to the family. Strong familial expectations of filial piety, including the obligations of children to their parents, mother to child, wife to in-laws, and wife to husband, make the family one of the strongest and most ingrained institutions in Chinese society. The pull of establishing her own family challenges even the most enlightened, career-minded Chinese woman. It is not surprising, then, that most of the women students opposed divorce, because it runs counter to the institution, the sanctity of the family, that they hold most dear.
In addition, traditional Chinese society imposes a myriad of ethical restrictions regarding sex. The majority of people consciously repress their own sexuality, and any inhibitions or repressions are doubly strict for women. Even though modern Chinese youth receive more information about sexuality than did their predecessors, they are still shackled by conservatism.

Although post-class interviews did suggest an increase in conscious awareness of feminist issues among these students, there is still great conflict modern Chinese society about women's roles and the expectations society imposes on them. As the class ended, many of the students expressed doubt about their futures. At the time of this writing, these conflicts remain unresolved. It is possible that these women may never break the shackles imposed on them by cultural expectations, but, at least, they are now aware of these constraints. I believe that this awareness may provide the first step toward societal change.
CHAPTER 7

DATA ANALYSIS: PATTERN ANALYSIS

Introduction

In doing action research, I was aware how the information/data gathered for this study helped to give me a clear understanding of the educational situation. Using pattern analysis, I investigated patterns of interaction which emerged from the transcripts of the classroom exchanges. In addition to identifying the patterns, I explain the significance of the patterns and the effects on students' learning. For example, I discuss what effect these patterns have on the class atmosphere, and what effect they have on learning. Also, in cases where the effects of the patterns in classroom interaction do not match my original pedagogical intentions, I discuss which action strategies should be developed to refine teaching techniques to direct them more accurately at the process and product teaching goals, described earlier.

Pattern Analysis

I chose to apply pattern analysis to my research findings because I believe it applies most directly to research questions concerning pedagogical techniques to enhance student participation in the classroom. The purpose of pattern analysis is (1) to identify patterns in the data; (2) to identify the relationship of these patterns to teaching philosophy and goals; and (3) to interpret the significant meanings behind the patterns and the interrelationships
between my personal contributions to the pedagogy and the data patterns which emerge.

According to Altrichter et al. (1993), pattern analysis can be defined as a creative process in which a teacher begins a so-called "conversation" with the reality of teacher/student interreactions based on lessons. The process of pattern analysis does not consist merely in identifying existing patterns, but is an active process of constructing personal meaning for the teacher, by relating intended goals to what the teacher perceives to be happening in the classroom.

Drawing from pattern analysis, Altrichter et al. describe types of teacher-student interaction patterns including: "sentence completion pattern," "listing pattern", and "following up pattern."

"Sentence completion pattern", according Altrichter et al. is that "the pupil answers with a catchword and that the word is complementary to the teacher's question, in the sense that it fills the gap left by his question." Listing pattern is the pattern "which prompts pupils to list concepts in answers to the teacher's question." Following-up pattern is the pattern which "offers an invitation to the pupils to engage in a 'discussion pattern' with the teacher.

I have selected as examples, 4 classroom exchanges, in the beginning, middle, and end of the semester, to provide a balanced opportunity to observe progress toward goal completion. Although some of the excerpts from the transcripts were selected randomly, some others were selected because, in reviewing the transcripts, certain passages stood out as being particularly clear examples of points that I wanted to convey. But whether randomly selected or not, all excerpts had to be relatively brief in the interest of being to the point and as a courtesy to the reader. The brief outline of exchanges, which took place on September 13, October 13, November 8, and December 13, serves as
examples of how T-S-T patterns are useful as a diagnostic tool in that the strict
T-S-T pattern is an example of a highly teacher-oriented pedagogy, and as such,
one that I wanted to avoid. As the classroom discussions evolved, a much more
"open" pattern emerged, which I call a "discussion pattern." In a discussion
pattern, the teacher does not constrain the discussion with a strict enforcement
of a pattern of prompt and reply, but instead encourages the students to take the
conversation when it naturally wants to go.

The classroom exchanges below are taken from dialogues transcribed in
Chapter 5. Abbreviations in the notation system are as follows:
1. TQ = Teacher question
2. T = Teacher comment
3. St1 = Single student response
4. Sts = Many students' responses
5. StCQ = Student comment and question

September 13: TQ St1 St2 TQ St1 St3 TQ Sts TQ Sts TQ Sts TQ
(silence) TQ St3 TQ St2 TQ St3 The actual transcript of this exchange
read as follows:

TQ: What do you think of women's status at that point in history?
St1: They could not study, they could not hold a job that involved being out in
public, because that was not something a decent woman did.
St2: They stayed at home, cooking and sewing.
TQ: How long ago are we talking about here? (Teacher has period from 1066
to 22 B.C. in mind)
St1: Very ancient times -- their sole purpose was to be a good wife and mother,
cooking and sewing.
St3: In ancient China women were very obedient--they had to follow the three
obediences.
TQ: Could they date or hold friendships with men?
Several students: No.
TQ: How do you know this? What's your source of information?
Several students: We read about it.
TQ: In the poem "Piao You Mei," we see an example of how women were viewed. Can someone explain this to me?
Several students: We don't understand it.
TQ: Seventy per cent of the fruit still on the tree, the rest is on the ground -- what's the metaphor here?
(No response)
TQ: Is the fruit ripe?
St3: Not yet.
TQ: Some is on the tree, the rest is on the ground -- what kind of metaphor is this?
St2: The woman is still young.
TQ: Yes. How about the second line of the poem?
St3: The fruit symbolizes that the girl is reaching marriageable age, so the men should come to her now.

This is a typical early classroom exchange pattern of the T-S-T variety.

The following week students felt more comfortable and began to ask questions.

September 20: St1CQ St2CQ St3C St4C St5C ST6C TQ (silence) TQ (silence) TQ (silence) St6 T Students were divided into small groups to discuss the questions they had raised. When the class reassembled, students began to comment and ask questions, but the class is still very much teacher-dependent.

Group A
St1CQ: This poem describes a woman who was divorced by her husband. They later met and talked. The woman asked the man how his second marriage and wife were. He told her she was better than his current wife and that made her sad. She thought, "Even though I was the better wife, I was divorced." Our group can't understand why her husband divorced her, if she was a better wife, and why she is kneeling throughout their conversation.

Group B
St2CQ: In this poem, the man regrets divorcing his wife — why did he do it? Was it because she didn’t bear him a son? And why does she herself stay kneeling down to talk to him? Is it because of the authority? Was he a playboy? Did she commit adultery?

St3C: This poem describes a man who misses his ex-wife. It seems like the moral of the story — you don’t know what you’ve got until it’s gone.

Group C

St4C: We think this poem is about an old woman meeting the husband who divorced her. They meet years later and have a heartfelt conversation. She regrets having been divorced, but she’s very polite and accepting. Because of this we know that the woman’s status was very low. We think she’s very generous because, even though he divorced her, they are still friends.

St5C: I think she kneels down as a greeting, but that’s all.

St6C: I think he divorced her, so women’s status must be very low. But if we look at it from the women’s point of view, maybe we’ll think she has pride, and so her status really isn’t all that low.

TQ: Any comments on these discussions?

(Students silent)

TQ: Each group raises its own questions and perspectives — let’s talk about each one respectively. The first question is about the wife’s pride — is this evident in this poem? If it is, how so?

(Students silent)

TQ: Do you think the women has pride?

(Students shake heads)

St6: I think women’s status is very low. They didn’t have pride.

T: So why does she kneel? Okay, at the time this poem takes place, women did not sit down in front of people with their legs stretched out. To sit with the legs out straight would have been considered impolite. If a woman wanted to rest, she would sit in what you would call a kneeling position, with knees bent and shins on the ground. Now, we don’t know implicitly that she was resting, but we are told that she has just come down from picking leaves in the mountains, so it makes sense that she might have been resting under the tree. When her husband or anyone else would come, she would rise in greeting out of politeness, but only as far as straightening her hips, her knees would remain on the ground because it would have been difficult for her to rise and still keep her modesty. Does this explanation make sense to you?

(Students nod silently)
September 27: TQ St1 St2 TQ St3 St4Q TQ St5 St6 St7 TQ St7 TQ (silence) T St8Q T The teacher-led class discussion continued.

