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Chameleon-Like Struggles: Negotiation Strategies of Critical Teachers in Taiwan's Public Primary Schools

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Chameleon-Like Struggles: Negotiation Strategies of Critical Teachers in Taiwan's Public Primary Schools

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

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in Education

by

Jiing-Tzer Jehng

2022

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

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by

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Doctor of Philosophy in Education

University of California, Los Angeles, 2022

Professor Carlos A. Torres, Chair

It is believed that primary education plays a part in creating socially just societies, and that students' critical consciousness needs to be cultivated from the early childhood. Critical pedagogy, originally proposed by Paulo Freire, can serve as an empowerment tool to foster youths' capacity to think critically and reflect on unfairness. However, Freire's critical pedagogy has drawn criticism for failing to find its way into public classrooms, particularly in the Asian context, where traditional teaching methods are heavily employed. The purpose of this study was, in Taiwan's settings, to examine the ways how, and to what degree, primary teachers exercised critical pedagogy in their restrictive classrooms. In the Literature Review section, I scrutinize the scholarly work regarding Freire's proposal of critical pedagogy, the teacher-related factors that influence K-12 classroom practices of critical pedagogy, and the survival strategies of critical K-12 teachers. In the section of Theoretical Perspectives, two concepts, including the

ideas of the culture cycle and impression management, are discussed to form the basis of how I address my research questions theoretically. In the Methods section, I depict how the phenomenological approach that involves individual interviews and document analysis is applied to investigate participants' pedagogical experiences and the contextual constraints they have faced. Twelve in-service teachers who educate primary schoolers in Taipei, the capital city of Taiwan, and also are knowledgeable about critical pedagogy participate in this study.

My findings are divided into three parts: 1) teacher alienation and teacher socialization, in Taiwan's primary schools, operate as powerful barriers to critical pedagogical practices. The former takes the form of teacher mobility away from powerless students within a given school, while the latter is marked by the negative pedagogical shift and politically neutral stance of focal teachers who increasingly immerse themselves in the profession; 2) the undesirable working conditions of teacher alienation and teacher socialization dialectally facilitate the growth of critical reflection among five critical focal teachers. The development of such reflective thinking essentially differs by teachers' social-class profiles. The focal teachers who come from middle-class families reflect on their negative, mainstream colleagues, while their counterparts who have a working-class origin introspect deeply about their negative schooling experiences; and 3) teacher negotiation characterizes the strategic struggles of five focal teachers in an attempt to teach against the grain and teach the taboo. The ways how these critical teachers negotiate the school's limit-situations vary by the subjects they teach. In the Conclusion section, I wrap up this study by arguing that extending critical pedagogy into Taiwan's primary schools is a complicated procedure marked by focal teachers' constant struggles which involve confronting the barriers, developing critical consciousness, and taking strategic actions. Lastly, I consider the implications of this study for Freirean scholarship, qualitative methodology, and primary school practices of

critical pedagogy.

Keywords: critical pedagogy, teacher negotiation, teacher alienation, teacher socialization

The dissertation of Jiing-Tzer Jehng is approved.

Richard Desjardins

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Lorena I. Guillén

Carlos A. Torres, Committee Chair

University of California, Los Angeles

2022

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to those who dare to teach against the grain and teach the taboo in K-12 public schools that have been chronically plagued by the banking model of education and the neutral silence toward issues of controversy. Our instructional classrooms have become a better place due to the critical endeavors of you all.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Twelve teacher participants that served as primary informants in this study and generously shared their personal stories deserve my earnest appreciation. I am incredibly humbled and sincerely thankful for the chance I had to learn from their lived experiences. Even though ethical conventions of anonymity restrict my disclosure of their personally identifiable information here, they can be assured that this dissertation seriously honors their voices, and that I feel so grateful to them all for helping me explore the focal phenomenon from an insider's perspective.

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Above all, I express greatest thanks to my parents whose unconditional love and unflagging encouragement strongly sustained me through the ups and downs of research and writing. I am deeply indebted to them for constantly lifting me up whenever I proceed towards my dreams and aspirations. It is their financial aid that makes my journey to a doctorate possible and sustainable. All they have done for me can never be cloned or repaid. To them, I dedicate this masterpiece in recognition of unparalleled care and endless warmth they had given while I was away from home pursuing my passion. I am returning home now!

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Jehng, J. T. (2018, May). "Sustainable development" as a fake news: Towards a critique of the united nations sustainable development goals. Paper presented at the conference, *California Association of Freirean Educators (CAFE) 2018*. University of California, Los Angeles, USA.

VI. AWARDS

2008 Outstanding Thesis Award, Taiwan Association for Sociology of Education, Taiwan.

2007 Outstanding Thesis Award, Professor Fu-Ming Chia's Education Foundation, National Taiwan Normal University, Taiwan.

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

This chapter orients readers to the background of my research, to its purpose and potential contributions, and to the research questions that center around it. This section also explains why the study of Asian grade-level critical pedagogues' lived experiences needs serious attention by academic educational communities that concern about classroom practices of Freire's critical pedagogy. It then provides a brief overview of my entire work reported in this dissertation.

1.1 Statement of Problems Regarding the Implementation of Critical Pedagogy

This section outlines three major problems embedded in Freirean scholarship regarding the praxis of critical pedagogy. Below, I state each problem in turn and how they will be addressed in this study.

1.1.1 The Loose Fit Between Freire's Critical Pedagogy and Public Schools

Elementary education plays a crucial role in the development of socially just, culturally inclusive communities. Ample evidence has shown that children may form negative biases at an early age (Charlesworth & Banaji, 2019; Perszyk, et al., 2019), and that children's social prejudices toward people who are culturally different from them may last into adulthood (Foster, 1994; Rottman, et al., 2020). Fortunately, since biases are learned early in life, they can be unlearned or reversed if children are exposed to public school settings that celebrate diversity and promote equality (Spiegler, 2016). This aspiration has placed anti-bias instruction as an essential element of quality education for young learners. Critical pedagogy, according to Freire (1973) and Giroux (1988), is one of the effective instructional strategies by which to create such an inclusive classroom environment where every student feels welcome and respected, and where the content of learning strongly connects with youths' varied cultures and experiences.

Drawing upon the existent volume of Freirean scholarship, critical pedagogy is defined as

the teaching approach that encourages students to think critically, to question the status quo, and to demonstrate critical consciousness through problem-posing dialogue (McLaren, 2016; Shor, 1993). Critical pedagogy rests on the tradition of critical theory, but it does not merely end with theoretical ideas. Instead, it focuses extensively on liberatory praxis. In the classroom structured by critical pedagogy, students participate directly and actively in their own education, and are involved in brainstorming the feasible solutions to real-world problems, through which meaningful learning occurs and social change might unfold. As a case in point, Mary Cowhey (2006), a first-grade teacher who taught the Peace Class with 16 students in Western Massachusetts, exercised critical pedagogy by openly discussing controversial issues (e.g., gender diversity, War, and death) in the classroom, and by having students jointly write a letter to the mayor in order to demand social changes in their community, including homeless assistance programs and sewage treatment. Added to this, Katherine Bomer, a fifth-grade teacher who taught language arts in Austin, Texas, not only integrated critical literacy into regular classroom reading and writing activities, but also helped students develop social action plans with the purpose of promoting equity and justice (Bomer & Bomer, 2001). Seen in this light, critical pedagogy is a political exercise that moves beyond traditional instruction and seeks alternatively to cultivate change agents striving for social betterment.

Critical pedagogy, by its nature, aims to empower the powerless (McLaren, 2016), which makes it suitable for public schools where a large number of disadvantaged students are served. However, the present school climate that features standardization and accountability is hostile to Freirean scholarship (Darder, Baltodano, & Torres, 2009). That said, the neoliberal rhetoric of competition and efficiency that has restructured school routines deeply threatens the real-world implementation of Freire's pedagogical proposal. In the era of neoliberal governance, then, there

is a poor fit between critical pedagogy and public schools (Gitlin & Ingerski, 2018). If educators generally agree that critical pedagogy is an empowerment tool essential for grade schoolers, the following inquiry will be in relation to the ways how teachers extend critical pedagogy into grade schools, which is a meaningful issue worth further exploration.

1.1.2 Overemphasizing Individualism When It Comes to Critical Pedagogical Praxis

Despite the poor fit between critical pedagogy and public schools, a number of empirical studies have shown that critical pedagogy could and did take place in K-12 classrooms. To name a few, Page (2016) explored the critical pedagogical practices of one English teacher, Ms. Lanza, who taught disadvantaged high-school students in the Upper Midwest United States. Ms. Lanza skillfully integrated LGBTQ texts into her curricular activities by encouraging students to determine their class readings, and by engaging students in dialogue and discussion around the issue of gender diversity. By doing so, students became critical thinkers that were able to problematize dominant sexual categories and interrupt the conservative climate of schooling. Coincident with this trend, in Jackson's (2010) study regarding the counter-hegemonic struggles of nine K-12 American teachers who marked themselves as homosexual, the focal instructors deliberately incorporated the taboo subject of queerness into English and social studies lessons by converting students' natural curiosity and spontaneous questions about homosexuality into a teachable moment, in which queer themes became a seamless part of classroom conversation. Although the school community was generally inhospitable to queerness, Jackson argued, this teachable moment seized and used by K-12 critical teachers did make pedagogical room for the tough issue. Moreover, another critical pedagogue Applegate (2013), an American high-school English teacher, engaged her minority students in the Hip Hop Project which drew connections between school-based literacies with street culture. In so doing, minority students were engaged

in critical thinking about why Hip Hop was widely excluded from mainstream coursework. Taken as a whole, the aforementioned studies report the successful anecdotes of K-12 teachers who have strived for extending critical pedagogy into public schools. Their counter-hegemonic school practices raise the hope for empowering the powerless K-12 students with Freire's liberatory education.

Existing literature on the K-12 classroom practices of critical pedagogy, however, is excessively geared towards describing single teachers' successful struggles, such as the cases mentioned above. Accordingly, the current discussion about critical pedagogical praxis is highly individualistic. Little attention was given to the lived experiences of K-12 teachers who have failed to exercise critical pedagogy in their workplaces, and to the discouraging factors that result in such a frustrating phenomenon. One discouraging factor might be the workplace culture[1] commonly shared by teachers at a given school.

Many leading critical pedagogy theorists argue that K-12 teachers who dare to work against conservative school norms are often in the minority and only make up a small share of the entire teaching workforce (Giroux, 1988; McLaren, 2016; Nieto, 2008; Shor, 1992). But why this is so? What are the hindering factors behind teachers' refusal to extend critical pedagogy into K-12 classrooms? Is it because K-12 teachers have little knowledge about Freire' ideas and thereby are unable to perform critical pedagogy? Or because K-12 teachers are hesitant to do so even if they are familiar with Freire's ideas? The answers to these questions remain unclear because they have not been seriously addressed. Briefly, with regards to the literature on the praxis of critical pedagogy, the thoughts and behaviors of the majority of K-12 teachers who disregard Freire's pedagogical proposal are like an elephant in the room, which needs to acknowledged and further

[1] Acker (1999) argued that the workplace culture of teaching might reduce teachers' willingness to try new ideas.

examined. This practical concern sets the stage for my research inquiry.

1.1.3 Limited Voices of Asian Grade-Level Critical Pedagogues in Freirean Scholarship

While there is a growing concern about the classroom practices of K-12 critical pedagogues, it is relatively rare to include the voices of Asian teachers in Freirean scholarship. At present, there are two major Freirean journals dedicated to discussing the practical applications of critical pedagogy in actual classroom situations – *Radical Teacher* and *The International Journal of Critical Pedagogy*. However, both of them focus primarily on the narratives and experiences of American K-12 critical pedagogues and thereby devote insufficient attention to those of their Asian counterparts. In the case of these two publications concerning critical pedagogy, then, little journalistic discussion of everyday classroom practices performed by grade-level Freirean educators is situated within the Asian context. Moreover, doctoral dissertations to date also contain an academic silence over my concerned issue. I conducted a keyword search with the phrase "critical pedagogy" through the ProQuest Dissertation & Theses Global (PQDT) database to examine whether any dissertations have been devoted to understanding Asian K-12 teachers' critical pedagogical practices. Frustratingly, the search results had no relevant information. As such, Freire's pedagogical proposal, to a significant degree, has not been well-discussed in the Asian region.

The limited understandings of Asian K-12 critical pedagogues' work lives might result from the exam-driven education system prevalent in many Asian countries. That is, K-12 teachers who educate students in Asian classrooms tend to emphasize rote learning and banking instruction[2],

[2] Brazilian scholar Paulo Freire (1970/2002) coined the concept of banking education to describe the teaching situation where teachers instill knowledge into students' brains, in the same way that money is deposited into the bank. Banking education is a dehumanizing practice because it deprives students of knowledge ownership and turns them into unconscious containers that passively receive information presented by teachers. It could be argued that banking education is a system of oppression which unfavorably hinders students' intellectual growth and critical thinking.

which leaves little room for critical pedagogical practices. Although this spoon-fed teaching method widely adopted by Asian educators is often seen as obsolete and oppressive, it did help produce a large group of Asian primary and secondary schoolers who have consistently outperformed their Western peers on international assessments (Kim, 2015; Schleicher, 2016), such as PISA and TIMSS. As a case in point, Zou (2017) compared the educational objectives between Anglosphere countries and Taiwan (see Table 1.1 for the comparison). He asserted that while Anglosphere countries establish diverse learning goals for their students, Taiwan solely prioritizes testing skills over other desirable student outcomes. Doubtlessly, such an exam-driven education system has made it difficult for critical pedagogy to take root in Taiwan.

Table 1.1

The Comparison Between Anglosphere Countries' and Taiwan's Educational Objectives

The Grade Level	Anglosphere Countries' Educational Objectives	Taiwan's Educational Objectives
Kindergarten	Life Management	Testing
Primary School	Self-Discovery	Testing
Middle School	Communication and Cooperation	Testing
High School	Career Planning	Testing
College	Professional Knowledge	Testing

Note. Adapted from "The critique of standardized testing and foundry thinking in Taiwan's secondary education: With the perspective of life education," by Zou, 2017, pp. 168-169.

Given that education should meet progressive ends (Dewey, 1938), and that students can never be reduced to the passive containers of existing knowledge (Freire, 1970/2002), it is critical for educators to question and challenge the purely testing-oriented pedagogy that has plagued Taiwan and other Asian countries. The next logical question is, then, how can critical pedagogy

take place in Asian K-12 public schools where banking education has dominated? In response to this urgent question, and to the academic silence on Asian grade-level teachers' critical pedagogical practices, I located this study in the context of Taiwan to seek the answer.

1.2 The Broader Context of the Dissertation: Taiwan as the Research Site

Taiwan was selected as my research site for three reasons. First, Freire's work has had a strong influence in Taiwan's educational circle over the past two decades. Second, Taiwan, since the early 2000s, has initiated a series of nation-wide, progressive education reforms to alter its exam-driven school climate, which to some degree has brought about more inclusive school environments that allow critical pedagogy to take place. Third, Taiwan has a large body of high-quality teachers who tend to remain in the profession for decades. This stable, competent teacher workforce is a great aid to Freire's pedagogical agenda that innately demands higher levels of teacher effectiveness[3].

Specifically, Freire's rhetoric of critical pedagogy, over the past two decades, has become a mainstay in Taiwan's educational circles. Many teacher educators in Taiwan have promoted that the principles of critical pedagogy should be incorporated into the coursework of teacher training (Chiang, 2010; Chou, 2006; Chuang, 2001). They contended that teacher candidates should be prepared to identify and challenge the potentially oppressive ideologies and discourses perpetuated by educational institutions, and to engage their own students in a liberatory learning process. On the other hand, Taiwan's in-service teachers and school administrators have been increasingly exposed to Freire's ideas through joining the Paulo Freire Institute Summer Program

[3] Critical pedagogy requires teachers to, on a regular basis, stimulate students to ask questions, identify issues, develop solutions, and learn beyond written texts. Then, teachers with lower levels of effectiveness, such as beginning teachers, may have difficulties teaching beyond the routines of daily work (Cochran-Smith, 1991). As such, it could be argued that, compared to rookies, highly effective teachers who hone their skills through school experiences are more likely to implement Freire's critical pedagogy in the classroom.

launched by UCLA annually. Since 2007, about 400 educators from Taiwan and other Asian countries have come to UCLA in summer and returned home with deeper understandings of Freire's work (Chang, Yoo, & Asanuma, 2019). Together, through the inclusion of Freire's ideas in teacher education programs, and through the dissemination of Freire's thoughts by the PFI at UCLA, more and more Taiwan's educators have been knowledgeable about critical pedagogy and may attempt to realize it in their own classrooms. This explicitly carves out a niche for extending critical pedagogy into Taiwan's grade schools.

Moreover, Taiwan, from the beginning of the 2000s, has redressed the pitfalls of its exam-driven school system with a variety of reform policies, which seek to promote student-centered instruction and thereby bring about a welcoming school climate that enables critical pedagogy to become real for students. Specifically, the Ministry of Education in Taiwan, since 2001, has launched a series of nation-wide, progressive education reforms, such as *Nine-Year Integrated Curriculum*, *University Multiple Entrance Program*, and *108 New Curriculum Guidelines*, to replace teacher-centered pedagogical practices with the competency-based model of learning (Chen & Huang, 2017). This pedagogical shift encourages Taiwan's teachers to engage primary and secondary students in problem-solving and critical thinking activities. Although Taiwan's high-stakes entrance exams[4] are never being removed by past reform initiatives, and still continue to regulate the tone of classroom learning, the banking model of education has become less dominant across public schools, in which teachers are more inclined to perform beyond the daily routine and try out progressive teaching approaches. This trend of student-centeredness, to some degree, has increased the likelihood of moving critical pedagogy from text to reality.

[4] After completing nine years of compulsory education (K1-K9), Taiwan's students need to take entrance exams in order to be accepted into senior high schools. This process will reoccur when high school graduates advance themselves to colleges. For most Taiwan's students, preparing for entrance exams is the major learning task during their school days.

In addition, Taiwan's high-quality teacher workforce and its significant teacher continuity may provide fertile ground for critical pedagogy to take root and grow. To clarify, in Taiwan, the demanding teacher-entry bar essentially raises and secures the quality of the education workforce. Prospective teachers, at first, are required to complete a four-year training program, which is followed by a six-month practicum. Then, teacher candidates, in order to be formally recognized as a qualified primary or secondary instructor, have to pass the rigorous qualification exam[5] held by Taiwan's Ministry of Education. However, even though aspiring teachers have succeeded in earning a qualified teaching credential, they may find it hard to get employed for a full-time role in public schools. Due to Taiwan's remarkable drop of student population[6] in recent years, the demand for teachers has been dramatically decreased, ending up with a rising surplus of teacher workforce. Relatively, the competition for a shrinking pool of full-time teaching jobs has become so fierce that, on average, less than 2 percent of licensed teacher candidates ultimately get hired into a tenure-track faculty position in public K-12 schools (Wang & Fwu, 2014). In Taiwan, such a highly selective bar for entry into the teaching profession certainly lifts up and ensures the overall quality of teacher competencies.

On the other hand, the career continuity of public K-12 teachers in Taiwan is significant and long-standing. Taiwan is often cited as a successful example of teacher retention, which is measured by its tremendously low teacher turnover rate[7] (Darling-Hammond, 2007; Li, 2013). While many Anglosphere countries currently experience considerable outflows of qualified

[5] In 2020, Taiwan's nation-wide teacher qualification examination had a pass rate of 50.107% (Lin, 2020).
[6] Taiwan's fertility rate has declined dramatically since the mid-1980s. Before 1983, the average number of births per year is about 400,000 (Central News Agency, 2016). Henceforth, birth rates started to fall. According to the recent statistics, the number of newborns in 2018 decreased to 181,601 (Everington, 2019). Several factors might be linked to this low birthrate in Taiwan, such as an increase in female educational attainment, declining marriage rates, low incomes for young employees, and the high costs of housing.
[7] In recent years, Taiwan has constantly maintained its teacher attrition rate as low as 2 percent (Wang & Fwu, 2014).

teachers, Taiwan has celebrated a decades-long tradition of attracting the academically talented into the teaching profession and keeping them (Wang & Fwu, 2014). In Taiwan, the majority of teachers do not leave their jobs until they reach the retirement age. This significance of teacher continuity in Taiwan, according to Ku (2002), can be attributed to the exclusive, handsome teacher welfare granted by the ruling elites that have traditionally embraced reluctant welfarism when developing the social security system nationwide. More specifically, Taiwan's social security provision is selective, not universal. The lion's share of public expenditures on social welfare is directed at politically important interest groups, such as civil servants, military personnel, and school teachers. To this end, James Midgley (1986), the former dean of the School of Social Welfare at UC Berkeley, coined the term 'reluctant welfarism' to describe the fact that Taiwan's government is reluctant to involve private-sector employees in social insurance schemes. He asserted that Taiwan has been "congruent with a marked reluctance on the part of the political elite to expand social programs," and that the state of Taiwan "frequently declares an aversion to welfarism" (p. 234). Historically, such a selective welfare system is the political product of Taiwan's nation-building projects.

From 1895 to 1945, Taiwan, an island located off the southeastern coast of mainland China, was a colony of Japan. After been ruled by the Japanese for half a century, Taiwan was taken over by the military leader Chiang Kai-Shek and his Kuomintang (KMT) political party, which, in 1949, lost the civil war on the mainland and then fled to the island. The ruling elites of KMT, under the constant military threat from China, invest heavily in the infrastructure relevant to national defense (e.g., the armed forces and compulsory education) and offer hefty welfare packages to government employees who are central to social stability and regime survival. In particular, teachers are expected to be the loyal servants that instill the youth with nationalist

attitudes and official ideologies. The importance of teachers' role in reinforcing national security, then, brings about many exclusive material rewards attached to the teaching profession (Tang, 1997), such as income tax exemption[8], the guaranteed tenure, competitive salaries[9], fully paid summer and winter vacations, education subsidies for their own children, and handsome pension payment after 25 years of service. This preferential treatment of Taiwan's ruling elites turns teachers' work into a well-rewarded, attractive occupation, which helps recruit the academically talented into teacher training programs and then retain the majority of in-service teachers. In other words, Taiwan's reluctant welfarism leads to significant teacher continuity that is essential for boosting school outcomes.

