

Gender-free education in Japan:
Postmodern feminist approaches to knowledge construction in classrooms

by

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Abstract

This research examine how an ongoing educational challenge in Japan for removing gender inequality from the hidden curriculum, called “gender-free education”, has brought confusion to Japanese societies and the learning environments. Although female teachers’ are struggling for creating gender equalities in the classrooms through gender-free curriculum, their practices have supported producing male normalized context, since gender equality in the classrooms is still represented as the sameness and fairness of boys and girls. This study illustrates that gender-only and gender binary conceptions of equality achievement are easily recuperated into dualistic hierarchical discourse, and consistently conceal how the self and others are positioned multiply privileged and oppressed. Creating gender-sensitive perspectives based on experimental curriculum, which requires questioning our positionalities and internalized gender biases is considered.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

This research focuses on gender bias free education in Japan, particularly as it relates to gender discrimination in the hidden curriculum, and the struggle of teachers trying to deal with gender issues in the school system. “Gender-free education” can be taken as a Japanese translation of gender bias free education. I became interested in the issue around gender-free education when I was working as an assistant in swimming classes in a public elementary school in Japan in summer 2006. I noticed some kinds of different school practices which did not exist when I was in an elementary school in the beginning of the 1990s. For example, although schools used to use gender separated rosters (class lists), they are using gender mixed rosters at present. Boys used to line up first, and their names were called before girls’ names in many situations such as graduation ceremonies. Now boys and girls are mixed when they line up. Also, in the past, girls needed to have red or pink school bags, as opposed to boys who needed to have black or blue school bags, now there are more color choices and no regulations for girls to chose red or pink.

When I encountered those changes, I had strange feelings probably because I got used to the conventional school practices, and it was more natural for me that boys’ names come before girls’ names in class lists. Then I was surprised to realize how my gender has been constructed through school curricula including the hidden curriculum and how students easily accept or at least adapt to the changes. This clearly indicates how our gender identity-development is affected by formal educational systems. However, since gender ideologies are socially constructed, they can be re-constructed or eliminated. This experience made me decide to do research gender-free education in Japan.

It can be said that the central purpose of gender-free education is to remove gender inequality in the “hidden curriculum” (Matsumoto & Kanai, 2004, p.191). According to Fujimura-Fanselow and Kameda (1994), there has been a growth in female educational participation and several changes in the formal curriculum over the past 50 years. For example, home economics had been made a mandatory subject for girls only, but it has been made a required subject for both girls and boys from 1994 (Fujimura-Fanselow & Kameda, 1994, p.54-55). However, behind the formal curriculum, the authors see the hidden curriculum which creates sexism and gender stereotyping in classroom practices and school rituals:

A close look at various practices that go on in the daily life of the school or classroom also reveals a common and almost universal tendency to place priority on males. These practices are not something that are set by any institutional regulation but are rather done as a matter of custom. Repeated over and over again in the course of daily school life, however, these customary practices, which make up the hidden curriculum, often function to reinforce certain attitudes and assumptions about the sexes and their respective positions and roles in society. (Fujimura-Fanselow & Kameda, 1995, p.55)

Generally gender inequality or gender issues in classrooms are invisible. Ito (2003) states that “sexual discrimination in educational fields is more difficult to be recognized than that in other fields such as in the working place or home. People tend to believe that the school is a place which provides gender and sexual equalities” (Ito, 2003, p.214). Apple, Nagao and Ikeda (1993) say, however, education is fundamentally political (Apple, Nagao & Ikeda, 1993, p.7). Although there is a myth that schools are gender egalitarian places, the hidden curriculum conveys unrealized gender inequality. Love (1993) emphasizes girls’ invisibility, linguistic bias, imbalance rates of males and females in text books and illustrations in elementary and secondary schools. For instance, boys are usually portrayed actively while girls are shown to be “watching and waiting” in textbooks (Love,

1993, p.3). As well, Fujimura-Fanselow and Kameda (1994), in an analysis of textbooks used in elementary schools and lower secondary schools, revealed that the majority of figures and main characters who appeared in the Japanese language arts textbooks were male. In addition, the overwhelming majority of the textbook authors were male (Fujimura-Fanselow & Kameda, 1994, p.53).

Since the Basic Law for Gender Equality was established in Japan in 1999, there has been an increase in discussion of gender-free education and elimination of sexism in the hidden curriculum. However, there is a lack of information because the topic is relatively new in Japan. One of the issues is ambiguity of definitions of “gender” and “gender-free” that has confused teachers’ recognition of the term gender and their practices of gender-free education. According to Kameda (1995), recently many teachers themselves have begun to call into question sexism and gender stereotyping found in textbooks and other teaching materials and are seeking changes. Many other teachers however, are not aware of these issues, due in part to the fact that no attention is paid to gender issues in the training of teachers (Kameda, 1995. p.113). Another issue I focus on is how the ambiguous meaning of “gender-free” prevents teachers from paying attention to gender differences and forces them to see all students as the “same.” As opposed to teachers’ willingness for creating learning environments where diverse individual knowledge is produced, the policies for gender-free education represented by local governments are simply liable to remove male prioritized ideologies from the hidden curriculum as wrong concepts, without giving students opportunities to think critically about gender and surrounding issues.

The central purpose of this research project is to examine public secondary school teachers' practices in creating nonsexist classrooms, particularly in relation to their knowledge of dealing with gender bias in education, and to explore the complexity of ideological representations of gender in the hidden curricula. In order to propose some practical recommendations for local secondary schools, I listened to teachers' experiences and needs. As a feminist researcher, I bring feminist theoretical viewpoints into the analysis of the structure of gender-free education in Japan. My research questions are: 1) How do teachers understand the term "gender" and "gender-free"? How do the teachers' representations of 'gender' reflect cultural aspects in the Japanese education system? ; 2) How are their curricula formed and how do they put the curricula into practice? What do they need in order to have classrooms where various individual voices are respected? ; 3) How do teachers' gender sensitive perspective coexist with internalized gender blindness?

Using a feminist postmodern theory as a lens, which sees language and public discourse as important sites of knowledge production, this thesis analyzes the work of teachers in secondary schools who have been challenging gender-free curriculum. The findings of this study are useful for all teachers who want to incorporate gender-free education in their pedagogy and curriculum. This research contributes to our understanding of the teachers' needs in their ongoing challenge for gender-free education. Participants in my research are three female teachers in public junior high schools in Japan involved in gender-free education in their curriculum.

In the next chapter, we will see a historical shift in the development of education for gender equality in Japan, and also we will close take a look at ongoing discussion around the issue of gender-free education.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

A historical review of education in Japan

Examining gender education from a historical perspective is crucial to understanding the current ideas and social convictions about gender-free education. An interesting historical shift can be seen in the development of education for girls and women after the Second World War. According to Morley (1999), under the American Occupation (1945-52), the Japanese educational system was reformed and fundamentally changed as a result of removing ethnocentrism and militarism from the curriculum (Morley, 1999, p.57). Female education in Japan prior to the end of the Second World War can be characterized as gender segregated, gender stereotyped, inferior, and less valued compared to that of males. However, under the influence of the U.S. Education Mission, equality of educational opportunity was guaranteed in several provisions in the new Japanese Constitution enacted in 1946, and the Fundamental Law of Education was established in 1947 (Hara, 1995, p.103). The Fundamental Law of Education set forth in more detail the aims and principles of education in accordance with the spirit of the Constitution and provided for nine years of free, compulsory education for both boys and girls; coeducation, which was formerly limited to the elementary school, was recognized by law and extended to all levels (Hara, 1995, p.103). After this, the educational level of women improved rapidly. Since 1969, the percentage of girls entering upper secondary school (grade 10 to 12) has exceeded that of male students. Hara (1995) notes that, within a mere twenty-five-year period, the percentage of girls entering upper secondary school doubled, from 47.4 percent in 1955 to 95 percent in 1979 (Hara, 1995, p.104).

Hara points out, however, there are several impediments to the realization of full gender equality after the educational reforms. From 1950s to 1970s, the idea of different curriculum for boys and girls became visible and justified in public beyond the influence of the U.S. Education Mission (Hounoki, 1996, p.65). For example, based on the guidelines for teachers, technologies became a required course only for boys in 1958 (Hashimoto & Henmi, 2003, p.258). In the 1960s, the gender-segregated curricula even became a part of educational politics. The Ministry of Education proposed, “Education should be formed suitable for special aptitudes and abilities of male and female” in 1969. As a result, specific textbooks were written separately for boys and girls, and also general home economics was made a required subject for female students only (Hara, 1995, p.104). Hounoki says,

The idea of separated educational curriculum for male students and female students was derived from traditional educational philosophy in the pre-war era that there is a natural difference between boys and girls so that education should correspond to such biological/sexual differences. (Hounoki, 1996, p.65)

It can be said that there was visible gender discrimination in formal curricula after the educational reforms following the Second World War.

Hounoki (1996) states, however, with the growth of the feminist movements in the 1970s, visible gender-segregation in formal curricula started to be criticized. According to Kimura (1999), in the 1970s, feminists questioned whether schools truly provide equalities of the sexes, and they brought the ideology of ‘gender’ into analysis of educational fields in Japan in the 1980s. As they urged abolition of gender separated textbooks and revisions of formal curricula, the educational policy was amended in 1989, and home economics became a required subjects for both boys and girls in 1994 (Hashimoto & Henmi, 2003, p.258). Although visible gender segregations in the formal

curricula were removed, under pressure from the global community at this time, Japan was forced to demonstrate the improvement of inequalities in the hidden curriculum. For instance, the issue of school rosters was criticized in an international conference as a symbol of hidden curricula which conveyed a message of male priority (Asai, Kimura & Hashimoto, 2004, p.88). Although schools have customary divided students by sex in the rosters, this was problematized at the Nairobi conference in International Women's Year (IWY) in 1985, that only Japan and India are the countries which do not use mixed class lists in classrooms (Asai, Kimura & Hashimoto, 2004, p. 89).¹

According to Asai, Kimura and Hashimoto (2004), in the global community, Japan is recognized as one of the rare countries which does not have assurance of gender equality in spite of its advanced economic development (Asai, Kimura & Hashimoto, 2004, p.95). In 2004, among of 175 countries, Japan is ranked 9th in the Human Development Index (UNDP, 2003)² which is derived from the average length of life, educational diffusion, and average income rates. However, in the Gender-Related Development Index (UNDP, 2003) Japan is ranked 13th among 148 countries. Furthermore, the Gender Empowerment Measure based on the rates of decision making positions in politics and economics is dropped to 44th among 66 countries in 2004, that is ranked 32nd in 2003 (Asai, Kimura & Hashimoto, 2004, p. 95). This indicates the singularity of the situation of human rights in Japan, as generally Human Development Index runs parallel with Gender Empowerment Measure.

¹ Among the following countries, Kenya, US, France, Korea, Japan, Canada, Australia, Netherlands, Indonesia, Sweden, India, Italy, Germany, England, Denmark, Bolivia, Nigeria, and Sudan, India and Japan that are the only countries that do not use mixed gendered class lists.

² UNDP (United Nations Development Programme) from Human Development Report 2003, July.

As a result of the critique of Japan by the global community, the Japanese government established the Basic Law for Gender Equality in June 1999. Under the influence of the new gender equality law, the term “gender-free” came to be used in various fields in order to bring changes for existing gender discrimination in the hidden curricula.

Current discussions of gender-free education

Since the establishment of the Basic Law for Gender Equality, the Japanese government has urged gender-free education in order to promote a gender egalitarian society. However, with a diffusion of the term gender and gender-free, there have increased accusations against the representation of gender and gender-free education. According to Mainichi Newspaper (2005), the Liberal Democratic Party had asked that the word “gender” not be used in the text of the second plan of the Basic Law for Gender Equality because the term is difficult to understand and could confuse those in the education sector (“Gender will not be removed,” 2005). “Gender-free education” has also accused as radical sexual education, which confuses children’s recognition of gender. There are criticisms that the meaning of “gender-free education” provides “the education which ignores gender difference” or “the education which denies gender” (Mochizuki, Kondo & Mori, 2005, p.16). The Liberal Democratic Party points out in extreme cases of gender-free education traditional events, such as the hinamatsuri doll festival for girls in March are not allowed. Ultimately they determined to leave the term “gender” in the law, but in 2006, the Cabinet Office notified of their view that “the term ‘gender-free’ is an inappropriate expression” in official documents (Work and education center, 2006, p.24).

As a result, some local governments decided to get rid of the term not only “gender-free” but also “gender” from their ordinance of gender equality projects (Work and education center, 2006, p.24). When the bashing for gender-free education has increased in 2005, textbook companies independently removed the term “gender” and “gender-free” from elementary and junior high school textbooks of home economics, health and physical education, and social studies of civic education, except one company left the term “gender” in their textbooks of civic education (The editorial department of the yearbook of women’s information, 2005, p.39). The textbooks of civic education published by other companies are dealing with the content about gender equality, but the term “gender-free” was replaced to “equality of men and women” and the term “gender” was changed to “the social distinction of sex [syakaitekina seibetsu]” (The editorial department of the yearbook of women’s information, 2005, p.39). Actually, “the Basic Law for Gender Equality” is English translation of “danjyo kyodosankaku kihon hou” in Japanese which officially expressed in the Japanese-English dictionary, but if you translate “danjyo kyodosankaku” literally, it must be “men-women joint participation” (“kihon hou” can be translated word for word, “the basic law”). In short, the term “gender-free” has been given negative images from all the arguments of conservative media and the political party, and also the term “gender” itself has been banished from textbooks.

With regard to the definition of terms, there is a concern about the ambiguity of the term “gender-free.” According to Mochizuki, Kondo and Mori (2005), originally, the term “gender-free” in education was used by Houston (1994) for the first time in her article *Should Public Education Be Gender Free?* (Mochizuki, Kondo & Mori, 2005, p.44). Kameda and Tachi (2000) state that the term was first used in Japan in the article *Is your*

class gender-free?: for teachers in young generation (1996) published by Tokyo Women's Foundation in 1996 and quickly became widespread among state-subsidized feminist education projects until it became a focus of the conservative backlash around 2002. The alphabetical words "gender" is catchy and gives casual image compared to "men-women equality." Yamaguchi (2004) says, Japanese scholars introduced the term "gender-free" as the "next step" for gender co-participation after legal and structural inequalities have already been eliminated, that gender-free would promote changes in people's minds and attitudes (Yamaguchi, 2004, p. 13). Yamaguchi says, if legal and structural inequalities have already been resolved, then it is no longer the responsibility for government to make any changes. Nonetheless, since 1995 many mainstream feminists, especially scholars working with bureaucracies, embraced the term "gender-free" (Yamaguchi, 2004, p.14).

Around 2002, conservative media and some local governments took notice of the proliferation of "gender-free," and made it a main theme of their campaign to distort and discredit feminism (Asai, Kimura & Hashimoto, 2004, p.5). They argue that "gender-free" perspective denies the existence of any difference between male and female. Also they criticize that the meaning of "gender-free education" provides "the education to make the neutered gender" or "the education which denies gender" (Mochizuki, Kondo & Mori, 2005, p.16). Besides the criticism by The Liberal Democratic Party that suggested gender-free education as the denial of any and all traditional festivities specifically for boys and girls, many false allegations were raised, such as gender-free education would require boys and girls to change in the same locker room, or boys and girls would have to take medical examinations in the same room (Asai, Kimura & Hashimoto, 2004, p.31). Moreover, feminists were presumed to be in support of "gender-free", and a conservative

newspaper owned by the Unification church criticized that some feminists researchers distorted Houston's call for gender-free education as the recommendation that education must be respectful toward boys' and girls' innate biological differences (Asai, Kimura & Hashimoto, 2004, p.79).

Many Japanese scholars and feminist researchers recognized Houston's "gender-free" strategy as an effective approach to be "free from gender-bias," however, Yamaguchi (2004) points out that the term "gender-free" introduced by Tokyo Women's Foundation (1996) was a misreading of Houston's original paper. Actually, Houston problematizes the "gender-free" approach in her article stating that it is almost impossible for teachers to ignore gender differences, because they often do not recognize when gender is exerting an influence, and if the teachers were successful in ignoring the gender differences of the students, it will reinforce the message that discourages girls' participation in the educational process (Houston, 1996, p.54-55).