TQ: (Points to student for a summary of the last class's work)
St1: The story was one about a beautiful virtuous woman who was divorced by her husband because her mother-in-law forced him to, so she had to move back in with her family.
St2: After she moved back with her family, two men approached a matchmaker about arranging a match with her.
TQ: What's the tone when the matchmaker discusses the offers with the woman's family?
St3: The matchmaker is a confident that the woman will remarry, because two very good men have made offers for her.
St4Q: (Raising hand): I have a question. The men are young, rich and eligible. Why would they want a divorced woman to take to wife?
TQ: Think about that. Why does she suddenly seem to have a sudden rise in social status after her divorce?
St5: Because she's virtuous.
St6: She is beautiful.
St7: Because the matchmaker is so eloquent, so persuasive.
TQ: That's a good point.
St7: If a marriage is struck, then the matchmaker will make a profit, so he makes the men seem very desirable.
TQ: These are good points. In our own lives, we have all had experiences like this. People who have something to sell -- like the matchmaker -- only talk about the good points of their wares and play down the bad. So his tone is a sort of exaggeration. Are there any other reasons?
(students silent)
T: I can think of another reason. What if the author used a sort of artistic exaggeration? That way, by telling you she is a beautiful and virtuous woman, he already has the reader sympathizing with the woman.
St8Q: Is this a true story or a folk tale?
T: (Gives mini lecture on the story's archetypes and explains how the author puts it down in written form).
October 13: StQ  St1  St leader  St2  St3  St leaderQ  TQ  St leader  St3  
This was the first week that there was a designated student to lead classroom discussions, although the teacher still generated occasional questions as well.

StQ: Were the characters in the story "Regret for the Past" happy during their cohabitation?
St1: They weren't, because they didn't know each other well before they moved in together. They couldn't afford to live together -- their finances were not large enough.
Student Leader: I had the same feeling. They only knew each other for six months, then lived together for a year. That's not enough time to make that sort of commitment.
St2: That's not the reason. Some married couples live together for 20 years and still don't know each other very well.
St3: I think they really didn't know each other very well. The story describes the male character, Juansheng, as speaking freely, while female character, Zijun, sits and listens quietly. On the surface, this seems very harmonious and sweet, but you have to realize that it also means that the discussion is all one sided -- they are not mutually communicating and that's bound to figure into the success of their cohabitation.
Student leaderQ: Teacher, whose idea was it for them to live together in the first place? I think this is important because the one who did the asking will be the one who's more responsible for the success of the relationship.
TQ: Does any one have an answer to this?
Student leader: I think they still love each other very much. Even when Zijun leaves him and goes back to her father's house, Juansheng still tries to visit her.
St3: I don't think so. On page 163, he says "Honestly, I don't love you any more." On page 167, he says, "I should not have told her the truth. We used to love each other. I should have let her go on believing it."

November 8: (I)  St1  TQ  St2  St3  TQ  St1  St2  St3  TQ  St1  St2  TQ  St4  TQ  St4  St5  St6  St7  TQ  St1  St2  St3  St4  St5  T  St2  T  The class discussed two stories during this week. This is the exchange notation for the discussion of the first story. Some students said they had difficulty in reading the assignment, which was in English, and many came to class unprepared.
Consequently, I felt obliged to step in and raise some questions and offer suggestions for the group discussion.

St1: The story is pretty superficial and is written in a dull, flat style. (Students silent, teacher looks around in an attempt to encourage students to speak)

TQ: Even though the plot seems to be told in a simple, straightforward way, that doesn't mean that the ideas behind it aren't profound. Let's analyze whether or not it reflects reality. Think about the roles of the wife and the concubine. Are they happy? Do you know of any real-life examples of concubines?

St2: My brother's girlfriend's father has a concubine. She always tells us the sad story of her family. I can understand how both the wife and concubine feel.

St3: My neighbors in Taiwan have the same situation. Outwardly they get along, but who knows what goes on behind closed doors?

TQ: Let's get back to this story. What do you think the author's motivation was for writing it?

St1: To compare different eras. In the third part of the story, the author seems to tell us that in different eras it is meaningless to talk about the skirt again.

St2: To expose the cruelty of the traditional marriage system.

St3: To describe these women's sad lives.

TQ: Why does this system of concubines exist?

St1: Males are more powerful than females.

St2: Because society thinks males are more important.

TQ: Why do you think society holds these ideas?

St4: Because the male carries on the family name.

TQ: Because the children will carry on the father's line. If this so, what is the female's social status?

St4: Continuing the family name is important; daughters are like spilled water.

St5: Sometimes they will have a dozen daughters before they get a son, because the son is so important.

St6: The family gets a betrothal fee when they marry off their daughters. It's like they sell her.

St7: Daughters who need a dowry will not perpetuate their family's name after marriage.

TQ: Since the women are seen as being less important, how could society's perception be changed?

St1: It seems reasonable that the children should have both last names.

St2: If some kids had the father's last names, other kids the mother's, it would be too confusing. [In most Asian countries, including Taiwan and China, the
woman retains her family name after marriage, but her children all bear their father's surname.]
St3: Try to marry a man with the same last name as you.
St4: From the genetic point of view that might not be a good idea—you might marry a distant relative.
St5: I don't think that's very likely to happen.
T: I think we should hold this thought: a tradition may exist in a society, but that doesn't mean it's reasonable. Like binding a girl's feet—it was traditional, but not reasonable. At this point, if carrying the father's last name may cause such problems, one needs to think about what's reasonable.
St2: As long as we understand that a family name is a symbol, not a reason for being.
T: That's a good point. The blood line continues whether the name does or not. If one keeps this in mind, one can change the perception that men are more valuable than women.

November 8: (II) TQ St1 TQ (silence) TQ St2 TQ St2 TQ St3 TQ St4 TQ (silence) TQ ST5 TQ St5 TQ ST3 TQ St3 TQ (silence) TQ St3 TQ St4 St6 During discussion of the second story later that same day, students complained that they failed to understand the key points of the story. I thus chose to direct the course of the discussion. The exchange shows the T-S-T pattern characteristic of the beginning of the course, indicating that because the students were confused about what they had read, they reverted to their passive, wait-and-see-what-the-teacher-says style of participation.

TQ: Why is this story called "The Candle?"
St1: A candle is like the old woman—it burns to nothing and she dies.
TQ: Any other ideas?
(Students silent)
TQ: How much light does a candle give off?
St2: It flickers.
TQ: Could this flickering be a metaphor for something else?
St2: It's like the life of the old woman; dark and lonely—one tiny candle against a big darkness.
TQ: So, the candle could represent her fate or her mood. Could it also represent anything else?
St3: Her circumstances are dark, so her situation is very bleak.

TQ: The reason for the man having a concubine is different than in the story we just discussed. What is the reason in this story?

St4: He is always looking for someone new and discarding the old one.

(At this point the teacher puts the poem on the board. It's about a woman who looks out the window waiting for her lover, but sees a stranger instead. A passerby sees her peering out and calls her action a "beautiful mistake."

TQ: Why does he call it a "beautiful mistake"?

(No response)

TQ: Is it a "beautiful mistake" from the male or female point of view?

St5: The female's.

TQ: Why do you say that?

St5: Because she has hope in her heart, even though she's disappointed again and again.

TQ: Does anyone else have a comment?

St3: It's the male's point of view.

TQ: Why do you say that?

St3: Because all of the action in the poem is from the male's point of view--he approaches the house, sees the woman, and makes the remark.

TQ: Can we interpret it this way? From the male narrator's point of view, love is just a fun game, so he narcissistically romanticizes the encounter into a "beautiful mistake." Because the "beautiful woman" is hopelessly waiting for her lover, from her point of view the mistake could hardly be considered "beautiful". Instead, it is a painful disappointment, and a reminder that her waiting is becoming meaningless. Do you have any other opinion or observations?

(silence)

TQ: The poem is an example of the male chauvinism inherent in traditional Chinese culture. But now we can look at it from other perspectives, and examine the place of the woman in the poem. Now let's return to the story, and compare the two male narrators' views of love. Why does the narrator of "The Candle" have a concubine?

St3: His consciousness represents the male-centered, selfish nature of the society. He is not committed to his marriage, and cares nothing for his wife's feelings. He gives her only material support, and goes about satisfying his desires with a younger woman.

TQ: What do you think our modern society's definition of love is?

St4: Communicating with each other, and caring for each other.

St6: I feel there must be honesty, communication, and equality. In the story and the poem, we can see that in the past there was no equality between men and women. But now there must be equality in our love relationships.
November 15: StQ St1 T St1 St2 StQ St3 St4 St5 St6 St2 St3
Following the previous week's difficulties, the students came to this class well prepared and once again returned to generating their own questions and discussing their ideas openly with relatively little teacher input.