As noted earlier, the current knowledge base on Asian K-12 critical pedagogues' classroom practices is limited in scope. Taiwan, with its chronical, deep connection with Freire's ideas, with its more progressive school climate, and with its high-quality, stable teacher workforce, will be a proper context for addressing my research concerns.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is twofold: 1) to reach an understanding of the extent to which Taiwan's teachers implement critical pedagogy in the primary classroom; and 2) to portray the way how, if at all, Taiwan's elementary educators engage students in critical learning when confronted with restrictive school norms. To clarify, these two research concerns are closely related since the collegial culture has a profound effect on teacher performance[10]. If, in a specific

[8] In Taiwan, elementary and junior high school teachers were exempt from paying income taxes before 2013.
[9] In 2021, the starting salary for Taiwan's public-school teachers who hold a bachelor's degree is NT$43,135 per month, which is far above the average entry-level wage (NT$28,402 per month) that college graduates can earn in private-sectors.
[10] Shah (2012) reviewed the existing literature on teacher collegiality and suggested that, at a given school, the collegial culture constructed by a significant number of teaching staff played a vital role in facilitating teacher effectiveness and school quality.

school, the majority of teachers favor traditional pedagogies over progressive ones, critical teachers may encounter strong collegial pressure and have a hard time resorting to student-centered instruction. On the contrary, if the large proportion of teachers at a given school aggressively work against the banking model of education, critical teachers may benefit from sufficient collegial support and have no barriers toward creating a democratic classroom environment. Seen in this light, by investigating the extent to which Taiwan's primary teachers can teach critically in the face of contextual constraints, the discouraging and facilitating factors that impact the implementation of critical pedagogy would become salient. Also, by examining the ways how Taiwan's elementary educators negotiate the tension between critical pedagogy and traditional school norms, the possibilities of extending Freire's ideas into public schools could be further testified. In so doing, this study essentially responds to the call for more Freirean scholarship on connecting critical pedagogy with primary education.

1.4 Research Questions

The following two main questions directed the design and determined the methods of this study: 1) To what extent do Taiwan's primary teachers realize Freire's critical pedagogy in their own classrooms where conventional teaching methods have chronically prevailed? 2) In what ways, if any, do Taiwan's primary teachers negotiate situational demands so as to successfully engage students in critical learning? The sub-questions listed below were developed to guide my principal research concerns.

- Are Taiwan's critical elementary teachers in the majority? Or vice versa? Why this is so?
- What factors discourage Taiwan's primary teachers from exercising critical pedagogy?
- What factors motivate Taiwan's primary teachers to become critical educators?
- How do Taiwan's primary teachers balance the competing priorities between classroom

routines and critical pedagogy?

- What structural opportunities exist in Taiwan's primary school for teachers to get involved in critical pedagogy?

These questions will be addressed in later chapters of this dissertation with data obtained in Taiwan's context. The findings are expected to have meaningful implications for Asian K-12 classroom practices of Freire's pedagogical proposal.

1.5 Significance of the Study

The intended outcomes of this study will help: 1) to achieve a better understanding towards classroom practices of Freire's pedagogy in the context of elementary education; 2) to fill the knowledge gap about the discouraging factors that stifle the implementation of critical pedagogy within public schools; and 3) to correct the academic silence on the work lives of Asian grade-level critical pedagogues. First of all, despite the volume of research on the praxis of critical pedagogy, little work has been conducted to specifically examine its implementation in primary school settings. This is because the current education climate has been strongly influenced by neoliberal forces that threaten the progressive elements of K-12 teaching and learning. The issue of extending critical pedagogy into the field of primary education, therefore, lacks sufficient attention from Freirean scholars (Giroux, 2011). By exploring how Freire's agenda finds its way into Taiwan's elementary schools, the findings of this study may strengthen the literature on the match between critical pedagogy and primary classroom instruction.

Second, Freirean scholarship that focuses heavily on individualistic narratives of critical pedagogues has distracted the audience, to some degree, from the fact that the school has more than one teacher. It is likely that, at a given school, one ambitious teacher embraces critical pedagogy while his/her colleagues unanimously turn their backs on Freire's ideas. As mentioned

earlier, K-12 critical pedagogical teachers tend to be in the minority (Giroux, 1988; McLaren, 2016). In view of this, if researchers seek to better understand the possibility of extending critical pedagogy into K-12 school settings, they need to make investigations beyond the range of one classroom and take into consideration the institutional constraints that keep the majority of teachers from assuming the role of critical pedagogues. In the context of public schools, what critical teachers want to do might be discouraged by what Freire (1970/2002) referred to as "limit-situations[11]." Under the neoliberal education system nowadays, such limit-situations might be the accountability-oriented school environment, the privatization of public education, and standardized curricular activities, according to Au (2016). This study seeks to examine the discouraging factors that contribute to the limited number of grade-level critical pedagogues in Taiwan, which specifically adds a new layer to the literature on the limit-situations that hinder the K-12 classroom practices of critical pedagogy.

Third, the empirical knowledge available about Asian K-12 teachers' classroom practices of critical pedagogy is limited in range and number. Most of the existing research that deals with K-12 teachers' critical pedagogical practices is specifically situated in the Western context. That said, the key educational issue regarding the extension of critical pedagogy into Asian K-12 classrooms has yet to be addressed in a satisfactory manner. This study moves beyond Western portrayals of critical pedagogues and further fills the knowledge gap by scrutinizing critical primary teachers' work lives in Taiwan, which may accordingly increase the representation of Asian teachers' voices in Freirean scholarship.

Given the above rationale, the results of this study that concentrates on exploring the ways

[11] In his book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Freire mentioned that the major limit-situations plaguing Latin American countries were underdevelopment and poverty, which hindered students from developing critical literacy. Such limiting circumstances that serve to oppress students, in my view, fundamentally vary from situation to situation.

how Taiwan's primary teachers extend critical pedagogy into their own classrooms, and on examining the factors that discourage many of them from teaching against the grain of traditional instruction, will have the potential to be practically significant in the field of Freire's liberatory education that occurs in Asian public grade schools.

1.6 Background of the Researcher

As an author of this study, I am exquisitely intertwined with my research. As a former tenure-track public primary school teacher in Taiwan, and as an intellectual that expects critical pedagogy to be widely implemented in Asian grade schools, I am intertwined.

From 2002 to 2006, I worked as a tenure-track public primary school teacher in Taipei, the capital city of Taiwan. The decision to become a teacher was highly associated with my own school experiences during childhood. In 1977, I was born in a rural village of southern Taiwan, an area that featured meager cultural resources. At age seven, my family moved to Taipei so I could receive a better education. However, during my school years in Taipei, I was often bullied by classmates because of my physical weakness. For instance, in elementary school, a group of aggressive boys violently dragged me out of the classroom, into the restroom, and then locked me there. In junior high school, the similar scenario continued as a number of bullies habitually pushed down my head, flattening my face against the desk in order to make me breathless. On multiple occasions, I tried to report my bullying experiences to teachers but usually got negative responses from them. Given that bullying has been commonly considered a normal part of growing up, most teachers of mine tended not to handle bullying incidents actively. With my intensely negative school experiences, I decided to join the teaching profession. I longed passionately to teach in a manner that cared for and empowered those students in need. In 1995 when applying for Taiwan's universities, I chose Taipei Municipal Teachers College over the

others. With a goal of being an educator committed to offer marginalized students the instructions that they desire and deserve, I ardently sought a degree in special education while doing my college work.

In 2002, after completing my mandatory military service in Taiwan, I enthusiastically started working as a public primary teacher in Taipei. However, my career ambition simmered right down when confronted with the reality of teaching. In my workplace, I ran into a demoralized teaching workforce that delivered low-quality educational services and failed to meet the needs of students. Many of my school colleagues revealed deliberate indifference to students with behavior problems, were disengaged from their routine work, and held a grudge against my extra efforts that I devoted to helping at-risk children get through the given school tasks. Unfortunately, the mediocre teaching culture that prevailed in my workplace reminded me of my unpleasant experiences as a student. It verified the facts that good teachers tend to be in the minority, and that, as Lortie (1975/2002), Hargreaves and Shirley (2009) argue, the latent culture of teachers is marked by bureaucratic indifference and professional inertia. Even though all of my teacher colleagues were properly certified and well-trained, they were inclined to rationally reduce their teaching outputs and efforts under the fixed-pay system. Ironically, the school performance of my fellows posed a threat to student outcomes. In the long run, my four-year teaching experiences in Taipei's primary school left a much stronger and long-lasting unfavorable impression on the teacher workforce.

What I have experienced as a Taiwan's primary teacher raised a question in my mind: Is the school merely a workplace for teachers to make a living off it? Or could it be a humanizing place that effectively empowers students to learn?" This perceived confusion completely redirected my career path. In 2007, when I quit my teaching job and returned to academia for pursuing a

Master's degree at the National Taiwan Normal University, I purposely switched to specialize in Sociology of Education and further focused my thesis on the workplace culture of Taipei's elementary teachers. By doing so, I aimed to investigate whether the mediocrity of teaching is widely produced and maintained among urban primary educators. Then, through a year-long ethnographic fieldwork in Taipei's elementary settings, I reached a conclusion that Taiwan's critical teachers were limited in number while their conservative fellows that sticked with school norms tended to be in the majority. This was largely because the front-loaded teacher reward system favored the latter over the former, and also because there was no performance evaluation mechanism existing to effectively rid schools of incompetent teachers[12], which inevitably ended up with a demoralized teacher workforce in Taiwan's urban primary schools. Impacted by the results of my thesis study, I gradually became uncertain of whether teachers can make a difference and change students' lives for the better.

In 2016, I began my doctoral journey with UCLA. Then, in my first course lectured by Dr. Rhonda Hammer – *Introduction to Education and Social Sciences*, I was introduced to Freire's ideas and critical pedagogy. Immediately, I learned that Freire urged teachers to counter traditional pedagogies which dehumanized learners, and that the classroom could become a potential site of liberation through which social change might unfold. Freire's work brought about a question in my mind: How can K-12 school teachers translate Freire's rhetoric into pedagogical reality? While critical pedagogy is concerned with praxis, Freire offered little clue to the strategies and steps that teachers could adopt to liberate learners (Daneill, 1999; Pennycook, 2001). Because the realization of Freire's work in the context of grade schools remains a

[12] In Taiwan, even though the nation-wide teacher evaluation system has been brought to the policy table, teachers are merely encouraged to join on a voluntary basis, instead of mandatory participation (Lo, Lai & Chen, 2011).

problematic area, I am eager to, through this empirical research in Taiwan, examine the likelihood that teachers, if any, apply the principles of critical pedagogy in elementary settings, where are typically structured by standardized testing. Meanwhile, I also expect that the findings can overturn my initial negative stereotypes on teacher mediocrity that I personally encountered in my past teaching days.

My current identities as a resigned Taiwanese teacher only with a four-year seniority and as an admirer of Freire's insights obviously distinguish me from many teachers in Taiwan, who tend to work for three decades and provide non-Freirean, banking education. Having left the teaching profession for years, I still constantly bear the following questions in mind: What would happen if I did not quit my teaching job and continued to teach in Taiwan's primary school for thirty years? Could I resist the influence of institutional norms and become a critical educator? Or might I be completely assimilated into the existing school culture and turn out to be a mediocre teacher? I embark on this dissertation because I want to seek satisfying answers to my long-lasting questions, and because I desire to discover the feasible, creative strategies of Taiwan's critical primary teachers who, if any, can aggressively reflect on the unjust reality of teaching and further take up Freire's pedagogy in the face of daunting challenges caused by the accountability-oriented school environment, then verifying, as Freire (1994) asserted, that education inherently has contradictory potentials, and that the school could be oppressive or emancipatory, depending on what kind of pedagogy teachers actually employ in teaching situations.

1.7 Definition of Key Terms

For the purpose of this study, the following glossary has been contextually defined to help readers better understand the keywords being used. In the later section of literature review, the meanings of these phrases will be interpreted in greater detail.

Critical Pedagogy: The humanizing pedagogy that values the lived experiences, personal histories, and cultural resources students bring to the school. It connects classroom instruction with students' outside-the-school experiences so as to generate a meaningful learning. For Freire, the pedagogy cannot have a critical nature without providing a meaningful content for learners (Giroux, 2012). In the critical pedagogical classroom, everyday experiences become a starting point and a valuable asset that enables students to understand the larger world, to become aware of the structural forces which have deeply affected their lives, and to image what possible role they can play in creating a more just and equitable society. In this way, pedagogy links student learning to social change.

Critical Teachers: Teachers who radically extend Freire's critical pedagogy into public schools provide students with meaningful learning activities through involving their community experiences and diverse voices as a fundamental source for liberatory instruction.

Banking Education: The banking model of education, according to Freire (1970/2002), is a teacher-centered pedagogy in which students are treated as empty containers and are passively spoon-fed with abstract knowledge by authoritarian teachers. Teachers in this model behave like bank-clerks that make disciplinary deposits into students' heads and expect them to precisely recall the subject matter content on testing occasions. Freire strongly denies this dehumanizing pedagogy because it deprives learners of the chance to question, challenge and debate, usually leading to a culture of silence and a cycle of oppression.

Problem-Posing Education: In sharp contrast to the banking model of instruction, problem-posing education, advocated by Freire (1970/2002), is a pedagogy of liberation that engages students in dialogue and discussion around the issues relevant to their daily lives. The role of problem-posing teacher is to facilitate, along with the learners, a democratic platform in which

they collaboratively reflect on and problematize those common-sense realities to unveil the hidden forces that regulate their lives and shape their awareness. This process of problem-posing intentionally serves to help students move towards what Freire (1973) called critical consciousness, a precondition for social action and political change.

Teacher Alienation: Teachers who are subject to the symptom of alienated labor rationally move away from schools that serve difficult-to-teach students as they gain greater seniority (Berlowitz, 1971). When teachers see disadvantaged learners as a burden to their workload, the former may attempt to keep a distance from the latter. Put differently, this phrase means that teachers, to make their career more rewarding, deliberately engage in some form of cost-benefit calculations to determine where to teach and whom to teach. As a result, the phenomenon of teacher alienation produces an ascent rate of faculty turnover in high-need schools and further limits underprivileged students' access to experienced teachers.

Teacher Socialization: The process in which teachers are assimilated into the institutional norms of their workplace is conceptualized as teacher socialization in this study. While teachers begin to immerse themselves in the teaching profession, many kinds of their attitudes undergo a dramatic transition, such as the shift from progressive to more traditional pedagogies (Hanson & Herrington, 1976), and the change from humanistic to more authoritarian approaches in terms of classroom management (Denscombe, 1982). In this sense, teacher socialization often reveals a discontinuity between idealism-based teacher preparation and the pragmatism-driven teaching reality, ultimately posing a threat on the adoption of critical pedagogical practices.

Teachers as Cultural Workers: To facilitate a learning environment in which critical pedagogy can flourish, teachers need to significantly play the role as cultural workers (Freire, 2005). The cultural work of teaching includes the tasks that teachers empower students and help

them develop critical consciousness by exploring real-world problems and centering the instruction on these issues, and that teachers actively involve themselves in political debates and social movements to interrupt the structural forces of oppression and domination hidden in schools and communities. In this regard, teachers as cultural workers are transformative agents who have the courage to personally bring about social change and also help students become reflective citizens that are capable of redressing the injustices and inequalities potentially imposed on them.

Impression Management: It is the process through which the individual attempts to affect the impressions other people have about him/her (Goffman, 1959). In the case of critical teachers who strive for surviving in the conservative school environment, they may adopt the tactics of impression management to conceal the critical actions incompatible with school norms, and to deliberately display acceptable behaviors in sight of their conservative colleagues, so that they can behave as the kind of teacher they aspire to be, but still fit in socially with fellow members.

1.8 Overview of the Chapters

This dissertation is divided into eight chapters. In the first chapter, I introduced readers to my research concerns, the objectives of this study, a series of research questions that narrowed the focus, the potential contributions to Freirean scholarship on Asian grade-level teachers' critical pedagogical practices, and the meanings of key phrases being used throughout this study. Furthermore, I portrayed a brief history of my teaching experience in Taiwan, which directed me toward the understudied issue regarding the extension of Freire's ideas into public schools.

In Chapter II, I first reviewed Freire's ideas about critical pedagogy and teachers as cultural workers. Then, considerable attention was directed to examining the empirical evidence on two discouraging factors (i.e., teacher alienation and teacher socialization) that worked against

critical pedagogy, and then to reviewing the existent literature on the deliberate strategies K-12 teachers adopted to engage in critical pedagogical practices. A number of research gaps were accordingly identified. I, in the end, situated this study in the identified literature gaps.

In the third chapter, I outlined two theories, namely the culture cycle theory and symbolic interaction theory, which not only helped fill the identified research gaps but also formed the basis of how I addressed my research questions theoretically. The former took into account the dynamics between structural forces and human agency. It was useful for my investigation on the contextual factors that discouraged Taiwan's primary teachers from exercising critical pedagogy. The latter developed the idea of impression management, with which I could conceptually wrap up the techniques adopted by Taiwan's critical primary teachers to negotiate situational demands.

In Chapter IV, I described my research design and discussed the methodology employed by this study. The detailed information about my research site, recruited participants, data collection methods, ethical considerations, the criteria of data trustworthiness, the researcher's positionality, the limitations and strengths of adopted research methods, and the timeline for completing the dissertation would also be provided in this section.

The next three chapters reported the empirical findings of this study. Chapter V focused on the phenomenon of teacher alienation described by my participants. I presented their thoughts about why to teach, and revealed their preferences toward whom to teach and where to teach. Then, I illustrated the contextual factors that influenced their teaching motives and preferred career movement. This section ended up with examining the undesirable impact of Taiwan's teacher alienation on critical pedagogical practices.

Chapter VI described the pedagogical shifts that my participants had experienced over their career, and proceeded with a portrayal of their current preferences regarding what to teach and

how to teach. The contextual factors that influenced their pedagogical preferences would also be revealed. This chapter ended up with discussing the unwanted influence of Taiwan's teacher socialization in critical pedagogical practices.

The seventh chapter responded to my central concern of this study, which reported the various negotiation strategies of participating teachers who had successfully engaged students in critical pedagogy even when confronted with the contextual constraints. This section also indicated the motivations behind their progressive struggles, and pinpointed the situational elements that determined the types of their strategies.

Finally, Chapter VIII drew together the various threads of this study by summarizing my key findings in response to the research questions previously mentioned, and also by providing suggestions and implications for Freirean scholarship and future academic work. In the end, I wrapped up this study with some final words.

Appendices include: the semi-structured interview protocol; the informed consent form; examples of interview coding; and Gail Jefferson's transcription notations adopted in this study.

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

The research literature I review in this section is divided into three major topics – Freire's proposal of critical pedagogy, the teacher-related factors that influence K-12 classroom practices of critical pedagogy, and the survival strategies of critical K-12 teachers. Specifically, I begin with discussing Freire's idea about critical pedagogy and his relevant notion of teachers as cultural workers. Next, I carry out an extensive review of scholarly articles about teacher alienation and teacher socialization, which, in my view, are the discouraging factors that work against critical pedagogy. By doing so, the limit-situations and possibilities of extending critical pedagogy into grade schools will be evidently unfolded. Third, I investigate the empirical studies regarding how K-12 teachers teach critically in restrictive school settings. What will become clear is that little work has been done to understand the feasible strategies for extending critical pedagogy into grade schools, particularly in the Asian context. Lastly, I explain how this study addresses the identified literature gaps.

2.1 Freire's Ideas of Critical Pedagogy and Teachers as Cultural Workers

This section begins by reviewing the tenets of critical pedagogy which Freire presents it as a potential solution to the oppression and exclusion produced by mainstream educational practices. After revisiting critical pedagogy's principles, some criticisms and limitations of Freire's proposal will be briefly discussed. Next, I devote particular attention to the radical role Freire has defined for teachers to fulfill the cultural work of teaching and enact critical pedagogical practices.

2.1.1 Freire's Proposal of Critical Pedagogy

Whereas pedagogy is commonly and literally presumed as an approach of instruction, critical pedagogy transcends this technical definition and takes into account asymmetrical power

relations embedded in the schooling process: from official curricula to teacher-student hierarchies (McLaren, 2016). In contrast to the banking model of education, critical pedagogy promotes critical reflection on reality and facilitates democratic participation that allows excluded voices to speak. The core concern of critical pedagogy, by its nature, essentially revolves around social transformation with an aim to disrupt the status quo of inequality strongly permeating our education system and society (Morrow & Torres, 2002). Critical pedagogy in this sense is a political exercise that moves beyond technical teaching concerns and seeks instead to develop critical agents striving for social change. Historically, Henry Giroux (1983) first created the phrase 'critical pedagogy' in his book *Theory and Resistance in Education*. Nevertheless, Paulo Freire is widely recognized as the forefather of critical pedagogy since his work on emancipatory education has exerted the most direct influence over this field of inquiry. As Adkins (2014) argued, "most critical pedagogy scholarship is based on the foundation of the work of Freire" (p. 212). Then, critical educators, inspired by Freire's philosophy, share a common language of critique to deny oppressive school practices, such as the ideas of teacher-talk (Shor & Freire, 1987), the culture of silence (Freire, 1970/2002), and banking education.

The primary purpose of critical pedagogy is to empower the powerless (McLaren, 2016). In the context of urban schools, the powerless are historically marginalized youth, including low-SES students, students of color, and sexual minority students. These powerless students are traditionally underserved by the schooling system which operates in a manner reifying white, middle-class, and heteronormative ideologies (Apple, 2008; Ladson-Billings, 2006). What marginalized students learn in the classroom is essentially divorced from their everyday lives given that their community experiences tend to be seen as abnormal and incompatible with school orthodoxy. Consequently, the situation of powerless learners at school is like a deviant

being exiled to Siberia in which their voices and cultures have been significantly muffled and rendered invisible (Shor, 1996). That said, vulnerable student populations, within a prison-like educational institution, are voiceless and not afforded chances to increase visibility around their cultural identities. According to Giroux (2014), the primary effect of modern schooling practices on minorities and the poor is oppression. Under such circumstances, one undesirable result is the counter-school subculture intentionally produced by marginalized students who are hopeless, depressed, and subject to academic failure (McGrew, 2011). Freire (1970/2002) believes that critical pedagogy, as an empowerment intervention for the oppressed, can best serve at-risk students and liberate them from systemic inequities permeating public school districts.