Because gender is a set of relations that is constantly changing and is constantly affected by other structuring processes in social relations, the gender-free strategy has to appear somewhat simplistic. It is misleading to think of gender as something that can be ignored or treated as irrelevant. Gender relations can be ignored, but only at the risk of entrenchment; and although they are changeable, it misses the mark to think of them as something that can be eliminated. (Houston, 1996, p. 60)

She points out the weakness of the "gender-free" strategy as "It is likely to create a context that continues to favor the dominant group" (Houston, 1996, p. 57). For example, boys and girls tried to play a basketball game in the same teams in physical education class in order to ignore the gender differences. But even when the girls had a higher skill level than boys did, boys preferred to pass the ball among boys since both girls and boys regarded boys as better players, and girls tended to give away scoring opportunities to boys (Houston, 1996, p.52). Houston says, "Equal participation in the educational process is

also a crucial dimension of equal educational opportunity. In this case, the strategy that removes access barriers has also had the effect of bringing about a *greater loss* of educational opportunities for girls” (Houston, 1996, p.51-52). She also mentions the loss of female participation of educational opportunities happens in all types of mixed-sex classrooms and activities not only in physical education class, as “Studies on teacher-students interactions indicate that within coeducational classrooms, teachers regardless of sex, interact more with boys, give boys more attention (both passive and negative)” (Houston, 1996, p. 52). Also, in students-students interactions, for example when women and men talk together in mixed-sex groupings, men often talk more and longer than women, and men interrupt women more than women interrupt men (Houston, 1996, p. 52-53). And the problem is that “in the school setting these ‘male’ ways of talking are often ‘equated with intelligence and authority’” (Houston, 1996, p.53). From the above reasons, Houston insists that we need to pay more attention to gender instead of trying to get rid of them, and it is important to “use gender as a criterion in designing a practice useful to eliminating gender bias” (Houston, 1996, p.57).

As Yamaguchi (2004) says, it is surprising that Houston’s “gender-free” strategy is almost opposite from what “gender-free education” in Japan is trying to practice. What has mostly recommended through gender-free education is to “mix” male and female students in various situations through for example using gender mixed rosters (Tokyo Women’s Foundation, 1996, p.103). The other thing that has been recommended is to call both girls’ and boys’ names with a title “san [さん]”. In Japan, there are two major titles “san [さん]” and “kun [くん]” added to names, and “san” can be used with both male and female names, while “kun” is used to address men who are younger or the same

age as the speaker. Through gender-free education, it is promoted to use only “san” when teachers call students names. Those curricula have been recommended for the purpose of elimination of unnecessary distinction, and giving “same” and “mixed” opportunities for girls and boys trying not to see the gender differences. As Hotta (2003) describes “‘gender-free’ is more like ‘free from gender,’ thus, it can be taken as ‘gender-less’ conditions” (Hotta, 2003, p.92), many teachers tend to try not to pay attention to gender differences of students through gender-free curriculum.

However, Houston suggests that teachers pay more attention to gender differences. For instance, the teachers can introduce new roles for the basketball game in the physical education class so as to require alternative passes to females and males (Houston, 1996, p.57). Rather than a “gender-free” strategy, Houston suggests what J.R. Martin (1981) labeled *gender sensitive* perspective (Houston, 1996, p.60). According to Houston, gender sensitive perspective requires “careful monitoring of our gender interactions and urges direct intervention when necessary to equalize opportunities” (Houston, 1996, p.60). She says, “a gender-sensitive perspective is not a blueprint for education that will answer all our questions about particular practices, it is, rather, a perspective that constantly reminds us to question the ways in which students and teachers make sense of and respond to a sexist culture” (Houston, 1996, p. 61). A gender-sensitive perspective encourages one to ask constantly “Is gender operative here? How is gender operative? What other effects do our strategies for eliminating gender bias have?” (Houston, 1996, p.61).

A gender-sensitive perspective can also be differentiated from a gender-free strategy by the kinds of questions it leaves open – questions that a gender-free strategy threatens to close, for example, questions about possible differences in learning that might be correlated with gender relations. It is not that a gender-sensitive perspective claims there *are* significant differences, only that there *could be*, given the way in

which gender has functioned as a species creator within our culture. (Houston, 1996, p.61)

In short, gender-sensitive perspective is an open-ended question to make us constantly see our gender bias. Unlike the gender-free approach, the gender-sensitive perspective does not deny the gender differences.

As Poynton (1985) declares, gender inequality issues are situated in teacher's cognitive knowledge rather than their deliberate behavior. She says, "Though the relationship of teacher to students remains one of more powerful to less powerful, the basis of the teacher's power shifts from authority to expertise, i.e. comes to be based on knowledge rather than control. It should also be noted that knowledge itself is by no means neutral in relation to gender" (Poynton, 1985, p.29). Grossman and Grossman (1994) also point out individual differences in each teacher's knowledge in gender equity. According to Grossman and Grossman, some educators equate equity with "sameness"; that is, treating students the same by providing them same courses of study. Alternatively, other educators define equity in terms of fairness; for instance, both genders have an opportunity to participate in activities (Grossman & Grossman, 1994, p.19). Houston (1996) says one of the problems of gender-free approach is obscurity in the definition of both teachers' and students' perceptions of fairness:

When teachers feel they are being fair, or even showing favoritism to girls, the empirical evidence shows otherwise. For example, giving 35 percent of one's attention to girls can feel as though one is being unfair to boys. Giving just over one-third of one's attention to girls can feel as though one is making a significant effort, even compensating girls. It is important to notice that students share this perception. For example, when a teacher tries to eliminate gender bias in participation by giving 34 percent of her attention to girls who compose one-half of the class, the boys protested: "She always asks girls all the questions"; "She doesn't like boys and just listens to girls all the time. (Houston, 1996, p.56)

As Houston also says, even when teachers do want to treat the sexes equally, the difficulty is that our society and education is so structured that “equality” and “fairness” means that males get more attention (Houston, 1996, p.57). Although “fairness” and “sameness” are promoted as key concepts in gender-free education in Japan, both teachers and students are too gender biased to perceive them. After all, the weakness of gender-free education is that they see gender is something can be eliminated. However, gender is constantly changing, as well as “fairness” of gender is too vague to define. Therefore, what the teachers and students can do might be only question themselves constantly about their gender bias. Houston argues, a gender-sensitive perspective is the most effective way to deal with gender bias since the gender-sensitive perspective encourages a critical and constant review of the meaning and evaluation attached to gender (Houston, 1996, p. 62). This perspective can be seen as a postmodern feminist perspective which tries to see plural truth and answers instead of only one truth.

According to Honoki (1996), education is not just giving one answer but giving ways to find plural answers: “Up to now, the traditional educational system has been insisted on ‘teaching the answer’ in learning. However, it is significant for students to ‘learn the ways to find answers’, not to just passively acquire the answer” (p.83). She insists the necessity of executing ‘learning for unanswered questions’ or ‘learning for plural answered questions’, although she points out the difficulty of it under the traditional educational system (Honoki, 1996, p.83). With regard to gender-free education, Hounoki stresses that learning for gender equity is not just to ‘convey’ directly the idea and the meaning of gender equality, but there should be various ways for children to learn, and their leaning should have some sort of connections with their lived experiences (Honoki,

1996, p.190). As well, Kameda and Tachi (2000) say, traditionally, education for gender equality tends to give weight for teachers to teach that “gender discrimination is bad” to their students. Gender-free education, however, should aim for both teachers and students to “notice” the gender-bias in their knowledge (Kameda & Tachi, 2000, p.341).

As some scholars propose, gender-free education should not just aim to make change to existing specific sexism but to give both students and teachers clues to think and find internalized gender-biases so as to be sensitive to gender issues (Honoki, 1996; Hirooka, 2002; Mochizuki, Kondo & Mori, 2005). Gender-free education should be ‘an education to think critically of gender equality’ rather than ‘an education aimed at gender equality’ (Mochizuki, Kondo & Mori, 2005, p.43-44). It is still literally called “gender-free education” in Japan, but what many feminist scholars aim to achieve through “gender-free education” is more closed to what “gender-sensitive perspective” proposed. Gender-free education; therefore, should involve students as subjects in their learning process. It is necessary to help students and teachers have abilities to find and think about gender problems spontaneously.

In this chapter, we have looked at a historical shift of education for gender equality and current discussion around the gender-free education. Since the Basic Law for Gender Equality was established, the gender discrimination in the hidden curriculum was to get public attentions. With the growth of the public recognition of the term gender-free, however, some local government, the Liberal Democratic Party, and conservative media accused the term as if it denies gender differences and agitates radical sex-education. As a result, the term not only “gender-free” but also “gender” stigmatized and have been vanished from school textbooks and official documents. However, as opposed to the

gender-free education curriculum works to “mix” male and female in order to give “same” opportunities for boys and girls, the original context of the term “gender-free” strategy does not suggest the denial of gender differences. On the contrary, Houston states that it is impossible to totally ignore gender differences, and the gender-free strategy has a risk to bring about a loss of educational opportunities for girls. Rather, Houston recommends that teachers pay more attention to gender differences and have gender sensitive perspective, that is, an open-ended question for both teachers and students to constantly ask themselves about gender biases in their knowledge. Although traditional education system in Japan has been insisted on teacher’s lecture style which provides single answer to students, gender-free education should be learning for plural answered questions that allowed both teachers and students to think and find internalized gender biases so as to be sensitive to gender issues.

In the next chapter, we will look at a postmodern feminist theories and feminist positional pedagogies, that is, an important theoretical framework for developing and analyzing my study.

Chapter 3: Theoretical approaches

Postmodern/post-structural feminist theories

Primarily, my theoretical perspective draws from post-structural/ postmodern feminist theories. Postmodern feminism tries to deconstruct the dualistic and hierarchical theories that previous feminists claimed (Kawashima, 2004, p. 145). Liberal feminists deny intrinsic differences between men and women and emphasize the similarity of abilities between women and men. On the contrary, radical feminists emphasize the differences between the two genders and insist on the importance of women's potential abilities and culture. Although liberal feminists simply want women to have access to the system more or less the way it is, radical feminists work to change the structural system of patriarchy that affect women's lives. Radical feminists deal with systems of oppression or privilege from the standpoint of whatever structure is their unit of analysis (i.e., patriarchy or capitalism), so they tend not to account for the fact that some groups are more privileged than others within the particular structural unit (Tisdell, 1995, p.69).

Post-structural and postmodern feminist theories, however, deal with multiple systems of privilege and oppression and their intersections, including gender, race, class, and sexual orientation, along with people's capacity for agency or resistance (Tisdell, 1995, p.69).

Poststructuralists argue that structural theories do not account for the individual's capacity for agency, or the fact that individuals exert some power and control over their lives, even though they might experience some forms of structural oppression. Individuals do have some capacity to resist maintaining the system and thus are actors or agents of change in producing their own unique individual meaning and systems of meaning or in working for social change. (Tisdell, 1995, p.70)

Poststructural/postmodern feminisms attempt to examine the intersections of many forms of oppression and privilege, particularly in regard to how Women construct “truth” (Tisdell, 1995, p.71). There is no one Truth, but each person’s “truth” is relative and contextually dependent on the cultural and social factors (Tisdell, 1995, p.71).

Postmodern feminists deal in some way with the notion of deconstruction, especially of the dominant discourse and categories. Hekman (1990) says, postmodern feminists see the current gender order as problematic and locate the problem in its dualistic and hierarchical nature:

What is unique about the postmodern feminist position, however, is that it avoids the modernist move of trying to incorporate women into the masculine definition of rationality and the radical move of attempting to reverse the privileging of the rational/ irrational dichotomy. Instead the postmodern feminists argue that we should deconstruct and transform the rationalist epistemology in which the dualism is rooted. This involves, as the French feminists have argued, rejecting phallogocentric unitary language for a plurality of languages that does not strive for the creation of a new orthodoxy, a unitary ‘truth’. (Hekman, 1990, p.47)

Postmodern feminists argue how women’s subjects/ identities/ selves are constructed by language and ideologies which marginalize women as “others” in the periphery and normalize men as the center (Kawashima, 2004, p.145). Instead of a coherent stable subject, postmodern feminists propose unsettled subjects that are in the process of change, including ambiguity, contradiction and conflicts under the dynamics of gender, race, sexuality and class (Kawashima, 2004, p.194). As Pellegrini (1997) says the boundaries keep moving (Pellegrini, 1997, p.7), postmodern feminist try to find differences by rejecting the idea of binary oppositions which exists such as in gender, race, and identification, that is, the opposition between women and men, black and white, the self and the other. Butler (1990) says gender is a performance through media such as language and customs:

In this sense, *gender* is not a noun, but neither is it a set of free floating attributes, for we have seen that the substantive effect of gender is performatively produced and compelled by the regulatory practices of gender coherence. Hence, within the inherited discourse of the metaphysics of substance, gender proves to be performative—that is, constituting the identity it is purported to be. In this sense, gender is always a doing, through not a doing by a subject who might be said to preexist the deed. (Butler, 1990, p.25)

Gender is a ‘doing’, and it is culturally and historically restricted. Gender is fluid that does not adjust to the two gender categories (Takemura, 2003, p. 110). Since postmodern feminists conceptualize the subject as “fragmented” (Jones & Barron, 2007, p.47-48), it is argued that if it is possible to have a politics of subjectivity when the subject is considered fragmented. According to Tisdell (1998), however, Lather (1991) argues that feminist postmodernisms of resistance keep the interests of women in mind and suggests that it is possible to deconstruct the category “women” in the philosophical sense, while maintaining a primary focus on the physical and material realities of women’s lives. In regard to education, Lather suggests that a feminist postmodernism of resistance is indeed concerned about and uses education to work for social change for women and other marginalized groups (Tisdell, 1998). Jones and Barron suggest teachers engaging with both feminism and postmodernism to ask questions themselves that “Who wants it to be true? What are the effects of saying this is true and not that?” (Jones & Barron, 2007, p.61). Davies and Banks (1992) also suggest that teachers and students need to understand precisely how the current gender order is held in place and how their identity is organized in terms of it, if they are to resist it. They state that “individuals who understand the processes through which they are made subject are better positioned to resist particular forms of subjectivity rather than to cling to them through a mistaken belief that they are their own—that they signal who they are” (Davies & Banks, 1992, p. 46).

Feminist pedagogies: positional pedagogies

Postmodern feminists see a connection between “knowledge” and “authority.” In the modern period women’s involvement in the process of knowledge construction has been distorted, thereby putting women at a disadvantage (Kawashima, 2004, p. 142). It is news to no one that girls and women have had unequal access to educational institutions. After significant progress toward sex equality was made and educators claimed that they treat girls and boys equally in the classroom, there still exists a loss of educational opportunities for girls in classrooms. As schooling is a political system which involves the practice of cultural ideologies (Apple, Nagano & Ikeda, 1993, p.6), feminists see schools as a place where specific knowledge is provided to construct subjects/agencies which results in social realities (Kawashima, 2004, p.193).

According to Tisdell, there are four main themes of feminist pedagogy; that is, “the construction of knowledge, voice, authority, and how to deal with differences particularly based on gender, race, ethnicity, class, physical and mental ability, or sexual orientation” (Tisdell, 1995, p.80). Feminist pedagogies attempt to deal with how women and those marginalized because of their race, class, or sexual orientation can come to voice (Tisdell, 1995, p.82). What Tisdell calls “positional pedagogies” is influenced by post-structural feminist theories as they emphasize the theme of difference and how to deal with it (Tisdell, 1995, p.77). Positional pedagogies propose that the best learning environment for women and those marginalized is where affective forms of knowledge that emphasizes connection

and relationship are valued, along with knowledge that comes from life experience (Tisdell, 1995, p.82).

Positional pedagogies help students examine how they and others' are positioned within social structures that have in part informed their own and others' construction of knowledge. Thus the emphasis in positional pedagogies is both on how individuals construct knowledge and how that process is affected by both social and political forces. This requires students to become familiar with a body of knowledge and to reflect on their own life experience and how they are positioned in relationship to society and to other participants in the classroom. (Tisdell, 1995, p.83)

With regard to the issue of gender-free education, the teachers I interviewed mentioned the necessity of curriculum to make students think about gender issues related to their career planning. Through the curriculum of career planning focusing on gender issues, students can think about gender issues in real lives. Also, exchanging their experiences with other students give chances for students to realize their positions, such as male experiences about jobs are more related to high income field as opposed to female experiences of that is more in care-giving positions. Positional pedagogies make apparent that students are positioned differently in relationship to each other and in relationship to the knowledge being learned (Tisdell, 1995, p.84). Drawing on Maher and Tetreault, Tisdell mentions that one of the styles of positional pedagogies is as helping students to see with a third eye (Tisdell, 1995, p. 82). To see with a third eye is "to recognize that the self (or the author) constructs knowledge in relation to others, and both the self and others are situated and positioned within social structures in which they are multiply and simultaneously privileged and oppressed" (Tisdell, 1995, p.83). Tisdell (1998) says,

Based on this idea of helping students to see with a third eye, poststructural feminist pedagogies help learners to examine the connection: a) how knowledge is constructed by individuals and the politics of "official" knowledge construction and dissemination at the sociocultural level; b) how sociostructural systems of privilege and oppression such as race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, and religion have affected the development of their "constantly shifting identities"; and c) who easily speaks and

who tends to remain silent in “coming to voice” in the learning environment, and who consciously or unconsciously is recognized as “smart” or “leaders” in light of these same systems of privilege and oppression.” (Tisdell, 1998)

She says, “The point is not merely to see with the third eye; it is also to move beyond “seeing” and to actively work to change such conditions” (Tisdell, 1998). As one of the ways to make women and those marginalized come to voice, Kawashima (2004) says, giving weight to dialog between teachers and students and among students contributes to bringing diversities and minority knowledge which is constructed based on women’s experiences into classrooms (Kawashima, 2004, p.188). In feminist pedagogy, plural, partial, and individual voices must be respected in the curriculum (Kawashima, 2004, p.197). The democratization of knowledge will reduce the power imbalance between teachers and students (Amano & Kimura, 2003, p. 176). This can be done through for example, an increase in discussions and role play instead of the lectures, and establishing negotiating curriculum and an evaluation scheme with students (Amano & Kimura, 2003, p.175).