StQ: Should prostitution be legal?
St1: No, because it's immoral.
T: Could you please elaborate on that.
St1: Prostitution influences families and society--it is not just a problem for individuals, it's a health problem and so a social problem.
St2: I think it should be legal. Everyone's curious. If you tell people they can't, then they just want to do it more. I think it's like American teenagers, who like to drink because they are underage--it becomes a challenge for them to try to drink. Once they are legal, it would not so tempting in the first place. Like in Taiwan, there is no drinking age, for example my young brother is not curious at all. I went to Holland, pot is legal, and so a lot of Taiwanese go there just to buy it because it's illegal in Taiwan. Holland has a low crime rate, because for the people that live there, there is no big attraction to this drug. So I think, prostitution should be legal.

StQ: A man pays the prostitute, like a business--it's like the concubine getting their material desires satisfied--isn't that a sort of prostitution?
St3: The concubine didn't get paid every time she put out.
St4: But he supported her, that's a kind of payment, an exchange.
St5: According to your definition, being a wife would be a sort of prostitution.
St6: A prostitute has sex without marriage, that makes her different from a wife.
St2: A concubine is a different sort of prostitute.
St3: I know a lot of concubines and they all started out as prostitutes.

November 22: StQ St1 St2 T St3 T Although the teacher was still an active participant, my role here was primarily that of commentator. The students themselves appeared to be well in control of their material and their exchanges.
StQ: Why doesn't Xinghua want her mother to know that she helped her brother?
St1: Because the mother has such high expectations for the brother, and she doesn't want her mother to be disappointed.
St2: She really didn't want to help him, because they both had begun to depend on her, so she didn't want her mother to know. But she had to help him—she couldn't say "no".
T: The shadow of the patriarchal society is everywhere, even on Xinghua herself. She may be a very capable woman, but even she can't escape the patriarchy. It's too big an obstruction to bypass. Her brother is like the father figure in the family, so she has to maintain his dignity, so she doesn't want her mother to find out.
St3: I think the most important thing is that she doesn't want them to get too dependent on her. If her mother finds out, then she'll expect Xinghua to be responsible for bailing him out every time. If her brother would at least try his best, then she wouldn't mind; but he slacks off, expecting her to fix things for him.
T: That's a good point.

December 13: St1 TQ St1 St2 St3Q St2 St4 St1 St4 St5Q St4 St2 St3 St2 St6 St2 St7 St5Q St4 St7 St4 St7 St5 St2 St3Q St5Q St4Q St3Q St4Q St5Q St7Q St2 St7 St4 St5 (many speak at once) St4 St5 St2

This exchange occurred following a student presentation dealing with homosexual themes. Because this is a topic that is never discussed openly in Taiwan, there were a great many questions for which there were no definitive answers. The comments and questions flew fast and furiously with a minimum of teacher imput.

St1: Taiwan also has lesbians, this has been discovered. They feel inferior, and aren't willing to talk about it, not like lesbians here, who are even on TV.
TQ: What if, today, a relative or friend of yours told you she was a lesbian and asked you to help her organize a support group? How would you react to that? St1: What do they want me to do? I am not a lesbian.
St2: I have a friend who is lesbian; she studies in another state. I want to say that I am straight. They have very painful lives. They know that people always are talking behind their backs. (Talking about gay man she knows). They are very pitiful, they are afraid to tell their parents. Every time he talks to me, he cries. I don't know how to help him. Afterward that man's parents found out. The parents of the two lovers fought. (This was in Taiwan.) I think the least guilty party was the parents. My feeling is that the fact that their being gay doesn't hurt me in any way. I should give them basic respect.

St3Q: If it was legalized [in Taiwan], does this mean that we support it? Because some people are not born homosexual, but later choose to become so. Even if it is a conscious choice, if we legalize it, would that be encouraging it?

St2: I think that no one would be willing to choose to change into a lesbian, although my friend said she did.

St4: I don't think this is supporting it, just give them space to be who they are, since they do exist. Their sexuality is their own business.

St1: But what if it was your brother or sister!?

St4: He is still your brother, whatever he is. I am definitely not encouraging him to be gay, but if he is going to be, I can't say no. This is a private matter.

St5Q: Isn't it true that all gay people get AIDS?

St4: No. That's wrong.....

St2: It's usually people who act very irresponsibly who get AIDS. I think it should be legalized, but they can't have children. Because if they have children there will be problems with their education. The children's education is very important. They can get married, but we shouldn't let them adopt children. It would affect their development.

St3: I think that it's very important to realize that there are only two sexes in our norm. If you have an inborn dislike of the other sex, this is understandable, because we are all born different. We can't look at them as being especially different. But we can't help them to organize, because that would be glorifying them. Because, realistically speaking, many people change during their lives. Perhaps if someone is feeling the pain of breaking up, and a same sex friend sympathizes with them and tells them that they can find the same kind of love and care with someone of their own gender, it is very possible that person would become a homosexual. I think that this is not proper.

St2: But I think everyone has natural rights, you can't just tell someone you can not be a certain way. Like that friend of mine, I once asked her if she had ever been with a person of the opposite sex. I am very much against pre-marital sex, but in this situation, I would encourage them to give it a try. You could consider it a kind of therapy. If they are born that way there is nothing you can do, but most of them just try it because they think it's fun.
St6: Many people broke up, and just made the mistake of trying homosexuality before coming to their senses and going back to normal. Because in this society, it is only normal when men and women are together.

St2: But they can still have their own organizations.

St7: I know an old man, he is gay. But in the '60s society wouldn't tolerate him, so he got married. But he really didn't love his wife. His life was very unhappy. In the end he got divorced. Later he had a lover. That lover also not accepted by the society, and he was beaten to death in Northampton because he was a gay.

St5Q: I have a question, how was AIDS initially transmitted?

St4: Nobody knows where AIDS came from.

St7: I heard it was from monkeys.

St4: I heard that too, but you can't be sure.

St7: I don't know where it started from either. But it has been said that homosexuals, especially gay men, because they have anal sex and that is the dirtiest part of the body, are most at risk to get AIDS. The virus grows there. But if they don't have sex, then the virus will not spread. But it will spread if they do, especially if they are bisexual.

St5: My thought is don't hurt the homosexuals, but don't spread these ideas.

St2: I think you shouldn't spread these ideas. Instead you should speak out to give people proper information about sex. Once I heard an Asian person talking about homosexuality. I don't support homosexuality, but I do support people addressing the issue. When people misunderstand something, then they will have an incorrect impression of it. Like that gay man in Taiwan who stood up for gay rights, and provided information for health center, so that gay men could get health exams. Although people were very negative about him, it's still very difficult to stand up for yourself. It's immoral that people attacked him like that. Because with things like this, you have to first understand before you can accept. Everybody has their own life, we have to respect this.

St3Q: But to what extent are we to accept it?

St5Q: Accept them as human beings or accept them as homosexual?

St4Q: That question is sick! Do you mean if you accept them as gay then you don't accept them as human beings?

St3Q: Then what is your limit?

St4Q: Have you thought about it from their perspective? In your view, their behavior is wrong, from their perspective, they can't accept your idea. Have you thought about that?

St5Q: From what you have said, everyone has a right to do whatever they want. If that's true how does the world continue?

St7Q: Right! How does the world produce new generations?
St2: (St4's) ideas are that we can't always say that other people are wrong, just because other people will think we are wrong.

St7: But the question is how to convince other people that your behavior is reasonable. Only if people understand your behavior will they respect you.

St4: So, I think education is important to allow you to understand why it happens. Like when she just asked if it isn't just gay people who have AIDS; I am sorry, but I have to say something you don't want to hear. I can't blame you, because your education has been very narrow, and that's why you can ask such a question. This is an uneducated question; it's ridiculous! You can learn about it from newspapers and from books. It's a failure of your education, you haven't been given the information. That's why you have to ask that question.

St5: I know that non-gay people also have AIDS; my question is how did it start?

[Every speaks at once; no one student is clearly audible on the tape]
[Some students try to calm everyone down]

St4: Chinese people don't like to argue, that's wrong. My point is that she just asked me if only homosexuals can get AIDS. This is because our society isn't educated. If you were educated, you would know that's not true.

St5: I know! I just want to ask where it came from!

St2: [gesturing for calm, tries to change the subject] I think this school handles it well, putting them together in one dorm. They respect them. But I am against people wearing T-shirts that say things like "I am gay, did you know that?"

This is just showing off.