For Paulo Freire (1973), the awakening of critical consciousness is the first effort to empower marginalized students. Liberation begins with a critical understanding of how dominant ideologies and practices have reinforced structures of oppression. Freire's concept of critical consciousness is signified by the ability to critically reflect on and act on one's oppressive circumstances (Jemal, 2017). Critical consciousness, therefore, encompasses both reflection and action geared towards social transformation. It does not stop at an awareness of dominant power structures but proceeds to work for social betterment. Put differently, a student who has developed critical consciousness not only vehemently interrogates social arrangements that privilege certain groups of people but also aggressively initiates individual or collective actions to redress perceived inequities. Through developing critical consciousness in learners, the classroom becomes a political space to facilitate student empowerment rather than merely a neutral site for instruction and socialization (McLaren, 2016). The cultivating of one's critical consciousness – the capacity to problematize the world so as to transform it – is at the heart of Freire's pedagogical proposal.

To help students achieve critical consciousness, two main teaching practices are emphasized by Freire's critical pedagogy: dialogue and problem-posing. Freire (1970/2002) held that dialogue itself is a practice of freedom and democracy, the process in which teachers and learners analyze, discuss, question, and deconstruct the dehumanized reality collaboratively. Dialogue as a crucial means to raising critical consciousness is grounded in students' everyday experiences, focuses on examining social conditions that perpetuate domination and injustice, facilitates action to interrupt structural inequalities (Salazar, 2013). Through egalitarian dialogue between student and teacher, Freire (1970/2002) suggests, individuals in the classroom become critical co-investigators of the world that draw on their own experience to interrogate taken-for-granted assumptions about social reality. The result is that students cease to be a passive listener and achieve a critical consciousness of the issues and problems meaningfully linked to everyday lives. As a case in point, Fránquiz and Salazar (2004) studied the effect of dialogical education on cultural identities of Mexican/Chicano students and found that a dialogical classroom obviously reduced minority learners' resistance or silence toward their own cultural heritage. Also, Cammarota and Romero (2006) engaged Latino high school students in the dialogical exercise that had learners write and present *I Am Poems* about their cultural identities. Through this dialogical learning process, Latino students were found to effectively resist the silencing of issues associated with their daily lives and amplify their own voices to speak out against the racial oppression they consistently experienced at school. Taken together, it is evident that dialogue, a central component of Freire's critical pedagogy, essentially deconstructs the hierarchical relationship between teacher and pupil, fosters critical consciousness among disadvantaged youth, and empowers learners to be responsible for social transformation.

As noted, critical pedagogy is also characterized by a problem-posing approach which

rejects the banking model of education. Instead of providing top-down solutions, the Freirean classroom poses problems and encourages students to think critically about the world in which they live and what efforts they could make to improve their own communities (Freire, 1970/2002). The role of teachers in problem-posing education, Shor (1980) asserted, is to "problematize the undemocratic quality of social life" (p. 95) and involve students in "extraordinarily re-experiencing the ordinary" (p. 94), through which learners are empowered to experience "the re-perception of reality" (p. 93). Through problem-posing, students learn to question rather than merely accept or recite textbook answers. Under this thought-provoking pedagogy, students approach the reality as a 'problem' to be investigated and transformed. Typical examples of such real-life problems that trigger students' critical thinking may include: "What counts as curriculum knowledge? How is such knowledge produced? Who has access to legitimate forms of knowledge? Whose interests does this knowledge serve?" (Giroux, 1988, pp. 17-18). The above reflective questions regarding knowledge production, legitimation, and circulation, according to Giroux (1988), problematize school education and can help students understand how power struggle in the wider society directly influences their school lives. As long as students are able to uncover the problems hidden beneath the status quo which is potentially open to negotiation and transformation, it becomes possible for them to envision a more humane world. Alternatively put, critical pedagogues believe that, by raising and discussing real-life issues that bridge connections between community, school, and the larger society, students can critically perceive the social forces shaping their daily lives in significant ways and accordingly be motivated to challenge oppressive structures. This is how Freire expects problem-posing education to function as a catalyst of social change.

However, although critical pedagogy purposely dissolves the dichotomy between theory and

practice, the real-world implementation of its principles still remains a problematic area (Gitlin & Ingerski, 2018). That said, Freire (1970/2002) has demonstrated that critical pedagogy is essential for empowering marginalized pupils who traditionally struggle with public schooling, but he offers little clue to the following practical concern: How do teachers translate the radical components of critical pedagogy into urban classrooms whose character and structure are strongly influenced by accountability policies and standardized testing measures? Giroux (1988) argued that, in response to this technical problem of critical pedagogy, Freire's pedagogical proposal focuses exclusively on ideological critique and provides little language to draw out actual counter-hegemonic practices. Hence, critical pedagogues need to "develop a discourse that unites the language of critique with the language of possibility" (p. 128), through which students can know how to connect learning to social change. The underlying point of Giroux's argument, then, is that there would be no critical pedagogy without an empowerment intervention that energizes students to both criticize the status quo and make all possible efforts for social betterment. Freire's proposal of critical pedagogy, I believe, can become more practice-oriented if it offers feasible, explicit guidance for teachers and students to engage in critical work. This is where the present study steps into the picture frame. In my view, this study which focuses on the negotiation strategies of urban teachers who work toward justice and equity in the classroom, to a certain degree, can provide a practical framework to move Freire's pedagogical agenda from text to reality.

2.1.2 Freire's Proposal of Teachers as Cultural Workers

For Freire (2005), education is a political act for liberation, in which teachers are expected to behave as cultural workers capable of facilitating equity and democracy in their social lives and at school. To fulfill Freire's critical pedagogical agenda, the cultural work of teaching

fundamentally entails two core missions: empowering the powerless students and direct involvement in social transformation (Knoester & Yu, 2015). First of all, the teacher, as a cultural worker, needs to expose disadvantaged students to the harsh reality of oppression that marginalizes their cultural identities and limits their choices. This pedagogical practice of unveiling and reflecting on pre-existing facts awakens students' critical consciousness and enables them to realize that "society and history are made by contending forces and interests, that human action makes society, and that society is unfinished and can be transformed" (Shor, 1992, p. 129). Inscribed in Freire's concept of teachers as cultural workers, then, is the belief that students should be invited to critically think about the world in which they inhabit and accordingly grow as critical citizens capable of furthering healthy democratic development. As such, one of the crucial tasks regarding teachers' cultural work is to empower and liberate traditionally oppressed students by valuing the histories and cultural heritage that they bring to school, and by encouraging them to interrogate the uneven power relationships hidden in formal curricula, so that they can read the world critically and take conscious efforts to redirect their lives toward a more just future.

More specifically, teachers who see themselves as cultural workers, to empower low-income students of color and sexual minority students, should have the courage to teach against the grain for social justice (Cochran-Smith, 2001; Simon, 1992) and delve into taboo issues (Ayers & Ayers, 2011). Given that the structure of schooling usually reflects white, middle-class, and heterosexual ideologies (Apple, 2008; Ladson-Billings, 2006), poor pupils of color and their LGBTQ peers have been subordinated as the silent minority and undergo some sort of social exclusion while studying at school. To minimize the powerlessness experienced by these historically underserved students, Simon (1992) urged teachers to engage in critical cultural work

that values the standpoints “from the margins” (p. 25), involves diverse voices in the classroom, and accordingly develops students’ multicultural awareness. This cultural work of teaching requires educators to defend their critical interests against the conventional grain of textbook-based instruction, and also against the newly-established grain of accountability-oriented measures (Cochran-Smith, 2001). Prior studies have documented that some ambitious teachers did break the norm and teach against the grain in their workplaces where instrumental competencies are placed at the center of learning. For instance, in a year-long ethnographic study undertaken by Albers and Frederick (2012), two Latino ninth-grade teachers radically taught against testing structures through their self-designed, critical curriculum that included the life experiences of at-risk Latino students who struggled academically on printed-based reading and writing, which, in turn, opened up spaces of reflective dialogue around the issues of oppression and discrimination regularly encountered by Latino students. Applegate (2013), an American high-school English teacher, worked against standardized tests widely used in the school system by integrating the Hip Hop culture into pedagogical practices, so that African American students in her classroom could develop critical thinking about the themes of power and identity related to their own communities. The empirical evidence above demonstrates that some critical educators are courageous enough to exercise the cultural work that operates against the grain of bureaucratic standards and empowers the academic journey of underrepresented students.

On the other hand, teachers as cultural workers should dare to teach the taboo topics as well, like white supremacy, homelessness, and sexual orientation, in order that students can speak and think against mainstream cultural codes that silence and marginalize the voices of minority groups. In general, taboos are purposely developed by the people in power to preserve the status quo or to secure certain power relations (Evans, Avery, & Pederson, 1999; Sorcar & Nass, 2010).

Taboos set the borders surrounding what is socially allowable and unallowable. They have a strong influence on the way our everyday lives are conditioned. A system of taboos places heavy restrictions upon what to teach students and how. To this end, breaking taboos by tackling highly controversial topics in classroom practices may potentially facilitate empowerment around marginalized youth. In the United States, for example, LGBTQ-inclusive sexuality education is one of the sensitive issues for K-12 teachers to discuss openly. Nevertheless, a few previous studies have recorded the successful work of critical pedagogues who dare to take risks teaching the taboo issues of homosexuality and queerness in the classroom. Page (2016) studied the instructional method of one English/Language Arts teacher whose students were largely homeless and LGBTQ students. She found that the focal teacher skillfully developed an inclusive curriculum by integrating multicultural texts that honored students' unique gender identities and facilitated open dialogue over LGBTQ issues, which helped make visible the hidden school discourses hostile to sexual minority youth. Jackson (2010) studied the pedagogical practices of nine K-12 teachers who identified themselves as gay or lesbian. These sexual minority educators, she found, deliberately disclosed their queer identities in the classroom context and naturally incorporated queerness as part of the curriculum, so that students were able to question taken-for-granted gender norms, and that LGBTQ youth had visible role models they could look up to. Taken as a whole, the aforementioned studies provide a vivid portrayal of radical teachers who educated on forbidden topics to empower minority pupils oppressed by heterosexual hegemony. Their counter-hegemonic pedagogy interrupts homophobic school norms and certainly exemplifies Freire's conception of teachers as critical cultural workers.

Secondly, teachers who act as cultural workers, according to Freire (2005), not only strive for empowering the powerless students but also are willing to perform the functions of change

agents involved in transforming the school community and beyond. That said, critical pedagogues, in the tradition of Freire, should assume the radical role of teacher activists dedicated to political debates and social movements that disrupt the reproduction of inequalities in schools and the wider society. For instance, teachers who seek possibilities for change can take an activist stance by voicing their concerns at school board meetings, by joining political campaigns, and by developing cooperative relationships with teacher unions and other civil rights organizations. A series of prior studies have illustrated the lived experiences of teachers who fulfill their activist interests and work for change inside and outside the classroom settings. Catone (2014) captured the voices of 4 teacher activists who were all affiliated with the New York Collective of Radical Educators (NYCoRE), a grassroots organization which initiated collective actions for liberation and social justice. His subjects, within the network of NYCoRE, functioned as change agents that not only equipped students with critical literacy through self-designed, anti-bias curricula but also joined the Opt-Out movement to combat the negative effects of neoliberal education policies on student learning. In the context of Canada, MacRae (2008) explored the work lives of four social justice activist teachers and discovered that, because of a strong dissatisfaction with the status quo, the subject teachers involved themselves in both school-based and community-based activist work, such as developing and circulating justice- oriented curriculum resources at school, engaging students in environmental education and global learning activities, and taking an active role in the statewide union that organized teacher marches and strikes. Together, empirical research on the profiles of teacher activists has demonstrated that teachers who believe in critical pedagogy and embrace community activism radically carry out the cultural work by teaching social justice on campus while also moving beyond where they work to generate transformational changes over structural oppression. This

certainly resonates the Freirean notion of teachers as cultural workers that "are committed to bringing about social change as active citizens within and outside of schools." (Knoester & Yu, 2015, p. 190). Such teacher activists roll up the sleeves and struggle hand-in-hand with youth to perform social justice tasks. They not only facilitate student activism through critical pedagogy but also personally take up an activist identity through social movement participation. Their activist stance on teaching illuminates how teachers' cultural work can transform injustice as it is essentially skewed toward the development of critical literacy and the expression of political activism.

In sum, constructing a more socially just world is the fundamental goal of critical pedagogy. To make possible such social transformation, teachers should, according to Freire (2005), take on the role of cultural workers that radically convert existing oppressive cultures into liberatory ones. As noted earlier, teachers who act as cultural workers are equally concerned with making changes at school and in the wider society. They exercise agency to enact change in various ways, such as teaching against the grain of bureaucratic standards, teaching the taboos to empower students, and joining social movements to disrupt the root causes of injustice. That said, Freirean teachers carry out the cultural work by making social change themselves rather than just teaching about it. Given that this study centers on the classroom practices of critical pedagogical teachers, more attention will be given to explore how teachers effect change within the school settings. In what follows, special attention is given to the contextual factors that may impede or facilitate the K-12 classroom practices of critical pedagogy.

2.2 The Hindering and Facilitating Factors That Impact Critical Pedagogical Praxis

The section focuses on the contextual factors that influence the extension of critical pedagogy into public schools. I assert that two teacher-related conditions – teacher alienation and

teacher socialization, are important school-level variables that discourage K-12 teachers from performing critical pedagogy. The former is associated with teacher preferences about whom to teach and where to teach. It may function as a push factor that drives experienced teachers away from the students in need. The latter is related to teacher preferences about how to teach and what to teach. It may be considered a pull factor that stimulates the assimilation of teachers into school norms. Through reviewing volumes of research on teacher alienation and teacher socialization, I argue, my question concerning the extent to which Taiwan's teachers extend critical pedagogy into primary classrooms will be properly informed.

2.2.1 Literature on Teacher Alienation

The term "teacher alienation" refers to the phenomenon that teachers, over the course of their career, rationally move themselves away from difficult-to-teach students, and away from the schools that host large numbers of underprivileged learners, in order to make their jobs more satisfactory (Berlowitz, 1971; Maclean, 1992). Put differently, it means that teachers deliberately engage in some form of cost-benefit calculations to steer the direction of their career movement. The reality of teacher alienation is associated with Karl Marx's (1963) discussion of alienated labor, in which human beings tend to pursue more rewards and less work when selling their labor in a capitalist society. As a result, the human is alienated from the working activity itself, and turns out to be a rational, calculating animal.

In the context of teaching, student characteristics (i.e., social class, race, neighborhood) have been proven as a crucial working condition that causes teacher alienation (Maclean, 1992; Quartz, et al., 2008). That said, the ways how teachers articulate personal interpretations toward student characteristics have a great influence in the direction of their career movement. If

teachers, under the front-loaded salary system[13], regard underprivileged students as a threat to their workload, they may experience work alienation and move away from pupils who need extra academic support during the teaching career. Conversely, if educators treat at-risk students as a challenge worth every effort, they may stay in or move toward the posts that best serve powerless learners. In terms of critical pedagogy that highlights the interaction between teachers and marginalized students, the former pattern of teacher career movement, namely teacher alienation, definitely goes against Freire's proposal while the latter one is beneficial to critical pedagogical practices. In the following section, I examine these two patterns of teacher career movement with empirical evidence drawn from prior studies. Finally, I will discuss their respective impacts on the extension of critical pedagogy into public schools.

2.2.1.1 Teacher Career Movement Away From Disadvantaged Students

A wide range of studies have shown that K-12 teachers, over the course of their career, tend to systematically move away from the schools that host large numbers of underprivileged learners, such as ethnic/racial minority students (Scafidi, et al., 2007), low-SES students (Loeb, et al., 2005), and ill-achieving students (Boyd, et al., 2005). Undesirable student characteristics are the push factors driving experienced teachers away from the classroom. Taking up this point, the typical pattern of career movement among K-12 teachers features the cherry-picking nature: in favor of privileged students over disadvantaged ones. The subsequent literature demonstrates the 'sweeting-up' career pattern[14] shared by a significant proportion of public-school educators.

[13] Lortie (1975/2002) argued that "income profiles of teachers today are predictable, comparatively unstaged, and 'front-loaded.' A beginning teacher knows what he will earn and can see that long service brings limited reward." (p. 84).

[14] Sonia Nieto (2003), a well-known scholar in the field of multicultural education, observed that many teachers who worked in urban areas migrated from less affluent to more affluent schools, which were often thought of as 'plum' jobs. Thus, I use the term 'sweeting-up' to describe the career pattern of teachers who deliberately make their working conditions more satisfactory through moving to 'sweet' positions serving high-SES students.

In his pioneering work on teacher alienation, Berlowitz (1971) adopted Marx's concept of alienated labor to study the staffing patterns of New York urban schools. Through analyzing the survey data collected from 3,563 primary teachers who taught in the City of Buffalo, he found that the focal teachers attempted to obtain higher reward from their work with fewer effort by transferring out of "difficult schools," and that New York's urban teachers generally defined "difficult schools" as those predominantly populated by black students, low-income students, and ill-achieving students. In other words, teachers in Berlowitz's study saw disadvantaged students as a burden to their workload, which needed to be kept away as far as they could. While teachers progressed through the teaching career, then, their mobility upward essentially represented the mobility away from students with marginalized status. To this end, Berlowitz argued, teachers were alienated laborers who deliberately calculated working conditions and job locations.

Using survey data from 738 districts in California, Stephen Carroll (2000) and his colleagues revealed that teachers preferred transferring out of schools with high concentrations of Black and Hispanic students, and into schools hosting relatively small populations of underrepresented pupils. As a result, most teaching vacancies in California's urban districts were geared toward the schools having a disproportionate amount of African American and Latino students. High-minority schools in California were commonly staffed by newly-hired, inexperienced teachers while predominantly white schools tended to have more highly-qualified and talented educators. It could be argued that, in California, the pattern of teachers' career movement produced an educational inequality, by which at-risk students had limited access to a high-quality teacher workforce.

Moreover, Lankford, Loeb, and Wyckoff (2002) analyzed seven administrative datasets from the New York State system, and discovered that there were systematic patterns of teachers'

career movement in New York City urban districts. Highly skilled teachers regularly seized opportunities to leave the challenging school context in which large numbers of low-SES students were educated, and moved to more desirable working environments while positions became available. They also argued that although teachers responded to the amount of salaries when selecting their workplace, "wage differentials did not compensate for the potential nonpecuniary effects of teaching poor students." (p. 53). That said, non-monetary features of teaching jobs, particularly the characteristics of the student body, played a crucial role in teacher preferences regarding where to teach. The result was that school-to-school teacher mobility in New York City could hardly retain senior, effective teachers in low-SES schools, ending up with an unequal distribution of experienced teachers across schools.

A similar pattern of teachers' career movement was documented in the context of Texas public elementary schools. Hanushek, Kain, and Rivkin (2004) used panel data that investigated teacher-student matching in Texas's urban districts to explore the determinant factors influencing teacher transitions. They discovered that teacher mobility in Texas was much more greatly associated with student characteristics, particularly the school achievement of pupils, than with salary differences. When Texas's urban teachers advanced in their careers, they typically shifted to schools that served fewer academically disadvantaged students. To this end, ill-performing pupils in Texas's troubled schools easily had unskilled teachers who were new to the profession since experienced teachers had left for more desirable work locations. The research finding of Hanushek and his colleagues – teachers systematically approach high-achieving students and migrate away from low-performing ones, confirms the negative effect of teachers' preferred career pattern on the quality of education received by students with higher need for academic support.

In concert, judging from the aforementioned studies, the phenomenon of teacher alienation has been proven by the evidence that teachers prefer to avoid a challenging work environment surrounded by disadvantaged students. A foreseeable result is that those struggling schools which urgently require highly-qualified, experienced teachers are often removed from them.

2.2.1.2 Teacher Career Movement Towards Underprivileged Students

While some teachers choose not to work in public schools serving large shares of low-income minority students, others choose to. Teachers who have disadvantaged backgrounds may be less likely to experience work alienation. That is, teachers of color may have a stronger preference for seeking employment in high-minority schools (Ingersoll, May, & Collins, 2019), and teachers from working-class backgrounds may decide to teach students in the low- SES district (Gorlewski, 2008). The scenario that teachers with underprivileged attributes pursue a career movement toward the positions educating disadvantaged students is well supported by the subsequent empirical evidence.

Ingersoll and May (2011) analyzed the national survey data collected by U.S. Department of Education and found that, after controlling other background factors, teachers of color were 2 to 3 times more likely than their white counterparts to teach in those hard-to-staff schools surrounded by high-minority neighborhoods. Stated differently, the schools which educated large numbers of underrepresented students of color tended to recruit a non-white teacher workforce. In light of this, there is likely to be a demographic match between teacher and student by race.

Hanushek, Kain, and Rivkin (2004) studied Texas's teacher mobility patterns between 1993 and 1996. They discovered that black teachers were significantly more likely than those from other racial categories to stay in the school districts serving a large population of black pupils, and that Hispanic teachers displayed a similar career pattern while working with students of their

own race. Besides, if black teachers in Texas decided to change schools or switch districts, they commonly chose a workplace with higher enrollments of black students than their previous schools. Hanushek and his colleagues argued that black teachers broke the typical pattern of career movement, which was usually pursued by non-minority teachers – migrating to schools with better student outcomes, fewer underrepresented minority students, and less students qualified for free lunches.

Jackson (2009) examined school-level data from the National Center of Education Statistics and tracked teacher mobility patterns in North Carolina between 2000 and 2005. He revealed that urban teachers in North Carolina preferred to teach same-race students. That is, teacher preferences for student race varied by teacher race. In the schools that educated a growing population of black students, black teachers were more likely to stay over time than their white counterparts, who often intended to leave for majority-white schools.