Postmodern feminists see the contradictions and the complexities in knowledge construction in the teacher-learner relationship. In *Pedagogy of the oppressed* (1982), Freire states the oppressor-oppressed dichotomy can be seen in the teacher-student relationship. Freire proposes that although teachers are the subject/ the knower/ the oppressor in the classrooms, students are the object/ the ignorant /the oppressed, and the more students gain knowledge from teachers, the more they adjust to the oppressors’ ideologies (Freire, 1982, p. 59-60). According to Brigham (2002), however, Freire has been accused by feminists as an essentialist who assumes “all oppressed people act uniformity” (Brigham, 2002, p.68). Drawing on Weiler, Brigham says:

Freire assumes that all oppressed people act uniformly: They perceive the world in the same way, they experience oppression in the same way, they define “humanisation” in the same way, and their goal is to move toward true humanity in the same way. Freire fails to acknowledge that the goal of humanisation has different meanings for different groups of people and there are deeper contradictions and tensions in oppression, which often overlap.... (Brigham, 2002, p. 68)

As an example of the way in which the teacher-student relationship is further complicated, Tisdell (2000) explains her teaching experience of sharing the authority of knowledge with learners when she talked to two Black female students about representations of Black women’s hair and racial, gendered identities (Tisdell, 2000, p.168). Tisdell says, “In this instance, although I was the instructor and thus the official teacher, both the Black women were the real teachers, and I was the learner about my own identity construction as a White woman and about the culture and ways of manifesting identity development of Black women” (Tisdell, 2000, p. 169). As she says, feminist pedagogy sees the dynamic position of teachers and learners and differences among women and among learners (Tisdell, 2000, p.167).

Although it is important to create an environment that reduces power disparity between teachers and students and the issue of the authority of the teacher, Tisdell also mentions that it is impossible to do away completely with the authority or responsibility of the instructor in any educational environment even though the authority can be shared:

Rather, the argument is that there is a power disparity between teachers and students in learning environments, and this needs to be dealt with openly. In discussing authority, hooks (1989) argues that teachers need to be proactive in confronting unequal power relations. Thus, the emphasis is more on appropriate uses of authority, rather than on trying to do away with it when attempting to facilitate students’ learning and their coming to voice. (Tisdell, 1995, p. 80)

Tisdell explains that although a feminist teacher tried not to exercise power as dominance in her classroom and took away most of her authority by taking passive role in

the class, she found that as a result of relinquishing her own authority as teacher, the students who considered themselves as “the enlightened” dominated the class and those students who had less of a background in the topic of discussions felt silenced (Tisdell, 1995, p.85). Since the authority still emerged in the class because of the power dynamics between the teacher and students, Tisdell says, “As an instructor, she can use the power of her role as teacher to facilitate the emancipation of women students” (Tisdell, 1995, p.85-86). According to Tisdell, Lewis (1990) also comes to a similar conclusion saying “I [have] no problem justifying the use of my institutional power to create the possibility for privilege to face itself...Using power to subjugate is quite different than using power to liberate” (Tisdell, 1995, p.86). Interestingly, Tisdell also says it is important for feminist pedagogies to make the students come to voice in the classrooms even though they feel discomfort. She says “in the long run silence will not necessarily protect those who have been marginalized,” since our living environments are not always safe (Tisdell, 1995, p.80-81). Although there should be the development of positive relationship among the students in the learning environments, it is sometimes uncomfortable for students to deal with their differences that they examined (Tisdell, 1995, p. 81). However, she says, “The point is coming to voice in spite of the discomfort. This is also a significant part of the development of relationship” (Tisdell, 1995, p.81).

With regard to curricula of gender-free education, however, there still remain teachers’ knowledge control that prevents students from being the subjects and the producers of knowledge in the classrooms. As Hino (2005) insists, teachers assume that gender-free education has a simple structure which can easily be put into place by making

a few changes (Hino, 2005, p. 103). Hino provides examples in these comments from teachers who are involved in gender-free education:

As a practice of gender-free education, we decided to use mixed rosters in our school. After we carefully remove the distinction of gender from classrooms, students seem to develop their personality and lively show their abilities without being restricted in one's gender. (Hino, 2005, p. 104)

I think students in our school are lucky since we became sensitive to gender issues, and we took away gender bias from hidden curricula. The last thing we have to do is the unification of colors of shoes for physical education. (Hino, 2005, p. 99)

Hino says, the problem here is that many teachers assume gender bias can easily be taken away from the school curricula through simple solutions (Hino, 2005, p. 103). Also, in the interviews with female teachers, I saw their struggle to pay no attentions to gender differences between boys and girls through gender-free curriculum. However, is that truly possible to remove the distinction of gender from classrooms? Since gender identities are socially constructed and internalized as cultures, they cannot be taken away that easily (Hino, 2005, p.104). Teachers tend to think a task for gender-free education is completed when they decide to discard the gender separated rosters or the regulation of gender separated colors for school bags and shoes. However, those are only visible examples of gender issues that result from school regulations (Kimura, 2005, p.83). According to Hino, Cordeiro (1994) says simplification of complicated ideologies such as “discrimination” or “prejudice” easily happens in human rights education. Cordeiro cautions against a list when implementing human rights education; instead, she explains the importance of encouraging students to ask critical questions all the time rather than giving them answers (Hino, 2005, p.113). It is significant for the instructors and the students to think constantly their positionalities in order to bring diverse knowledge and plural voices in the classrooms.

In this chapter, we have looked at a theoretical framework of post-structural and postmodern feminist theories and pedagogies. Postmodern feminists deal with multiple systems of privilege and oppression and their intersections, including gender, race, class, and sexed orientation. Seeing the current gender order as problematic and locate the problem in its dualistic and hierarchal nature is crucial for deconstruction of the dominant discourse. As postmodern feminists try to find the differences by rejecting the idea of binary oppositions, feminist positional pedagogy emphasizes the difference and how to deal with it, dealing with how women and marginalized can come to voice. Feminist positional pedagogy makes apparent that students positioned differently in relationship to each other and in relationship to the knowledge being learned. These ideas relate to my study since I problematize the fact that the current curriculum of gender-free education is aiming for making boys and girls mixed and seeing their sameness avoiding their positional differences, and it only works to bring gender parity to the classrooms within the dualistic male dominant discourse. Instead of repressing their power and struggling not to see the gender differences among students, Tisdell suggests that teachers can use their authorities in order to bring the diverse voices of women and the marginalized to classrooms. The above postmodern feminist theories and pedagogies also inform my study in terms of developing my research questions and data collections. As Butler (1990) says, “It is not enough to inquire into how women might become more fully represented in language and politics. Feminist critique ought also to understand how the category of ‘women,’ the subject of feminism, is produced and restrained by the very structures of power through which emancipation is sought” (Butler, 1990, p.2), my research questions are made to examine “how” the truth around gender is represented and

produced in the knowledge of the subjects who are restrained in the male normalized social structures. Also, my data collection is based on open-ended interviewing asking female teachers what they think and feel reflecting their different realities, including ambiguity, contradiction and conflicts, which are moving and changing even during the interview process through the interactions between me and the participants.

In the next chapter, we will look at the research methodologies, including more details of the interview process and data collections, and also the role and positionalities of the researcher.

Chapter 4: Methodology

This research is designed to offer insights into how female teachers challenge gender-free education. As Gaskell (2000) says, qualitative interviewing is useful to gain more in-depth understanding of the issue and provide valuable contextual information to help to explain particular findings (Gaskell, 2000, p.39). Many feminists think qualitative methods provide “more human, less mechanical relationship between the researcher and the researched” and “more accurate and valid information about respondents’ experience” (Jayaratne & Stewart, 1991, p.221). Gaskell says, “The real purpose of qualitative research is not counting opinions or people but rather exploring the range of opinions, the different representations of the issue” (Gaskell, 2000, p.41). Therefore I believe qualitative interviewing is the best methodology for my research in order to see individual women’s various experiences and needs for their ongoing challenge in gender-free education.

As Reinharz (1992) discusses in “*Feminist methods in social research*”, feminist research is feminist praxis, because the purpose of feminist research is inherently linked to action and change (Reinharz, 1992, p.175). Also Gorelick (1996) describes, “The relationship is exploitative when a researcher studies people for the benefit of the researcher’s career or of the sponsors of the research without regard for any positive or negative effect on the people being studied” (Gorelick, 1996, p.24). Since I aim to empower the participants to speak out about their experiences and needs, my research must

be identified as feminist praxis which creates positive change during the research process. As a feminist praxis, rejecting the scientist/person dichotomy is significant. Participants are female teachers since I am in a better position to understand female teachers' experience rather than male teachers'. Some feminist scholars such as Reinharz discuss the necessity for a woman to be interviewed by a woman. She quotes feminist sociologist Marjorie DeVault's interviewing style which represents woman-to-woman talk as it is based on self-revealing and consciousness-raising (Reinharz, 1992, p.23). Reinharz says,

She (Devault) explains the importance of using categories that represent what women do (e.g., feed their families) rather than categories that reflect men's activities or terms derived from social science. Feminist researchers who interview women frequently discuss topics that are not part of typical public or academic discourse and therefore 'have no name.' This makes it all the more important to avoid naming the interviewee's experience. A woman listening with care and caution enables another woman to develop ideas, construct meaning, and use words that say what she means. (Reinharz, 1992, p. 23)

It can be said that woman-to-woman talk reduces a power imbalance between the researchers and the researched subjects, as opposed to the difficulty for female researchers to share their experiences with male participants since the female experience is different from the male experience. Bhavnani (2004) also mentions the difficulty in developing intimate relationships with male participants, and she criticizes the idea that the relationship between a male interviewer and a male interviewee is authentic, whereas the relationship between a female interviewer and a male interviewee is not (Bhavani, 2004, p.73).

Gorelick says, however, there is no complete equality between researcher and researched because of the differences of their roles and the power complexities of their relationship (Gorelick, 1996, p.32). Letherby (2003) discusses that it is not necessary to develop a friendly relationship between the researcher and the researched, even between

female researcher and female participants. She says a researcher becomes something other than a stranger to the respondents during the research process, but it is difficult to make a real equal relationship (Letherby, 2003, p.129). One of the reasons a researcher avoids developing a real friendship is because “it is important that researchers remain aware of their ‘privileged position’ within the research relationship” (Letherby, 2003, p.125).

In my research, I was not able to diminish the hierarchical relationship totally, but, I also kept in mind that the researcher is not an expert, and I tried to give the participants opportunities to talk about their experiences freely, as well as the issues and concerns that are of importance to them. I could not visit the school to see them before the official interview which I had planned to do. Although I talked to participants on the phone before the official interviews in order to reduce the interviewees’ discomfort of having an interview with a stranger, during the interview, especially in the beginning of the interview process, I still felt I was a complete stranger for them. I even felt they were still wondering if it is safe to talk about what they think openly or not. I tried to talk with the interviewees, however, rather than just listen to the interviewees’ voices, and when I talked about my own experiences and even my honest opinions about the local governments’ projects, I felt the participants felt more at ease and they started talking about what they think more honestly than before.

As Letherby says, although I was still a stranger for the participants and could not make a real friendship and an equal relationship with them as long as I controlled the data collection, the conversation between me and the participants helped to reduce participants’ defensive attitude and reduce the hierarchy because there was a connection between my

personal experiences and the interviewees' experiences. My friendly attitude as an empathetic listener and learner rather than a researcher of authority also helped participants talk freely in the interviews. I also assured them of their confidentiality and explained the ethics guidelines that guided my study.

The researcher's role

Subjectivity

As a feminist researcher, I consider subjectivity as a valuable element for my research rather than something I need to eliminate. Scantlebury (2005) says, "A feminist researcher will explicitly acknowledge the subjectivity of her/his perspective and others who are involved with the research. However, rather than ignoring this subjectivity or using other methods to minimize the impact of subjectivity on the research and interpretation, feminist researchers view subjectivity as an asset" (Scantlebury, 2005). Also Kuo (2002) says, "Features such as race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, economic class, etc. as well as differences in individual lives are part of the subjectivity which contributes to the production of knowledge. Most feminists have therefore attempted to be as inclusive as possible in the perspectives which inform their research" (Kuo, 2002, p.20). Feminist research should include subjective knowledge, and the connection between self-interests/self-experiences and the researched issue is important. As the participants become more talkative about their opinions after I shared my own personal perspectives and experiences during the interviews, sharing subjective knowledge helps to reduce the power imbalances between the researcher and the researched, as opposed to the researcher only taking knowledge from the researched and giving them nothing back.

However, when the interviewee asked me some questions, for example the difference between education for gender equality in North American and Japan, what I replied was limited by my understanding and experiences. When the interviewee tried to develop her idea on the bases of what I talked about, her idea was also under the influence of my knowledge limitation. Baker (1998) says, while the researcher's contributions allow her to go beyond individual women's voices to provide an analysis of "systemic structures of oppression", she is limited by her own voice and experience including her "relationship to privilege power and oppression" (Baker, 1998, p. 39). Both my power and oppression as it relates to my gender, class, and individual experiences have influences on the whole process of my research. According to Jones and Barron (2007), research activities are not single performances or a unity, but "many and disparate, contested and uncontested, relational and interactive, unrelated and fractured" (Jones & Barron, 2007, p.107). There are boundaries between representation and reality, since the research process is performative which involves a fiction in which there is only one story to be told (Jones & Barron, 2007, p.100). Unlike traditional research, feminist research recognizes there are multiple interpretations in research performances. Because the researcher's self is fragmented and changing, the researcher's different selves appear in different conditions to interpret the situation.

Research performances need to be reconceptualized as involving casting and recasting as roles are negotiated, assigned, contested and renegotiated. The possibility of multiple telling and shifting performances needs to be recognized as the stagings reflect the different perspectives. These multiple tellings reflect a belief that this is the nature of how the world is and the contention, therefore, is that research can no longer satisfy itself with a single unproblematic narrative. We all act out different beings in different situations with different others and to seek to eliminate these 'performances' is to eliminate what there is to be known, to reduce the multiple to a false and restricting unity that leaves no place for the spaces in between that give us some sense

of glimpsing the nodal points between apparently discontinuous performances. (Jones & Barron, 2007, p.102)

The complexities of researcher's multiple selves bring multiple interpretations of the reality. Through the research process, I am always required 're-thinking and re-interpreting' (Jones & Barron, 2007, p.49) in order to raise new questions which disturb stereotypical view points.

Insider/Outsider

As regard to the researcher's position in qualitative research, the insider/ outsider debate is significant. "Insiders" are "researchers who belong to the same social or cultural group as the people they are studying", and "outsiders" do not have any community or experience in the position of insider (Rose, 2001). In traditional research method, the researchers prefer to be "outsiders" since they are "privileging of the participant's analysis of 'what is going on here' " (Brayboy & Deyhle, 2000, p.167). In contrast, feminist researchers tend to recognize the "insider" can provide more ethical research and better knowledge, because the insider can share experience with participants. However, Rose (2001) insists there is no clear cut separation between insider and outsider. She proposes that the researcher's position is "more fluid and ambiguous, such as the 'outsider within' (Collins 1991; Acker 2000) who comes from the group being studied but has had experiences which set her apart from it in certain ways" (Rose, 2001). Likewise, Pellegrini (1997) insists that the position of the subject is moving, and it is multiple in postmodern feminist perspectives: "At different historical moments, race has signified different relations between the body and society, in-group and out-group, and self- and group-identity. Or, to put the matter slightly differently, race has not always cut the same

way; the boundaries keep moving” (Pellegrini, 1997, p.7). From those perspectives, I think my position as a researcher is in between insider and outsider. Since I grew up in the Japanese education system, I can deal with the issue as “our issue” as an “insider” researcher. Compared to Western researchers, I have advantages of understanding the language and Japanese educational system when I have interviews with female teachers. However, I also identify myself as an “outsider”, since I don’t have any teaching experience that I can share with the participants, and I have had other experiences not shared by the research participants such as living in Canada and doing graduate work at a Canadian university. Besides, as a researcher, I am responsible for analyzing “systemic structures of oppression” (Baker, 1998, p.39) based on the participants’ voices. In order to reduce the limitation as an “outsider,” I tried to know more about the insiders’ situation through accessible resources, but before I was an outsider, I was a stranger for them. However, I believe that the exchange of the experiences between the outsider and the insider was stimulus to review my own position and perspective, so too was it for the participants to rethink their perspectives. The boundary between the insider and the outsider was always shifting during the interviews through the interaction of knowledge.