In the beginning of the semester, as can be seen in the above patterns, a simple and repeated pattern is the sequence of alternating speech by the teacher and the students, the T-S-T pattern. It can be seen clearly in the following extract from the transcript for September 13:

T: What do you think of women's status at that point in history?
St1: They could not study, they could not hold a job that involved being out in public, because that was not something a decent woman did.
St2: They stayed at home, cooking and sewing.
T: How long ago are we talking about here? (teacher has the period from 1066 to 22 B.C. in mind).
St1: Very ancient times--their sole purpose was to be a good wife and mother, cooking and sewing.
St3: In ancient China, women were very obedient: They had to follow the three obediences.
T: Could they date or hold friendships with men?
Several students: No.
T: How do you know this? What's your source of information?
Several students: We read about it.
T: In the poem "Piao You Mei," we see an example of how women were viewed. Can some one explain this to me?
Several students: We don't understand it.
T: Seventy per cent of the fruit still on the tree, the rest is on the ground. What's the metaphor here?
(No response)
T: Is the fruit ripe?
St3: Not yet.
T: Some is on the tree, the rest is on the ground. What kind of metaphor is this?
St2: The woman is still young.
T: Yes. How about the second line of the poem?
St3: The fruit symbolizes that the girl is reaching marriageable age, so the men should come to her now.

It is clear that these examples match the T-S-T, or more specifically the TQ-Ss-T or TQ-S-T pattern. When TQ-Ss-T pattern occurs, a variation within the pattern is the "listing pattern," where students listed concepts in answer to the questions. For example, when I asked about women's status, students' responses were that women could not study, they could not have a job; they stayed home, cooking and sewing. I accepted the students' interpretations, and acknowledged this as their response. The "following-up pattern" by the teacher also emerges in this excerpt. When students replied to a question incorrectly, instead of telling them they were "wrong," I responded by following up the student answer, saying "How do you know this? What's your source of information?" When students replied that they could not understand the subject matter, I tried to make the material easier for them to interpret by adding some further explanations and then posing another question. From the pre-class
interviews, I noted that my students tended to be shy, some of them extremely so, perhaps even a bit fearful, and that they respected highly the teacher's position and authority. I believe that, for students to feel comfortable, teachers must create a friendly class environment and encourage them to speak up. I think it is always more successful to be encouraging than negative, regardless whether what a student says is wholly accurate or to the point.

When I asked, "Is the fruit ripe?" the student answered with two catchwords that were complementary to the question. This answer, in a sense, filled a gap that was left by my question, which was, of course, the intent of this style of questioning. The question required part of a sentence as the answer necessary to complete the statement. Then, as I asked other questions, the T-S-T pattern repeated itself. Students' answer were also confirmed by my saying, "Yes" and following up with another question. Both patterns remained stable throughout the exchange.

The T-S-T or T-S-S-T pattern demonstrates that I, as teacher, did control the way in which students responded to the subject matter. My aim clearly was to encourage the students to come up with ideas that were compatible with my own way of thinking: I asked questions in such a way as to maximize the likelihood of the students responding with answers that would meet my expectations. I will say more about this later.

This kind of teacher-centered pedagogical method was followed during the first three classes of the semester; transcripts from these sessions show that at least eight of the 14 students gave responses. This suggests that a number of students appeared to be responsive to the teaching method. The voluntary responses by students comprised about 50 percent of all contributions (although this is difficult to judge from the transcript). The results of the September 27th
questionnaire indicated that almost all of the students were satisfied with this teaching method. They mentioned that they liked the way this class was conducted because the discussion style offered them an opportunity to express many different points of view. For example, Ms. R wrote, "It's very lively and well mannered." Ms. W commented that the discussion, with its interplay of varying opinions, helped her to understand the material more thoroughly. Ms. Y wrote, "I feel very comfortable in this class. I also want to hear different points of view from other classmates. Actually, it should be more voice spoken out, [sic], not only persons like me."

Nonetheless, I was not satisfied with this teaching method because I recognized that I was "in control" all the time. I always raised questions and only then did the students discuss them. I believe that the chief weakness of the teacher-controlled teaching method is that knowledge acquisition is implicitly defined as answering set questions posed by the instructor. This kind of teaching cannot contribute significantly to the students' ability to think independently, an important goal of mine. Although the questionnaire shows that the students were comfortable with the discussion process, I wanted to teach my students to approach literature critically, to open their minds to literature and, through it, to the problems of our time and society. I wanted my students to be able to think and function in a manner more liberal than has been customary in their society. This means that they ought to become capable of criticizing authority, and become more independent and self-reliant in their thinking, able to develop their own ideas. I preferred to think of my role as that of a facilitator, in charge of carefully designing class interactions so that students could move toward the greatest participation in their own learning. I
thus chose to progress in my class from a teacher-centered pedagogy to a student-centered one.

Identifying the T-S-T pattern in class exchanges is an excellent way to analyze by observation simple student-teacher interactions around learning goals. In this study, as teacher involvement/comment decreased and student question/discussion increased over the course of the semester, there was observable progress toward independent thinking among the students. The use of pattern analysis allowed me to evaluate and modify my teaching methods accordingly as the semester progressed.

Here another excerpt, from October 13, which shows an evolution in pattern:

StQ: Why did they [the main male and female character in the story] separate?
St1: Because they could not afford to stay together.
St2: I think he complains that she's always too busy to keep up her appearance. You cannot say that it's her fault, but I think it's important to always try to look your best.
St leader: He thinks she changes after he gets fired, she feels displaced and so he thinks she's changed--she's acting very traditional--the opposite of what attracted him in the first place, and so he gradually stopped loving her.
T: You said, "He thinks she changed after he gets fired." Do you think she changed and why do you think that way?
St3: I don't think she changed--I think that all the pressure just took its toll and influenced her mood.
St4: No, she changed a lot. Before they moved in she was very spirited--like Nora in "A Doll's House," but after, she turned into a regular housewife.
St5: She's right. After they lived together she never had time to read--she never had time for anything but housework. That stifled her spirit. She wasn't the same after that.

Here, we see that the pattern is StQ-St1-St2-St leader-TQ-St3-St4-St5, a "discussion pattern" that indicates the students were enthusiastically involved in the classroom discussion. The T-S-T pattern no longer exists in this dialogue; instead of the simple sentence completion pattern or listing pattern, the pattern
of interaction is more sophisticated and complex. The students freely expressed their ideas from different points of view. Their replies were clear and to the point. For my part, after three students' contributions, I quoted part of the students' response and "followed up" on one of the student's comments.

In addition to the increasing complexity of student-teacher interaction that this excerpt illustrates, the students themselves, in their answers to questionnaires, said that such discussions were good practice for them. They said most students had a chance to express themselves in the classroom and that the discussions helped them to understand the text and to communicate their ideas.

From pre-class interviews, I was aware that the students were not willing to experiment with an unfamiliar teaching style, especially one that would encourage students to take more responsibility for their own learning. To counteract this reluctance, during the first few classes I attempted to ask questions designed to encourage an exchange of ideas and an examination of social issues. Sometimes, though, the students responded with silence. It was only during the second half of the semester that the students took delight in sharing and exchanging ideas.

The following transcript is from November 8:

T: Why is this story called "The Candle?"
St1: A candle is like the old woman--it burns to nothing and she dies.
T: Any other ideas?
(Students silent)
T: How much light does a candle give off?
St2: It flickers.
T: Could this flickering be a metaphor for something else?
St2: It's like the life of the old woman; dark and lonely—one tiny candle against a big darkness.
T: So, the candle could represent her fate or her mood. Could it also represent anything else?
St3: Her circumstances are dark, so her situation is very bleak.
T: The reason for the man having a concubine is different than in the story we just discussed. What is the reason in this story?
St4: He is always looking for someone new and discarding the old one.
(At this point the teacher puts the poem on the board. It's about a woman who looks out the window waiting for her lover, but sees a stranger instead. A passerby sees her peering out and calls her action a "beautiful mistake."
T: Why does he call it a "beautiful mistake?"
(No response)
T: Is it a "beautiful mistake" from the male or female point of view?
St5: The female's.
T: Why do you say that?
St5: Because she has hope in her heart, even though she's disappointed again and again.
T: Does anyone else have a comment?
St3: It's the male's point of view.
T: Why do you say that?
St3: Because all of the action in the poem is from the male's point of view—he approaches the house, sees the woman, and makes the remark.
T: Can we interpret it this way? From the male narrator's point of view, love is just a fun game, so he narcissistically romanticizes the encounter into a "beautiful mistake." Because the "beautiful woman" is hopelessly waiting for her lover, from her point of view the mistake could hardly be considered "beautiful". Instead, it is a painful disappointment, and a reminder that her waiting is becoming meaningless. Do you have any other opinion or observations?
(silence)
T: The poem is an example of the male chauvinism inherent in traditional Chinese culture. But now we can look at it from other perspectives, and examine the place of the woman in the poem. Now let's return to the story, and compare the two male narrators' views of love. Why does the narrator of "The Candle" have a concubine?
St3: His consciousness represents the male-centered, selfish nature of the society. He is not committed to his marriage, and cares nothing for his wife's feelings. He gives her only material support, and goes about satisfying his desires with a younger woman.
T: What do you think our modern society's definition of love is?
St4: Communicating with each other, and caring for each other.
St6: I feel there must be honesty, communication, and equality. In the story and the poem, we can see that in the past there was no equality between men and women. But now there must be equality in our love relationships.