Liggins (2014) interviewed seven urban elementary teachers who came from working-class backgrounds and taught economically disadvantaged students in North Texas. He discovered that those teachers were motivated by their low-income backgrounds and accordingly chose to educate students from similar circumstances. They were confident that their personal histories of poverty left them better equipped to teach working-class children. To this end, they saw themselves as role models for their students and inspired low-income children to rise above poverty with their own success stories.

Sun (2018) used teacher survey data from North Carolina between 2003 and 2013 to analyze career movement patterns of black teachers. She pointed out that, compared to white teachers who possessed similar professional attributes, black teachers were inclined to work in those challenging school settings where non-white, poor-achieving, or low-income students were

served. Particularly, the school-to-school mobility patterns of black teachers in North Carolina did not parallel those of white teachers. Sun added that, when it comes to teachers who did switch schools, black teachers were more likely to select the school hosting higher concentrations of black pupils than their white counterparts. The career movement patterns of black teachers observed by Sun, to some degree, is in line with the findings by Eric Hanushek et al. (2004), which I have mentioned above.

However, despite teachers with disadvantaged backgrounds are evidently more inclined to approach the powerless students, they represent a relatively small portion of teaching workforce in the United States. According to the U.S. Department of Education (2016), as the K-12 student population becomes more racially and socioeconomically diverse, the elementary and secondary education workforce is consistently and mostly white. Foreseeably, minority and lower-class youths may have limited access to those committed teachers who have demographic attributes similar to them.

2.2.1.3 The Impact of Teacher Alienation on Critical Pedagogical Practices

Based on the empirical research I have mentioned earlier, teachers' preferences about where to teach and whom to teach evidently contribute to teacher sorting (Lankford, et al., 2002) and teacher segregation by race and class (D'amico et al., 2017; Maguire, 2005). On one hand, K-12 teachers, to minimize potential threats on workload posed by at-risk students, deliberately move away from difficult-to-staff schools, and further sort themselves into easy-to-teach ones that host fewer non-white, low-SES, and low-performing children. When K-12 teachers are systematically sorted across public schools, the neediest students are more likely to experience less-skilled and less-qualified instructors. As a consequence, the overall teacher effectiveness in disadvantaged schools has been considerably threatened. Given that experienced teachers intentionally alienate

themselves from powerless learners, and that critical pedagogy demands long-serving teachers who possess high levels of teaching competencies, the looming prospects of extending critical pedagogy into K-12 schools inevitably turn dim.

On the other hand, not all public teachers are resistant to serving low-income students of color. Teachers from minority and working-class backgrounds, as the literature shown above, may seek their initial employment in K-12 schools that match their demographics. Ingersoll, May, and Collins (2019) argue that the match between teachers' and students' demographics often fosters positive learning outcomes and may function as a potential solution to improving the education for vulnerable students. Seen in this light, the hope of empowering the powerless students with critical pedagogy rests on these committed teachers of color. Frustratingly, despite the appealing fact that teacher-student demographic match can carve out a promising niche[15] for implementing critical pedagogy in high-needs schools, teachers from disadvantaged households only constitute a small percentage of teaching workforce (U.S. Department of Education, 2016). As might be expected, the goal of disseminating Freire's ideas throughout K-12 schools would be fairly difficult, although not impossible, to achieve.

2.2.2 Literature on Teacher Socialization

Defined broadly, the term 'socialization' refers to a learning process in which people acquire the knowledge and skills essential for engaging successfully in a given society through interacting with social members (Billingham, 2007). Socialization helps individuals learn to perform properly in a specific social setting. In the case of teachers, socialization into the teaching profession means learning to teach in a manner that is compatible with a particular

[15] Giroux (2012) asserted that, in public schools, the successful implementation of critical pedagogy lies in whether teachers are in tune with students' cultural identities.

school culture and also meets the requirements prescribed by education authority figures (Zeichner & Gore, 1990). The socialization of teachers is an on-going process that formally begins with the onset of pre-service training and continues throughout the entire teaching career. During this career-long process, adherence to the prevailing school code is not the whole story of teachers' working lives. It is possible that teachers actively make choices about what type of educator they would like to be. Considering the vital role of human agency in constructing people's social world, Tierney (1997) argued that "socialization involves a give-and-take where individuals make sense of an organization through their own unique backgrounds and the current context in which the organization resides." (p. 6). To this end, the process of teachers' socialization which embeds agency in the construction of their professional lives is not merely uniform and orderly, but might be complex and dynamic.

Given the dynamic character of socialization process, teachers, in their working lives, respond to the demands of the teaching profession in more than single way. They may conform to formal school codes for appropriate conduct. Or they may strategically resist against collegial influence on teaching and preserve their cherished interests without open disobedience to restrictive school norms. The former falls into the functionalist perspective of teacher socialization that features the reproduction of existing order and is harmful to the transformative nature of critical pedagogical practices while the latter is located in the critical paradigm of teacher socialization that emphasizes teacher agency and social change, which yields favorable conditions to engage students in critical learning. The ensuing empirical studies illustrate that the ways how teachers socialize themselves into their profession, to a large extent, determine the chance of extending critical pedagogy into urban classrooms.

2.2.2.1 Teacher Socialization as Reproducing Dominant School Norms

Earlier work on teacher socialization primarily centers around examining the assimilation of novice teachers into the school culture during the early induction period. From the 1960s through the 1980s, many studies done by American and British researchers usually report the innovative-conservative shift in pedagogical perspectives while newly graduated teachers transit from college training to classroom instruction (Butcher, 1965; Denscombe, 1985; Hoy, 1968; Lacey, 1977). In such a scenario, the influence of teacher education programs tends to be gradually faded away after neophyte teachers increasingly immerse themselves in the profession. The longer teachers stay in the field, the more likely they are to fall out of their progressive perspectives originally developed by teacher educators. For this reason, most early literature on teacher socialization often documents an apparent discontinuity between idealism-oriented teacher preparation and conservatism-driven classroom reality (Zeichner & Tabachnick, 1981). With an overemphasis on the power of structure and little attention paid to the agency of teachers, reproduction and maintenance are major themes in earlier scholarship as far as in-service teachers' occupational socialization process is concerned.

For instance, Hoy (1969) surveyed 175 beginning teachers who accomplished their teacher education program at Oklahoma State University and discovered that, after their first two years of classroom teaching, neophytes were gradually integrated into the teacher subculture and became more open about student control techniques. Because schools in Oklahoma, Hoy added, generally and significantly demanded teachers to maintain an orderly classroom, and because experienced teachers usually functioned as "a group of significant others" (p. 259) who saw excellent teaching as identical to excellent classroom control, beginning teachers deeply internalized the role-related expectations of senior colleagues around them and further geared themselves toward authoritarian teaching styles when going through the incipient stage of career.

To this end, the existing subculture of experienced teachers operated as a powerful socializing force that restricted new teachers with innovative ideas, which led to their humanistic orientations acquired from teacher education being washed out.

Hoy and Rees (1977) collected attitudinal data from 112 student teachers who accomplished their teacher preparation courses in New Jersey State College. They found that, by the end of nine-week teaching practicums in New Jersey's secondary schools, these student teachers turned out to be obviously more bureaucratic in their pedagogical orientations and thereby passively conducted classroom instruction through the principles of conformity and impersonality. The bureaucratic climate of secondary schools in New Jersey, Hoy and Rees argued, was powerful and efficient; it effectively washed out the idealistic values and beliefs that student teachers acquired in preparation programs and brought to their classrooms. In this sense, the integration of student teachers into the profession is manifested in the form of what they described as "bureaucratic socialization" (p. 25). That said, after real-world exposure to classroom teaching for two months, student teachers were found to obediently follow the bureaucratic codes created and shared by school staff. Then, school bureaucracy, according to Hoy and Rees's findings, strongly shaped the pedagogical practices of newcomers and largely constrained the effects of training courses on their own perspectives.

British scholar Martyn Denscombe (1985) carried out an ethnographic research in three UK secondary schools and uncovered that beginning teachers tended to gradually embrace the hidden pedagogy – a hidden pedagogical perspective which stressed noise and student control – after they accumulated their classroom experiences. This hidden pedagogy, Denscombe contended, played a more vital role in shaping the ways how teachers performed daily tasks than any other pre-service training program might have done. On the surface, teachers understood and

commonly agreed that students' needs should be taken care of during class time. But behind their closed classroom doors, teachers cared intensely about establishing classroom control and sustaining instructor authority, which were often regarded as an essential prerequisite for competent teaching. Whether secondary teachers in the UK could become an eligible member of the teaching profession depended on their capacity to control students effectively. However, this hidden feature of teachers' work threatened progressive pedagogies and was detrimental to education reforms. The socializing power of hidden pedagogy on novice teachers, Denscombe (1982) added, was pervasive and long-standing because it was not simply caused by the formal organizational arrangements but also resulted from teachers' pragmatic responses to job demands. For this reason, the hidden pedagogy, as a strong conservative element in school structure, is the direct product of teachers' rational choices, which perpetuates conventional pedagogical practices (e.g., teacher-centered instruction) and militates against liberal models of teaching.

Elaborating further on Denscombe's thesis, Hatton (1987) asserted that the hidden pedagogy only played a partial role in socializing teachers into the existing occupational codes, and that the pressure from parental intervention tended to more directly affect the classroom experiences faced by teachers. Hatton interviewed primary teachers who served a high status school in Brisbane and revealed that middle-class parents were able to exercise a strong influence over school affairs and actively engaged themselves in evaluating teacher competence. The goals of classroom instruction, as a result, were often in line with those of aggressive parents. Parental pressure, Hatton concluded, not only constrained the scope of teacher socialization but also functioned as a barrier to classroom practices of non-traditional pedagogies that were not congruent with parents' expectations. Based on this scenario, parental influence evidently fosters

the notorious ‘wash-out’ effect which usually tears down the progressive elements of teacher education and restricts teachers with high ideals.

Although the wash-out effect of teacher socialization is well documented in early scholarship, it continues to be verified by more recent studies. This trend shows that the reproduction-oriented model of teacher socialization is stable and far-reaching. For instance, Blankenship and Coleman (2009) interviewed and observed the teaching of two elementary physical education teachers. They found that these primary teachers did experience the ‘wash-out’ of some pedagogical perspectives during the induction years, such as spending less time on instructional interactions and on planning the lessons. Moreover, Achinstein and Ogawa (2011) conducted a five-year study on the work lives of 21 beginning teachers of color. They discovered that although these non-white novice teachers strongly committed themselves to improving the education of low-SES students and ambitiously served as an agent of change in their workplace, they were still subject to nationwide accountability policies and helplessly complied with exam-driven school demands that washed out their original radical perspectives. That said, before they could transform the reproductive destiny of schooling, these committed teachers of color had been transformed by the subtractive education system.

In concert, judging from the above-mentioned studies, it can be argued that, since the 1960s, ‘reproduction’ is an enduring theme in the literature regarding teacher socialization, which stresses the idea that socialization fits teachers into the bureaucratized school. Prior studies have identified several organizational factors that contribute to this functionalist, reproduction-oriented model of teacher socialization, such as the teacher subculture (Hoy, 1969), school bureaucracy (Hoy & Rees, 1977), the hidden pedagogy (Denscombe, 1985), and parental pressure (Hatton, 1987). However, it is possible that teachers might resist against the static, linear

process of socialization and inhibit the continuity of school codes. Without the obedient responses from teachers, the reproduction of the status quo affecting schools would not be as stable as prior studies have shown. As Fligstein (2001) puts it, the success of maintaining the status quo always needs the active participation of social actors. The reason why the reproduction of conservative elements permanently plagues the school system is that, according to Denscombe's (1982) analysis, novice teachers consciously and actively shift away from humanistic teaching methods to traditional ones which are encouraged by existing school norms. This is because teachers that meet the practical demands of teaching benefit more from the bureaucratized system than do those who radically challenge structural constraints. Thus, it is the mutual cooperation between institutional norms of schools and rational responses of teachers perpetuates conservative classroom practices, albeit that progressive pedagogies have been constantly embraced by teacher training programs, and that innovative approaches are personally cherished by beginning teachers. As a result, "the practical pedagogy of teacher-centered instruction continues to dominate schooling" (Cuban, 1993, p. 253), and the beneficial effects of pre-service preparation programs on newbie teachers are largely washed out and difficult to retain.

2.2.2.2 Teacher Socialization as Resisting Against Institutional Demands

Since the mid-1980s, American and British researchers have begun to critically question the deterministic notion of teacher socialization and accordingly propose a thesis associated with the critical paradigm that emphasizes the role of human agency when addressing the socialization issue (Ball & Goodson, 1985; Nias, 1985; Zeichner & Tabachnick, 1985). This alternative view posits that the analysis of factors affecting teacher socialization cannot remain only at the structural level but, instead, has to consider the subjective aspects of the socialization process,

acknowledging that teachers have the capacity to resist the negative influence of school norms and construct their own professional identities. The critical conception of socialization accounts for the reasons why some teachers consciously and actively counteract bureaucratic constraints in an attempt to adopt more liberal pedagogies within their workplaces (Zeichner & Gore, 1990). The ensuing empirical studies, contrary to early scholarship which stresses a functionalist, reproduction-oriented model of teacher socialization, illuminate that teachers are able to strategically mitigate the pressures of socializing forces imposed by schools and take an active role in the process of learning to teach. These more recent findings recognize the agency of teachers that make deliberate responses to work situations and role expectations.

Zeichner and Tabachnick (1985), in a two-year longitudinal study funded by the Wisconsin Center for Education Research, investigated the development of beginning teachers' pedagogical perspectives in U.S. classrooms. They employed the idea of "social strategy[16]" elaborated by Lacey (1977) to portray the variance of infant teachers' reactions to technical control. Three of the four teachers who joined the study actively struggled against bureaucratic constraints in an attempt to implement innovative pedagogies in their workplaces. That said, they "engaged in some form of strategic redefinition and introduced at least some new and creative elements into their schools" (p.12). In the long run, two of them successfully broadened the range of tolerable behaviors with regard to the teaching approaches adopted. One made it covertly within the closed classroom while the other reached it openly with parental support. The findings indicated that novice teachers could strategically steer the direction of their socialization into the teaching

[16] According to Lacey (1977), the social strategy is the means by which individuals handle the tension between social norms and personal concerns. He identified three different social strategies: 1) internalized adjustment, in which the individual completely complies with social norms and behave in an expected manner; 2) strategic compliance, in which the individual outwardly accepts social norms but internally disagrees with them; 3) strategic redefinition, in which the individual resists against social norms and attempts to change them in his/her favor.

profession.

Skelton (1990) also adopted Lacey's (1977) concept of social strategy and used it to examine how individual teachers responded to institutional norms that were in conflict with their cherished pedagogical beliefs. Two British teachers who joined the study were found to carefully select their 'development sites' and only realized liberal pedagogies in specific situations where bureaucratic control was relatively weak. They did not openly and completely challenge against accountability demands that concentrated on testing practices; instead, they performed no differently from their conservative colleagues on required testing-related tasks and simultaneously attempted to develop innovative curriculum when the situation allowed it. These teachers, according to Skelton, utilized "strategic compromise" as a way to address the value conflicts they encountered at schools. Similar findings were documented by Lloyd (2007), who followed one female pre-service teacher into her kindergarten internship and concluded that the student teacher smartly used the tactics of strategic compromise through which she merged test-oriented school objectives into her progressive math instruction and thereby engaged in 'hybrid teaching practices' – "a little progressivism and a lot of traditionalism" (p. 344), to balance competing pressures she faced at her practicum school. In my view, strategic compromise is essentially akin to Goffman's (1959) concept of impression management cited earlier, which highlights individuals being able to present an acceptable public appearance required by social norms while preserving their own strongly-held beliefs in adverse circumstances.

Not only teachers' negotiation strategies but also the motivating factors behind them, such as teacher biography, teacher feeling, and teacher experience, have received considerable attention from researchers who are interested in examining the process of teacher socialization through the critical paradigm. For example, considering the significant role of biography in the

socialization of teachers, Saldaña (2013) interviewed five Mexican American primary teachers who worked at a dual-language school in San Antonio and found that these teachers, through reflecting on the educational inequalities they personally experienced during their school-age years, were devoted to subverting oppressive school codes with transformative teaching practices. All of the Mexican-origin teachers who participated in the study recalled their memories of schooling. They reported traumatic learning experiences caused by an English-only instruction policy prevalently exercised across Texas's urban schools. To heal the linguistic trauma they had endured, teachers in their daily work committedly sought to create a more inclusive learning environment that affirmed Spanish-speaking students' cultural identities and values. Saldaña's study revealed that teacher biography entails the power of agency, and that undesirable experiences in teachers' biography can help shape critical pedagogical practices essential for empowering the marginalized students. Coincident with this trend, Fry (2015) interviewed 46 highly-qualified U.S. teachers who struggled academically as K-12 students and found that their negative biographical experiences turned them into ambitious educators committed to helping all children learn. Associatively, Jetty (2014) conducted a mixed-methods study to understand the socialization process of 120 U.S. secondary science teachers and concluded that some teachers who had undesirable learning experiences in the secondary education were more inclined to exercise reform-based pedagogies than their peer colleagues. Taken together, it can be speculated that teachers are not passive recipients of school norms and their biographical profile essentially affects the way how they are socialized into the teaching profession.

Secondly, teacher emotion can elicit a strong sense of commitment to embracing pedagogical innovation and promoting quality education. In particular, teachers' feelings of guilt

which results from frustrations about not being able to fulfill personal ambitions and cherished goals have been proven to be a powerful catalyst for the development of individual resistance against the socializing forces exerted by school demands. For instance, Boyle and Woods (1996) investigated the survival strategies of an exemplary British primary teacher who faced the increasing pressures of curricular reform which featured accountability and its intensification. They revealed that the female teacher who joined their study tended to feel guilty while having to comply with institutional standards at the expense of children's individual needs. To repair the depressive guilt[17] she experienced, the female teacher resisted some parts of accountability measures and strategically involved herself in child-centered teaching. Added to this, Madrid and Dunn-Kenney (2010) explored the emotional themes of four American preschool teachers and indicated that the neoliberal education reform, such as the No Child Left Behind Act, had engendered the guilt feelings of focal teachers who worried about a failure to meet government requirements. This kind of persecutory guilt[18], according to Madrid and Dunn-Kenney (2010), often evoked implicit resistance to change within the teacher community. In congruence, teacher guilt, as empirical evidence has suggested, may trigger and enhance teacher agency that defends against prevailing socialization mechanisms of schools.

Thirdly, the extent to which teachers exercise agency in redefining their everyday work varies with experience. The more classroom experience teachers accumulate, the more likely they are to desocialize themselves from conservative school codes that interfere with progressive pedagogies. Specifically, Borg (2006) compared novice and experienced teachers' classroom performance and contended that experienced teachers were more inclined than their newbie peers

[17] Depressive guilt is the type of guilt that teachers may experience when they are unable to meet the needs of diverse students (Hargreaves & Tucker, 1991).

[18] Persecutory guilt is the type of guilt that teachers may experience when they fail to fulfill the requirements prescribed by education authority figures (Hargreaves & Tucker, 1991).

to perform beyond routine pedagogical procedures and hence tried out new teaching approaches. Furthermore, in the Netherlands, Wolff et al. (2015) examined the differences between expert and beginning teachers' classroom management skills and reported that expert teachers tended to employ learner-oriented classroom management while neophytes cared more about maintaining an orderly and disciplined classroom. In the context of Singapore, Caleon, Tan and Cho (2018) observed and interviewed 12 secondary school physics teachers. They discovered that experienced teachers were more likely to adopt constructivist pedagogies than novices who commonly embraced transmissionist beliefs on learning. Taken together, teaching experience has been shown to reinforce teacher agency that can help pedagogues antagonize the notorious wash-out effect of teacher socialization and strategically redefine classroom practices.

In summary, with more and more studies examining teacher socialization through the critical paradigm, what becomes clear is that, under bureaucratic school structures, ambitious teachers are still able to exercise their agency which translates to negotiation strategies for overcoming value conflicts. Also, several motivational profiles of teachers, including teacher biography, teacher guilt, and teaching experience, are evidently and positively associated with the development of teacher agency. However, it needs to be noted that although previous research has identified the agency of teachers who critically counteract the pressures of socializing forces imposed by schools, it often consists of relatively small sample sizes which inevitably threaten the validity of its conclusions. On one hand, this implies that the socializing power of existing school codes is strong and widely spread; it reduces the number of teachers who dare to radically teach against the grain of traditional pedagogical models. On the other hand, further studies are definitely needed to examine the extent to which teachers of all levels enact agency in desocializing themselves from institutional norms, to better understand the way

how ambitious teachers negotiate contextual constraints, and to clarify the reason why some teachers are more active to redefine daily tasks than others.

2.2.2.3 The Impact of Teacher Socialization on Critical Pedagogical Practices

A review of the literature regarding teacher socialization reveals that teachers are socialized into the teaching profession in more than single way. A significant number of teachers, as previous studies have shown, completely internalize the institutional norms and uphold traditional elements that stubbornly plague schools. Meanwhile, a relatively small group of teachers evidently engage themselves in strategic resistance against the socializing forces exerted by schools and accordingly preserve their progressive perspectives on teaching. Taken together, socialization into the teaching profession can be seen as a dialectical process in which teachers are constrained by existent school norms while also being able to negotiate contextual restrictions and steer their own socialization in a desired direction. Put another way, strong conventional socializing forces of schools not only would, to a certain degree, wash out the initial progressive perspectives of teachers but also might trigger their critical action and make changes happen. To this end, an overly deterministic view of teacher development, namely a reproduction-oriented model of teacher socialization, is essentially problematic.

Shor (1993) elaborated Freire's work on critical pedagogy and argued that desocialization from traditional school norms is a vital step for teachers moving toward empowerment education. In his view, desocialization directs teachers to deny the dominant influences on their development, to counteract industrial ideologies of instruction, and to embrace progressive classroom practices. Through the process of desocialization, teachers are directly involved in questioning the status quo and considering how it might be different or changed. Thus, desocialization is the starting point to liberatory pedagogies because it enables teachers to

deconstruct dominant school codes and negate a standardized way of teaching. Critical pedagogy, for Shor, is a desired outcome of desocialization which recognizes the agency of teachers to restructure pedagogical activities beyond the banking model of instruction. As mentioned earlier, the change-agency of teachers and the degree in which teachers desocialize themselves from school norms have been proven to be positively associated with several teacher motivation factors, like teacher biography (Fry, 2015; Jetty, 2014; Saldaña, 2013), teacher guilt (Boyle & Woods,1996; Madrid & Dunn-Kenney, 2010), and experience in the teaching profession (Borg, 2006; Caleon, Tan & Cho, 2018; Wolff et al., 2015).