Research Method

Interviews

As a qualitative data-gathering technique, semi-structured one-on-one interview was used in my research. According to O’Leary (2004), one-on-one interview “allows the researcher control over the process and the interviewee the freedom to express his or her thoughts” (O’Leary, 2004, p.164). One-on-one interview is a conversation lasting based

on open-ended questions. O’Leary (2004) says, semi-structured interviews are “generally start with some defined questioning plan, but pursue a more conversational style of interview that may see questions answered in an order more natural to the flow of conversation” (p.164). Also Scantlebury (2005) mentions,

a feminist approach is that interviews reflect a conversation in which the participants and researcher shares and discusses ideas and issues, rather than a conventional style in which the researcher asks questions seeking information, clarification and other data, but does not share any personal information or answer the subject’s questions since they are conventionally deemed by the researcher as irrelevant to the research. (Scantlebury, 2005)

However, the one-one-one interview differs from ordinary conversation, since there is an unusual role relationship, the interviewer and the interviewee, that are in different ways involved in the production of knowledge (Gaskell, 2000, p.45). I prepared questions prior to the interview, but “the questions are almost an invitation to the respondent to talk at length, in their own terms, and with time to reflect” (Gaskell, 2000, p.45). My interview questions (**Appendix A**) were started from listening to the participants’ broad ideas about gender and their first impressions of gender-free education. Then the questions shifted to more specific information, such as about their practices in classrooms or their students’ and colleagues’ responses toward the gender-free education. Finally I asked their recommendations and needs for improvement of gender-free education. The first questions about their impressions and broad ideas about gender and gender-free education not only helped the participants talk freely about their ideas, but also helped me understand how much do the participants know about the term gender and gender-free, so that the questions could be changed and added as well as reduced during the interviews. For instance, one of the participants was confused and became speechless since the first question was too abstract, thus, I gave her more specific questions such as if she has been

using mixed gender rosters in her class, in order to help her make connections between some concrete example in school curriculum and her experiences related to gender-free education. Also sometimes the interviewees asked questions and I replied them. This interview style provided free interaction between the researcher and the interviewee which reduces the hierarchy between us.

Participants

Participants were three female teachers in public junior high schools (grade 7-9) in Hyogo province in Japan. Three schools were chosen in my research. Each school has gender-free education in their curriculum, but one of them is in Ono city where the local educational board makes extra efforts to promote gender-free education. They issued a report about practice of gender-free education in schools in Ono, which shows their struggles and efforts for developing a gender-free curriculum. One participant was from this school. Two other schools were in Kobe city where the local government gives only a few arrangements for curriculum of gender-free education. Two other female teachers participated from this area.

The first task in recruiting participants was to send an information letters privately to teachers in the schools (**Appendix B**) to explain the study and ask for volunteers. Since Ono city issued the report of the practice of gender-free education which including the teachers' names who were involved in gender-free education and edited the report, I was able to send the information letters to the participants privately by mail. At the end of each information letters, I mentioned that I will give them a call to see if they are interested in the research or not. Within a week and a half of beginning the recruitment

process, I phoned a total of eleven female teachers and got eight responses since three teachers were already out of the schools. Seven of them refused to join the interviews, and one consented to join the research. When I recruited participants in Kobe city, I asked my friends who are teaching in the schools to give my email address of her colleagues, and I exchanged emails with five teachers telling about what I am interested in and general information of my research. Two teachers expressed interests to join my research and became participants, so I sent the information letters to them to give my background information and more details about the general topics of my research. They know that their schools do not spare extra time for gender-free education curriculum other than minimum improvement such as using the mixed gender roster, but they expressed interest in talking about what they think is necessary for bringing changes in their curriculum. So, the final number of participants for this research was three.

All of the participants were Japanese, and they ranged in age from thirty-five to fifty-nine. When I was looking for participants I did not specify the age range, although I was hoping to interview a number of women from various age groups. Each school has 450 to 1050 students. Atsuko-sensei is fifty-nine years old, teaching Japanese in Kobe city, and she has 25 students in her class. Beniko-sensei is thirty-five years old, teaching Mathematics in Ono city, and she has 27 students in her class. She is one of the committee members of gender equality board in Ono city called “danjyo kyodo sankaku iinkai.” According to Beniko-sensei, the principal of each school, from kindergartens to high schools, chose a teacher for the committee member from their schools at random. Cazuko-sensei is forty-seven years old, teaching gymnastics in Kobe city, and she has 35 students in her class.

Ethical Considerations

As a feminist researcher, preventing the exploitation of those being researched played a major role throughout the entire research process. The research I conducted was that in which both the participants and I shared a common goal of change. Participants were involved in the research because they wanted to contribute to an area of study that was of importance to them. Thus, feedback from participants was encouraged in order to reduce my power of defining as a researcher.

The interviews were conducted from April 12, 2008 to May 20, 2008. All went according to schedule except for one that had to be postponed one week due to unforeseen circumstances. While one of the interviews was conducted in a classroom at the school of the participant, two took place in coffee shops near the participants' homes. The choice and the location of the interview were left to each participant so as to ensure her comfort and security. In terms of the interview conducted at a participant's school classroom, I talked to the school principal when I visited the school, since the participant showed my information letter to her principal before she made a decision to participate in my research, and she wanted me to see the principal before the interview.

For all of the interviews I made sure that I was casually dressed so as to aid in putting the participant at ease. The participants were given general topics and my background information prior to the interview so that they could have time to think about the topics, and they could have an idea about who I am in advance. Before the interview, I asked each participant for permission to tape record the interview. With this, and the participant's understanding of the study, each one carefully read and signed the Participant

Consent Form (**Appendix C**). Participants were also reminded that they did not have to answer anything that they did not want to and could turn the tape recorder off or withdraw from the study at any time.

The three interviews lasted anywhere from thirty minutes to one hour. To ensure the confidentiality of participants throughout the research process, their names and the names of other people that were mentioned during the interviews were changed. Once the interviews were transcribed, plans were confirmed to have the transcripts sent to each participant by email for viewing. This gave them an opportunity to verify intended meanings as well as add and / or delete any information that they did not want to appear in the thesis. All interviews were conducted and transcribed in Japanese, and the transcripts were sent to the participants and then, the transcripts were translated to English. None of the participants requested that any changes be made and each participant kept the transcript that she was sent. The participants can also have a copy of the results once my paper is completed.

To think how I can explain the lives of others without violating their reality is significant. In the research process, it is always necessary to consider my position and try to reduce the hierarchy between the researcher and the researched as feminist ethical practice.

Chapter 5: Findings and Analysis

This chapter explores the experiences of three female teachers who are involved in gender-free education. The scope of analysis is centered on demonstrating how gender is represented by the teachers and how the meaning of gender-free is created and embodied through their practice. The purpose of the research is to examine how female teachers understand contradictory messages conveyed by the term “gender-free”. The goal of this research is to help teachers develop “gender-sensitive” perspectives and to re-think and re-question their gendered positional knowledge constantly.

This chapter consists of three themes: 1) the representation of gender-free, and how the meaning of the term gender-free is tied to negative, rigid, and surface gender perspectives; 2) how the notion of gender-free education is put into practice; 3) the complexities and contradictions in practice, or a shift from gender blind to gender sensitive perspectives and contradictory desire for masculinity.

In undertaking this research, the original target number for interviewing was three to five female teachers. Since I ended up having the minimum of three participants, the concern is three interviews would not provide sufficient data for analysis. However, here make the case that 3 still provide sufficient data. There were ten female teachers who refused to be interviewed, but during the conversation with them on the phone, most of them expressed hesitation and fear for being criticized for talking about gender-free education. Some of them said their principals let them refuse to take part in whatever

having relation to “gender-free”. As I mentioned, what Houston proposes “gender-free” has been distorted and given negative images in Japanese context. Why does the term “gender” have images of fear, confusion, and resistance?

Representation of “gender-free”: negative, rigid, and invisible

First, I will analyze the representation of gender-free, and how the meaning of the term gender-free is tied to rigid gender perspective as if it can be eliminated. From the negative impression of gender-free education, the term gender is diminished from curriculum and still the term “danjyo byodo [men-women equality]” is mainly used. What teachers recognize as “gender-free education” is some of the regulation changes to make students mixed. The local government also promotes superficial policies of few changes for the regulations. As a result, students accept the changes without any resistances, and they would not be sensitive to gender issues through the curriculum changes.

The term “gender-free” has been concealed. In a case of Atsuko-sensei, the questions I gave from (a) to (f) (see **Appendix A**) were difficult, since she was unfamiliar with both the term “gender” and “gender-free.”

A: I remember I heard the term “gender” in a meeting we had when our school started using the gender mixed rosters in 2003. But yeah...I don’t remember what I understood about the term [laugh].

Beniko-sensei was designated as one of the committee members of gender equality board in Ono and edited a report about practices of gender-free education in her school. But in the last process of editing, she got a comment from the local government that the word “gender-free” should be removed from the report.

B: When I edited the report, I got a comment at the end that the term “gender” is improper to use in the report. At the beginning, there were no suggestion or restriction on using the term “gender-free,” but after the argument around the term emerged among the Parliament, such as the meaning of the word “gender” is vague and stuff, I got a comment that we should replace the word “gender” to some other words such as “men-women equality education [danjyo byodo kyoiku]” or “men-women symbiotic education [danjyo kyosei kyoiku]”. That notice came from Ono city government. Since the committee would look over the report ultimately, I felt kind of pressure to chose what I should put and what I shouldn’t put in the curriculum and the final report [laugh].

Cazuko- sensei also said, instead of the term “gender-free education,” the term “men-women symbiotic education [danyo kyousei kyoiku]” is used more practically. The term “men-women equality [danjyo byodo]” or “men-women symbiotic [danjyo kyosei]” has been used before the term “gender-free” was first used. According to Yamaguchi (2004), the term “gender-free” was justified by feminists in order to replace the older term “danjyo byodo [men-women equality]”. She says the term “danjyo byodo” could be interpreted to permit “different but equal” rhetoric, so that one could say that men and women are fundamentally different and therefore should have different, sex-segregated roles to play in the society and in families, but they should be respected as equals nonetheless (Yamaguchi, 2004, p.15). However, with the diffusion of negative images around the term “gender-free,” the old term “danjyo byodo” is continuously in use. While the term “gender-free” is something unreliable and confusing for teachers to deal with, the term “danjyo byodo” is more understandable. Although the difference between the two terms is unclear, “danjyo byodo” is more generalized and has more acknowledgements, since the term has been used for past 50 years as a slogan to remove gender discrimination from the official curriculum and to bring female educational participation. Therefore, “dnajyo byodo” is more related to liberal and radical feminism

in that it promotes women having access to the education system by changing patriarchal social systems.

There is an image that the idea of gender and gender-free education came from North America that subverts femininity and masculinity cultivated in traditional Japanese culture, as C indicates,

C: I don't know what to say, but...I'm not saying that the matter of "gender" and "gender-free" is good or bad, but I think there is something important in Japanese society, and there are various customs cultivated in history of Japan, so, I'm not saying "girls should be like this" or "Japanese girls should be modest" in every situations, but I feel like we don't need to change something underneath of our culture. What to say...I think if you introduce something naturally exist in foreign countries to Japan and try to adjust to Japanese culture, there is no guarantee to be accepted and adjusted in Japanese culture. I think we have to remain something good custom which is in underneath of Japanese culture as precious things, otherwise, it's not going to be culture at all. Thus, I don't think it's good idea to throw out all good traditional custom in Japan in terms of gender. Well, it's so difficult to say [laugh].

The difference between "danjyo byodo" and "gender-free" is ambiguous in teachers' understandings, but there is a negative image attached with "gender-free" as an unreliable western perspective. Cazuko-sensei thinks the ideology of "gender" is imported from foreign countries and functions to subvert gender identification cultivated in Japanese culture. She worries that 'femininity' developed in Japanese culture would be lost by gender-free education. According to Subrahmanian(2005), historically legitimized and naturalized differences between women and men has uphold by all social actors as essential and has translated into entrenched norms that define appropriate behaviors for men and women.

These *gender ideologies* become the basis of social norms, practices and rules; these processes in turn inform masculine and feminine identities. Masked as 'culture', these identities and ideologies become stubbornly defended as traditional and immutable. Further, these gender ideologies are encrypted in institutions that govern daily life, and thus translate into deeper structural inequalities that are not likely to be removed

unless there are clear efforts to rethink and rewrite the basic rules that underpin institutional functioning. (Subrahmanian, 2005, p.398)

The opportunities for teachers and students to rethink historically legitimized culture are not given through gender-free education. Rather, the effort for gender-free education is usually limited to the elimination of the gender separated rosters and surrounding issues of gender separation in classrooms and school regulations.

Beniko-sensei has experiences that she drew on to write a report about an open day that her school held for students' parents to demonstrate how their curriculum about gender is practiced. It was the first trial for them to have an open day to deal with the issue of gender, but it also became the last time for them to spend extra time for having special class dealing with gender issues. The class was hold in 2004, and it was about the time when the public attention toward "gender-free" was at the peak. Each school in Ono is required to give a report which was put together as a hard copy and issued in 2004 as *Heart-ship: case studies of school project for gender equality in Ono in 2004*. According to the report, all of the schools in Ono from grade 1 to 12 are using gender mixed rosters as one of the ways to meet the requirements in the Basic Law for Gender Equality. Her school started using gender mixed rosters from 2002 in order to get rid of 'unnecessary gender discrimination' from their curriculum, focusing on improving students' learning environments. For example, although the shoe boxes, the lockers, and the seats in classrooms had been separated between boys and girls, now there are no physical separations by mixing items. Also nameplates on the shoe boxes and the lockers that used to be separated as pink for girls and blue for boys are changed to white for both.

What they think are problems which they still have to work on are; boys and girls line up separately at meetings; bathrooms have color separations between boys and girls; many

teachers still call boys name followed by “kun”; skirts are mandatory for girls and pants are for boys as school uniforms. In the report, she categorizes the above problems as “unnecessary gender dichotomy” in school custom and facilities. She says it is important not to see boys and girls separately. Especially she emphasizes that education for gender issues should start from ‘conscious raising of teachers and adults,’ and teachers have to realize internalized gendered filter to see students as ‘boys’ and ‘girls’ unconsciously (Gender equality propulsion board of Ono, 2005, p.50).

Unlike Beniko-sensei, other participants did not have opportunities to spend time for specifically learning about gender. They mentioned that they are not familiar with the term “gender” and “gender-free education,” but what came to their minds when I said the term “gender-free education” in my questions was some of the regulation changes to make students mixed and the same, such as gender-mixed rosters, gender-mixed line up, and calling boys’ name followed by “san”. As I mentioned before, the title “san[さん]” can be used with both male and female names, unlike “kun[くん]” can be used to address only male name.

A: What my school does as a practice of gender-free education is, I think using gender-mixed rosters. I don’t think we made special explanation for students about the gender-mixed rosters when we started using it. At one of the staff meetings, we just agreed with bringing gender-mixed rosters as a curriculum, yeah...I think it was the teaching union that recommended us to use it, and it was probably 2003. Well, first I thought it is odd that girls lined up before boys as a result of switching positions between girls and boys [laugh]. Now, boys and girls still line up separately in this school except in graduation ceremonies.

Cazuko-sensei also said that the gender mixed rosters is the only changed curriculum taken as “gender-free education.”

C-san: I don’t know if I can say this is a concrete example, but gender separated rosters we used to have is now replaced with gender mixed rosters. I think elementary schools started using it earlier than us. In junior high schools, we took it after

elementary schools did. I heard there were even junior high schools which started using it from this April. But yeah, in health and physical education classes, we use gender-separated rosters, and also in medical examination too. And male and female students make lines separately, since making two lines is more convenient in many situations.

M: How about standardization of “san” instead of using “kun” followed by boys’ names?