It is very clear that this is a T-S-T pattern of interaction. After the fourth week of successfully participating in student-led discussions, the class reverted to a teacher-centered style: the students had complained that they had trouble understanding the main theme of the story. After students gained a basic comprehension of the story, I chose to direct the course of the discussion in an attempt to lead the students to a deeper understanding of the texts. Again, the teacher-centered teaching style resulted in fewer students taking an active part in the discussion, and a reversion to the simple T-S-T pattern of communication. This supports the notion that a teacher-centered classroom inhibits active student participation in the discussion. The exact reasons for this phenomenon, after a period of active student involvement, probably are reflected in what was discussed earlier as typical behavior patterns for Taiwanese students: fear of challenging the teacher's authority, fear of answering incorrectly and being publicly embarrassed, and a sense that the teacher's knowledge is more valid than the students' by virtue of the teacher's years of training in the subject matter. When I asked if it was a beautiful mistake from the male or female point of view, student # 5 answered with two catchword, ("the female's"), that were complementary to the question. After student # 5 answered, I asked the other students if anyone had any comments, student # 3 answered it is the male's point of view. Again, I followed up the question. I agreed with student # 3's contribution and offered my own comments. The transcripts shows that we didn't go back to student # 5's
response to further explore the poem from "female point of view". It also indicates that I controlled the classroom situation and only focussed on the response that I already had in my mind.

In following sessions, however, the class returned to a more student-centered approach, and the T-S-T pattern disappeared. The average number of responses to each question increased, and this level of student activity was maintained for the remainder of the semester.

The following dialogue is from November 22 and reveals a change in the simple T-S-T pattern:

Q: Why doesn't Xinghua want her mother to know that she helped her brother?
St1: Because the mother has such high expectations for the brother, and she doesn't want her mother to be disappointed.
St2: She really didn't want to help him, because they both had begun to depend on her, so she didn't want her mother to know. But she had to help him--she couldn't say "no".
T: The shadow of the patriarchal society is everywhere, even on Xinghua herself. She may be a very capable woman, but even she can't escape the patriarchy. It's too big an obstruction to bypass. Her brother is like the father figure in the family, so she has to maintain his dignity, so she doesn't want her mother to find out.
St3: I think the most important thing is that she doesn't want them to get too dependent on her. If her mother finds out, then she'll expect Xinghua to be responsible for bailing him out every time. If her brother would at least try his best, then she wouldn't mind; but he slacks off, expecting her to fix things for him.
T: That's a good point.

The discussion above shows the pattern, StQ-St1-St2-T-St3-T. This level of involvement by students would seldom be found in Taiwan. After two students' contributions I offered my comments, then other students offered opinions which differed from mine. Students were more articulate in these exchanges than they had been during the T-S-T pattern. It is also important to
mention that seldom have my Taiwanese students followed up a teacher's comments with their own observations, particularly phrased so emphatically ("I think the important thing..."). I think this is an excellent example of the new pedagogy at work, changing the traditional, passive demeanor of the Taiwanese student. Looking back, however, I regret that I was so intent on praising the students. In reviewing the audio tapes, I began to wonder if perhaps my praise was often misinterpreted as a signal that the topic had been thoroughly discussed and we could move on to the next question listed on the board. Indeed, it often happened that the student leader would move on to the next question immediately after I praised the comment(s) as "good". This is a reaction that I will need to be aware of in my future teaching, and I may make a conscious effort to follow words of praise with an invitation for more comments (e.g., "That's good. Does anyone have anything else that they'd like to add?" or "An interesting point—how would the rest of you respond to what she just said?").

The following is an excerpt from December 13, when the class discussed a scene from the movie, "The Color Purple".

St1: Taiwan also has lesbians, this has been discovered. They feel inferior, and aren't willing to talk about it, not like lesbians here, who are even on TV.
T: What if, today, a relative or friend of yours told you she was a lesbian and asked you to help her organize a support group? How would you react to that?
St1: What do they want me to do? I am not a lesbian.
St2: I have a friend who is lesbian; she studies in another state. I want to say that I am straight. They have very painful lives. They know that people always are talking behind their backs. [Talking about gay man she knows].... They are very pitiful, they are afraid to tell their parents. Every time he talks to me, he cries. I don't know how to help him. Afterward that man's parents found out. The parents of the two lovers fought. [This was in Taiwan.] I think the
least guilty party was the parents. My feeling is that the fact that their being gay doesn't hurt me in any way. I should give them basic respect.

St3: If it was legalized [in Taiwan], does this mean that we support it? Because some people are not born homosexual, but later choose to become so. Even if it is a conscious choice, if we legalize it, would that be encouraging it?

St2: I think that no one would be willing to choose to change into a lesbian, although my friend said she did.

St4: I don't think this is supporting it, just give them space to be who they are, since they do exist. Their sexuality is their own business.

St1: But what if it was your brother or sister!?

St4: He is still your brother, whatever he is. I am definitely not encouraging him to be gay, but if he is going to be, I can't say no. This is a private matter.

This discussion is broad in outline and student-driven, with only occasional teacher intervention. This is the pattern I was seeking to achieve, since it involves students relating class material to personal experience, a hallmark of feminist pedagogy. It goes well beyond the simple T-S-T pattern that characterized the opening class exchanges in September. It exhibits neither sentence completion nor listing patterns, but is an extended follow-up, the pattern that characterizes an open discussion.

From week one to week fourteen, students were progressively more able to integrate the readings, their cultural background, and teacher/student experiences in the classroom in such a manner that they could bring all these factors to bear on the discussion. It was, on a few occasions, a rare opportunity for a teacher to observe students rising above their "cultural veil" (W.E.B. DuBois, 1903) and discussing issues in an objective, informed fashion.

Three five-minute excerpts were taken from each class session throughout the semester. The first sample was taken approximately ten minutes after the class began, the second from the middle of the class, and the third
approximately 15 minutes before the class ended. These samplings were studied to determine how much time the teacher spent speaking, compared to how much time the students spoke. The results, given below, show that, as the course progressed, the teacher spent progressively smaller increments of time speaking, while students' speech took up increasingly longer increments. This indicates that the students gradually changed from being passive listeners to active learners.

Table 3 Five Minutes Representative Samplings of Dialogue

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>(Ten Minutes After the Class Began)</th>
<th>(In the Middle of the Class)</th>
<th>(15 Minutes before the Class Ended)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>T</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/13</td>
<td>5 min.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4 min. 8 sec.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/20</td>
<td>5 min.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4 min. 20 sec.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/27</td>
<td>2 min. 18 sec.</td>
<td>2 min. 42 sec.</td>
<td>3 min. 2 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/13</td>
<td>2 min. 3 min.</td>
<td>2 min. 14 sec.</td>
<td>2 min. 46 sec.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/18</td>
<td>(film)</td>
<td>(film)</td>
<td>(film)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/25</td>
<td>51 sec.</td>
<td>4 min. 13 sec.</td>
<td>3 min. 1 min. 37 sec.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/8</td>
<td>3 min. 20 sec.</td>
<td>1 min. 40 sec.</td>
<td>4 min. 1 min.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/15</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5 min.</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/21</td>
<td>40 sec.</td>
<td>4 min. 23 sec.</td>
<td>4 min. 37 sec.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/22</td>
<td>1 min. 30 sec.</td>
<td>3 min. 30 sec.</td>
<td>1 min. 10 sec.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/29</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5 min. 13 sec.</td>
<td>1 min. 37 sec.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5 min.</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/13</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5 min.</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In addition to enhanced student participation in class discussions, a look at random samples of verbal exchanges taken from each class session reveals that the pattern of discourse was also changing. In the early weeks of the semester, a rather simple, straightforward T-S-T pattern emerged, with an utterance by the teacher followed by an utterance by one (or, occasionally, two students), and then another utterance by the teacher. The pattern then began again. As the semester progressed, this pattern shifted. After the first three classes, control of the class was given to a student leader/participant and this led to a shift in the dynamics of the class. Students were instructed to arrive for class prepared with one or two questions to raise with each other, so that students responded to each other rather than to the teacher.

The table below shows the number of questions and responses generated by teacher and students in random five-minute samplings taken from the audio tapes of each class session (excluding October 18, which was devoted to viewing a film, and December 6, which were reserved for student presentations). These figures were developed by dividing the number of student responses/comments in each five minute period by the number of explicit questions, these questions that were either teacher or student generated.