Despite a growing concern on the role of agency in influencing the socialization process of teachers, only a few studies have been done so far to explore teacher negotiation strategies against the socializing forces imposed by schools (Nias, 1984a; Skelton, 1990; Woods, 1990; Zeichner & Tabachnick, 1985), albeit that a small body of doctoral researchers began paying serious attention to this problem more recently (e.g., Jiang, 2017; Kern, 2017). As such, our understanding of how ambitious teachers negotiate bureaucratic demands is rather constrained. In what follows, I narrow my focus to empirical research specifically examining classroom practices of critical pedagogues so as to uncover feasible strategies that radical teachers can use to redefine their work within the constraints of public-school settings.

2.3 Empirical Studies on the Extension of Freire's Proposal into Public Schools

Freire's work essentially has a theory-practice gap (Giroux, 1988). It is heavy on theoretical construct and light on feasible counter-hegemonic techniques. Despite its praxis-oriented nature, critical pedagogy lacks a set of concrete, usable guidelines for actual classroom implementation. Moreover, the current school climate that features standardization and accountability is hostile to Freire's agenda. Teachers who dare to work against conservative pedagogical models are often in

the minority (Cochran-Smith, 2001). Together, faced with little clue to implementation, and also threatened by traditional school structures, Freire's aggressive proposal has consistently drawn criticism for failing to find its way into urban classrooms (Gitlin & Ingerski, 2018; Perveen, 2015). However, multiple studies have shown that critical pedagogy can and does occur in public school settings where instrumental competencies are placed at the center of student learning, and that a small number of radical teachers adopt creative strategies to, covertly or overtly, engage in critical pedagogical practices.

First of all, due to the pervasive hostile school climate toward critical education, numerous researchers have observed that ambitious teachers tend to covertly perform critical thinking activities behind closed classroom doors. For instance, Smith (2013), a middle-school technology teacher who worked with suburban students in Ohio, attempted to employ Freire's critical pedagogy in his seventh-grade class, but he experienced severe pushback from parents who restricted children's access to left-wing political discourses. While Smith directed his students to conduct an interview project that aimed to examine racial discrimination occurring in and out of school, he unexpectedly got called to the principal's office several times for parental concerns against his open, radical teaching approach. As a result, Smith realized that if Freire's critical proposal were to be realized in his workplace where parents did not support progressive pedagogies, it needed to operate behind closed classroom doors. He, by perceiving the school as a limited situation, eventually confined his critical pedagogical practices to classroom discussions that focused on questioning hegemonic discourses embedded in official curricula, rather than openly engaging students in radical research projects which might elicit considerable parental complaints.

Chang (2000) explored the critical teaching practices of five Taiwanese primary teachers

who identified themselves as transformative intellectuals. He revealed that, due to bureaucratic control and parental pressure that worked against Freire's critical pedagogy, the subject teachers, in their workplaces, developed underground support networks to help them covertly and collaboratively redesign classroom activities aimed at raising students' critical consciousness through discussion and reflection on the taboo issues, such as LGBTQ rights and sexism. When embarking on the daily routine, these critical primary teachers, just like their conservative colleagues, obediently implemented pre-packaged curricula and delivered official knowledge to students. But, during their own free time, they surreptitiously grouped together to exchange ideas over timely topics ranging from cross-gender identities and sexual assault to gay rights, which would be used to organize students' town hall meetings. Then, according to Chang's (2000) study, Taiwan's primary teachers who acted as transformative intellectuals deliberately launched back-stage reactions to reshape pedagogical rationales in order to match their own critical concerns. In this sense, critical teachers' back-stage area becomes a private resistance site for exercising Freire's counter-hegemonic pedagogy that markedly interrupts dehumanizing school norms. That said, teachers' underground network in which radical ideas are created and shared provides a collaborative source of survival mechanism.

However, performing critical pedagogy 'under the radar' might place Freirean teachers at potential risk of parental backlash or administrative censure. That said, even if critical teachers, to empower marginalized students, can surreptitiously sidestep systemic regulations and teach against the grain behind closed classroom doors, such covert practices do not necessarily guarantee a safe shelter that completely keeps themselves away from public monitoring. As a case in point, Chang (2019) recorded that, in March 2019, a fifth-grade Taiwanese teacher

covertly had students watch a gay-rights documentary[19] when teaching an art lesson. After school, students went home and informed their parents about what they had learned in art class. The next day, some of the parents who strongly opposed the presence of homosexuality in the elementary curriculum launched a protest against LGBTQ-inclusive education in front of the official building of Taiwan's Ministry of Education. Angry parents yelled at the officials who were trying to pacify the situation, "Why did my fifth-grade child see the rainbow flag at school?" "Who allowed the teacher to smuggle LGBTQ issues into the primary classroom?" As a result, the focal teacher who showed a gay-themed film in art class not only drew sharp condemnation from school and government authorities, but also was subject to close supervision and extra monitoring on classroom lessons to come. In view of this tragic incident, it could be argued that critical teachers who address sensitive topics 'under the radar' are possibly unable to entirely avoid public scrutiny, and that extending critical pedagogy covertly into primary classrooms does have a potential flaw.

Since below-the-radar struggles against institutional norms may be risky for critical teachers, is it possible, then, for them to safely and successfully perform critical pedagogy in the public spotlight? In reality, a small number of prior studies have proven that critical pedagogy does and can openly move into teachers' routine teaching activities. For example, Page (2016) documented the critical pedagogical practices of one female secondary teacher, Ms. Lanza, who educated sexual minority students in the Upper Midwestern area of the United States. She found that, to overtly implement LGBTQ-inclusive education in the classroom, Ms. Lanza blended standards-based instruction with equity-driven pedagogy. On one hand, Ms. Lanza efficiently

[19] This gay-rights documentary is titled "*The Rose Boy*" that commemorates a Taiwan's gay middle-school student, Yeh Yung-Chih, who was bullied to death in 2000. Yeh's school teachers did nothing to prevent it from happening.

boosted student reading scores through standards-based instruction in order to earn the trust of administrators and parents, so that she was granted more academic freedom in introducing LGBTQ-focused texts to her courses. On the other hand, Ms. Lanza also asked her students of sexual minority to select in-class reading materials that included LGBTQ issues (e.g., the gay-themed novel '*Rainbow Boys*') and were meaningfully associated with their everyday lives. Since it is the students who proactively added LGBTQ literature to their own courses, Ms. Lanza was able to largely circumvent parental opposition and administrative disapproval. Taken together, Ms. Lanza's strategic, hybrid teaching practices that not only promote both student achievement and LGBTQ equity but also, to a large degree, let LGBTQ youth take charge of their learning experiences successfully prevent herself from public criticism when teaching taboo subjects.

A bit earlier, Schultz and his colleagues (2013) examined the transformative practices of a middle-school teacher, Jennifer, who was one of the co-authors of the study and held her job in a Midwestern urban district. Jennifer, to perform the principles of critical pedagogy within a high-stakes climate, exploited the 'openings' of mandated curriculum framework that left students enough room to develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Specifically, she addressed traditional textbooks in a critical manner, through which students were encouraged to problematize and challenge pre-packaged learning units with their own community experiences. Instead of rejecting or entirely throwing away school textbooks, Jennifer used them purposely as a departure point of her critical teaching. She worked with students to identify objective, value-neutral vocabularies from textbooks and then collaboratively uncovered what lay beneath surface meanings. For instance, while the textbook superficially defined the term 'charity' as actions of voluntary giving, Jennifer's students were invited to think deeply about and to create action plans

for social issues (e.g., world hunger) hidden behind the phenomena of charitable giving. As such, the pre-packaged contents of textbooks were transformed into thought-provoking resources for students' action projects. Jennifer's teaching story reveals that although teachers are required to deliver the standardized curriculum, they do have autonomy in determining their teaching methods, which can be seen as a negotiable crack amidst the strict structure of high-stakes environments. Ultimately, the authors conclude that it is possible for critical teachers to teach against the grain of textbook-based instruction by "teaching in the cracks" (p. 53).

Coincident with this trend, Jackson (2010) unfolded the marginalized voices of nine American K-12 teachers who had a homosexual orientation. She discovered that these homosexual teachers strategically engaged students in queer pedagogy by naturalizing LGBTQ-related discourses in the classrooms. On one hand, the focal teachers naturally queered their pedagogical practices by disclosing their sexual identities and sharing their lived experiences with students. By making visible their marginalized identities in the teaching context, these queer instructors translated LGBTQ issues into a normal section of the curriculum, rather than merely an inserted topic. On the other hand, the subject teachers also seized teachable moments as students spontaneously brought up questions about queerness. During the class, they paid special attention to students' interesting occurrences and then converted their LGBTQ-related questions into radical lessons that challenged biological understandings of sexuality. For example, Jackson recorded that, after gay teachers honestly disclosed their sexual orientation, some students displayed sudden interest in queerness by asking, "How do you spell homosexual?" "Are you gay?" (p. 45). Gay teachers, then, keenly and purposely used these probing questions to further students' learning about homosexuality. In this sense, students did the work of initiating dialogue on LGBTQ issues, and queer teachers accordingly took advantage of students' curiosity to

develop the lesson. Together, Jackson's study shows that queer teachers strategically utilize self-disclosure and students' spontaneous questioning to make LGBTQ content a natural part of classroom conversation, through which potential anti-queerness comments of parents and school administrators can be effectively prohibited.

In sum, prior studies have revealed possible negotiation strategies of extending critical pedagogy successfully into school environments that are hostile to Freire's ambitious proposal through discussing taboo issues behind closed classroom doors (Smith, 2013), through hybrid teaching practices that balance student achievement with critical literacy (Page, 2016), through teaching critically in the cracks of dominant curricular structure (Schultz, 2017), or through seizing critical classroom moments that arise from students' spontaneous inquiries to tackle controversial topics (Jackson, 2010). The first strategy above is what Scott (1990) called "hidden transcripts" which allow critical pedagogy to operate below the radar, so that critical teachers surreptitiously teach against the grain and thereby overcome the value conflicts they encounter at schools. However, such covert resistance against school norms might place critical teachers at potential risk if public scrutiny accidentally penetrates into classroom walls. Next, the aforementioned second tactic is known as "strategic compromise" (Sikes, Measor & Woods, 1985), by which critical teachers partially modify their radical perspectives and accordingly render counter-hegemonic practices highly tolerable and acceptable to school authorities and parents. It can be seen as a mixture of traditionalism and progressivism over teaching methods, which practically functions as what Woods (1990) called "bridging devices" that enable critical teachers to align traditional standards with progressive values more closely in order to bridge the discrepancy between classroom reality and their idealistic visions. Then, the third negotiation

strategy adopted by critical teachers is to exploit structural openings[20] where institutional regulations are relatively weak, so that they can remain safe from public accusations while overtly interrupting dominant school codes. Lastly, the fourth negotiation technique is often referred to as "critical moment teaching" (Goodman, 2003), in which the teacher attentively listens to students and grasps their spontaneous inquiries as a means to naturally trigger classroom discussions over controversial issues. Such unplanned teaching moments are critical and have potential for facilitating profound learning because they heighten student interest and effectively interrupt lecture-based instruction, which allows critical pedagogy to take place during class time. Taken as a whole, the first aforementioned strategy may engender a relatively risky form of teacher struggle than the rest. This is because it merely moves critical pedagogy into the private backstage area without modifying counter-hegemonic teaching practices to an acceptable level. This potentially subjects critical teachers to disciplinary sanctions if the glare of public scrutiny incidentally creeps into enclosed classrooms. For this reason, the present study, with Taiwan's research samples, seeks to explore appropriate negotiation strategies that critical teachers employ to safely and successfully extend critical pedagogy into their workplaces.

2.4 Gains from the Reviewed Literature

The literature review above informs my study with the following points. First, Freire's critical pedagogy seeks to empower the powerless students. It requires teachers to reach learners with marginalized status, and then to take on the role of cultural workers that are concerned with transforming the school community through teaching against the grain of banking education, and through teaching the taboo issues. Second, critical K-12 teachers tend to be in the minority. This

[20] Tarrow (1998) aggressively saw such openings of power structures as a political opportunity that can facilitate significant changes on the existing order.

is because, two teacher-related factors – teacher alienation and teacher socialization, strongly permeate the education system and eventually lead to the limited number of critical pedagogues across public schools. The former factor moves experienced teachers systematically away from powerless students while the latter one assimilates K-12 educators into traditional school norms and results in a progressive-traditional shift regarding pedagogical perspectives. As noted earlier, these factors are associated with teachers' rational responses to institutional regulations – front-loaded salaries and accountability measures respectively.

Third, teachers are not merely passive technocrats, but capable of repositioning themselves as critical agents that challenge the status quo. Given the dialectical relationship between structure and agency, dominant school codes not only threaten classroom practices of critical pedagogy but also facilitate the growth of critical consciousness among teachers. Judging from the aforementioned studies, the development of teacher agency that defends against workplace alienation and bureaucratic socialization is associated with teacher demographics (e.g., teachers' social class and race/ethnicity) and motivational profiles of teachers (e.g., teacher biography, teacher guilt, and teaching experience). That is, teachers with disadvantaged backgrounds, memories of academic struggles, strong feelings of depressive guilt, or more teaching experiences, tend to perform progressive pedagogies more actively than their counterparts.

Fourth, critical K-12 teachers, in the face of restrictive school norms, adopt a range of sophisticated strategies to negotiate situational demands while exercising Freire's pedagogy in their own classrooms. Multiple aforementioned studies have documented that, due to a handful of critical K-12 teachers who articulate various techniques of impression management to avoid open conflict with institutional norms, Freire's counter-hegemonic agenda does occur in public schools where traditional teaching methods are heavily employed. As discussed above, these

deliberate tactics include keeping critical pedagogy under the radar (Smith, 2013), blending academic efficacy with student empowerment (Page, 2016), seeking the cracks within official curricula to teach for justice (Schultz, 2017), and taking advantage of critical teaching moments when students spontaneously ask equity-related questions (Jackson, 2010). Through adopting these strategies, critical pedagogy is likely to successfully find its way into K-12 classrooms in which Freire's proposal is unwelcome.

2.5 Gaps in the Reviewed Literature

A number of research gaps can be identified in the literature reviewed in this chapter. One is that little empirical research focuses on the extension of critical pedagogy into grade schools, particularly in the Asian context. This leads to limited understandings of the contextual factors that impact the implementation of critical pedagogy in Asian primary schools, and of practical strategies that Asian primary teachers undertake to integrate critical pedagogy into their everyday teaching. Additionally, with regards to the issue of teacher alienation, the existing literature focuses heavily on K-12 teachers' inter-school migration and scarcely discusses about their intra-school mobility. In the school, the workload of teachers is uneven. Some school positions have a more demanding workload than others. It is likely that K-12 teachers, to lessen their own workload, rationally choose to distance themselves from heavy-workload positions within the school rather than transfer to other more satisfactory schools. As such, the future studies about teacher alienation need to take teachers' intra-school mobility into account[21]. On top of that, much of the scholarship on teacher socialization draws research participants from U.S. or UK teachers who receive one-year PGCE training courses. The occupational socialization of Asian

[21] Coincident with this trend, Kalogrides, Loeb, and Béteille (2013) reviewed a large body of research on teacher sorting and then argued that "in contrast to the literature that describes how teachers sort between schools, there is comparatively little research on the extent to which teacher sorting also occurs within schools." (p. 104).

teachers who are required to complete a four-year training program has been sidelined in the literature. It might be speculated that the longer the training program, the greater the tendency of teachers to desocialize themselves from school norms and embrace critical pedagogy. Lastly, as this review of literature demonstrates, the progressive struggles of critical K-12 teachers who teach academic subjects have drawn significant attention from Freirean scholars while those of their counterparts who teach practical subjects (e.g., music, physical education) have not been given sufficient consideration. Different subject teachers, in my view, may face different degrees of institutional control and thereby have different levels of academic freedom in exercising critical pedagogy. To this end, critical pedagogical struggles of K-12 teachers that take over non-academic disciplines need to be further investigated. In consideration of the aforesaid knowledge gaps, then, this study involves Taiwan's primary teachers as research samples to examine the extent to which, and the ways in which, Freire's critical pedagogy has been implemented in Asian grade schools. All of my participants graduated from Taiwan's four-year teacher training program. Some of them teach non-academic subjects, and many of them choose to spend the entire career in one school.

2.6 Situating This Study in the Reviewed Literature

The literature reviewed above informs my study by indicating: 1) the core missions that teachers should fulfill in an effort to perform critical pedagogy; 2) the limit-situations that threaten the real-world implementation of critical pedagogy; and 3) the limit-acts that critical teachers can carry out to counter situational constraints. In the context of Taiwan where this study is located, students have been traditionally taught in a rote way (Driskell, 2014), and teachers are obliged to keep political topics (e.g., the theme of Taiwan's independence movement), away from the classroom (Misco, 2019). As such, the key missions of Taiwan's

critical primary teachers, based on Freire's (2015) notion of teachers as cultural workers, have to do with teaching against the grain of rote learning, and with facilitating classroom discussions on the taboo issues related to politics, particularly that of the so-called One-China policy. For this reason, the present study will be designed to gather focal teachers' comments on these missions, and also to uncover any difficulties they have experienced.

Next, as the studies above demonstrate, the limit-situations, including teacher alienation and teacher socialization, have endangered the K-12 classroom practices of critical pedagogy. In Taiwan, the majority of public-school teachers seldom transfer between schools throughout the entire career[22]. Teacher alienation that occurs there, then, may take the form of intra-school mobility away from the disadvantaged students[23]. In view of this, the data collected in this study seeks to entail the empirical evidence regarding teacher career movement at a given school. On the other hand, the limit-situations that disrupt the extension of critical pedagogy into K-12 schools also involve teachers' pedagogical shift from progressive to conventional during the socialization process, according to the scholarly work I reviewed earlier. Specifically, teacher socialization that takes place in Taiwan's public schools is driven by a general concern with creating the quiet, orderly classroom[24], which primarily works to boost student outcomes. As such, I intend to collect and analyze the career history data of Taiwan's primary teachers to

[22] According to Taiwan's Ministry of Education (2020), the overall teacher mobility rate across public elementary schools was 1.39% in 2019, 1.40% in 2018, 1.04% in 2017, 1.18% in 2016, 1.22% in 2015. That said, for the past years, over 98.5 percent of public primary teachers in Taiwan have spent their teaching career at the same school.

[23] In Taiwan's primary schools, new teachers tend to experience workplace bullying, in which they are required to take over at-risk classes that have high concentrations of disadvantaged children (Ke, 2010; Wang, 2005). This is because senior teachers often turn their backs on neediest students, so that new teachers have to bear the brunt of serving at-risk pupils.

[24] Taiwan's primary teachers commonly focus classroom management on keeping students quiet in order to enhance teaching performance. For instance, Wang (1996) studied the socialization process of two Taiwanese second-grade teachers and found that learning to be a good teacher was about learning to control classroom noises effectively. Also, Ke (1999) observed the teaching activities of a Taiwanese sixth-grade teacher and discovered that, during the class, the focal teacher preferred keeping students busy with worksheets in order to keep them quiet and focused.

understand their changing perspectives about classroom management, and to examine whether their initial, progressive beliefs have been washed out by the socializing forces of school norms.

Lastly, limit situations, Vieira Pinto (1960, as cited in Freire, 1970/2002) suggests, are not "the impassable boundaries where possibilities end, but the real boundaries where possibilities begin." (p. 99). Although the aforesaid limit-situations operate as a barrier to the implementation of critical pedagogy in Taiwan, limit-acts can still be taken by critical teachers to overcome the situational constraints. As noted above, a few studies have identified several structural openings that American and British critical teachers exploit to negotiate the contextual constraints around them, such as the cracks of dominant curricular structure (Schultz, 2017), and the marginal subject area where school demands are relatively weak (Woods, 1990). Crucially, my literature review also reveals that the biographical factors and motivational profiles of teachers are associated with the development of limit-acts against the grain of traditional pedagogical models (Boyle & Woods,1996; Saldaña, 2013). In relation to my learnings from prior scholarship, then, this study has two dimensions: the first is the structural aspect that describes school norms currently faced by critical teachers in Taiwan, so that I can explore the structural opportunities through which Taiwan's primary teachers perform critical pedagogy in their workplaces; and the second is the phenomenological aspect that focuses on revisiting focal teachers' lived experiences, so that I can understand their negotiation strategies and capture the motivating factors behind their critical practices. Simply put, this study blends together both structural and phenomenological analysis on the work lives of critical primary teachers in Taiwan.

Based on my gains from the literature review, I purposely select two theories that frame this study. In what follows, I briefly discuss each of them and further explain how they can help fill the identified research gaps on extending critical pedagogy into grade schools.

CHAPTER III: THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

This chapter describes two theories – the culture cycle theory and symbolic interaction theory, to form the basis of how I address my research questions theoretically. The former takes into account the dynamics between structural forces and human agency, which is useful for my investigation on the contextual factors that influence primary teachers' real-life applications of critical pedagogy. The latter develops the notion of impression management, with which I am able to conceptually wrap up the techniques adopted by critical teachers to negotiate situational demands.