C: That only happens in elementary schools. Well, in junior high, there are teachers who raise strong conscious toward gender issues, for example a teacher of social studies in my school consciously calls boys name with “san.” There are differences among individual teachers. Unlike elementary schools, junior high does not make agreement with calling boys name with “san.”

Beniko-sensei says, however, the textbooks they use are standardized by using “san” for both boys and girls.

B: In present, all students are called followed by “san” in classrooms, although I don’t really know what’s going on outside of the classroom [laugh]. Well, I’m trying to concentrate on thinking about it... But, from 2006, revised textbooks are all standardize using “san”. Really, no matter what textbook is, Japanese or Social studies or anything, unified by “san”.

It is interesting however, if you take a look at the policies proposed by Kobe and Ono government, there is no mention about calling boys name followed by “san” that teachers believe in one of the practices of the gender-free curriculum. As well, there is no term “gender-free” in the policies. Introducing the curriculum which makes student mixed rosters can be seen as the first step to reducing unnecessary gender separation in the classrooms, but it is problematic to think that using gender mixed rosters is the main goal of education for gender equality. The local government, however, strongly promotes gender-mixed rosters as if the completion of diffusion of gender-mixed rosters is the proof of achievement of gender-equality.

In *The plan for gender equality in Kobe in 2004*, you can see 10 (from number 43 to 52) policies proposed for gender equality in school education in Kobe (Life, culture, and tourism office of gender equality section in Kobe, 2004, p.14). It is a revised version of

The plan 21 for gender equality in Kobe issued in 1998 (See **Appendix F, 1**). In *The annual report of gender equality plan in Kobe in 2005*, there is an interim report of *The plan for gender equality in Kobe in 2004* (See **Appendix F, 2**). The Policies from number 44 to 48 are actually pointed out by participants in interviews as what they need for improvement of gender education. The teachers I interviewed recognized the diffusion of gender mixed rosters (the number 50) as one of the main gender-free curriculum, but they implied a lack of other subjects. Introduction of gender mixed rosters to schools was strongly recommended by local government and reported with quantitative data showing achievement of their tasks, since it can be made easily by switching over from the old rosters to new one. The practice of using gender mixed rosters among schools is symbolized as the accomplishment of gender equality. Except introduction of the gender mixed rosters and supplementary reading materials, there is very little evidence of any outstanding results in the policies.

In *Heart-ship plans: plans for gender equality in Ono in 2002*, there are 2 plans for propulsion of school education for gender equality (Gender equality propulsion board in Ono, 2002, p.34-35). Since the Basic Law for gender equality was established in 1999 by Japanese government, Ono city government set up a project team for drawing up plans of gender equality in Ono. After Hyogo province established *Gender equality plan 21 in Hyogo* in 2001, Ono city government enacted *Heart-ship plans: plans for gender equality in Ono in 2002* (See **Appendix F, 3**). In *Heart-ship: case studies of school project for gender equality in Ono in 2004*, there is a reports of the plan 2002. It is composed of individual reports collected from schools, from kindergartens to high schools, in Ono. Ono city government required that a teacher from each school be on the committee for the

gender equality propulsion project. Each school provides reports about various experience based curriculum they conducted. As a supplementary report, the committee also provided *Revision, inspection, and practice of 'hidden curriculum'*, that show the result of an investigation of the diffusion gender mixed rosters, gender mixed line up, shoe boxes, and lockers. According to the result, all of the schools in Ono, from kindergarten to high school, have already introduced gender mixed rosters (Gender equality propulsion board in Ono, 2004, p.2). As well as the report issued by Kobe, the diffusion of the gender mixed roster among schools is symbolized as an accomplishment of gender equality in Kobe. The representation of gender discrimination in the politics is rigid as if it is easily eliminated. Those changes for school regulations help to make students mixed based on their gender, but it does not make gender issues visible. Invisible gender issues in hidden curriculum are still invisible unless we make a conscious effort to see them. There are not enough explanations for both teachers and students about using gender-mixed rosters, but students show no reactions to the changes, and the gender mixed roster is gradually naturalized among teachers and students. As teachers said, if they do not see major differences of students' behaviors and values after the curriculum changes, how can one be sensitive to gender issues through the curriculum changes?

Teachers said, students accept the curriculum changes without resistances in the classrooms.

A: I think I get used to using gender-mixed rosters in classrooms most of the time, even though sometimes I feel it is inconvenient when boys' names and girls' names are similar. Well, sometimes students start laughing when I call boys' names with "san," but that's it. Students call each other's names without "san" or "kun" outside of the classrooms anyways [laugh].

C: Before we start using gender mixed rosters, some of us were worried about using it, but once we get used to it, I don't think we have confusions or complaints about the

mixed rosters. I think students easily accepted the changes of curriculums, although we did not explain about the aim of using mixed rosters to students from the first time.

C: There is no special time spent for gender issues, but since it has a connection with human right education, gender issues must be taught in social studies class. Even in social studies class, however, does not really concentrate on “gender.” But, compared to few years ago, in recent years, I think because we have a certain kind of recognition of “gender,” it naturally be accepted in the class.

Although there is not special class focusing on gender issues, as Cazuko-sensei said, there can be seen an increase of acknowledgement of the issues of “gender” that helps students and teachers to accept the changes of curriculum without any explanations. However, invisible gender issues in hidden curriculum are still invisible unless we try to see them. Students are easily the receivers of new curriculum and do not have chances to doubt the knowledge given by teachers. But, when students have chances and experience to focus on gender issues, they show different reactions. According to Beniko-sensei, students who have using gender mixed curriculums in elementary schools accept the changes of curriculum without showing particular reactions, but students who did not know gender mixed rosters until they entered junior high school ask questions “why”.

B: In the beginning, at the point of 2004, we had a seminar for teachers and came to an agreement with using the mixed rosters. At that time we had a kind of common understanding that we can’t make boys and girls separate when they line up. For students, at the time of 2004, I think we explained about the reason of using mixed rosters. Like these name labels on backside of each student’ desks, you often see that they used to be blue for boys and pink for girls, but at the seminar in 2004, we got notification that we shouldn’t separate colors between girls and boys. Now we are using all white colors. Basically, students accept changes without resistances, since the most of the students in this schools come from the elementary school in this area next to this school, they have already get basic idea about gender. I think, in general, students who get used to using “san” from their elementary schools do not have any resistance. So yeah, there are some students show responses like “why do we have to use gender-mixed roster?” or “why the old roster was changed?” or “we had been separated girls and boys, but we didn’t need to!” like that [laugh]. One student even pointed out that we still have separations in school bag color [laugh]. But yeah, most of the students accepted it without any resistance.

Students who was in the border between the new curriculum and the old curriculum had chance to notice the issues which was hidden in old curriculum. Since this research participant's school had a special class dealing with gender issues, some students even pointed out a gender separation in the material she gave.

B: I used a picture that you can't tell it's a boy or a girl. But one student point out one of the picture has long eyelashes but the other picture doesn't have long one... I didn't notice that.

Through experiences to realize the existence of "gender," students become sensitive to gender issues. However, as Tisdell (1998) says "learners do not come into the learning environment simply as equal players, with equal chances, or different but 'equal' kinds of life experiences" (Tisdell, 1998, p.9), how students react to the new curriculum also depends on each individual perception.

M: When I had interviews with a teacher in a school in Kobe, she said she remembers that some transfer students from Ono city can call their classmates' name followed by "san" whoever they are boys or girls. She said students from Ono city make it a habit to do that.

B: Oh really? But I think it depends on each student. I think difference among individual is big. Well, students I was in charge of the first year are now third year students, and they can correspond to both situation "san" and "kun". But yeah, I think the difference among individuals can't ignore.

Also, there are differentials among reactions of teachers.

B: You can see teachers who call both females and male students' names with "san" are increasing lately. But, it is all depend on the person. There is a male teacher who says "I call male students names with "kun" with a strong faith. I can't call their names with 'san'"[laugh].

Tokyo Women's Foundation (1996) mentions that the purpose of "gender-free education" is to bring gender equality in latent level (Tokyo Women's Foundation, 1996, p.104). That is, gender-free education does not only aim to enlighten students on gender equality intentionally by setting up official curriculum, rather it should work as a

counteractive hidden curriculum to instill the idea of gender equality into students. As a dimension of latent curriculum, to create atmosphere in the schools that both boys and girls naturally get mixed with together is significant, and the first step of gender-free education should start with a shift from “separation” to “shuffle” (Tokyo Women’s Foundation, 1996, p.104). According to Beniko-sensei, however, there is a video *Thinking of hidden curriculum in schools (1996)* made by Tokyo Women’s Foundation that is required for the committee members to watch and she had an initiative thought about gender. Watching this video, unnecessary school customs which help to divide girls and boys in many situations is criticized, and also the significance of seeing students’ individual differences is stressed. Especially, at the end of the video, the researcher who got involved in making this video gives a comment that bringing gender mixed roster is just a start to thinking about gender and it does not result in big changes to the classrooms. Rather, the important thing for both teachers and students is to keep asking themselves why they are using the gender mixed roster, since the issues of gender cannot be seen unless we keep trying to see it consciously. Thus, there is a contradictory request that, although Tokyo Women’s Foundation mentions using gender mixed roster to make students “shuffle” it is just a beginning. A continuance of pondering over issues around gender is more significant in order to see the hidden curriculum, at the same time, they emphasizes the importance of elimination of unnecessary gender separation in unconscious level. To create a learning environment that boys and girls naturally and unconsciously get mixed together is necessary, but also to elicit unconscious gender biases is significant. That is, neither of them exists alone.

In the article, Tokyo Women's Foundation suggests that becoming "gender-sensitive" is the first step to creating "gender-free" learning environment (Tokyo Women's Foundation, 1996, p.104). Contradictorily, Houston (1996) describes "A gender-sensitive perspective is a higher-order perspective than that involved in the gender-free strategy" (Houston, 1996, p. 61). Houston proposes the gender-sensitive perspective as an open-ended question that encourage us to ask constantly the ways in which respond to a sexist culture. Thus, to be "gender-sensitive" is not only the process but also the goal for teachers and students in order to create learning environments that give educational opportunities for girls and those who are marginalized are able to take part in. Most of the students accept the changes in the curriculum without resistance, but can we see it as an achievement of gender equality that invisible gender separation turns into invisible gender co-mixture among students?

Resistance against creating unity and sameness

Second, I will analyze the practice of gender-free and the teachers' resistance against surface measures to create unity and sameness through curriculums. During the interviews, I saw teachers tend to feel guilty about paying attention to gender differences through gender-free curriculum. Teachers are caught by a pressure to see boys and girls as the same unconsciously. As a result of the conflict to create unrealistic sameness among students, teachers suggest creating learning environments where students themselves have a chance to think about the issues of gender.

Teachers try to see girls and boys as the same, and they feel guilty when they realize they see students differently.

A: When I speak in front of students, I try not to recognize the difference between boys and girls, and I think I don't really care about the difference now.

B: The roster we use in classrooms is gender-mixed, [lowering voice] but what strongly remains in this school is that students form a line gender separately in the situations such as a meeting or a morning assembly. One of the reasons students line up separately is because we think seriously about crisis management. If students are lined up gender mixed when something happens, we can't count how many girls and boys are in the line or who is not in the line immediately. When we try to see who is in the line and who is not in a moment, it would be difficult to find a person who is not in the line if they line up jumbled. It is not the issue of girl or boy. It's the issue of security and life primacy. Therefore, we talked about this before in a meeting, and I hope we don't gain any accusation about it [laugh].

Beniko-sensei tries to think about "gender" constantly in order not to see boys and girls differently, but she feels it is difficult to keep her consciousness toward the issues of gender, and she sometimes realizes that she has a moment that she cannot think about gender.

B: What to say...I think every teachers is involved in and working on about the issue of gender in anytime in anyplace, even though we don't spend extra time to have class focusing on the issue now.... I can say, sometimes the level of consciousness toward gender issues become low without any notice. I don't know what to say, but sometimes I have moments that I cannot think about gender. Even I edited the report and I always get involved in 'gender-free education', I don't know what it is. If somebody ask me what is "gender-free" and stuff, I don't know what it is...I can't answer because it is not only about "girls be strong like boys."

Gender is too elusive to define. Houston says, gender is not a trait of individuals, but it is a structure of power or a structuring *process* (Houston, 1996, p.59). Gender should be treated as a pattern of *relations* among people, and the social relations are systematic, not random and historical, not static (Houston, 1996, p.59). Eliminating gender bias may often be a matter of seeing gender differently rather than becoming blind to it (Houston, 1996, p.60). Since gender is not something teachers always keep focusing on, teachers have questions and resistances toward the superficial gender-free curriculum aiming at creating sameness.

C: I think the curriculum introduced to each school is less important since the unification of using “san” is nothing really to do with the real issues of gender-bias.

B: When I was taking charge of the class before 2004, I was calling boys’ names followed by “kun,” then suddenly after 2004, I had to call them all followed by “sun.” It was sudden and surprised me somewhat. I felt a bit sorry for students, too.

Beniko-sensei implied a feeling of guilty to bring a different ideology to her classroom using her power. She said gender-free education should not be stuck to superficial regulation changes.

B: I think the issues around gender is going to be the argument of having kids or not. It is such a big issue for students and also for myself. The issue of gender cannot be taught only in the textbooks, only in the classrooms, since it connects to some big issues in terms of our bodies and also minds. In the stage of junior high schools, I think we have to do something more progressed and related to real situation, such as thinking about jobs, what they want to be in the future, making a connection with thinking about gender issues. In junior high level, we have to construct a curriculum which makes us look at future jobs. That brings the issue in another stage as well, makes students to think the issues of gender wider and deeper... Well, there are teachers who believe in important thing is the “form” in order to make something accomplish. There are also teachers who think the important thing is “thought or ideology”, but other teachers say “you can’t make it possible only by thought, the form is important.”

Cazuko-sensei showed attitude against denial of conventional Japanese gender identities, but behind the reason she showed conservative attitude, she has strong suspicion to the current gender-free education which provides only one-dimensional strategies.

C: I think whether we call boys’ names with “san” or “kun” is just a small matter [laugh]. It is just an ostensible treatment for the issues of gender. And I think the substance of the issue of gender is in different dimension. What it called “gender-free education” is too sensitive to trifle expressions and stuff, such as, once I say “you are a girl, aren’t you?” and they say “Oh it is not proper expression” [laugh]. Therefore, rather than we indicate “you should be like this” or “to be like this is correct”, we better say “this is one of the ways of thinking” or “this is another way of thinking”, or “what do you wanna be?” to students. I think “kun” and “san” is not a big deal.

Cazuko-sensei feels she should think that girls and boys are same, but at the same time she is opposed to the idea that girls and boys are the “same” in every situation.

C: I know I have to have a perspective that men and women are ‘same’ and ‘equal’ through gender-free education, but somehow, I’m still thinking it is okay that there are differentials between men and women [laugh]. Well, gender-free education does not particularly suggest bad things, but when the gender-free education suddenly came out for the first time, it had a strong impact like ‘gender should be removed, and every women and men must be the same,’ and I thought it is not true. I think therefore I still have a negative image. But I guess the original meaning of gender-free must be something different. If I get the explanation about real purpose and meaning of the gender-free, I might feel “oh yeah, that’s true”. So they should explain about it properly. But just the first impression is strong and I still have negative image of it [laugh].

Then, if superficial “sameness” or “fairness” is dubious for equality, what is the definition of gender equality in education? Subrahmanian (2005) points out that there is a lack of a universally accepted definition of gender equality in relation to education goals.

According to Subrahmanian, achieving gender parity is just one step toward gender equality in and through education (Subrahmanian, 2005, p.397). An education system with equal numbers of boys and girls participating, who may progress evenly through the system, may not in fact be based on gender equality:

Gender equality rests on, but is not the same as, achieving gender parity, or female being represented in equal numbers as males in education, although the latter offers a “first stage” measure of progress towards gender equality in education. Gender parity reflects “formal” equality, in terms of access to, and participation in, education. “Formal” equality can also be understood as equality that is premised on the notion of the “sameness” of men and women, where the male actor is held to be the norm. (Subrahmanian, 2005, p.397)

She points out that “gender parity” indicators are “static” measures which do not tell very much about processes of education. Rather than static measures, she says the processes *how* equality of outcome has been achieved and the processes referring to the *quality of experience* of education are significant.

A relational understanding of “gender” requires recognition of the dynamic processes by which gender inequalities are constituted across different arenas of human life. Gender inequalities arise from the unequal power relations between women and men, and hence assessments of gender equality need to capture the relational dimensions of

gender inequality. (Subrahmanian, 2005, p.397)

A first step towards assessing progress towards substantive gender equality beyond formal equality, entails understanding the social construction of gender identity or what it means to be a woman or a man in a given context (Subrahmanian, 2005, p.398). For equality to be achieved, Subrahmanian says, a definition that recognizes women and men start from different positions of advantage, and are constrained in different ways is necessary.

