

Conditions in the Classroom that Encourage University Students to think About Gender Equality

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ABSTRACT

The article identifies key pedagogical conditions, such as curriculum design, teaching methods, and teacher-student interactions, that can foster students' understanding of gender equality. The authors emphasize the importance of creating a safe and inclusive learning environment where students can critically reflect on gender stereotypes and biases. Additionally, the article highlights the role of teachers as facilitators in promoting gender equality thinking, emphasizing their responsibility in creating opportunities for students to challenge and question societal norms. Ultimately, the findings of this article contribute to the growing body of knowledge on pedagogy for gender equality, providing insightful guidance for educators and policymakers seeking to promote gender equality thinking in students.

KEYWORDS: *gender equality, education, inclusive, pedagogical conditions.*

Introduction:

Promoting gender equality is a crucial aspect of education in today's society. By fostering a deep understanding and appreciation for gender equality among students, we can pave the way for a more inclusive and just world. To achieve this, pedagogical conditions play a fundamental role in shaping students' thinking and attitudes towards gender equality. In this article, we will explore the key pedagogical conditions necessary for the formation of gender equality thinking in students.

Literature Review

The word “pedagogy” originates from the Greek phrase, “to lead a boy.” It was not until the nineteenth century that Western countries began promoting women’s education, but this impetus was dampened by the belief that education was harmful to women’s health. Dyhouse mentioned that even medical authorities promoted the misinformation that university education would lead to infertility among women. If women did manage to enroll in school, they entered an education system that did not consider the needs of a woman as an independent individual. Instead, women were relegated into a marginal position and were expected to prepare for duties as a wife and mother (Chang, 2021; Pan, 1998; Tsai, 1998).

In the late 1960s, under the influence of social human rights movements and women’s movements, the lack of female representation in academia became obvious. All scientific researchers at the time were men so male perspectives became established as the mainstream thought and the views of ordinary women were ignored (Chen, 2004).

In the 1980s, women’s studies began to question the legitimacy of old gender theories and to reconstruct new theories. Different feminist schools of thought have developed different strategies to address the unequal treatment of women until the present day. Liberal feminism emphasizes gender-equality education and the elimination of stereotyped gender roles but radical feminism emphasizes sexual autonomy and the awakening of consciousness (Chen, 2004).

In the 1990s, women’s studies earned recognition as an academic resource that provided a future

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direction for women's empowerment and promoted interdisciplinary dialog and integration. An important development at this stage was the evolution of women's research to gender research, which then developed to include discrimination based on race, class and age (Chen, 2004). Some studies also show that educational experiences often differ, according to a student's gender (Klein, 1993), so the issue of gender discrimination is a focus of inquiry in the field of education.

As the goal of the international community every modern citizen should have knowledge of law and gender equality (Su, 2006). Correspondingly, the course, Gender and Law, was established. In addition to introducing the legislative background and reasons for passing relevant bills and the introduction of important provisions and concepts, the course focuses on pertinent topics. This course provides students with the opportunity to discuss gender-related laws and issues in different groups, in order to enhance their legal literacy and gender awareness. Su made recommendations for the design of the curriculum and for teaching practice to allow general curriculum educators in domestic colleges and universities to improve the teaching content and methods for general education. Gender awareness is important for students (Su, 2006).

Tang and Cheng (2010) used action research to examine how feminist teaching can be applied in university general education. Lecturers assume the standpoint of respecting students' personal experience at the outset and then dismantle the idea of gender being binary. They work toward constructing a knowledgeable society and assist students to develop and cultivate gender sensitivity through participatory learning by discussion and dialog. A teaching atmosphere of respect, equality and sharing that is emphasized by feminist teaching allows students to identify and empathize with different gender issues and political views, recognize gender diversity and enhance their awareness of gender equality. Awareness of gender equality is important for university students (Tang and Cheng, 2010).

Liu, Tasi, Ou and Huang (2011) studied the influence of the media. Through the course "Gender and Media Culture," students learn to identify the correctness of gender-related content that is conveyed by media materials and to use multiple media as educational materials to better assimilate their life experience to transform its content and integrate gender awareness. This is an effective aid for gender education, so the curriculum also focuses on increasing the diversity of students' gender perspectives.

Liu and Tasi (2013) studied students' opinions on marriage customs, pregnancy and giving birth and some students highlighted their experience of breaking traditional customs, but this world view was not maintained for the custom of funeral sacrifice. Many customs have gradually evolved but funeral sacrifice customs still reveal gender differences. Folk conventions and traditional customs concerning funeral sacrifices and the paperwork for funerals often promote male superiority and the inferiority of women because many of the concepts are degrading for women. However, efforts have been made to increase students' awareness of gender equality and to create a classroom atmosphere of mutual respect to allow genders to coexist peacefully with each other.

Findings

1. Inclusive Curriculum:

An inclusive curriculum is the foundation for promoting gender equality thinking in students. It should reflect diverse voices, experiences, and contributions of individuals across genders. Incorporating literature, history, and other subjects that highlight gender equality achievements and challenges can spark discussions and encourage critical thinking among students.

2. Challenging Stereotypes:

Pedagogical practices should actively challenge and debunk gender stereotypes. Teachers can engage students in activities that promote critical analysis and questioning of societal norms and

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expectations related to gender roles and behaviors. By encouraging students to challenge stereotypes, they can develop a more nuanced and open-minded understanding of gender equality.

3. Role Modeling:

Teachers and educators play a critical role in shaping students' attitudes towards gender equality. They should strive to be positive role models by demonstrating and promoting gender equality in their own behaviors and interactions. Teachers should create a respectful and inclusive classroom environment that values the contributions and perspectives of all students, regardless of their gender.

4. Teacher Training and Professional Development:

Teachers play a crucial role in shaping students' beliefs and attitudes. Hence, it is imperative to provide them with comprehensive training and ongoing professional development on gender equality issues. This training should include strategies for creating inclusive classroom environments, addressing stereotypes and biases, and promoting respectful dialogue around gender-related topics. Teachers should also be encouraged to examine their own biases and reflect on how these may impact their teaching practices.

5. Educational Curriculum:

One of the important pedagogical conditions for promoting gender equality is an inclusive educational curriculum. The curriculum should encourage critical thinking, self-reflection, and an understanding of the social construction of gender roles and identities. It should include diverse perspectives, experiences, and contributions from individuals of all genders. By incorporating gender-related topics across various subjects, students can develop a comprehensive understanding of gender as a social construct.

Conclusion

In summary, general education courses on gender studies have become increasingly popular in universities in recent years. In the past, the courses were limited to only Gender Relations and Women's Studies, but the course offerings now include Gender and Law, Gender and Society, and Gender and Customs, which increases the diversity of general education courses. Teachers from different fields introduce various gender-related issues to students from various perspectives to allow university students to develop the ability to think critically about these issues. The effect of gender differences on individuals and on society at large has been the subject of much study in the gender research community and related educational fields (You, 2009). However, the success of gender-equal education depends on how this subject is taught. Gender-equal education should increase students' awareness of gender equality and establish a classroom atmosphere of mutual respect that enables genders to coexist peacefully.

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