3.1 The Idea of the Culture Cycle

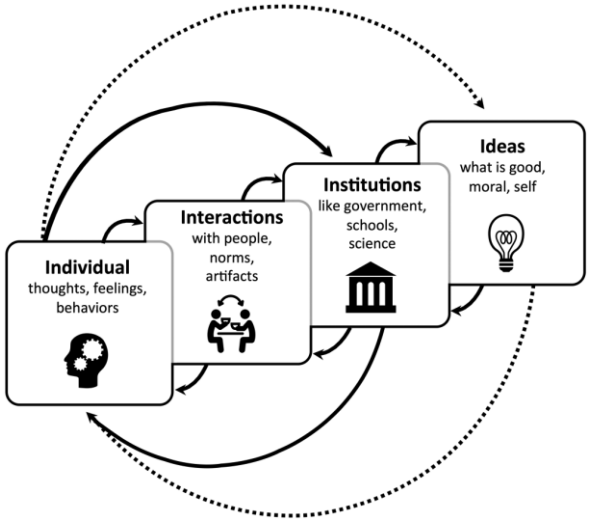
The culture cycle is a cognitive tool that graphically illuminates the dialectical relationship between structure and agency. It was developed by Stanford psychologist Hazel Rose Markus with a focus on how "cultures and selves define and build upon each other in an ongoing cycle of mutual constitution" (Markus & Kitayama, 2010, p. 420). That is, individuals and cultural forces make up each other. People are both constructors of and constructed by their sociocultural environments. Since humans may help shape their cultures, they are not just cultural dopes who passively comply with existing social orders (Giddens, 1984). When individuals become aware of the hidden cultural codes around them, they might reflect on or even resist their undesirable impact. This is why each educational institution has its own revolution history, rather than merely "same system, different times." This is why most educational reforms have a slow pace of progress due to the potential hindrance from conservative teacher groups.

According to Markus and her colleague (2014), the culture cycle consists of four intertwined elements which range from micro to the macro level, including the individual's selves (e.g., one's feelings, actions, and thoughts); the everyday interactions with environments

(e.g., home, school, workplace, etc.) and cultural artifacts that reflect and shape one's selves; the institutions where one's daily interactions happen, which permits specific practices and artifacts while discouraging others; and the hidden, deeply-rooted ideas that define what is right and wrong as well as what is good and bad. These background ideas both affect and are affected by the lower levels of the culture cycle (see Figure 3.1).

Figure 3.1

The Culture Cycle Theory



Note. Adapted from "In this together: Doing and undoing inequality and social class divides," by H. R. Markus, 2017, *Journal of Social Issues*, *73*(1), p. 213.

One strength of Markus's culture cycle approach is that it specifies the interplay between intrinsic and extrinsic factors in shaping one's action. In other words, no human action is simply caused by either intrinsic factors or extrinsic ones. Both of them are always in effect. As Markus and Hamedani (2019) put it, "people are culturally shaped shapers." (p. 14). For example, in the case of banking education that is widespread in East Asian countries (Kell & Kell, 2013), it is simplistic to completely attribute this spoon-fed pedagogy to the authoritarian character of Asian teachers, or to the prescribed textbooks with which teachers interact to make deposits of official

knowledge into students' minds, or to the exam-driven education system that does not provide the conditions needed for student-centered pedagogy, or to the widely-held ideology of meritocracy that judges a person's success and status solely by his/her level of educational attainment. Then, the better way to analyze the rote-learning model deeply rooted in East Asian education systems is to carefully consider the interaction of all four layers that include both individual psychological and sociocultural factors. Each factor mentioned above is responsible for shaping the climate of banking education in East Asia.

Being conscious about the existence and operation of the culture cycle, as Markus and Conner (2014) argued, is a necessary first step to managing it. As soon as people understand the fact that their behavior is influenced by cultural forces ingrained in the environment, they may intentionally take pragmatic action to confront these structural constraints, or even directly resist against them. Take teachers' resistance to bureaucratic norms for an instance. Prior studies have shown that, in the face of institutional constraints, teachers are likely to consciously resist conformity and attempt to redefine the school norms that do not fit their needs. Zeichner and Tabachnick (1985) conducted a two-year longitudinal study on examining the development of four American beginning teachers' teaching perspectives. They found that three of the four teachers significantly took concrete efforts to negotiate the school code that featured hierarchical teacher-student relationships and impersonal technical control. In the end, two of them successfully widened the range of acceptable behaviors in their schools and introduced progressive elements into classroom settings. Later in the same context, Pitzer (2014) interviewed 13 urban teachers in the United States and discovered that, when facing NCLB and other neoliberal testing policies, some teachers did not turn themselves into the kind of educator the neoliberal policies demanded. One female teacher in her study, Kelly, reacted strongly

against the strict school discipline and rejected adopting the behavior accounting system that was designed to control urban students' bodies. Added to this, in the settings of Taiwan, Wang and Fwu (2014) chose a sample of 21 novice teachers for in-depth interviews and pointed out that some Taiwanese beginning teachers were able to resist the long-standing exam-driven school culture and then embraced a more progressive approach to teaching. Taken as a whole, it is shown in previous research that teachers are not passive players without agency to change the game rules of education. Rather, some of them may think critically and struggle politically to evade the institutional forces imposed on them. This empirical evidence verifies the dynamic, performative nature of individual selves that is built into the culture cycle.

As a conceptual tool, the culture cycle raises critical issues about how teachers negotiate the school system and why some teachers are more active to redefine school norms than others. Given that it identifies various cultural forces teachers may face and also acknowledges the possible role teachers can have to redefine their work lives, the culture cycle approach can usefully inform my research questions regarding classrooms as potential sites for resistance and liberation.

3.2 The Concept of Impression Management

Even though the culture cycle approach seriously considers the role of agency in the dynamic process by which culture and self mutually constitute each other, it seemingly pays little attention to the specific strategies individuals can employ to negotiate the cultural constraints around them. Then, further attention to symbolic interactionist perspectives that focus on people's strategies for negotiating the meanings of structure would help flesh out better understanding of the deliberate tactics exercised by enthusiastic teachers[25] to navigate contextual

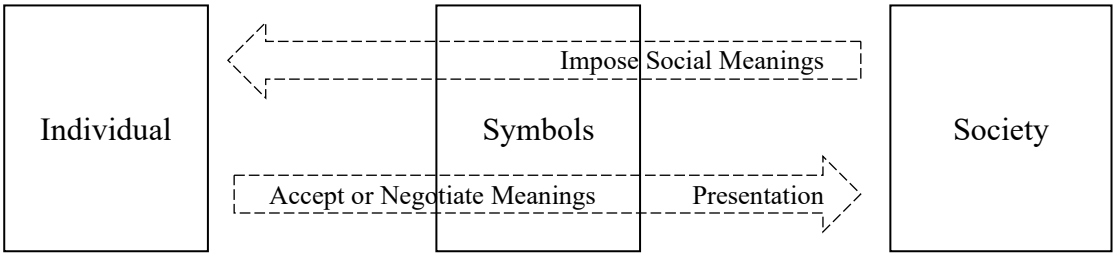
[25] The symbolic interactionist approach has been widely adopted in scholarship to study teachers' work, particularly

constraints and maximize their interests in urban schools.

Symbolic interactionism is a micro-level theory that examines human interaction in a shared situation. Symbolic interactionists argue that, by nature, the communication between human beings is a kind of symbolic interaction. Humans inherently create and use symbols that help facilitate communication through words, language, images, and gestures. In social interaction, people learn the shared meanings of symbols by which they are capable of participating in group life. However, an individual does not merely accept or internalize the meanings of the symbols being used. Instead, the social actor may, through negotiation with the others involved, modify or adjust the definition of the situation to his/her own needs. Hence, for symbolic interactionists, actors have the power of agency to some degree. Their actions are not totally determined by the social meanings of symbols even though symbolic meaning systems might highly constrain the ways they can act. In this sense, central to symbolic interactionist thought is the recognition of the dialectic of individual-society interaction. As Woods (1983) put it, "actions are rarely totally original, nor is the individual totally bound by cultural and structural constraint." (p. 4). The symbols which mediate between the social actor and society, then, provide a mixture of constraints and opportunities; in most situations, they are open to negotiation (see Figure 3.2).

Figure 3.2

The Theory of Symbolic Interactionism



in the field of British sociology of education (Acker, 1999; Woods, 1983).

Take teachers' negotiation with the mandated school curriculum as an example. Prior studies have identified the possibility of teachers negotiating between what they want to teach and what they are asked to teach. Ross (1986) investigated the formation and development of 21 preservice social studies teachers' perspectives at the Ohio State University, and one female respondent was found to, during her student teaching, attempt to negotiate the prepackaged social studies textbook by adding new curricular units about the history and cultures of South America and Islam, which other teachers had always neglected. Moreover, Agarwal (2011) conducted a year-long case study on exploring how beginning primary teachers worked on social studies curricula in New York City and discovered that one female teacher in her study, Tanisha, navigated an accountability context by integrating social justice content into the mandated social studies curriculum. By doing so, she was able to uphold her commitment to teach for social justice and concurrently met administrative requirements. Therefore, judging from the previous research, it could be argued that the symbolic tensions institutionally inscribed in the education system, much or less, certainly leave some room for teachers' negotiation.

However, some symbols which translate into coercive policies or cultural norms might allow little room for negotiation. In such a circumstance, individuals need to employ deliberate strategies when negotiating the highly-structured contextual meanings that go against their interests at hand. One strategy often used by social actors to negotiate the tensions between their original beliefs and rigid cultural norms is the tactics of impression management. According to Erving Goffman (1959) who elaborated the notion of impression management, people, in the face of community demands that contradict their own values, tend to conceal the actions incompatible with social norms and to discreetly display acceptable behaviors in sight of their audience. By securing the border between public and private social life, and by strategically

manipulating the images they give off to others, individuals are able to preserve their personal attitudes and avoid open conflict with the community.

In the school settings, researchers have demonstrated that some creative teachers adopted the strategies of impression management to defend their valued perspectives from collegial influence or institutional restraints. Specifically, Nias (1984a) interviewed 100 mid-career graduate primary teachers in England and found that many of her interviewees engaged in a low degree of behavioral conformity with social orthodoxy and widely resorted to impression management so as to behave as the kind of teacher they wished to be, but still fit in socially with fellow members. Moreover, in Wisconsin, Zeichner and Tabachnick (1985) followed four newly qualified teachers into their first year of teaching and then discovered that one female teacher, Hannah, covertly carried out her state-of-the-art teaching methods, which were essentially dissonant with school norms, behind the classroom walls. By skillfully concealing her preferred teaching style in self-contained classroom settings, Hannah was able to implement a non-traditional pedagogy that contradicted the dominant school culture. In sum, findings from these studies show that the tactics of impression management prove effective for ambitious teachers to negotiate situational demands and accordingly preserve their initial interests without disrupting school social life.

The conduct of impression management, for symbolic interactionists, verifies the fact that the individual has multiple selves by nature, including the substantial self and the situational self (Nias, 1984b). First, the substantial self reflects one's core beliefs and values that are strongly shaped by crucial life experiences or the impact of significant others (Hilton, 2014). It is stable, enduring, and less amenable to change. For instance, a student teacher who was seriously impressed by a great educator during his/her childhood decides to choose teaching as a career. It

is likely that this student teacher, in his/her future teaching profession, would make efforts on making a difference to children's lives. Second, the situational self refers to the adaptive capacities of the individual (Murray & Male, 2005). It is malleable and often defined by the requirements and rules of a given social context. It arises to protect one's core beliefs from direct situational influence or collegial restraints. To say, a rookie teacher who faces bureaucratic pressures emanated from the workplace may, in the presence of school staff, adjust his/her teaching perspectives to some extent so as to meet contextual demands, but privately doubts the impersonal school rules that are contradictory to his/her own cherished values. Then, a crisis in self-preservation may occur while one's multiple selves are in serious conflict with each other. That is, an ambitious teacher who repeatedly fail to defend his/her personal, idealistic perspectives from strong collegial influence might finally give up his/her core beliefs and completely comply with the dominant norms shared by school officials and the majority of passionless teachers.

One way to avoid such a loss of original idealism during the process of socialization, Woods (1990) argued, is to employ the "bridging devices" that enable individuals to align their substantial and situational selves more closely in order to cross the divide between the real and the ideal. Many past studies have identified, in the case of school teachers, several bridging devices that progressive educators exercised to negotiate the institutional constraints around them, such as the operational curriculum[26], the individually constructed reference group[27], and

[26] The operational curriculum is defined as what is actually taught by the teacher (Posner, 1995), which may be different from the official curriculum that provides core knowledge students are supposed to know. Even though the official curriculum constrains instructors' pedagogical practices, teachers are still able to determine what occurs in the classroom through working on the operational curriculum. Schultz (2017) recognizes it as a negotiable crack within the mandated curriculum framework.

[27] Nias (1985) interviewed 99 early-career British primary teachers to understand the ways how they maintained and carried out their own cherished beliefs. She found that many of the focal teachers actively sought out like-minded colleagues within or outside of the school to serve as a supportive reference group, which could help them

the marginal subject area[28].

As a theoretical lens, symbolic interactionism which introduces the notion of multiple selves and the idea of impression management demonstrates how possible it is for individuals to negotiate antipathetic circumstances without losing their initial, idealistic perspectives. It provides me with a potential perspective to examine the likelihood that critical pedagogical teachers navigate urban school settings, which feature test-based accountability and uniform curricula, to support the needs of diverse learners.

3.3 Theoretical Lenses to Approach This Study

Given the above rationale, two complementary theories, namely the culture cycle theory and symbolic interaction theory, provide the foundations of how I address the identified research gaps theoretically. They possess the theoretical power to help fill in missing scholarship about the rate at which, and the ways in which, Freire's critical pedagogy is being realized by Asian primary teachers. First, the culture cycle theory that considers the impact of macro-level social forces (e.g., ideology) and meso-level institutional norms (e.g., school codes) on micro-level individual experiences will be useful for my investigation on the challenges that critical pedagogues may face in Taiwan's grade schools. Second, symbolic interaction theory that develops the idea of impression management, which can sum up a set of teacher negotiation strategies that have been documented by the above-mentioned literature, demonstrates how possible it is for critical pedagogues to engage in micro-level teacher resistance that safely navigates restrictive circumstances while teaching against the grain. It provides me with a potential perspective to examine the likelihood that Taiwan's critical teachers negotiate primary

sustain their professional goals.

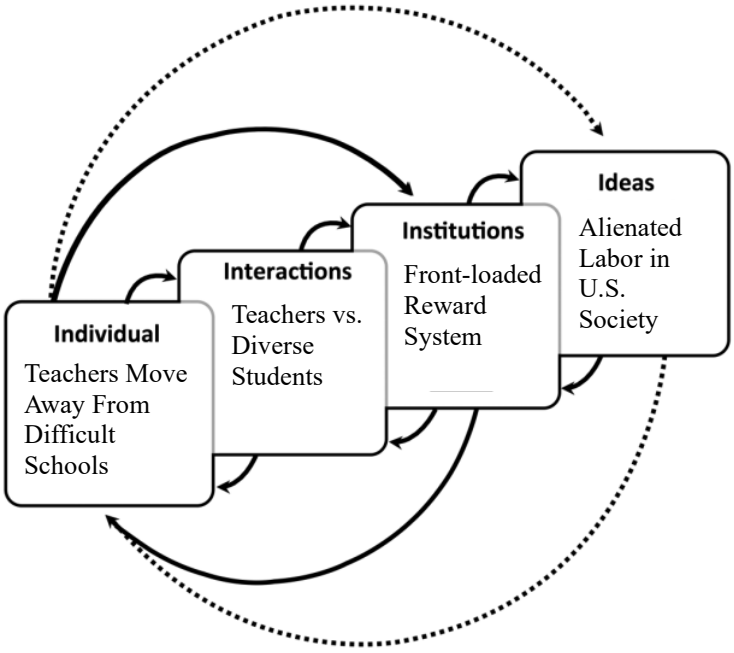
[28] Woods (1990) conducted case studies on the work lives of two 'radical' male primary teachers in England and revealed that one of the focal teachers successfully performed his non-traditional pedagogical practices in the subject area of art, which was often seen as a marginal school space with relatively weak institutional control.

school norms, which traditionally feature the banking model of instruction, to teach for social justice. These two theories which takes into account the dynamics between structural forces and human agency, I assert, provide a niche for generally understanding the possibility of extending critical pedagogy into Asian grade schools.

The theory of culture cycle is useful for my analysis on the contextual factors behind the phenomena of teacher alienation and teacher socialization. In Figure 3.3, I apply it to illustrate the workplace alienation experienced by New York urban teachers in Berlowitz's (1971) study.

Figure 3.3

The Culture Cycle of Teacher Alienation



First, in the U.S. capitalist society, teachers teach other people's children to make a living. They sell their labor to the education system in exchange for a salary. Given that the labor power of teachers is sold as a commodity, it becomes an alien object that does not belong to teachers, but to their clients. While teachers are subject to alienated work, they tend to pursue more and more rewards for less and less work (Mills, 1956). Second, in terms of institutions, a school district

establishes a salary schedule that aims to recruit, hire, and retain qualified teachers. Usually, the pay scale of teachers' work has a "front-loaded" character (Ingersoll & Collins, 2018, p. 209) that bases teachers' salaries primarily on seniority, not on work performance. Although pay rises for teachers automatically occur on the basis of length of service, the growth in teachers' pay is rather limited throughout the career (Lortie, 1975/2002). Third, this flat salary structure affects the way how teachers interact with students of different backgrounds. Also, the idea of alienated labor produces an impact on classroom social interactions, which determines teacher preferences about where to teach and whom to teach. Lastly, in a career with very limited salary increases, teachers who are subject to the symptom of alienated labor rationally move away from schools that serve difficult-to-teach students as they gain greater seniority (Berlowitz, 1971), which compensates for the lack of significant income growth in their work lives. Exemplary urban teachers are those who successfully move out of difficult schools and into less demanding work locations. The fact that teachers move out in order to move up resonates with the background idea of alienated labor. To a certain extent, the general pattern of teachers' career movement exacerbates the unequal distribution of educational resources among schools.

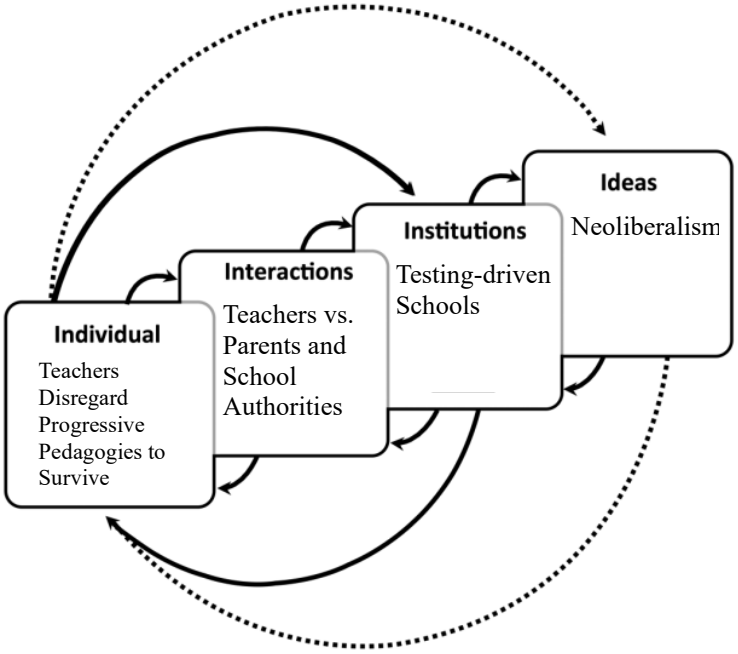
Then, in Figure 3.4 (as shown on the next page), I draw on the culture cycle theory to illustrate how the dominant ideology of neoliberalism is associated with the functionalist account of teacher socialization, as reported by American and British researchers in the 1960s and 1970s (Butcher, 1965; Denscombe, 1985; Hoy, 1968).

First, the American society nowadays is deeply permeated by an ideology of neoliberalism that focuses on boosting educational efficiency through deregulation and competition (Au, 2016), and that educational equity can be achieved with sufficient school choices (Hursh, 2007). Next, American schools absorb this ideology and function as neoliberal institutions (Crawford, 2010).

They narrowly define student achievement (or to say, the merit) as test scores and rely heavily on students' exam grades to measure teacher effectiveness. Third, new teachers inevitably perceive accountability pressure while interacting with primary socializing agents (i.e., senior colleagues and parents) who take students' test scores into first account. Lastly, to meet situational demands and to survive in a testing-driven school environment, infant teachers gradually adhere to the expected norms, consciously rejecting liberal pedagogies as unrealistic or impractical, and turn to comply with school codes that reflect the rhetoric of neoliberalism. To a certain extent, the initial progressive perspectives of beginning teachers are washed out by the socialization of neoliberal schools, which reproduces a group of impersonalized instructors that novice teachers might have opposed when receiving progressive pre-service programs.

Figure 3.4

The Culture Cycle of Teacher Socialization

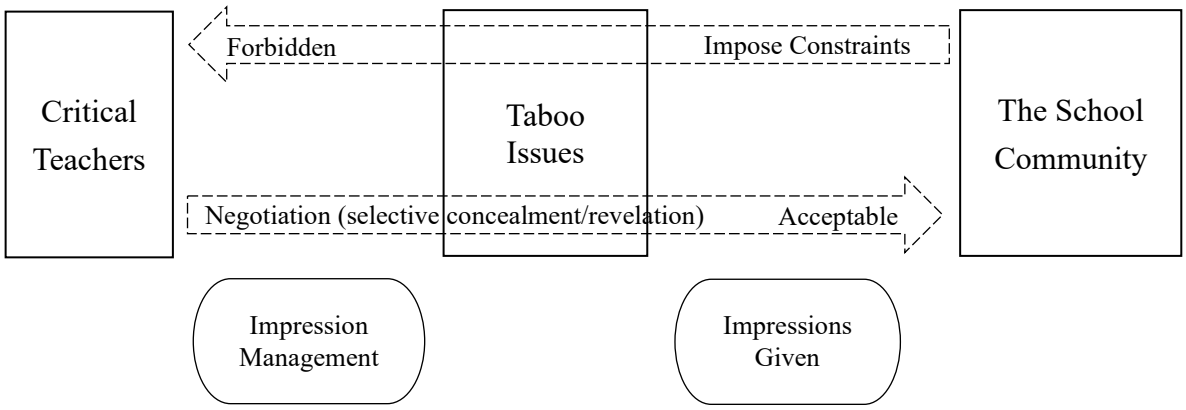


Moreover, in Figure 3.5 (as shown on the next page), I associate the aforementioned strategic struggles of critical teachers with the concept of impression management, which is developed by

symbolic interactionism.