“Thus, achievement of substantive equality requires the recognition of *‘the ways in which women are different from men, in terms of their biological capacities and in terms of the socially constructed disadvantages women face relative to men’*” (Subrahmanian, 2005, p. 397).

If teachers are trying to see boys and girls as the same through gender-free education curriculum, it is aiming at “formal equality” to see the “sameness” of men and women that is still based on male as a norm. Subrahmanian emphasize the importance of the recognition of differential between men and women for achievement of substantive equality, but Ringrose (2007) says poststructural feminists problematize the idea of seeing inherent gender differential as a misreading of gender which cannot be taken as a stand alone variable or measure:

Equality became the primary platform of ‘liberal feminism’, which extends a liberal ethos of equality of rights, and has focused on eradicating gender difference as a way toward gender equality (sameness). Feminist ‘difference’ theorists argue, in contrast, that women’s inherent difference be valued, and that strategies to have equal-ness (which leave the masculine norm intact, against which feminine difference is positioned as something to be transcended towards *sameness* with men) are inherently patriarchal. Poststructural feminists are trying to go beyond this dichotomy between equality and difference critiquing both the equality perspective and difference perspectives as essentializing of gender, and missing how gender is differentiated by other forms of difference. (Ringrose, 2007, p.480)

As Houston (1996) suggests that teachers should pay more attention to gender differences

in order to give educational opportunities for girls, it must be necessary to recognize socially constructed gender differential as a first step toward substantive gender equality. However, as Ringrose points out, it is also problematic for post-structural feminist theories to see only gender differentials which is not monolithic but is constructed by multiple factors such as social class, ethnicity, race and culture. Measuring for equity through gender-only frameworks embeds knowledge into a binary oppositional framing (Ringrose, 2007, p.480). Thus, as Subrahmanian says, the dynamic processes, not static measures, referring to how gender equality and differential is constructed and how the quality of experience of education is created are crucial.

It seems teachers also feel that seeing the processes how equality and differential is created is significant rather than the achievement of gender parity in the classrooms. As a recommendation to improve gender-free curriculum, teachers mentioned students should have a chance to think about gender issues related to their experiences. Especially they think it is necessary to develop a curriculum that takes into consideration future occupations and broader gender issues. Although teachers question the current gender-free curriculum focusing on a few regulation changes, they are willing to provide learning environments for students to think critically about gender and to find multiple solutions.

A: Students have rigid image that “this job is made for men” or “this job is for women,” for instance, doctors are male job that kind of thing...I think the image should be changed, since there are also women doctors. Well, I don’t know the way I say “women doctors [joi]” is appropriate expression or not [laugh].

B: I think it’s not really hard to bring the curriculum such as classification of pictures or thinking about gender separated jobs. They are something any students in any grade can do.

C : I don't know what to say, but junior high school students are getting into the phase of adolescence, therefore, especially individual students become aware of "men" and "women" at this time in terms of sexually and physiologically. Thus, it is really appropriate timing for students to learn about what 'men' and 'women' is, in the meaning of socially constructed 'gender.' Junior high school students are mature enough to understand the topic of 'gender' and related external pressures as a girl and a boy.

C: I prefer to focus on each individual's abilities and differences which is constructed in different age and different needs in societies. I think in Career education, students can think about gender. Thinking about their future lives and jobs connected with gender issues, and also connected with individual specific characteristics, you can learn about gender. Of course in 'education for human right' or 'moral education' you can learn about it. Yeah, so I believe it is possible to put education for gender into regular curriculum. Just I think to put it into 'career education' is the easiest way to approach. We actually have a "career education" session in an assembly hour, and also each class spends few hours for career education. From their first year, students start thinking about their personal characteristics or what they are, and then they think what kind of job is around them. Then, they make a plan of their futures and goals and way, those kinds of things.

As well, in the report she edited, Beniko-sensei points out that "Rather than surface measures of 'unity of form,' it might be more important to promote to set up opportunities for students to think about their internal gendered identities in relate to moral education and education for human right" (Gender equality propulsion board in Ono, 2005, p.50). Cazuko-sensei mentions, gender issues must be already dealt in social studies class in her school even the term "gender" does not appear on the textbooks.

C: Especially in civic education as a part of social studies, issues around gender should be dealt with in many ways naturally. A teacher of social studies was talking about the importance of paying attention to gender issues before. The term 'gender' probably appears in the part of learning about equal right, although there wouldn't be special spare time and curriculum for it. But, from 3 years ago, 'career education' has been promoted, and issues around gender should be dealt with.

As Tisdell (1995) proposes, the best learning environment for women and those marginalized is where affective forms of knowledge that emphasizes connection and relationship are valued, along with knowledge that comes from life experience (Tisdell,

1995, p.82), teachers think the improvement of career education would be one of the key strategies for education about gender issues related to real experiences. Also the research participants point out a lack of resources for teachers about gender and gender-free education and necessarily the lack of accessible supplementary reading materials for teachers.

B: In my case, as a result, the point was I had to edit and write up the report which I had to submit to the committee of gender equality at that time. It was a bit difficult to find a sample practice for gender-free curriculum and try to put it in the real situation in the class. Each class and each student have a different reality even around the issue of gender. It was a bit difficult that I had to find the idea about what I have to write on in the report and try to make the practice adjust to the idea. I looked for various resources, I looked over books, and put one idea from one book and put another idea from another book... Not only for the report, but it was also something I had to make for the open day that the opportunity for mothers to come see it. So, yeah, the thing I made was a curriculum I formed intentionally to hand in to the committee. Actually, when I was looking for resources for forming gender-free curriculum, I thought there are not enough supplementary reading materials around. There are some, but I still think we need more of them.

C: I think one of the reasons I am confused is because of a lack of opportunities for learning about gender. Well, I don't feel like I wanna go to learn about gender issues anyways [laugh]. But as long as I remember, I didn't take any classes about education for gender equality when I was a student in teaching university. Well, even though I think young teachers who finished university lately might get some training of creating gender equal curriculum. Yeah, if there is something we can do to remove the fixed idea about gender, that is to have a class to teach it after all.

Beniko-sensei said, after the year 2004, when they had special open day working on gender issues, they have not had any seminars or training programs about hidden curriculum so far. As Hirooka (2002) stresses the necessity of setting up the training programs for teachers to learn about gender (Hirooka, 2002, p.87), in the report she edited, she says that teachers need to have opportunities to talk about their opinions on issues of gender together in order to reduce the differences of consciousness of gender issues among teachers (Gender equality propulsion board in Ono, 2005, p.50).

The aim of gender-free education is to bring invisible “sameness” to classrooms through counteractive hidden curriculum such as gender-mixed rosters, while teachers suggest that the only way to be aware of gender issues is to create a visible formal curriculum to enlighten students and teachers. The literal meaning given by the term gender-free creates a problem because it promotes the mistaken assumption that it is to be free from gender. Teachers therefore have a conflict between their efforts to see all students as the same yet they have an uncontrollable internalized gender perspective to see gender specific characteristics. Gender-free education provides a message as if gender can be eliminated through simple superficial changes, but teachers notice the complexities of gender and the significance of creating students’ action based curriculum.

Transition to gender-sensitive perspective and contradictory desire for masculinity

In this third theme, I explain how teachers who are becoming sensitive to hidden gender issues ironically as a result of the diffusion of the term gender-free, are also still holding stereotypical notions of femininity and masculinity with regard to their students. Teachers are becoming more sensitive to gender issues more than they realize in that they are careful not to say sexist remarks. Some teachers question male privileged school administrative systems as well. On the other hand, teachers have negative images toward a lack of traditional stereotypical femininity and masculinity among girls and boys. Some teachers believe that the schools are places where women and men can work equally. It can be said that, transition to gender sensitive perspectives and resistance to internalized gender perspectives exist simultaneously.

A: Yeah, I think now I am careful not to say “because you are girls” and stuff. My colleagues seem also try not to say “that’s not what girls do” deliberately.

C: I sometimes say ‘girls’ shouldn’t do it’ carelessly [laugh]. It is very difficult. Cazuko-sensei takes an affirmative position for the preservation of traditional Japanese gender identity, but she feels regret for unintentionally saying the words to emphasize stereotypical girls’ image. With the diffusion of the idea of gender-free, teachers experienced the awareness of gender discrimination in teachers’ words expressions and remarks. Each teacher has different experiences with their awareness of gender.

B: In this report I wrote, I reflect my own idea and data that I took in my class. If I use the data that I got from other classes taught by other teachers, it would be different. I thought it has a hidden curriculum. After all, I would like to see if students can get what “I” wanted to express as “equal” with my own thought. Other teachers also focusing on “men-women equality education [danjyo byodo kyoiku]”, but what I talk and what other teachers talk has a gap in conscious level. Students also gave us different responses. I feel it’s so different. What I told about gender in classrooms would be received differently by each student depending on how they understand my words.

M: Learning about gender, I get the idea that it is already beyond the level of seeking for sameness or equality between boys and girls, or not expecting that “girls have to be like boys.” Rather, boys are also getting various pressures because they are “boys” as well as girls get pressures. So, how we can provide education to take away the pressures from boys is also a problem.

C: Oh yeah...That’s what I happened to hear yesterday. As I’m studying about counseling, I was taking pedagogies class, and the professor was talking about it. What he was saying is...one thing we can say is ‘external evaluation’ or ‘external pressures’ that we always get, such as ‘because you are a girl’ or ‘if you are a boy’. If you are a boy, you think I have to work hard since I am a boy, but it is not right. We have to think about it deliberately, and we have to think about creating societies where both women and men are able to express themselves well and live well. We had that kind of talk yesterday by coincidence. I’ve known that, saying ‘girls shouldn’t do...’ or ‘because you are a girl...’ are problematic, but I realized that boys are also getting pressures, you know... boys are also living in the circumstances getting pressures ‘since you are a boy...’. Thus, yeah, on the contrary, compared to the past, the status of women is getting better and being recognized lately, but there is a lack of recognitions for men too, and I guess it is necessary to set up a curriculum from the perspective of seeing both men and women.

Cazuko-sensei is taking evening classes of postgraduate courses in University in order to get required certification to be a clinical psychologist (counselor). During the interview,

she found a connection between what she learned in the evening classes and her perspective of gender. There are more opportunities for a person to be aware of internalized views of gender. There is a stereotypical image that education for gender equalities is about rescuing women who are disadvantaged in male privileged societies, but she realized that there are various pressures for men as well as women that are rarely paid attention to in education for gender equalities.

C: I thought about it just yesterday...boys are also getting pressure. Thinking about a real situation, if their fathers say 'act like a man!', it's so much pressures for boys in a sense. Yeah...external pressure or external desire affects development of gender. But, each person has individuality, so seeing each person's different value is significant.

In addition to their awareness of gender discrimination in their knowledge, there are awareness of sexism exists in the school systems. Some teachers criticized male teachers' occupation of decision making positions in the schools as obstacles for female teachers.

B: Teachers in other classes are also working on getting rid of using gender separated color name cards. Now some teachers are really cautious about not saying "behave as a woman" or "be a man" to their students. As I mentioned in this report, we tried to make students aware of gender issues through the curriculum in this school, but I heard there were other schools in Ono that reported teachers' reaction and understandings about gender issues. Such as, asking teachers that if their status is equal or what, and if there is gender separated roles among teachers or not.

M: Oh really? In this report, you said intensification of educators' consciousness toward gender issues is significant.

B: Yeah, I really think it is the most important that teachers have consciousness about gender. Since we put ourselves in the school for long time, we can't see how it's like from outside...even there still remains gender separated roles among teachers.

Well...as an opinion from a person who is in the inside of the school, it seems we still have elementary schools occupied 60 %, 70%, or at most 80% by female teachers in Ono. The percentages of male and female teachers in Junior high schools are much closer to even. But still, I feel sometimes male teachers are given heavier responsibilities than female teachers.

M: Do you mean, there are more male teachers in decision making position in the school?

B: Yeah. I think it is necessary to pay attention not to be like that. I mean, for example when we have a meeting, or when we are given a task to work on, I think we have to

pay attention not to give more work and heavier responsibility to male teachers. In our school, I found more male teachers are taking charge of student advisors.

As an “insider”, she indicates male teachers’ power and also their burden accompanying the authority in terms of quantities of tasks. In the report she edited, she also points out a shortage of the number of female teachers holding administrative positions. In addition, she points out that the majority of participants who usually come to an open day to see their kids are mother/women (Gender equality propulsion board in Ono, 2005, p. 50).

Teachers are becoming sensitive to say the words related to gender in the classrooms, and they are re-thinking and re-questioning about gender through the experience in the schools and outside of the schools. There are, however, individual differences in the perception of one’s marginalized situation. Unlike Beniko-sensei, Cazuko-sensei sees the school as places where equal opportunities are provided. Cazuko-sensei has a positive perspective toward the administration system of the school and both the male and female teachers’ status, although she mentions she has a traditional fixed idea on gender, which she attributes to her age and generation:

C: What my mom was always saying is that the teaching profession is quite gender equal because of less wage differentials. She said many other kinds of jobs still have quite huge wage differentials, but as a teacher you don’t need to worry about it. Both women and men can work same ways. But yeah...now, young teachers are finally coming into schools, but because of the baby-boom generation such as me, who is in their 40s and 50s, we have been occupying the roles of school teachers. But since 2 or 3 years ago, especially in elementary schools, teachers who is in their 20s or 30s is increasing. It is better that we have teachers from different generations. In my junior high school, since last year, 2 teachers who are in their 20s came to our school finally, and probably they have different perspectives about gender and school systems. After all, a senior is stubborn and has traditional ideas [laugh]. It’s hard to accept new ideas [laugh]. (See Appendix F, 4)

Quantitative data shows there is a lack of female teachers who are in administrative position in the schools, but she thinks schools are places where equal opportunities are

provided. There is an unconscious refusal to acknowledge systematic oppressions in one's lives as a result of a process of selective reality (Hughes, 2000, p.55) and lack of critical awareness since it is very painful and difficult to overcome. Moreover, behind the teacher's awareness of internalized gender biases, there can be seen a deep-rooted stereotypical view of femininity and masculinity.

A: You know, home economics and technologies are required for both girls and boys, and girls work on technologies same as male students. Yeah, it's not like only girls attend to cleaning up classrooms as opposed to boys are running around like the old days. They know it's the responsibility of both girls and boys. Also, it is no longer only boys who study hard preparing for high school entrance examination. And also, a class chair is often taken by a girl student now more than boys. Just if a girl becomes a chair, it is necessarily for a boy to be the vice chairperson. But yeah, compared to the past, I feel boys become more 'girly,' or what to say, become kinds of 'womanish' [laugh]. What to say...they become 'delicate' [laugh]. There was a boy in a kitchen apron, and he was distributing sandwiches to teachers in the faculty room that he made in the home economics class [laugh]. Yeah...I think I shouldn't say 'womanish', but really I think there are less 'manly, manly' men. What to say...recently I can't really see boys who are strong and dependable [laugh]. On the other hand, girls are, if anything, becoming more powerful and having backbone. There are many girls who say 'Atsuko-sensei, I can do it!' [laugh]. Well, in the stage of junior high, mental age of girls is still older than that of boys.

She emphasizes the progress of female advantages in classrooms as a positive meaning, but at the same time, she indicates the loss of masculinity among male students in the present. Instead of an affirmative image for today's strong girls, there is a regressive image for delicate boys.

C: Compared to the past, things have been changed a lot. It is no longer true that girls are the quiet one. The one who is quiet is no longer depends on gender. I don't know if this change happened because of the gender-free education or the gender-mixed roster or what, but yeah I feel girls are becoming more "mannish" than before.

B: I think, recently, girls are becoming more naughty and disorderly [laugh]. [With pointing at the lockers in the back] Like this area, girls were the ones who tried to keep the locker neat and tidy, but now it turns to be each individual personalities' issue. Even taking a glance at the shelf over there, the one in a full of mess is girls'

[laugh]. Whatever it is, a shelf or a locker, we used to have impression that the one in organized is girls'. But it's not true now.

B: I don't know if it's because of this education for gender equality we are working on, but one thing I can say is, recently students are not given words such as "girls can't do that" or "act like a man!" by teachers.

M: Oh, okay. Yeah, seems teachers are really careful about what they shouldn't say lately, especially about something related to gender issues.

B: Yeah, I don't know the reason though. If that's because of we don't say "girls shouldn't do that" that kind of stuff. I don't know... But, yeah, it is true that quite "mannish" girls are increasing.

M: [laugh]. I heard, as opposite, a sort of "delicate" boys are increasing.