The table below provides some objective credence additional support for the conclusion of a changed pattern of discourse. Beginning in the middle of November, one can see that the number of teacher questions drops off to zero, while the number of student-generated questions reaches a consistent level, and the number of student responses remains rather steady. Also of this seems to indicate the students' assuming a more active role in the class. This is consistent with the prior finding that students spent increasingly more time
speaking in class as the semester went on. It also indicates that the shift at the third week from the teacher-as-lecture to teacher-as-facilitator successfully resulted in more active student participation.

Table 4 Weekly Frequency of Questions and Responses by Source

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Q.</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Q.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher R.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student R.</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>7*</td>
<td>8*</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silence</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Q. = Questions  R. = Response)

(*Although these figures appear to represent a significant decrease, in actuality these responses were considerable longer in duration than the others sampled.)

All of this data suggests that, although there is still plenty of room for refinement, the pedagogy was successful when used with a class of Taiwanese college students studying in America, and that further study of the implications of a feminist pedagogy are advisable. Some of these implications will be discussed in the chapter which follows.
CHAPTER 8

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Restatement of the Problem

The purpose of the dissertation study was to develop a pedagogy with which to teach feminist Chinese literature to female Taiwanese college students and then to examine what effect that pedagogy had upon the feminist consciousness of those students.

There were two research questions related to the main goals:
1. What elements constitute an effective pedagogy for teaching feminist Chinese literature at the college level to Taiwanese students?
2. How does studying feminist Chinese literature within the context of a course in question # 1 affect Taiwanese women students' feminist consciousness?

An action research model was applied to a college-level course in "Modern Chinese Feminist Literature" for Taiwanese students in the Asian Languages and Literatures Department at the University of Massachusetts, during the fall semester of 1993. The study employed planned instructional strategies to incorporate a feminist pedagogy guided by the ideologies of whole-language philosophy. The strategies were systematically submitted to observation, reflection, and modification.

The data collected in this study consists of several different components: student interviews, papers and journals, questionnaires, transcripts of classroom discussions, field notes, and research journals, containing observations and reflections on my decisions as a teacher/researcher.
Findings

This part of the chapter reviews the major findings from chapters four, five, six and seven and explores the issues inherent in these analyses of the two main research questions concerning pedagogy and feminist consciousness.

Pedagogy

This pedagogy differs from that of the traditional literature classroom in that it allowed the students to analyze their own performance in the classroom, through constant questioning and re-evaluation of the ideas expressed. The students' ability to express and defend or modify their ideas became as important as the development of the ideas themselves. In a sense, the class became a stage for their own thinking and discussions, and students' critical and expressive performance therefore became as important as the text itself. They became active participants rather than passive learners.

1.1 What motivates students to involve themselves in classroom discussion?

There were several factors which contributed to students' motivation to become participants in classroom discussion. According to the students, for instance, Ms. W and Ms. R (during informal conversation), the incorporation of class participation in figuring the course grade was one key factor. During interviews with Ms. S, and Ms. W, the topic of discussion was also a strong motivating factor when it was of particular interest to the students, or when it was made pertinent to their own lives and experiences. Other contributing
factors included the students' feelings of competence gained by praise and encouragement, as well as the feeling of confidence generated by prior successes. For example, Ms. D, Ms. H, Ms. W and Ms. Y said that when they felt a mastery of the subject matter, or, when they were called upon to be discussion leaders, they had enough confidence to lead the classroom discussion. Ms. W mentioned that students leading the discussion was a good idea, and that this would make them participate and feel more comfortable speaking.

1.2 How can a teacher involve students who might be reluctant to participate?

As demonstrated in my study, one way for the teacher to involve students who were reluctant to participate actively in class was to foster a sense of self-esteem and confidence in each individual. I attempted to develop this confidence through direct and indirect interaction with the students, such as showing respect for students and fostering a harmonious environment for discussion. I came to believe that each attempt at participation should be praised, and not only for the content, but equally important, for the student's willingness to try. Students stated that the teacher's response to the students' answers was very important. Ms. Y said the teacher's attitude made a deep impression on the students. When a student said something that was not to the point, if they heard "wrong" from a teacher they would not dare to say anything further. Thus, I realized that when an answer had a flaw, instead of simply pronouncing it wrong, I should instead prompt the student to think further by saying, for example, "With this in mind, how would you account for..." and then offer another idea. I also asked students for permission to share their
written work with the rest of the class, because some individuals were more articulate on paper than they were verbally. I also found that recognizing their best effort is another way to encourage their self-confidence, which benefited them both inside and outside the classroom.

Another student, Ms. C, said sometimes she was reluctant to participate because she had a dilemma about whether or not to contribute embarrassing personal information in the class. Although she wanted to contribute a pertinent personal anecdote to the discussion, it might be embarrassing to relate. Because of the societal mores, she did not feel that she could express her story in class. Thus, I found it is necessary for the teacher to create a classroom environment that allows students to feel safe enough to disclose potentially embarrassing personal anecdotes.

1.3 How can students' prior knowledge be ascertained and augmented in a classroom situation?

From my observation, a certain amount of students' prior knowledge was inferred from their cultural background. All but one of the students in this class were females who spent their early years in Taiwan, so it could be assumed that they shared certain linguistic, educational and social experiences. In this study, their prior knowledge was assessed on a more personal level through pre-course interviews, student interviews conducted at the outset of class, journal entries, reaction papers, and in classroom expression.

Prior knowledge was built upon through the sharing of experiences, either in classroom discussions or by reading (with the author's permission) anonymous journal entries or response papers by their peers. Even though the class had certain cultural experiences in common, individual experiences and
responses varied from person to person. Based on students' opinions in the interviews, I found knowledge was expanded through probing and open-ended questions, which prompted the students to investigate cultural assumptions which they had previously taken for granted, because the assumptions were part of the cultural norm.

1.4 How will students with a history of passivity in learning react to open-ended questions?

The data showed that the students often were not aware of their abilities to analyze literary works. From this class experience, I realized that it is the teacher's responsibility to guide the students to the path of discovery and self-confidence, away from reliance on the teacher's "correct" interpretations. It was only after much encouragement and repeated attempts to exercise their intellects through the medium of open-ended questions that they came to appreciate their own abilities. For example, Ms. D said that she had never questioned why events happened, what the causes and reasons were. She said that she took everything for granted, but now she started to question how and why things happened.

1.5 How do students adjust when the teacher goes from the expected role of "omniscient imparter of knowledge" to that of a facilitator?

When the students first came to the class, they didn't know how to analyze texts or ask questions. By the end of the third week of class, they had grasped the rudiments of how to ask questions to gain a deeper understanding of the texts they confronted. Students gradually realized that the analysis of the texts is not nearly as important as the development of the awareness of their
own individual abilities to do analysis. As this awareness grew, the classroom
dynamic began to change: Dialogues replaced lectures and multiple
interpretations were compared, explored, discarded or modified. Students who
were initially reluctant or shy about speaking out gained confidence and began
to take risks. The transformation of the teacher from authority figure to
facilitator occurred as a natural result of the change in the students.

1.6 Will critical/creative thinking result from a class where students are
expected to be active participants in the learning process?

As described in Chapter 6, the students in my classroom experienced
frequent inner conflicts in their beliefs and interpretations. As a result of these
conflicts, students were challenged constantly to reexamine and modify their
individual intellectual schemata. This critical/creative thinking was beneficial
because, as each student expanded her individual understanding, she shared
what she had learned with her classmates. Other classmates, in turn, struggled
to integrate the new interpretation they had received with their own existing
knowledge.

1.7 How do students respond to the approach of teaching feminist literature
in the context of culture?

In the post-class interviews, students all responded enthusiastically to the
pedagogy employed in the course. They reported that it allowed them to think
about literature and culture in new and fruitful ways, and it encouraged their
critical thinking. For example, Ms. S had previously depended on authority to
hand down the "right answers" to her. Gradually, she became more aware of a
diversity of opinions and a multiplicity of perspectives. She also said that
women's roles and their status are defined by culture, so one needs to explore women's issues from a cultural perspective. Ms. Y said that she liked the way that the teacher was a facilitator in conducting the class, rather than a direct lecturer. She also said that the class helped her to think about how aspects of the culture developed, what the elements of the culture are, and what problems those elements cause in society.

Feminist Consciousness

2.1 How can the feminist consciousness of female Chinese students be assessed?

An effective way to assess the feminist consciousness of Chinese women students would be a thorough review of their lives, attitudes, and goals, in order to see what role feminism plays. However, due to the constraints of this study, my access to the students' personal lives was limited to what they chose to relate about themselves in interviews, written assignments, class discussions, and observable class conduct. Additional sources of information about the students' feminist consciousness were the charts that the students drew, diagramming the issues relevant to feminism and the relationships between them. Some diagrams were complex and afforded useful insights into student ideas about feminism. Others, however, were simple and not of much use in determining the students' level of consciousness.
2.2 How do the three sources of cultural understanding; personal, mutual, and institutional, operate in the context of a course on feminist literature? To what extent and in what ways do they affect each other?