Figure 3.5

Associating Critical Teachers' Struggles with The Concept of Impression Management



As described earlier, impression management, denotes the strategic action of the individual that is "accentuating certain facts and concealing others" (Goffman 1959:65). By presenting and maintaining a desired self-image in social encounters, the individual is able to "construct more beneficial, less threatening, surroundings" (Schlenker and Weigold, 1992:134). In other words, impression management is practiced through employing the tactics of selective concealment and revelation. In the case of critical teachers' pedagogical struggles that are shown in the literature reviewed above, they cautiously conceal their radical orientations when confronted with harsh limit-situations in which bureaucratic demands are visibly strong. Then, they boldly display their counter-hegemonic practices in the face of modest limit-situations where institutional control is relatively weak. Arguably, only when critical teachers take advantage of structural openings may their radical struggles have triumphant consequences in restrictive school settings. Types of these existing or created structural openings have been mentioned by the scholarship above include: the closed classroom (Smith, 2013), the cracks of dominant curricular structure (Schultz, 2017), students' spontaneous inquiries related to taboo issues (Jackson, 2010), and earning parents' trust

and support about critical teaching (Page, 2016). Accordingly, the successful extension of critical pedagogy into K-12 schools rests on whether teachers can engage in impression management, or selective self-presentation, through finding, creating, and exploiting potential fissures within the education system.

In light of the knowledge gaps identified earlier, this study will progress in the following ways. Since teachers' work lives occur in the education system, a structural description about the school norms that regulate their daily work, then, is essential. I will accomplish this goal through the lens of culture cycle theory to examine the contextual constraints that critical teachers may have encountered. Meanwhile, teachers also construct their own pedagogical perspectives inside the school walls, so that, crucially, special attention should be given to examining how teachers view and negotiate the social field in which they work. The theory of symbolic interactionism will help guide me to better understand the actions and strategies that critical teachers undertake to navigate school norms. Given the above rationale, this study seeks to collect information about the context within which Taiwan's critical teachers conduct their work, as well as data about the thoughts and actions demonstrated by focal educators. The employed research methods will be discussed in greater length below.

CHAPTER IV: METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

The current chapter covers research methods employed by this study. I start with discussing the reasons why qualitative methodology and the phenomenological approach are applied. Next, a detailed explanation of the research site and participant recruitment criteria is provided. Third, I describe the procedures pertaining to data collection. Following this, I outline the steps of analyzing data, address ethical issues, and then verify trustworthiness with special attention to examining my positionality that may impact the research process as a whole. Lastly, the limitations and strengths of adopted research methods will be considered.

4.1 The Qualitative Phenomenological Approach

The underlying logic of picking one methodology over another is associated with the nature of the studied phenomenon, and with the purpose of the inquiry. Since this study aims to explore teachers' negotiation strategies of extending critical pedagogy into primary classrooms, it is essential, I assert, to adopt a qualitative methodology that "concentrates on understanding the thinking and behaviors of individuals and groups in specific situations" (Arksey & Knight, 1999, p. 10). The qualitative research tradition seeks to understand individuals from their own points of view, so that the researcher can approach reality as the study subjects have approached it. That is, employing a qualitative approach enables the researcher to capture insider perspectives of the target group and "faithfully represent participants' subjective experiences" (Williams, 2019). A further advantage of qualitative methodology is that it allows a close examination of phenomena which are not easily quantifiable, such as problem-solving strategies. Britzman (1985) argues that quantitative measures are difficult to uncover the social strategies employed by individuals, and that it is only through qualitative methods that this type of human actions can be validly revealed. Based on the above considerations, this dissertation is situated within a qualitative

paradigm that aims to grasp participants' subjective insights with regard to the phenomenon being investigated.

A number of different approaches exist within the qualitative paradigm, including ethnography, grounded theory, and phenomenology. Given that participants' self-report of their lived experiences is the central component of this study, phenomenology which emphasizes in-depth descriptions of how people process the life-world essentially best suits my purpose of inquiry. More specifically, phenomenology is a form of qualitative inquiry with a goal of illuminating social reality through systematic analysis on individual conscious experiences. It originates from the scholarly work of German philosopher Edmund Husserl (1999) who asserts that the lives experiences of human beings are the primary source of knowledge. Researchers, with a phenomenological paradigm, endeavor to directly and exhaustively probe the way people experience their everyday world in order to advance the scientific understanding of phenomena under investigation. For example, a phenomenological study on critical pedagogy may closely examine the daily work lives of critical pedagogical teachers involved in teaching against the grain of bureaucratic standards. Although phenomenologists pay particular attention to the subjective nature of human experiences, they are aware of the role of social structure in shaping one's worldview and perception of reality. That is, phenomenologists recognize that "individuals' realities are invariably influenced by the world in which they live" (Lopez & Willis, 2004, p. 729). Thus, the researcher, when doing phenomenological research in critical pedagogy, should consider the influence of contextual constraints on the professional lives of critical teachers.

Moreover, it is worth to note that qualitative research methods are commonly used when the issue of interest is understudied. Flowerday and Schraw (2000) contend that a phenomenological approach is suitable to frame the study if the author plans to explore a phenomenon about which

little is currently known. As noted earlier, there is a paucity of empirical studies concerning the specific strategies Asian teachers can employ to negotiate the cultural constraints around them. From this perspective, the phenomenological method is uniquely positioned to support my study.

Based on the above reasons, phenomenology which enables researchers to capture the subjective experiences of participants, to consider the contextual influence on phenomena, and to explore the unknown facts, is chosen for this study that concentrates on the ways how Freire's critical pedagogy can be realized by primary teachers in Taiwan. With this research design, I am able to discover the negotiation strategies of Taiwan's critical teachers through their testimonies, and my findings may shed light on how to safely and successfully exercise critical pedagogy in Asian school environments that are hostile to Freire's ambitious agenda.

4.2 Research Site Selection

District X[29], one of the developed regions of Taipei, is purposely chosen as my research site for two reasons. First, Taipei, the largest city and the capital of Taiwan, has the best quality of teacher workforce among Taiwan's 22 cities and counties. According to the Economist Intelligence Unit's (EIU) Global Livability Survey 2020, Taipei was awarded a perfect score of 100 in the category of education. This is because Taipei has displayed its commitment to providing state-of-the-art school facilities, to boosting student outcomes, and to recruiting the best teaching staff. As mentioned above, Freire's critical pedagogy demands a higher-level of teacher competence which is needed to facilitate empowerment and raise critical consciousness among marginalized youth. Then, Taipei, with its large population of high-quality teachers, is a proper location to find potential participants for this study.

[29] Given that confidentiality and anonymity are important ethical issues in qualitative research, I use the pseudonym "District X" to prevent my research location from being identifiable. In addition to pseudonymizing my research site, I also scrub identifying information from my portrayal of the field by using range identifiers. For instance, I describe the background information of my research site with relative values instead of specific ones.

Second, District X is an area with the relatively lower cost of living in Taipei, which hosts a significant number of disadvantaged students from working-class and migrant backgrounds. Since Freire's critical pedagogy aims to empower the powerless and support culturally diverse learners, District X that educates a large population of neediest pupils makes it a suitable setting to better understand the way teachers perform as what Freire (2005) called "cultural workers" who are committed to celebrating student diversity and helping children take ownership of their own learning.

In brief, the reasons why I focus my research site on District X of Taipei are because of its high-quality teacher workforce, and also because of its relatively high proportion of students in need, both of which are vital elements to study how Freire's critical pedagogy can be successfully extended into Taiwan's public schools. Additionally, it is worth to note that, in Taiwan, primary schools are less affected by the exam-driven education system, and thereby have greater operational freedom and flexibility to develop classroom activities that fulfill students' needs. This is because Taiwan's primary students are not required to take entrance exams when advancing to junior high schools. As such, compared with their middle-school counterparts, Taiwan's primary teachers are generally granted more autonomy to adopt innovative educational models at their workplaces. To this end, this is why, rather than targeting secondary teachers, this study chooses to recruit participants from Taiwanese teachers who serve public primary schools located in the District X.

4.3 Research Participants

This study adopts the criterion sampling strategy to purposely select participants that can provide in-depth and diverse information on the phenomenon of my interest. The technique of criterion sampling is widely used by phenomenological researchers to seek informants who not

only possess considerable knowledge and experience with the target topic but also vary in demographic characteristics (Moser & Korstjens, 2018). The rich and varied perspectives drawn from heterogeneous respondents allow the researcher to eliminate sampling bias, and to better understand a phenomenon by approaching it from multiple angles. In this regard, I recruit my participants from Taiwanese primary teachers who are knowledgeable about Freire's critical pedagogy and have attempted to perform it in the schools of District X. Also, to increase sample diversity, I include teachers of different grade levels, different discipline areas, different backgrounds, and varying school experiences, which may provide a broader platform for me to explore the life-worlds of Taiwan's critical pedagogical teachers.

In qualitative research, the point of saturation determines an appropriate sample size (Patton, 2015). Data saturation occurs when information obtained from participants has become repetitive and no new themes emerge from the collected evidence. It is estimated that, when data are gathered from a homogeneous group, saturation usually occurs between 12 and 15 participants (Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006). The term 'homogeneous,' as used here, refers to some position in the organization or a specific type of employee. In this study, the homogeneous participants that I have reached are well-qualified teachers currently employed by the primary schools of District X. Thus, following the logic above, I set my minimum sample size at twelve[30]. The basic demographic information of my participants is provided in Table 4.1 (see next page).

Specifically, I recruit my teacher participants from three different primary schools located in District X. To preserve their anonymity, each school was assigned a pseudonym (i.e., X1, X2,

[30] An acceptable number of participants for the phenomenological study, Creswell (2014) and Polkinghorne (1989) suggest, is between three and ten.

Table 4.1

Demographic Information of Research Participants

Pseudonym	School	Gender	Background	School Position	Discipline Area	Seniority
Teacher A	X1	M	Working-Class	Director of Academic Affairs	Social Studies	30+
Teacher B	X1	M	Middle-Class	Sixth-Grade Homeroom Teacher	Reading & Math	10+
Teacher C	X1	F	Middle-Class	Subject Teacher	Music	20+
Teacher D	X1	F	Working-Class	Chief of Curriculum	English	5+
Teacher E	X2	M	Working-Class	Third-Grade Homeroom Teacher	Reading, Math & Social Studies	20+
Teacher F	X2	M	Middle-Class	Chief of Student Affairs	Natural Science	5+
Teacher G	X2	F	Working-Class	Subject Teacher	Art	30+
Teacher H	X2	F	Middle-Class	Second-Grade Homeroom Teacher	Reading, Math & Social Studies	20+
Teacher I	X3	M	Working-Class	Subject Teacher	Mental Health & Sports	20+
Teacher J	X3	M	Middle-Class	Subject Teacher	Technology	10+
Teacher K	X3	F	Middle-Class	Fifth-Grade Homeroom Teacher	Reading & Math	10+
Teacher L	X3	F	Middle-Class	Chief of Special Education	English	5+

and X3) throughout this study. Then, two female and two male teachers were drawn from each school. In total, twelve public school teachers who educated urban primary students in District X of Taipei were involved. I obscured participants' identities with the first 12 letters of the alphabet, such as Teacher A, Teacher B, Teacher C, and so on. Among a dozen teachers selected, five of them come from working-class families, while the rest have a middle-class origin. My teacher participants took on a variety of school positions, ranging from homeroom teachers to subject teachers and administrative teachers. In terms of discipline areas that they were currently allocated to teach, those who performed the role of homeroom teachers or administrative

teachers primarily instructed academic subjects (e.g., reading, math, natural science, English, and social studies), whereas subject teachers were in charge of non-academic, practical courses (e.g., art, music, technology, and sports). Lastly, the research sample covers a wide range of seniority levels, with a quarter of respondents having 5 to 10 years of seniority, another quarter having stayed in the profession for 10 to 20 years, and half of the sample reported that they have continuously provided 20 or more years of service.

As noted earlier, the teacher participants that I recruited were savvy about Freire's critical pedagogy and have made efforts to put it into practice. For this reason, I list the ways how my participants, during their teaching career, connected themselves with Freire's critical pedagogy in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2

The Ways How Research Participants Approached Freire's Critical Pedagogy

Pseudonym	The Ways That Teachers Reach Out to Critical Pedagogy During Their Career
Teacher A	Taking courses about Paulo Freire during his teacher training program
Teacher B	Having conducted an action research project on his own critical pedagogical practices
Teacher C	Focusing her finished Master's thesis on Freire's theory
Teacher D	Attending an international conference on Paulo Freire and critical pedagogy
Teacher E	Having attended the Paulo Freire Institute Summer Program at UCLA
Teacher F	Being introduced to Freire's ideas when enrolling in a Master's degree program
Teacher G	Having completed a Master's thesis on Freire's idea of teachers as cultural workers
Teacher H	Taking courses about Freire's teaching philosophy during her college years
Teacher I	Focusing his finished Master's thesis on the actual classroom practices of critical pedagogy
Teacher J	Exposure to Freirean scholarship produced by Peter McLaren & Henry Giroux
Teacher K	Having attended the Paulo Freire Institute Summer Program at UCLA
Teacher L	Joining a monthly workshop on Freire's theory when initially entering the profession

Collectively, my participants were exposed to Freire's critical pedagogy in different ways. As shown in Table 4.2, some of them have attended the Paulo Freire Institute summer program at UCLA, others have written a Master's thesis on critical pedagogical practices, and the others have approached Freirean scholarship by taking courses, or by joining seminar meetings. Then, in my findings chapters – Chapter V, VI, and VII – the details of challenges and strategies that arose while my participants attempted to facilitate classroom practices of critical pedagogy will be further discussed.

4.4 Data Collection

The two main methods of data collection considered for this study are in-depth semi-structured interviews with aforementioned 12 participants and analysis of official artifacts that are directly associated with primary teachers' job duties in Taiwan. The former enables participants to revisit their school experiences over time and reflect on their own teaching practices that work toward or against critical pedagogy, while the latter seeks to examine the broader context in which my participants' teaching career takes place. The combination of these multiple sources allows me to better understand the pedagogical struggles experienced by my informants.

4.4.1 In-depth Interviews

Phenomenological research typically adopts in-depth interviews with open-ended questions to explicate lifeworld experiences of participants (Bevan, 2014). That said, it traditionally involves semi-structured interviews that enable participants to revisit their lived experiences regarding the phenomenon of the researcher's interest. In this study, I began conducting remote interviews with participants through an online communication app, Zoom, after receiving an

exemption determination on October 1, 2021, from the UCLA IRB. Each of the focal teachers underwent a one-hour Zoom interview, which started on October 3, 2021 and ended on October 31. These initial interviews allowed me to understand whether critical pedagogy had occurred in the focal schools, and if not, what structural factors existed to keep participating teachers from critical pedagogical practices. Subsequently, five of the focal teachers – Teacher D, F, G, J, & K – who did integrate critical pedagogy into their classroom teaching were separately involved in a follow-up, 30-minute interview in March, 2022, through which I was able to investigate their motives behind and strategies of implementing critical pedagogy in Taiwan's primary schools. Table 4.3 shows the details of my interview schedule.

Table 4.3

The Details of My Interview Schedule

Participant	Date	Time
Teacher A	Saturday, October 16, 2021	6pm-7pm (PDT)
Teacher B	Saturday, October 23, 2021	9pm-10pm (PDT)
Teacher C	Sunday, October 10, 2021	7:30pm-8:45pm (PDT)
Teacher D	Wednesday, October 6, 2021	5:30pm-6:35pm (PDT)
	Sunday, March 6, 2022	9pm-9:32pm (PST)
Teacher E	Friday, October 15, 2021	6pm-7:10pm (PDT)
Teacher F	Sunday, October 24, 2021	9:30pm-10:28pm (PDT)
	Saturday, March 12, 2022	5pm-6:35pm (PST)
Teacher G	Saturday, October 9, 2021	7pm-8:20pm (PDT)
	Saturday, March 5, 2022	10pm-10:33pm (PST)
Teacher H	Saturday, October 30, 2021	7:30pm-8:30pm (PDT)
Teacher I	Sunday, October 3, 2021	9pm-10pm (PDT)
Teacher J	Sunday, October 31, 2021	8:30pm-9:35pm (PDT)
	Friday, March 18, 2022	7:30pm-8:05 (PDT)
Teacher K	Sunday, October 17, 2021	7pm-8pm (PDT)
	Friday, March 11, 2022	6pm-6:33pm (PST)
Teacher L	Friday, October 8, 2021	6:30pm-7:40pm (PDT)

When I conducted Zoom interviews with participants, the interview protocol was used to guide my inquiry. It was framed by my research questions that concentrated on the challenges, teacher motives, and teacher strategies of extending critical pedagogy into Taiwan's primary classrooms (see Appendix A for further details). The evidence garnered from my interviews made it possible for me to examine the likelihood that the focal teachers negotiated Taiwan's school norms, which typically celebrated the banking model of instruction, in order to facilitate student empowerment.

4.4.2 Document Review

The phenomenological research often begins with a fundamental understanding of contextual conditions in which participants' lived experiences are situated (Bevan, 2014). The phenomenological researcher, through analyzing documentary evidence, seeks to examine the structural factors behind the behavioral patterns performed by the members of a given group. For this reason, I collected and reviewed artifacts that directly affected the work lives of participating teachers. Specifically, I gathered and examined nation-wide policy documents that had regulated teachers' employment and working conditions (e.g., the teacher employment handbook and the teacher salary scale), school-level administrative records that structured teachers' daily routine (e.g., the annual school calendar and the school organizational chart), and instructional materials that played a role in shaping teachers' classroom practices (e.g., official textbooks and exam papers). The aforementioned artifacts provided background information of my research site and allowed me to contextualize participants' experiences within the broader social structure (see Table 4.4 on the next page for a detailed list of documents). More importantly, this document review could generate meaningful inquiries that enriched my interview questions as the study unfolded.

Table 4.4

The List of Written Archives Included in My Document Review

Documents	Author/Provider	Date
Nation-Wide Policy Documents		
The Teacher Employment Handbook	Taiwan's Ministry of Education	Mar, 2022
The Teacher Salary Scale		
The Teachers' Retirement Law		
Yearbook of Taiwan's Teacher Education Statistics		
Education Policies About Classroom Teaching		
School-Level Administrative Records		
The Annual School Calendar	School Official Websites	May, 2022
The School Organizational Chart		
School Position Assignment Rules		
Instructional Materials		
Official Textbooks	My Participants	Jun, 2022
Self-Designed Curriculum		
Exam Papers		
Classroom Quizzes		
Student Assignments		

4.5 Data Analysis

After transcribing and translating[31] my recorded interviews, I immersed myself in the raw data by thoroughly reading and rereading participants' narratives to achieve a sense of the whole (Tesch, 1990). Then, the method of constant comparison was employed to analyze verbatim transcripts, which comprised the following steps: 1) assigning the appropriate code to a chunk of data by careful examination and reflection on its deeper meaning (Saldaña, 2013); 2) comparing my initial codes consistently and grouping similar ones to develop more analytic categories; as well as 3) converging relevant categories into broader themes that tied together this study and

[31] Since my participants spoke Mandarin Chinese as a native language, I translated their interview transcripts from Mandarin to English when analyzing raw data.

accordingly were used to compose my descriptive report. Besides such bottom-up, inductive data analysis, I also developed deductive codes and categories that were embedded in the interview protocol. All detailed codes, categories, and themes generated from my data analysis were reported in Table 10.1 (see Appendix C). In concert, this study adopted both inductive and deductive coding methods to analyze raw data, by which I was able to capture the specific details of participants' narratives, and then to connect them with the phenomenon being studied.

Despite the careful line-by-line analysis of each interview transcript, my particular attention was given to the metaphorical phrases that occurred occasionally in participants' narratives. According to Lakoff and Johnson (1980), people often express their thoughts and feelings with metaphors. Metaphorical thinking shapes the way people take action and make sense of their lives. Qualitative researchers, then, through searching and examining the metaphors that participants commonly use in everyday conversations, are able to deductively uncover underlying themes that reflect respondents' emic perspectives and lived experiences. In the case of teachers, Clandinin (1986) suggested that metaphors embedded in teacher knowledge are cultural signifiers of how teachers develop an understanding of teaching and also work as a form of guidance to direct everyday activities they perform. Saban (2006), after reviewing the literature on teaching metaphors frequently used by school educators, added that teachers tend to define their professional identity by means of metaphor (e.g., teachers as nurturers, or teachers as gardeners) and then enact their teacher role in a correspondent manner. Seen in this light, the present study scrutinized the metaphors occasionally mentioned by my participants to better understand the challenges they faced and the negotiation strategies they adopted when performing critical pedagogy in their school settings. Through such metaphorical analysis, I attempted to identify implicit themes deductively, allowing for a more nuanced understanding of pedagogical struggles experienced by participating teachers.

Interview data, once transcribed, translated, and analyzed, were subsequently triangulated with above-mentioned official artifacts that structured the working conditions of my participants. Narratives gathered from all 12 interviewees were addressed in such a rigorous manner so as to enhance the credibility of my empirical evidence. When I displayed data in my final report, the transcription notations developed by American sociologist Gail Jefferson (2004) were adopted to represent my conversations with participating teachers (see Table 10.2 in Appendix D).

4.6 Ethical Considerations

On October 1, 2021, this study was granted an exempt certification from the UCLA IRB, which endorsed that I carried out my research in an ethically responsible manner, and that all procedures performed were in accordance with the fundamental principles of human subjects protection. Specifically, given that qualitative inquiry often takes place in real-world settings and captures the lived experiences of individuals, qualitative researchers are more likely to face ethical challenges than their quantitative counterparts (Rossman & Rallis, 2012). To this end, the following procedures were adopted to manage the ethical issues raised by this qualitative dissertation, and to minimize potential risks to my participants: 1) I sought the voluntary agreement of prospective subjects before involving them in this study. Participants, prior to joining research activities, were given a consent form (see Appendix B), indicating that participation is entirely voluntary without coercion, and that they have the right to withdraw from research involvement at any time without penalty; 2) I assured the confidentiality of the collected data through storing them securely in password-protected computers that were only accessible to the researcher. After completion of the study, research records will be kept for three years, and then they will be permanently deleted from my secure storage facility; and 3) when reporting my research outcomes, I utilized pseudonyms to obscure the identifiable information of my research location and participants so as to protect the privacy of all personnel involved. All in

all, the ethical issues that arose in this study were considered and addressed by obtaining informed consent from research subjects, maintaining data confidentiality throughout the study, and further pseudonymizing participants' identifiable information while presenting the results.