B: [laugh] Yes, they are! Again, I don't know the relevance between gender-free education and what is happening now. But, yeah, I feel very feminine men are increasing, for sure.

There is a double standard in evaluation of boys. Even though male teachers who have power are criticized as an obstacle for progress of female teachers, the effeminate boys are recognized as the one who lost characteristics which is necessary for boys. Thus, in female teachers' voices, contradictory desires for strong "manly boys" and subversion of male authorities exists simultaneously. As well, there are both positive and negative aspects for strong girls. Ringrose (2007) says girls' educational and workplace success have become a 'metaphor' for social mobility and social change. While, girls' educational victories and work place success is somehow productive of a culture wide 'crisis of masculinity' (Ringrose, 2007, p.472). If a student, either a boy or a girl, possesses remarkable feminine character, then it cannot be accepted as an advanced characteristic in Japanese culture. The argument between the strong 'manly' girls and the delicate 'girly' boys is still limited within a dualistic rhetorical cycle of girls' victimization vs. boys' victorization in educational debates. The debate on gender and achievement is framed through a narrow binary conception of gender so that the unitary category of 'girl' is simplistically pitted against the unitary category 'boy' (Ringrose, 2007, p.479). The

dualistic argument between the ‘manly’ girls and ‘girly’ boys has a connection to the context of seeking equality or the sameness of men and women. The strong girls are admired because they symbolize themselves same as boys. As I mentioned before, the notion of the “sameness” and “fairness” of men and women is still based on male norm, and it is limited within dualistic categories of gender. No matter how teachers are getting gender sensitive to notice sexism in their knowledge and in their school curriculum, they cannot overcome the male normalized social structures if they are captured by a binary conception of gender. If we are going to build and expand feminist counter culture, we must move beyond denying patriarchal authority. Postmodern feminists are, therefore, trying to go beyond the dichotomy between the equality perspective and difference perspective of gender since it is missing how gender is differentiated by other forms of differences.

However, in a real situation, how can teachers make a curriculum beyond gender equality and differences? Although I have supported Houston’s idea of paying more attention to gender differentials among students in order to give more educational opportunities for girls, seeing gender differences would be restricted within a dualistic heterosexual discourse which helps to widen the distinction between two gender frameworks. Gore (1993) says, “Feminist pedagogy’s goal to ‘replace hierarchical authority with shared leadership’ and its distinction between authority-over and authority-with function, in part, to justify the ‘contradictory’ experience of feminist practice in a ‘patriarchal’ institution (Gore, 1993, p. 78). Ringrose also says, “We are repeatedly returned to a ‘melancholic’ heterosexual narrative –an endlessly repeating and cyclical, rigid gender binary” (Ringrose, 2007, p. 480). Nonetheless, I still believe that

gender issues are invisible without trying to see them, so, it is crucial for postmodern feminist research and practice to reveal how the dominant, masculine messages construct the structure of school culture and curriculum. There must be conflict and contradiction rather than one answer when we analyze the structures of the issues of gender equality and differences, as well the teachers are in chaos of gender sensitive perspective and internalized gender blindness. What we can do is, after all, to see more differentials and to keep thinking our positionalities. As feminist positional pedagogy suggests, in order to make women and those who marginalized come to voice, teachers can see the gender differences and can use their authorities of her roles as teachers to facilitate the emancipation of women students. Also, the authorities can be shared with students by giving weight to dialog between teachers and students and among students that contributes to bringing diversities and minority knowledge into classrooms. As I cited Davies and Banks (1992) before, teachers and students need to understand how the current gender order is held in place and how their identity is organized in terms of it, if they are to resist it. Tisdell (1998) says, post-structural feminist educators should problematize the conditions that have informed their own lives, and examine and acknowledge the limitations and possibilities of their positionality for their own teaching and learning.

Ellsworth (1989) calls this “the pedagogy of the unknowable”, referring to the limitations of what instructors can know at any time due to the unconsciousness of their own positionality. There are also limitations posed by institutional constraints, what Gore (1993) refers to as “institutionalized pedagogy as regulation”, such as those that require instructors to be in an evaluative role and to satisfy the demands of the institution. All these factors – positionalities of participants, institutional regulations, and what remains “unknowable” by being unconscious or hidden – pose limitations and possibilities for an emancipator agenda. But by examining, problematizing, and owning one’s own positional limitations and possibilities, and the institutional constraints in which the learning activity is conducted, the possibility for emancipator education is greater than if one ignores dealing with these issues. (Tisdell, 1998, p.8)

Gender-sensitive perspective has been cultivated among teachers through experiences to be aware of the limitations and possibilities of each teacher's multiple positionalities. The opportunities for teachers and students to become aware that the self and others are positioned within social structures in which they are multiply simultaneously privileged and oppressed is significant.

In this chapter, we have looked at the experiences of three female teachers who are involved in gender-free education. First I examined how the representation of "gender-free" is tied to negative, rigid, and surface gender perspectives. The term "gender" and "gender-free" has been eliminated from the textbooks and the school curriculum, giving a negative, unreliable image for teachers to deal with. There is also an image that the idea of gender and gender-free came from North America that subverts femininity and masculinity cultivated in traditional Japanese culture. Gender and gender-free are perceived as ambiguous and complicated elements which threaten a rigid gender separation between men and women created in Japanese education systems. Compared to the negative image of the term "gender-free", the old term "men-women equality [danjyo byodo]" is more understandable and more generalized that helps bring female educational participation. The effort for gender-free education is usually limited as the elimination of the gender separated rosters and unnecessary gender separation in classrooms and school regulations. Indeed, the local government strongly promotes gender-mixed rosters as if the completion of diffusion of gender-mixed rosters is the proof of achievement of gender-equality. As a result, teachers also recognize that "gender-free education" as some of the regulation changes to make students mixed. As well, most of the students accept the changes without any resistances, and they do not have chances to be

aware of gender issues. Tokyo Women's Foundation, which first introduced the term "gender-free" to Japan, proposes that the purpose of gender-free education is to instill the idea of gender equality into students in latent level, that is, gender-free education curriculum should eliminate gender separations in unconscious level in order to create a learning environment where both boys and girls naturally mixed together. However, as the teachers says in the interviews, students who have chances to have experiences to be aware of gender issues give different reactions, such as students who were in the border between the new curriculum and the old curriculum are able to have a question "why". Even though how students react to the new curriculum depends on each individual student, it can be said that gender sensitive perspective can be cultivated through experiences to elicit unconscious gender biases. To make student mixed can be seen as the first step to reduce unnecessary gender separation in the classrooms, but it is problematic to think that using gender mixed rosters is the goal of education for gender equality. In order to make gender issues visible, it is significant for teachers and students to have opportunities to be aware of unconscious gender biases.

Secondly, I looked at how the notion of gender-free education is put into practice. Gender-free curriculum is recognized as bringing gender-mixed rosters to make students mixed and call their names with "san" to make no differences between girls and boys. Teachers believe in that it is important to try not to see boys and girls separately in their practices, but they also have feeling of resistances against providing only surface strategies to make students shuffled and same. As Subrahmanian points out, there is a lack of definition of gender equality in relation to education goals, and achieving gender parity only reflects "formal" equality in terms of access to, and participation in, education. As

well, formal equality is premised on the notion of the “sameness” of men and women, where the male actor is held to be the norm. Houston recommends teachers to pay more attentions to gender differentials in order to bring more girls’ participation of education. Also, Subrahmanian suggest the significance of paying attentions to gender differences in order to progress towards substantive gender equality beyond formal equality. But Ringrose points out that post-structural feminists problematizes the idea of seeing only gender differentials which is not monolithic but is constructed by multiple factors such as social class, ethnicity, race and culture. Measuring for equity through gender-only frameworks embeds knowledge into a binary oppositional framing. As Subrahmanian says the dynamic processes, not static measures, referring to how gender equality and differential is constructed and how the quality of experience of education is created are crucial. There are teachers’ voices that students should have chances to think about gender issues related to their experiences, especially through career education. Also the opportunities for teachers to learn and talk about gender issues with their colleagues are also required. I have focused on how the resistance of teachers, as an impediment to creating the unity and sameness, is presented in teachers’ words as a symbol of their gender-sensitive perspective. The curriculum of gender-free education tends to bring invisible “sameness” to the classrooms through simple superficial changes, while the teachers notice the significance of creating students’ action based curriculum. The resistance of teachers is outside of, and obstacles to, previous feminist theories which were aiming for gaining the same and equal opportunities for women and men to access to the education system.

Finally, I looked at the theme of the complexities and contradictions of gender practices, such as, how teachers' gender sensitive perspective coexist with internalized gender blindness. Teachers are getting sensitive to sexism and gender discrimination in their words and their curriculums through different experiences to be aware of their limitations and possibilities. However, there still can be seen stereotypical predictions for boys and girls, that is, strong "manly" girls are given positive meanings as opposed to delicate "girly" boys are labeled regressive images. Both boys and girls must get rid of "womanly" qualities in order to fit within the masculine paradigm, thus, the argument between "manly" girls and "girly" boys is still limited within a dualistic context of hierarchical relationship masculine/feminine. As well, the notion of the "sameness" and "fairness" of men and women is still based on male norm, and it is limited within dualistic categories of gender. As Houston suggest, paying more attentions to gender differences could be restricted within a dualistic heterosexual discourse which helps to widen the distinction between two gender frameworks. However, in order to turn invisible gender issues into conscious level, it is crucial to keep thinking their positionalities and differentials. There should be conflicts and contradictions rather than one answer when we analyze the structures of gender equality and differences, as well the teachers are in the chaos of gender sensitive perspective and internalized gender blindness.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

Summary of the research

My main purpose of researching and writing this thesis has been to demonstrate how the meaning of gender and gender-free is perceived by female teachers and how they struggle for creating nonsexist classrooms, and how their practice is still confined within the context of the achievement of gender parity which help producing male standardized binary oppositional structures. My main goal of this research is emancipation of female teachers from their inner constraint to ignore gender differences between girls and boys, and help them create the learning environments where both students and teachers have opportunities to become aware of their internalized gender biases through experimental, action based curriculum.

I have used Houston's ideas of "gender-free strategies" and "gender-sensitive perspective" as a central concept to analyze the issue of gender-free education in Japan. Through literature reviews, I found that, despite of Houston's implication for the weakness of gender-free strategies, the term "gender-free" was introduced to Japanese societies as a next step to surpass the old term "men-women equality [danjyo byodo]" and quickly became widespread among governmental policies and projects. But with the growth of the public attention to the term gender-free, it became a target of criticism from a conservative party and media as a feminist propaganda of gender-less perspective which reject gender differences between men and women. However, Houston actually problematizes the "gender-free" approach in her article that it is almost impossible for teachers to ignore gender differences since gender is a structure of power that is constantly changing and is constantly affected by other structuring processes. As opposed to the

current practices of gender-free education in Japan which encourage teachers to mix boys and girls in order to eliminate unnecessary gender differences from school culture, the original context of “gender-free” strategies does not indicate the denial of gender differences. On the contrary, Houston proposes the importance of paying more attentions to gender differences in order to bring more educational opportunities for girls and those who marginalized. Instead of the gender-free strategies, Houston recommends a gender-sensitive perspective, that is, an open-ended question which encourages us to constantly think the way to eliminate gender biases and question how gender is operative in the situation.

Postmodern/post-structural feminist theories and positional pedagogies have been used as theoretical frameworks of this research, and my research questions are made to examine “how” the truth around gender is represented and produced in the knowledge of the subjects who are restrained in the male normalized social structures. As Houston states that gender is a set of constantly changing social relations, postmodern feminists see the current gender order as problematic and try to deconstruct the dualistic and hierarchal dominant discourse around gender, dealing with multiple systems of privilege and oppression and their intersections, including gender, race, class, and sexed orientation. When I use postmodern feminist theories to look at learning environments, feminist positional pedagogy is an appropriate idea as it emphasizes how to deal with differences and how women and those marginalized because of their race, class, or sexual orientation can come to voice. Positional pedagogies make apparent that students are positioned differently in relationship to each other and in relationship to the knowledge being learned.

Although the current curriculum of gender-free education is aiming for making boys and girls mixed and forcing teachers ignore gender differences, positional pedagogies help students to see with a third eye that make them to aware that they are multiply and simultaneously privileged and oppressed.

Breaking down the exploitative binary relationship was also explored in my research methods. Approaching the experiences and thoughts of female teachers to challenge gender-free education, qualitative interviewing was chosen as my research method. Although there was no complete equality between the researcher and the researched, my positionality was constantly questioned in my research process in order to reduce the power imbalance between me and participants. Subjective knowledge is considered as a significant element for reducing power imbalance rather than something I need to eliminate from my research, since the participants became more talkative about their thoughts through the conversation to share my own personal perspectives and experiences during interviews. A friendly attitude as an empathetic listener also helped to reduce the participants' defensive attitude and helped them talk freely because there was a connection between my experiences and the interviewees' experiences. At the same time, I should consider that the interviewee's voice was influenced by my knowledge limitation since sometimes she tried to develop her idea on the bases of our conversation during the interview. As well, the researcher's multiple selves bring multiple interpretations of the reality, as positionally situated subjective knowledge is fragmented and changing in the social relations.

Approaching the female teachers' experiences, three specific themes emerged: 1) the representation of gender and gender-free; 2) how the notion of gender-free education is

put into practice; 3) the complexities and contradictions in the practice. First of all, approaching the representation of gender and gender-free, I found that the meaning of the term gender-free is tied to negative, rigid, and surface gender perspectives as if it can be eliminated. Not only the term gender-free, but also the term gender has been given negative images and vanished from textbooks and school curriculum, and teachers believe in that making student mixed through some of the regulation changes is the goal of gender-free education. Gender-free education is apt to work as embedment of the idea of gender equality to the students in latent level, but as students who are in the border between the new curriculum and the old curriculum showed different reactions, such as having a question “why” to gender separations, unconscious gender issues should be elicited through the experiences to be aware of gender biases in their knowledge.

Secondly, examining how the notion of gender-free education is put into practice, there is a fact that teachers must get rid of unnecessary gender separation through gender-free curriculum, so that they think that they are responsible for ignoring gender differences between boys and girls. As a result of their struggle to see the students all the same, they have feeling of resistances against producing surface strategies to make students mixed and paying no attentions to gender differences. I found that the teachers’ resistances imply their counteraction against creating the sameness and fairness between women and men that is promoted by previous feminists to have same access for women to the education system. Establishment of “formal” equality is still restricted in male normalized context, thus it is crucial to see how gender equality and differentials are created in order to deconstruct the male standardized context. Measuring for equity through gender-only frameworks repeatedly embeds knowledge into a binary oppositional

framing. As opposed to the current gender-free curriculum to only shuffle girls and boys, teachers are willing to make curriculum related to students' experiences and gender issues. Especially they feel possibilities for career education programs for students and also opportunities for teachers to exchange their thoughts about gender issues with their colleagues. The teachers' resistance against creating the sameness and unity can be seen as their step for gender-sensitive perspectives to deconstruct binary hierarchal education systems.

Finally, I looked at the complexities and contradictions in the practices to be gender-sensitive. Behind the teachers' perspectives to re-think/re-question of gender biases in their knowledge and the school curriculum, there are still stereotypical values for masculinities and femininities. With the awareness of gender discriminations in their words expressions and remarks, teachers are trying to be careful not to say sexist terms. Gender-sensitive perspective has been grown through each different experiences to become aware of internalized gender blindness, for example, one of the teachers noticed the existence of pressures for boys as well as girls through a postgraduate course she is taking and the conversation during this interview. At the same time, however, there are positive images for strong "manly" girls as opposed to delicate "girly" boys are labeled regressive images in the teachers' representations. There can be seen an internalized idea that masculinity is stable, predominant and fundamental, therefore, both girls and boys need to be approached masculinity in order to be superior manly norm. As long as the teachers look for the sameness and fairness between girls and boys in their gender-free curriculum, they repeatedly help constructing dualistic male normalized paradigm. As Tisdell (1998) says the possibility for emancipator education is greater than if one ignores dealing with

the issues of one's own positional limitations and possibilities, gender-sensitive perspective can only be cultivated through experiences to be aware of the limitations and possibilities of each teacher's multiple positionalities and differentials. In order to turn invisible gender biases into conscious level, it is significant for both teachers and students to think critically about their positionalities which are privileged and oppressed simultaneously.