In this study, I attempted to develop a pedagogy to teach Chinese feminist literature using a cultural perspective and also to see whether the pedagogy was effective in changing students' beliefs about their culture. The first step in the process was to assist students in gaining an understanding of culture as it is presented in literature. This was done through observation of cultural phenomena and the development of initial, subjective interpretations of the nature and causes of those phenomena. For the most part, their initial understanding was unreflective and heavily influenced by standard, institutional understanding. Gradually each individual then began to examine the reliability of their beliefs in the light of their investigation of the deeper issues through class discussion promoting mutual understanding. Sometimes the teacher provided an "institutional interpretation" from historical documents, which, when combined with the investigation of several "personal understandings," allowed students to develop a clearer and deeper understanding of cultural phenomena.

From my observations, the three sources of understanding; personal, mutual, and institutional, affected each other. The students' institutional understanding governed their mutual understanding and backed up their personal understanding. As well, mutual and personal levels of understanding influenced each other. Through communication and discussion, one individual considered another's opinion and modified it to some extent to suit her or his own thinking.
2.3 Do the students' beliefs about feminism change as a result of their increased awareness of their own cultural backgrounds?

Many students came to the class with only a vague understanding of feminist concepts. Although they believed that equality between the sexes is important, many oppressive practices were and still are part of their culture and, consequently, were neither examined nor questioned closely. Through class discussion, individual students began to acknowledge the unreasonableness of certain parts of the culture, one of these being, the inequality in the status of men and women. Through the pre-class interviews, it became clear that they recognized inequality, but did not recognize its root causes, because inequality was so much a part of their ingrained cultural experience. Discussions and essays gave them an understanding of some of the culturally embedded causes of this inequality. Most of the students came to acknowledge the need for a societal change in the roles of men and women, although some were more optimistic about the possibility of this change than others.

At the outset of the class, questionnaires were employed to assess the students' beliefs at the outset of class, regarding divorce, sexual relations, and the dilemma of a career outside the home. The majority of the class proved to be strongly conservative. They expressed considerable conflict over the desire to have a career and a family; they opposed divorce; and they stressed the need to be obedient, even though their parents' wishes often conflicted with their own. Although some students said that sexual relations are a private matter, most of them would not admit to premarital sex, and many of them opposed lesbianism. In the post-class interviews, some of these questions were posed again. Although there were some changes in a few individuals' responses to particular issues, their opinions were largely unchanged. From this it could be
inferred that their beliefs were also basically unchanged. However, this does not mean that the pedagogy was a lacking. A wholesale reversal of beliefs was not expected, and the fact remains that the students were confronted with challenging perspectives on delicate issues and exposed to the root causes of their cultural beliefs. The students had to consider, discuss and assimilate these ideas into their own personal schemata. Their beliefs were largely unchanged, but new thoughts were planted. One 15-week course would be unlikely to counter 20 years of cultural influences, but, from the comments made and questions raised, the students did become aware of new ideas, and those became a catalyst for thought.

2.4 How are inner conflicts in beliefs addressed or resolved?

Most students experienced some degree of conflict in trying to reconcile their feminist consciousness with their own individual lives. Some students, like Ms. W, believed that family and career should be of equal importance, but had no concept how they would resolve the conflict themselves. Another source of conflict resulted from generation gaps. The most common student response to this conflict was to accept tradition and simply yield to the wishes of the older generation. The third type of conflict arose when students considered their future return to Taiwan after the relative freedom and openness of American society. Having adjusted from a rigidly structured, highly conservative culture to a more liberal, permissive culture, could they readjust to their native culture? Or would they endeavor to change that society to meet their own personal needs? Would they be unable to readjust and become outsiders in their own homeland? All of these issues were clearly a serious source of conflict, and many remained unanswered.
2.5 Are there issues which female students from Taiwan may be less likely to discuss openly in class?

With one exception, the students felt there were no issues that students reported that they were unwilling to discuss openly in class. Ms. W though, noted that at one point in the semester, she wanted to bring up the issue of women's sexual desire, but felt too shy to do so. In retrospect, this is a cultural response that is not unique to Chinese culture. The presence of a male student in the class further complicated her reluctance to discuss such personal and intimate issues. Even if the issue had been raised directly in class, it is questionable whether any of the students would have been willing to contribute to the discussion. This was, however, the only reported instance of students feeling reluctant to bring up a topic about which they were curious.

**Discussion--Significance of the Study**

Although this pedagogy was conceived to meet the specific needs of students from the Taiwanese higher education system, it was implemented in an American university classroom, where all but one of the students were Taiwanese women. This was done for very practical reasons, but the American setting also reduced the restrictions which might arise if the pedagogy were transferred to the setting for which it was originally intended: a college literature class in Taiwan.

Higher education has always been valued in Taiwan for its own sake; Chinese culture traditionally has esteemed cultivated and educated people. In addition, as Taiwan has become a major international, industrial power,
technical education has become increasingly important, and so the function of Taiwan's universities has become the production of highly qualified, capable people to maintain the society's industrial and commercial competitiveness in the world market.

The traditional Taiwanese educational system, however, is one that fosters blind repetition of facts, rather than critical/creative thought. As a result, students become imitators rather than innovators, which handicaps the nation's ability to create marketable new products. The educational system must change if it is to breed a new type of Taiwanese intellectual: One who is equipped to lead, rather than follow; to develop rather than to merely manufacture; and to be a leader in a chosen field, rather than one of the pack. At present, when Taiwanese students graduate from college, they have been trained only to absorb a discipline and to blindly follow precedent; they have been discouraged from exercising their imaginations and critical faculties. Naturally, Taiwanese students bring these same habits into the workplace, and the result is a dearth of creative ideas and the rampant theft of other nations' intellectual property rights, especially in computer software and compact disc technology.

In the past, graduate students in Taiwan were encouraged to go abroad to take advantage of other country's superior educational systems. Now, however, students of all ages commonly enroll in foreign school systems, Ms. S, Ms. R, and Ms. H, for example, all have studied in American secondary schools. This diaspora of Taiwanese young people only underscores the tremendous need for educational reform within Taiwan.

Much media attention recently has been focussed on the shortcomings of the Taiwanese educational system. As a result, officials in the Ministry of Education have begun reform efforts, such as reducing the importance of the
National Entrance Examination. Some attempts at reform are already underway. Two private elementary schools have opened, which incorporate elements of western-style teaching methods. The names of the two schools, "The Forest School," and "Caterpillar," are intended to convey the "new" philosophies they practice. The first school name indicates that, instead of the narrow-tracked method of traditional schooling, the Forest School employs a more natural, dynamic pedagogy. The Caterpillar School name was selected because its students will emerge someday as fully realized individuals, as butterflies, who need individual nurturing. The large number of applicants to these two schools have resulted in a glut of media coverage and prompted a widespread debate of the need for national educational reform.

The need for reform was also recognized recently at the university level. In the past, university presidents were always appointed by the Ministry of Education and were essentially instruments of the government; now many universities, including the most prestigious university in the country, have elected their own presidents. Also, many universities now have student senates. These new elements contribute toward democratizing the universities, transforming them into environments in which students as well as faculty can contribute, not only at the administrative level but it is hoped in the future at the classroom level as well.

Currently, most professors are content to follow traditional methods, because they have little experience of anything else. If change is to occur, professors must eschew traditional methods, a change that probably will have to be adopted as a result of exposure to those who have experience with more effective pedagogies. This is why I chose to come to America to do my doctoral study.
To be an effective agent of change in Taiwan's educational system, though, it is necessary to behave in ways appropriate to the society. It would be counterproductive to adopt a confrontational stance or to become a kind of intellectual guerrilla soldier, as this would create too much resistance among the majority of traditional educators. For example, attempts to introduce radical changes into the educational system, such as eliminating the National Entrance Examination, have met with fierce opposition and served only to cause heated debates that produced no results. To demand that the standard pedagogy be radically altered would be similarly fruitless.

However it is to be accomplished, change is nevertheless necessary. As I perfect this pedagogy in my university classes in Taiwan, I plan to present my ideas to my colleagues through conferences and journals, and to begin to spread the seeds of a reformed pedagogy throughout the country. I am not, of course, alone in seeking this reform in the R. O. C., so I plan to make myself join the network of similar-minded teachers so that I can contribute what I have learned.