Recommendations for the future research

Since the original target number for interviewing was reduced, the concern is my analysis might be changed if there are different voices from larger numbers of participants recruiting from different schools in various provincial governments in Japan. The age range of participants was from thirty-five to fifty-nine in this research, but the results would be changed if I interview a number of women from more various age groups. Especially I am interested in listening to young teachers in their twenties who must have learned the current curriculum referring gender issues in education lately in the teaching universities. Also, as female teachers I interviewed mentioned it is difficult for them to embody the ideologies of equality in real situations without any practical methods, not only theoretical level but also more practical methods or practical teaching materials to help seeing individual differentials in classrooms should be explored and indicated to in the next projects. Besides, practical recommendation for policy changes is also necessary to be made. The tendency of local government policies to promote gender mixed rosters as a symbol of achievement of equality should be amended and represented as a basic common regulation in the schools. Elimination of the term "gender" from textbooks and

official documents can be seen as regressive and anachronistic movements in the global communities in this generation, since the term “gender” is a common language which is acknowledged and used in worldwide level. Thus, revision of the policy for reusing the term “gender” in the official documents and textbooks should be encouraged in the future studies.

Although the limited scope and space of this project did not allow for me to analyze, there are a number of topics related to the study of gender-free education that could grow out of this project. For example, focusing on students’ perspective of gender-free curriculum and also listening to male teachers’ experiences would help develop the arguments for creating new curriculum. A comparative study could be made between gender education in Japan and North America in order to explore how gender is represented in different cultural background and different education systems. The focus of this research could be further developed by looking at various different policies issued by other local governments.

The results of my analysis may appear incomplete and arguable, and indeed, they are. But, this research could open up the future research for seeing female teachers’ struggle to challenge hidden gender discrimination in the classroom and their knowledge, and especially this research could help disclose the misrepresentation of the term gender-free and elimination of the term gender from the current Japanese societies.

Appendix A

Interview guide

- (a) Tell me a story of when you first understood “gender”. How did you understand this?
- (b) Can you tell me a story about a time when you had to consider gender when you were teaching?
- (c) What does gender-free education mean to you?
- (d) How have you developed your understanding of gender and gender-free education?
- (e) What are your feelings about gender-free education?
- (f) In what ways is your curriculum gender-free?
- (g) How do you put into practice gender-free education?
- (h) How do your students respond to the gender-free education that you practice/provide?
- (i) Do you have any difficulties or pressures when you practice gender-free education in the schools? Please explain.
- (j) Through gender-free education, have you seen any changes in students’ attitudes, values, and behaviors? Please explain.
- (k) How do parents of students, other teachers, school administrations, and other outside community respond to your efforts?
- (l) What changes do you hope to make in order to ensure your teaching practice is more gender-free?
- (m) What are some recommendations you would make for the curriculum to be more gender-free?

Appendix B: Information Letter

Dec.13, 2007

Dear Participant,

My name is **Momoko Migita**, and I am a graduate student in the Masters of Women's Studies Program at Mount Saint Vincent University in Halifax, NS, Canada.

You are invited to participate in a research study, which is conducted for the purpose of writing a thesis for my Master of Arts in Women's Studies. My research paper will be called: *Gender-free education in Japan: Postmodern feminist approaches to knowledge construction in classrooms*.

The purpose of my study is to understand how female teachers in secondary schools understand and practice gender-free curriculum. My research questions are: 1) How do teachers understand the term "gender" and "gender-free"? Are the definitions ambiguous so as to confuse public secondary school teachers about the terms? ; 2) How do teachers develop their ideas and understanding of gender? How are their curricula formed and how do they put the curricula into practice? ; 3) How do the teachers' representation of 'gender' reflect cultural aspects in the Japanese education system?

My research can help to understand female teachers' understandings and needs in their ongoing challenge for gender-free practices. This study will be useful for all teachers who want to incorporate gender-free education in their pedagogy and curriculum in general and for Japanese public secondary school teachers specifically.

Your participation will involve one interview with me, which will be approximately one hour to two hours long. You will be interviewed without payment.

Notes will be taken during the interview. With your permission, I would like to audiotape the interview. All forms and the interview results (e.g. tape recordings, transcripts, my written notes) will be stored in a locked cabinet or on a password protected computer, and they will be destroyed following completion of the written results of the study.

Your name will be changed to a fake name in my thesis and in any presentations of this research, for the purposes of assuring confidentiality in reporting the research. There will be no way to identify participants when I refer to you in any reporting of this study as I will remove all identifying information (e.g. your name, address, school name and address) and information that may identify who you are.

I am interested in hearing about your experiences, but you do not have to answer questions if they make you uncomfortable. Should you become uncomfortable, simply tell me you are uncomfortable and I will move to a different question or stop the interview. For any reason, if you decide at any point not to take part in, or to leave the study once it is underway, this will be totally respected, and I can stop the audio-taping without any penalty and your contributions will be withdrawn and destroyed. Your decisions about participating, not participation or terminating participation will have no impact on your employment. You may ask questions, and change or add to your comments any time during and after the interviews.

I will provide you with a copy of a summary of the complete research paper if you are interested after I have written it up. I will send the results as an attached file via email, or if you prefer, I will send you a hard copy by mail.

At any time, during and after this study, I will be happy to answer any of your questions. I can be contacted by phone at [REDACTED] or by email at [REDACTED]. My supervisor is Dr. Susan Brigham and she can be contacted by phone at 902-457-6733 or by email at Susan.Brigham@msvu.ca. If you have questions about how this study is being conducted and wish to speak with someone who is not directly involved in the study, you may contact the Chair of the University Research Ethics Board (UREB) c/o MSVU Research and International Office, at 457-6350 or via e-mail at research@msvu.ca. I look forward to seeing you soon!

Sincerely,

Momoko Migita

Graduate Students

Faculty of Women's Studies in Mount Saint Vincent University

[REDACTED]
Tell: [REDACTED]

Permanent address: 1-3-24, Yamate, Tarumi-ku, Kobe, Japan, 655-0891

Local address: Birch5, Room306, Mount Saint Vincent University, Halifax, NS, B3M 2J6 Canada

Appendix C: Free and Informed Consent Form

I have read the information letter about Momoko Migita's research project titled "*Gender-free education in Japan: Postmodern feminist approaches to knowledge construction in classrooms*", dated Dec 13, 2007, and I understand that I will be involved in one interview, which will be one to two hours long. I will be interviewed without payment.

I understand that the purpose of Momoko's study is to understand how female teachers in secondary schools understand and practice gender-free curriculum. I understand that Momoko Migita will take notes and with my permission she will audiotape the interview. All the notes, tapes and transcriptions will be stored in her locked cabinet and on a password protected computer, and they will be destroyed following completion of the written results of the study.

My name will be changed to a fake name in her thesis and in any presentations of this research. My identifying information such as my name, address, and my school name and address, or any information that would allow others to identify who I am will also be omitted when she refers to me in any reporting of this study.

I understand that I do not have to answer questions if they make me uncomfortable. If I become uncomfortable, I can move to a different question or stop the interview. If I decide not to continue my involvement in the research at any time, for any reason, I can stop the audio-taping without penalty and my contributions will be withdrawn and destroyed. I understand that my decisions about participating, not participating, or terminating participation will have no impact on my employment. I can ask questions, and change or add anything on my comments any time during and after the interviews.

I understand that Momoko Migita will provide me with a copy of a summary of the complete research paper if I am interested after she has written it up. I can get the results as an attached file via email, or I am able to receive a hard copy of the paper research by mail if I prefer.

I know that I can ask questions or raise my concerns to Momoko Migita at any time, during and after this study. She can be contacted by phone at [REDACTED] or by email at [REDACTED]. Her supervisor is Dr. Susan Brigham and I can contact her by phone at 902-457-6733 or by email at Susan.Brigham@msvu.ca. If I have questions about how this study is being conducted and wish to speak with someone who is not directly involved in the study, I may contact the Chair of the University Research Ethics Board (UREB) c/o MSVU Research and International Office, at 457-6350 or via e-mail at research@msvu.ca.

By signing this consent form, I am indicating that I fully understand the above information and agree to participate in this study.

Participant's signature

Date

Researcher's signature

Date

I agree to be audio-taped during the interview.

Participant's signature

Date

Researcher's signature

Date

One signed copy to be kept by the researcher, one signed copy to the participant.

Appendix F: The plans and the reports

issued by gender equality board in Kobe and Ono

1.

Propulsion of school education from the perspective of gender equality in Kobe, including kindergarten and day-care centers. (From Subsection 2, Section 4: Propulsion of education from the perspective of gender equality).

	Policies	Contents of the policies	Controlled by
43	Drawing up a guidance plan from the perspective of gender equality	In order to develop one's individuality, make a guidance plan from the perspective of gender equality	the school boards
44	Preparation of teaching materials regarding gender equality	Make teaching materials in proportion to developmental stages of children from the perspective of gender equality.	life, culture, and tourism office/ health and welfare office/ the school board
45	Preparation of trainings for those who is involved in education and nurture	Provide trainings for the staff of schools and nurseries to understand the idea of gender equality	life, culture, and tourism office/ health and welfare office/ the school board
46	Promotion of gender equality in terms of school management	Promote women staffs to administrative positions in schools in order to bring equalities for decision making	the school board
47	Development of one's abilities to chose courses and make career plans from the perspective of gender equality	Develop one's abilities to chose courses and make career plans seeing fields where conventionally excluded women/men. Enlightenment of teachers and parents is also promoted	the school board
48	Propulsion of education to develop a sense of profession	Promote educations to give better understanding about jobs, such as meanings of profession, in order to help planning their careers	the school board
49	Development of abilities to materialize one's plans	Promote fixation of basic academic abilities in order to encourage children's self-reliance and self-respect.	the school board

		Also, develop attitudes to respect the rights of others through hands on learning experiences	
50	Introduction of gender mixed rosters	Promote gender mixed rosters from the perspective of removal of unnecessary gender distinction.	the school board
51	Propulsion of Technical skills and Home economics from the perspective of gender equality	Promote Technical skills and Home economics as required subjects for both boys and girls in order to perform actively the roles of family members	the school board
52	Preparation of measures to prevent sexual harassment in school	Enlighten and hold seminars for staffs in each schools to prevent sexual harassment, and also setting up consultation centers for teachers, children and parents	the school board

2.

Propulsion of school education from the perspective of gender equality in Kobe, including kindergarten and day-care centers. (From Subsection 2, Section 4: Propulsion of education from the perspective of gender equality)

Contents of the policies	Results for 2004/ Plans for 2005	Estimates for 2004	Estimates for 2005	Controlled by
43. Drawing up a guidance plan from perspective of gender equality				
Encourage staffs at the staff meeting and have study seminars to consider the viewpoint of gender equality	< Results for 2004 > Propulsion of gender mixed rosters (see the number 50.) Setting up of training seminars for teachers	---	---	Human right section in the school board
44. Preparation of teaching materials regarding gender equality				
Make enlightening materials “Many things you can do” for elementary school students. Distribute to the students in grade 3.	< Results for 2004 > Distribution 14,000 copies **	830,000 (\$8300)	830,000 (\$8300)	Life, culture, and tourism office of gender equality section
Use materials “Many things you can do” in moral education classes for grade 3 and 4	< Results for 2004 > Practical use of enlightening materials in moral education classes and homeroom	---	---	Human right section in the school board

	activities			
Revise materials for human right education in elementary school students	<p><Results for 2004> Still in the process of revision of teaching materials dealing with gender equality</p> <p><Plans for 2005> Same as the above</p>	400,000 (\$4000)	400,000 (\$4000)	Human right section in the school board
Use same teaching materials for boys and girls in day-care centers.	<p><Results for 2004> Continuance of the policies</p>	---	---	Health and welfare office of the department of child care support
Make supplementary reading materials for moral education classes corresponding to students in the each grade. (In the lower classes, focus on live together happily; in the higher classes, focus on understandings of the opposite sex; in junior high, also focus on cultivating healthy understandings of the opposite sex.)	<p><Results for 2004> Distribution for each students in each schools (72,000 copies)</p> <p>Distribution for junior high (grade 7-9) will be pegged for 3 years</p>	37,729,000 (\$377290)	25,844,000 (\$258440)	Guidance section in the school board
Increase of elective classes in physical education in order to give more choices for both girls and boys, and help them to develop independence	<p><Results for 2004> Execution in 60% of junior high (grade 7-9); Execution in every high school (grade 10-12)</p> <p><Plans for 2005> Execution in every school (grader 7-12).</p>	---	---	Physical education commission of the supports section
45. Preparation of trainings for those who is involved in education and nurture				
Encourage staffs in schools to participate study seminars independently	<p><Results for 2004> A seminar about “sexual harassment” on Nov 22.</p> <p><Plans for 2005> A seminar about</p>	60,000 (\$600)	60,000 (\$600)	General education center in the school board

	“sexual harassment” on Nov 21.			
Hold study seminars for administrative positions	<p><Results for 2004> A seminar about “sexual harassment” on April 22.</p> <p><Plans for 2005> A seminar about “mental disease in teachers” on June 28 & “sexual harassment” on Oct 20.</p>	30,000 (\$300)	30,000 (\$300)	General education center in the school board
46. Promotion of gender equality in terms of school management				
Assign women staffs to administrative positions	<p><The result as of May 2005 > <i>Female Principals</i> High schools 0/11 Junior high 5/83 Elementary 24/173 Kindergarten 33/37 Nursing schools 0/6 <i>Female vice principals</i> High schools 0/16 Junior high 5/85 Elementary 19/172 Kindergarten 0/0 Nursing schools 2/7</p>	---	---	The school board
47. Development of one’s abilities to chose courses and make career plans from the perspective of gender equality				
Enlighten students, teachers and parents to see the fields where conventionally excluded women/men at career planning seminars	<Results for 2004> Continuance of the policies	---	---	Guidance section in the school board

48. Propulsion of education to develop a sense of profession				
Hold seminars for teachers who are in charge of academic and career counseling	<Results for 2004> Continuance of the policies	---	---	The school board
49. Development of abilities to materialize one's plans				
Develop students' abilities of communication through special homeroom hours	<Results for 2004> -----	---	---	The school board
50. Introduction of gender mixed rosters				
Promote introduction of gender mixed rosters through principal's meetings and school visitations Make investigations into the situations and effects of the gender mixed rosters and the contents of the curriculum for gender equality each school provides	<Results for 2004> Schools using gender mixed rosters (as of May 2004) High schools 12/13 Junior high 80/83 Elementary 170/170 Kindergarten 46/46 Nursery schools 6/6 Total 314/320 (98%) <Plans for 2005> High schools 12/13 Junior high 83/83 Elementary 170/170 Kindergarten 46/46 Nursery schools 6/6 Total 318/320 (99%)	---	---	Human right section in the school board
51. Propulsion of Technical skills and Home economics from the perspective of gender equality				
Hold staff seminars	<Results for 2004> Continuance of status quo; Technical skills and Home economics as required subject for both boys and girls	---	---	Guidance section in the school board
52. Preparation of measures to prevent sexual harassment in school				
Distribute handbooks for prevention of sexual harassment	<Results for 2004> Distribution in seminars	210,000 (\$2100)	---	Life, culture, and tourism office of gender equality section

Establish “school harassment consultation windows”	<Plans for 2005> Setting up consultation windows for school harassment	---	---	Human right section in the school board
--	---	-----	-----	---

****Percentages of schools using supplementary readers for gender equality ‘Many things you can do [Dekirukoto Ippai]’ in elementary schools**

year	2002	2003	2004
percentages of usage	88.4 %	85.6%	84.2%

Investigated in Kobe (2005) (grade 3-4 in 2002 and 2003)
(grade 3 in 2004)

3.

Propulsion of school education from the perspective of men-women equal participation in Ono. (From Subsection 2, Section 2)

Policies	Contents	Controlled by
Preparation of the curriculums from the perspectives of gender equality	Through entire school education, check and review if there are any teaching materials, the contents of curriculum, and learning environments to encourage students to be bound by gender. Enlighten students to show their individuality, and develop their abilities to make career plans independently.	Health section School education section Health and physical education section Human right section
Propulsion of school managements from the perspective of gender equality	Hold seminars for teachers about education of gender equality and human rights. Assign women staffs to administrative positions positively in order to make schools more gender equal environment.	School education section

4.

Percentages of women principal/vice-principal

Investigated in Kobe (2005)

year		2003	2004	2005
women principals	Junior high (grade 7 – 9)	2 (2.3%)	5 (5.9%)	6 (7.1%)
	Elementary (grade 1 – 6)	16 (9.3%)	22 (12.7%)	21 (12.1%)
	Kindergarten	46 (95.8%)	42 (91.3 %)	42 (91.3%)
	Nursing schools	(0%)	(0%)	(0%)
women vice-principals	Junior high (grade 7 – 9)	7 (8.3%)	5 (5.9%)	6 (7.0%)
	Elementary (grade 1 – 6)	22 (12.7%)	19 (11.0%)	22 (12.7%)
	Kindergarten	---	---	---
	Nursing schools	2 (33.3%)	2 (33.3%)	2 (33.3%)

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