There are certain practical changes that I will make in my own classes immediately upon my return to Tunghai University. At first in lower-level courses, I will continue to employ a teacher-centered pedagogy. But, as the semester progresses, I shall open up the format, and encourage students' participation through direct questions and group discussions. In the higher-level classes I shall follow the same pattern, but, as the students are more advanced, I expect that change will occur more quickly and easily.

These changes in my own classroom habits, i.e. lecturing to the students, not encouraging them to think for themselves, etc., will be relatively easy to implement, since I am motivated to do so. Students' habits, by contrast, will be much more difficult to alter, since they are accustomed to a system that places
few demands upon their capacity for imaginative, critical thought. This will be especially true for university students who have worked very hard to get to college and who, typically, view their university years as a time to reflect and focus on social pursuits. Getting them to take an active responsibility for their further intellectual development and break the habit of laziness will not be easy.

Feminist issues will be even more difficult to incorporate into the Taiwanese University system. Indeed, Lu Xiu-Lian's book, New Feminism, had a very difficult time being accepted by the government for copyright. According to the preface, the book did not get past Taiwan's censorship division of the Ministry of the Interior when it first was submitted for publication in 1977. It was denied a copyright because, the government said, "this book discusses feminist issues, but its views are too extreme. It points at the mulberry but abuses the locust -- that is, it makes oblique accusations in stating its case. The ideas contained in this book are inappropriate. For example, the author points out that traditional Chinese women suffered from abuses inflicted on their feet (footbinding), their sexuality (imposed chastity) and their minds (the idea of female obedience and subservience) by the culture and that the masculine sense of superiority came at the expense of the women's development" (Lu Xiu-Lian, 1990, P. 11, 4th ed.). The author resubmitted the book for a copyright and was turned down several times before finally winning acceptance.

Times have changed. Feminist literature has spread everywhere in Taiwan. The book, New Feminism, is in its fourth edition. There are also many popular books dealing with the subject of "feminism." In addition, university campuses today are more liberal in their approaches to educating women. Recently, I interviewed two professors, one is just returned from a
two-year exchange program, the other a woman visiting scholar from Tunghai University, my own University. Both of them report that Taiwanese college students, including Tunghai University's women students, have formed Female Student Organizations, which are becoming quite active in demanding female rights and courses dealing with feminism.

Although this information indicates that feminism is no longer viewed as an unorthodox opinion, there are still discouraging signs. In my experience teaching Taiwanese students in the United States, feminist literature courses have attracted only female students -- males are conspicuously absent. Expectations for women students on graduation are still traditional. This may be because male students do not see a particular need to learn about "women's" issues, or else they fear that the class may become a place where female students blame them for a long history of discrimination and oppression. Either way, it is unfortunate, because the first step in remedying inequality is to become aware of it. This awareness can be achieved by teaching feminist literature through a cultural perspective. The feminist pedagogy itself assumes that readers will bring their own experiences to the act of interpretation, a personal interaction with the material that is discouraged by the traditional Taiwanese teaching approach. On the other hand, the presence of one gender in the classroom may discourage the other from sharing their personal experiences, and thwart a key element of the pedagogy.

It is unlikely that my course in feminist issues will be able to reverse the age-old tide of conservatism and oppression. It is also unlikely that it will change many beliefs outright. But the class should raise both questions and awareness in the minds of its participants, and that is the first step toward change.
However, the pedagogy employed in the United States would need to be modified before it could be transplanted to Taiwan's college classrooms. There would have to be accommodations, because the students I taught in this study were already inclined to be more accepting of a western-style feminist pedagogy by virtue of being students in the United States. Because so few male students elected to take my class, I redesigned it with female students in mind. So, if it were to be given to both male and female students, it would again have to be modified to make it more acceptable to male students and adapted so that both male and female voices are heard.

In addition, the success of introducing the new feminist pedagogy may rest largely on semantics. Because of patriarchal conservatism in Taiwan, the word "feminist" is often equated with "radical," "militancy" or "anti-male." In order to make the pedagogy seem more culturally appealing, it may be necessary to employ some other word than "feminist" when translating it. We need to come up with a less loaded term than "feminist," a suggestion would be "humanist" even though the pedagogy itself would remain basically unchanged.

**Recommendations for Future Studies**

Based on this study, the following 4 items deserve further study: (1) Applicability of the pedagogy in a different setting; (2) making sense of new knowledge; (3) mutual respect; (4) effect of teacher praise.

(1) Applicability of the pedagogy in a different setting
The most obvious test of the pedagogy's practical applications will be to use it in the setting which I had in mind when I developed the pedagogy: a Taiwanese literature class. Will the pedagogy evolve differently when it is applied to a group of students who have no prior experience with western-style culture or classrooms? Will living and learning within the conservative culture that is being studied narrow the students' perspective? And how will a feminist pedagogy work in a class that is not predominantly female, as the one used in this study was? It may be difficult to find out, if male students persist in avoiding feminist courses.

(2) Making sense of new knowledge

With regard to constructing new knowledge, Maher (1990) urges educators to establish a learning context where students can consciously compare their personal theories and experiences with one another and with the texts, and thereby construct new knowledge. Further research needs to be done on how people make sense of the newly constructed knowledge in interactive classroom environments. For example, how do male Taiwanese college students, in the context of a co-ed classroom discussion, come to terms with information about the institutionalized oppression of women.

(3) Mutual respect

Mutual respect in the classroom is also a significant issue. DeVito (1986) notes that teaching and learning involve the development of relationships as well as critical thinking skills. Further research needs to be focused on how teachers and students signal acceptance of one another's ideas and their feelings. I believe that there needs to be a certain measure of mutual respect in the
classroom before any truly meaningful exchange can take place. Research might be done to discover how respect can be measured and fostered in the classroom, and how that respect influences the classroom proceedings.

(4) Effect of teacher praise

Another aspect of teacher-student exchanges that deserves further examination is the effect of teacher praise in a college level literature classroom. Often, when I have praised students contributions to a discussion, I have noticed that doing so seemed to bring the discussion to a halt. Does teacher praise in fact interfere with the flow of conversation? Is it interpreted by the students as a sign that the topic has been thoroughly addressed, and if so, how might the teacher go about encouraging student participation and self-esteem without instances of direct verbal praise in the classroom? These are all questions which bear addressing.

Conclusion

In this study, I noted a number of key observations among students that can have important implications for pedagogical development:

1. Students became less dependent on the teacher.
2. Students became more responsive over time to classroom discussion and interaction as a method for learning.
3. For students, the topic of discussion is a strong motivating factor; there is the motivation of pride as well.
4. The teacher's attention to student self-esteem and confidence had a significant impact. Student participation was enhanced indirectly by showing respect for them as individuals and for their ideas; and directly by praising their participation in class and by grading them for class participation.

5. Prior knowledge can be built upon through the sharing of experiences. Through discussion, one individual can consider another's opinion and modify it to some extent to suit her/his own thinking.

6. Students' beliefs did not change radically but they became more receptive to ideas.

7. Students were influenced by feminist pedagogy. Discussions were an important tool in helping students achieve/develop an understanding of some of the culturally-embedded causes of gender inequality. They acknowledged the need for societal change in the roles of men and women.

8. Students experienced some degree of conflict in trying to reconcile their feminist consciousness with their own individual lives.

The pedagogical guidelines drawn from this study can have special application to the teaching of literature in Taiwan. As discussed in the previous section, the potential applications of the pedagogy created in this study are particularly timely in light of the current swing toward less authoritarian teaching in Taiwan's universities. Already, new, more liberal teaching methods are entering what had been a very traditional system. I hope that this study can serve to further open up the system and make it more receptive to modern pedagogy. One fact that may foster liberalization is that university administrators typically exert a small influence over professors' teaching styles, thus teachers have relative freedom to adopt new approaches. Previously, professors realized the need for pedagogical change but were largely unable to
develop new solutions. New ideas are now being introduced and gaining acceptance. However, I believe this liberalization will likely be gradual, since students need to adjust from a teacher-centered pedagogy to a student-centered one.

With regard to feminism and the general liberalization of society, the lifting of martial law in Taiwan in 1987 has had a dramatic impact. Ideas surrounding the changing role of women have steadily gained increasing acceptance. If progressive societal change is to continue, it is my belief that feminist perspectives must be incorporated into all aspects of academia. To establish courses in Women's Studies has been a positive step, but as long as participation in these courses remains optional, and women the main audience, these courses are essentially preaching to the already converted. As a literature teacher, I believe that women's literature must be incorporated into survey courses in Chinese literature, and that a feminist perspective should generally be incorporated into other courses as well. In this way, we can plant the seeds for a more widespread, deeper interest in feminist studies.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