4.7 Trustworthiness

While the quality of quantitative research ties in with the parameters of reliability and validity, the rigor of qualitative inquiry is appraised by means of trustworthiness (Creswell, 2013). To achieve and maintain the methodological rigor of qualitative work, trustworthiness can be established through the criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), all of which were manifested in this study through the following techniques. First, credibility was strengthened through member-checking that involved seeking participants' feedback on analyzed data and thereby verifying the accuracy of interpretations. That said, I invited participants to provide their own clarifications on preliminary findings, and to identify and correct distorted meanings, so that the misrepresentation of reality under study could be largely avoided. Second, transferability was assured through thick description which included clear descriptions regarding my research site, demographic information of my participants, the sampling strategy, and the phenomenological approach applied to this study, so that readers of my report can themselves assess the generalizability of the results to other subjects or settings. In this dissertation, I made explicit the social context and methodology that data collection was framed around, consequently allowing the audience to make their own transferability inferences. Third, dependability was addressed through external audit (Maxwell, 1997) that had independent researchers who were not engaged in the present study review and examine my data collection, analysis, and reporting in order to assess whether my findings faithfully reflected the phenomenon. For this reason, I endeavored to present my dissertation project regularly when taking research apprenticeship courses at UCLA and, accordingly, had fellow PhD students carry

out an inquiry audit on my work. Lastly, confirmability was accomplished through triangulation that involved cross-checking my empirical evidence from multiple sources, and also through bracketing (Creswell, 2013) whereby I intentionally put aside my own assumptions about the issue being studied to avoid biased results. In other words, I accepted participants' narratives as an accurate representation of the focal phenomenon only when resonating with other informants' statements, or with written documents. Furthermore, during the process of data collection and analysis, I carefully suspended my own understandings of the topic and approached participants' lived experiences in an open manner, which made it possible that the findings were clearly derived from participants' perspectives rather than from my personal beliefs. Collectively, all of the aforementioned techniques contributed to the trustworthiness of this dissertation. Table 4.5 lists the strategies employed in this study to achieve the four criteria of trustworthiness.

Table 4.5

The Ways How This Study Achieved the Four Criteria of Trustworthiness

The Criteria of Trustworthiness	Definitions (Lincoln & Guba, 1985)	Techniques Adopted in This Study
Credibility	The extent to which a study's findings are reliable and believable	Member Checking (seeking participants' feedback on my preliminary findings)
Transferability	The extent to which a study's results can be applicable to other situations or populations	Thick Description (presenting a clear, detailed portrayal of the context and methodology that my study was based on)
Dependability	The extent to which a study's outcomes can be replicated if it is conducted as previously described	External Audit (having fellow PhD students constantly audit my dissertation when I took research apprenticeship courses at UCLA)
Confirmability	The extent to which a study's findings are reflective of participants' views, as accurately shown in the raw data	Triangulation (cross-checking my collected data from multiple sources) Bracketing (suspending my own predispositions about the issue being studied to avoid biased results)

4.8 Researcher Positionality

As a Taipei's former primary school teacher who composed this dissertation in a rigorous manner, I positioned myself as both a cultural insider and outsider to my research subjects. On

one hand, my insider positionality played a crucial role in developing research questions, in designing this case study, and in recruiting teacher participants. On the other hand, I adopted an outsider stance, throughout the process of data collection and analysis, to prevent personal biases from negatively affecting the study's results.

Specifically, I began this study with my personal concerns regarding how to teach critically in Taiwan's primary schools where traditional teaching methods are heavily employed. Based on my negative school experiences as mentioned above, I understood how difficult it is to exercise critical pedagogy in Taiwan's exam-driven education system. Certainly, I embarked on this dissertation because I wanted to explore the negotiation strategies of Taiwan's primary teachers who were able to manage situational demands while also successfully teaching against the grain. Importantly, my insider experience not only was valuable in guiding the inquiry of this study, but also could help develop a close and trusting relationship with the studied subjects, which directly benefited[32] my research proposal as a whole. Due to my past teaching experiences in Taipei, I had effortless access to primary schools there and was capable of gaining instant acceptance by teachers who worked within that system. As a result, it took me a relatively short period of time to recruit qualified participants. It could be argued that without my insider knowledge directing the course of the inquiry, this study would not proceed as smoothly as it did.

However, despite the vital role of my insider knowledge in guiding the development of research, it might produce the unintentional biases that distorted the findings. To ensure that the study's outcomes accurately represented the phenomenon being studied, thus, I was intentionally detached from my insider positionality and shifted toward an outsider stance while collecting and

[32] According to Kipnis and Broeckerhoff (2016), the insider positionality has several advantages for qualitative researchers, such as familiarity with the research context, possessing extensive folk knowledge about the focal phenomenon, and facilitating access to and rapport with research subjects. In my case, these insider advantages derived from my biography which mirrored that of my participants.

analyzing the data. Put another way, when conducting the fieldwork, I maintained the appropriate detachment from my personal experiences, like a stranger, to seek the objective and unbiased depiction of work lives of participating teachers. To this end, the interview questions that I used to collect teacher participants' voices were open-ended and avoided leading language, which allowed my research subjects to freely express what they thought in their own words. When engaging in the interview process, I actively listened to participants' career stories and learned about their unique worldviews through an open-minded attitude. Then, in the phase of data analysis, I kept in mind that the information obtained from my participants must speak for itself and prioritize my own interests, subsequently resulting in the findings that reflected participants' true voices and would not be misinterpreted.

In sum, I began designing this study with the position of a warm-hearted homecomer[33], bringing my teaching background to the dissertation foreground. As a former primary teacher in Taipei, I personally identified with my participants due to sharing similar backgrounds with the target group. This insider status privileged me with a more nuanced understanding of the study's context, and with easier access to my informants. Thereafter, I shifted to an outsider positionality, while embarking on data collection and analysis, and intentionally detached my own knowledge and experiences from those being investigated in order to make the familiar strange. Through taking a stranger's point of view on the work lives of my participants and objectively scrutinizing what has been collected with a pair of cold eyes, I expected to provoke a break with the long-standing assumptions underneath my own interests so as to reach trustworthy and credible conclusions.

[33] Alfred Schütz (1945), the German phenomenologist, used the metaphors of "homecomer" and "stranger" to respectively describe the insider and outsider positionalities of the researcher. In this section, I discussed my research positionality with reference to his own metaphorical language.

4.9 Methodological Limitations and Delimitations

Methodological limitations of this dissertation mainly derive from three aspects: interviews as the major method of data collection, the potential bias of purposive sampling, and the limited scope of my research site. First of all, my research approach was driven by a phenomenological stance, which mainly depended on interviews to capture participants' emic perspectives. Lortie (1975/2002) once warned that, under the pressure of social expectations, teachers' words might not be matched by their deeds. That is, what teachers say might not be consistent with what they actually do in the school. Solely conducting interviews to capture teachers' perspectives might lead to unreliable findings. Next, another limitation to consider is the sampling bias. It is likely that teachers who agreed to join this study possessed different lived experiences from those who were not recruited as participants. As a result, the collected data might be a weak representation of Taiwanese primary teachers' complex perspectives. Lastly, the third limitation of this dissertation is the specific geographic area where this study took place. My findings inevitably had a strong tie relationship with primary schools located in the District X of Taipei City. Then, this study's outcomes could not be generalized to other Taiwan's grade school settings.

Although the aforementioned limitations weakened the validity and reliability of this study, several techniques were employed to ensure that the methodological rigor was not threatened by these issues. For example, I engaged in data triangulation and accordingly cross-checked my interview data from multiple informants to obtain a trustworthy insight of the focal phenomenon. Also, to eliminate selection bias, I adopted the maximum variation sampling strategy through seeking participants with a broad range of perspectives on the topic. That said, I strengthened sample diversity by including teachers of different grade levels, different discipline areas, different backgrounds, and varying school experiences, which allows for the sufficient breadth of

interview data. Moreover, for the purpose of addressing the generalizability issue in this study, thick descriptions, such as reporting my fieldwork site with contextual details, presenting my interpretations with examples of raw data, and describing the chosen research methods clearly, have been provided. This made possible the comparison between my fieldwork context and some other site, thereby enabling the audience to make informed judgments about how sensible the transferability of my findings could be. As Lincoln and Guba (1985) have put it, the duty of the qualitative researcher who desires to enhance the transferability of findings "ends in providing sufficient descriptive data to make such similarity judgments possible" (p. 298). In brief, I implemented data triangulation, the maximum variation sampling strategy, and thick description of the focal phenomenon to delimit the methodological tools employed in this study.

4.10 Summary

This chapter describes my research design and discusses the methodology adopted by this study. I explain the reasons why qualitative methodology and the phenomenological approach are well suited for addressing my research questions. Moreover, I make explicit the contextual details of my fieldwork site, the District X of Taipei City, and then identify my participant recruitment criteria that data collection is framed around. Added to this, I illustrate two main methods of gathering empirical evidence, the steps of analyzing data, the practices of managing ethical issues, the strategies of enhancing data trustworthiness, and the ways in which my positionality impacts the research process as a whole. Finally, the limitations and delimitations of adopted research methods are discreetly verified.

Having outlined the key issues and the research questions in Chapter I; identified the research gaps after examining the literature about critical pedagogy, its facilitating/hindering factors, and its practical strategies in Chapter II; discussed the theoretical lens that structured this

study in Chapter III; described the research design and the adopted research methods in Chapter IV, I now turn to report and interpret my findings in subsequent three chapters.

CHAPTER V: TEACHER ALIENATION THAT THREATENS THE EMPOWERMENT OF POWERLESS STUDENTS IN TAIWAN'S PRIMARY SCHOOLS

> Few teachers seek out urban public schools as their first choice. Students in urban schools are the ones who suffer most. – Sonia Nieto (2003, p.2)

> When it comes to workload, everybody always prefers the lower one. Then, how to make my work less burdensome? *Keep myself away from students* [emphasis added]! Just that simple! As long as I need not to deal with student affairs, I can get off work on time, and I can have more leisure time, because I don't need to communicate with annoying parents at all after school hours. (Teacher A, Interview, October 16, 2021)

5.1 Chapter Overview: Intra-School Career Movement of Taiwan's Primary Teachers

This chapter reports the phenomenon of teacher alienation that takes place in my research site. While the aforementioned literature has highlighted the issue of teacher alienation with empirical evidence on public schoolteachers' inter-school migration, it pays little attention to teacher career movement within a given school. It is likely that, when spending their entire careers at a single school, teachers alienate themselves from close-to-student positions and intentionally move to far-away-from-student ones. In what follows, special attention is given to examining primary teachers' intra-school mobility in Taiwan's context. I begin with discussing the role of exclusive teacher welfare, which is the official and domestic product of Taiwan's reluctant welfarism, in shaping my participants' decision to become a public schoolteacher. Next, I explore the underground, seniority-based work assignment rule informally created by Taiwan's primary school community, in which teachers are placed to different teaching positions based on how long they are employed in a given school. Such a seniority-based employment system, I contend, is closely associated with teachers' profit-driven teaching motives. Third, I demonstrate the metaphors that appear in my participants' narratives. Their metaphorical language not only

offers clues about teacher preferences toward whom to teach and where to teach, but also guides the way many teachers act when pursuing a desirable career path. Lastly, I conclude that the typical intra-school career movement of Taiwan's primary teachers negatively results in a limit-situation of teacher alienation that threatens Freire's revisionist proposal of critical teaching.

5.2 Profit-Driven Teaching Motives of Taiwan's Primary Teachers

Through analyzing why my participants choose teaching as a career, it becomes clear that they are motivated to enter the profession with extrinsic reasons. The argument that described teacher salary as "stable," "competitive," and "privileged" frequently surfaced as a key theme from teacher narratives. As noted previously, Taiwan's government that embraces reluctant welfarism exclusively provides generous material rewards for public-sector employees, including lifetime tenure and child education subsidies. In consequence, such a preferential treatment granted by Taiwan's ruling class has turned teachers' work into an attractive occupation, in which public school educators perceive and position themselves as an economically advantaged group. To this end, Teacher B & Teacher H illustrated their profit-driven teaching motives as follows.

> In Taiwan, public school teachers surely enjoy high pay and job security. I have many friends who hold their jobs in private companies. They not only start their work at low salary but also have to face midlife crisis. I mean, private-sector employers often like to eliminate mid-career workers, and further seek young blood for their companies. But, for me, I don't need to worry about that. As soon as I was hired into the public school, I was granted tenure from the government. I believe, many Taiwanese people come to teaching for such a privilege. To be honest, I am no exception. I come for that as well. (Teacher B, Interview, October 23, 2021)

> My husband is currently a manager in a private bank. His workplace has an informal rule. Every year an employee will be chosen and get fired, no matter how hard he/she works. Then, his bank will look for new blood. I can tell you that, in Taiwan, the private-sector labor market has been in a state of anarchy. Taiwan's government only takes care of its

> employees. Since I work as a public-school teacher, I never need to worry about my job security. (Teacher H, Interview, October 30, 2021)

Some of my participants are college graduates with a major in liberal arts, such as art, music, foreign language, or literature. In Taiwan where the labor market is in higher demand for STEM degree holders (Chen, Ho, & Hsu, 2019), liberal arts graduates generally have limited access to job opportunities. For non-STEM majors in Taiwan, then, teaching in public schools is an alternative and well-compensated career choice. The focal teachers that have been trapped in narrow career pathways of liberal arts degrees tend to highlight the importance of extrinsic considerations when being asked about the reasons behind teacher entry. As the notable examples in my study, Teacher L and Teacher C stated,

> My college major is foreign language. When I graduate from college, I only have two available career choices: becoming a professional translator, or enrolling in a teacher training program in order to become a school teacher. In Taiwan, the work of teaching is much more well-paid than that of the translator. The former's starting salary is twice as much as the latter's. Also, the former receives a good care from the government's pension system. Honestly, it is the economic concern that I choose to become a teacher rather than work as a translator. (Teacher L, Interview, October 8, 2021)

> When I decided to pursue a career related to music, my parents seriously opposed my career decision and said, "How can you make a good living by being a musician?" Truly, it is hard to my bread and butter as a musician in Taiwan. So, I have to attach my own interest to something that can pay my bills. Teaching at a public school is the best answer to my concern. If I didn't become a music teacher right now, I could only work as a private music tutor whose pay is pretty low. Frankly, the money issue drives me into my current job. (Teacher C, Interview, October 10, 2021)

In addition to monetary rewards, non-monetary incentives, such as family-friendly work hours, regularly scheduled teaching days, and long vacations with full pay, also play a crucial role in explaining why Taiwan's educators enter the profession. That said, pursuing life quality is one of the career goals held by in-service teachers in Taiwan. When to describe the primary advantages

of the teaching profession, Teacher H and Teacher I stated the following,

> In Taiwan, people traditionally see that teachers' work is best suited for the female who want to have a career and family. As a teacher, women are able to sync their work schedules with their family calendars, and accordingly lower the cost of child care. In my case, I have two kids. When my children attended primary school, I enrolled both of them in my workplace, so that I could go to school with them and go home together after school. This kind of work-life balance, I believe, is unique to the teaching job. Certainly, I go into teaching for such a balance. (Teacher H, Interview, October 30, 2021)

> I have many male friends who work as engineers in private tech companies. They work overtime regularly and even go to their workplaces on weekends. Their jobs have poor quality of life. In comparison, teachers' working hours are fixed. During school days, I am in work from 8am to 4pm, and I seldom work overtime. To this end, I have a good balance between work and life. According to my observation, many teachers come to teaching for such a healthy work schedule. Well, I do, too! (Teacher I, Interview, October 3, 2021)

In sum, the excerpts above reflect extrinsic motivations behind teacher entry in Taiwan. The fact that participating teachers are extrinsically motivated occurs within Taiwan's societal context of reluctant welfarism. When asked about the reasons behind their career decisions, my informants articulated an awareness of exclusive monetary rewards attached to Taiwan's teaching jobs, and of non-monetary incentives, particularly the work/life balance, that are embedded in the teaching profession, both of which strengthens the profit-driven motives of public educators in Taiwan. For primary teachers in my research site, then, teaching functions as a means to the financially secure and wealth-life balancing career, rather than as an end in itself. To some degree, I contend, the focal teachers and school colleagues around them may be semi-detached from the profession in that they manifestly make job choices on extrinsic bases. As might be expected, participants' profit-driven motives likely translate into counterproductive work behavior that is harmful to critical pedagogy, which requires consistent teacher commitment. The section below provides evidence to my given claims.

5.3 The Seniority-Based Career Ladder of Taiwan's Primary Teachers

The seniority of participating teachers in this study influences their job placement. Less-experienced teachers, such as Teacher D, F, and L, are currently placed in demanding school positions that required them to take on extra administrative roles outside the classroom. Their additional responsibilities include developing remedial courses for low-achieving students on a school-wide basis, intervening in discipline and attendance problems created by at-risk students, as well as taking the lead in serving children with specific learning disabilities, all of which are critical to empowering the powerless youth. On the other hand, veteran teachers, like Teacher C and I, currently take charge of non-academic classes without the need to address student affairs. All they need to do, in other words, is teach practical subjects only (i.e., music or sports lessons) without considering issues related to the student code of conduct. Such uneven work assignments mainly result from informal power relations among teachers within a given school, and are tied with the belief system of Confucianism, in which power and authority are disproportionately attached to the elderly. Depicting what it was like to be a Taiwan's primary teacher that had the low seniority status or the high one at school, Teacher L and C respectively stated,

> Since I came to this school two years ago, I have worked as the section chief of special education. [sighs] I would say, this is one of the most tiring positions at school. No teachers are willing to hold this position, you know. If you have low seniority at school, you are doomed to be placed in such a burdensome position without exception. My school principal said, "this is an informal school rule, you have no choice but to accept it." (Teacher L, Interview, October 8, 2021)

> Our [Taiwan's] education system has been deeply influenced by the Confucian tradition, through which the youth are required to respect the elderly. [Me: Mm.] I have taught elementary kids for over 20 years. For most of my career, I worked as a homeroom teacher that had to instruct core academic subjects and address student affairs. About three years ago, I started to serve as a non-academic subject teacher who provided music lessons for

> students. Any school colleague that wants to teach the music class just like me, I would argue, he/she must have a high seniority status in advance. According to my own experience, school positions are assigned to teachers mainly based on their seniority rather than on their expertise. Even though my college major is music, I was disallowed to teach music classes during my early career. My colleagues didn't care about what expertise I do have. They just told me, "Hey, you want to teach the music class? Don't even think about it! Let's discuss about your goal after you accumulate enough seniority credits at this school!" (Teacher C, Interview, October 10, 2021)

In presenting seniority as a major principle to determine teacher placement, Teacher L and C highlighted three crucial facts related to this seniority-based job assignment that impacts primary teachers' career trajectories in Taiwan. First, teachers rank three types of school positions from worst to best based on workload volume. In terms of the worst job generally considered by the focal teachers, the position of section chiefs has been unanimously chosen, which is required to largely provide supplemental support for disadvantaged students on a school-wide basis. The second-worst school position assumed by my participants goes to the stressful role of homeroom teachers, who need to handle core subjects, tailor instruction to school exams, and take care of student affairs. Then, the work of single-subject teachers that primarily engage in course-related activities without the need to display strong classroom management skills is the most desirable position highly sought after by participating teachers.

Second, Confucianism that emphasizes a strong concern for seniority has been extensively adopted by Taiwan's primary school community to legitimate an informal job assignment rule governing the matter of teacher placement. In Taiwan, as in the United States, teacher pay varies primarily by degree attainment, length of service, and licensing qualifications, rather than by teaching performance or student outcomes. For this reason, it is not surprising that Taiwan's teachers who come to teaching with extrinsic motives intentionally decrease their productivity in

exchange for better labor returns. To determine the one who benefits first and foremost in the school community, then, the seniority principle that arises from Confucianism kicks in, through which teachers take turns occupying cushy positions – the role of single-subject teachers who merely instruct non-academic courses – based on the amount of time on the job. As a result, the more senior the teacher, the more likely he/she is to hold the cushy position at school, ending up with a sweeting-up career trajectory.

Third, in talking about the link between seniority and teacher placement, the focal teachers articulate the importance of seniority within the same school. Basically, the seniority status of Taiwan's teachers is school-based and not maintained district wide. They may experience a loss of seniority upon changing their work locations. Given that a teacher's seniority status in his/her current workplace is the lone determinant for job assignment, teachers tend to rationally avoid unnecessary inter-school migration and stay continuously at a given institution to strive for more satisfactory positions. Describing what may occur if a teacher frequently transfers from one work location to another, Teacher H stated the following,

> During my first 15 years of teaching career, I transferred five times and taught in six different primary school. [Me: Oh!] A new teaching environment usually gives me a sense of freshness. For that reason, I transferred between schools frequently. However, many of my colleagues regarded me as a freak because, in their views, teachers had better remain at one school to accumulate profitable seniority credits. [Me: I see.] Whenever I transferred to a new school, I was always asked to take up the demanding job of section chief. As soon as I changed my work location, my seniority immediately got reset to zero, which placed me at the bottom of the seniority list in my new school. To this end, most teachers are reluctant to engage in inter-school mobility. (Teacher H, Interview, October 30, 2021)

Teacher H's narratives index her awareness about the undesirable consequence of inter-school migration, as well as about the deviant label that is attached to her transfer behavior. Exactly like

Teacher H above, across interviews the focal teachers articulate the need to maintain workplace continuity that is highly related to seniority status. They bear such contextual understandings and thereby gear themselves toward a rewarding career path.

In above quotes, my participants underscore that, to pursue a desirable career advancement, Taiwan's primary teachers intentionally construct a sweeting-up career ladder on the basis of seniority, which is deeply tied with and also legitimated by the belief system of Confucianism. As such, high-seniority teachers who reach the upper tier of the career ladder are allowed to take on cushy positions without the need to address student affairs. In contrast, the lower tier of the career ladder is filled with low-seniority teachers who often take charge of heavy-duty jobs that have the added burdens of serving neediest students. Moreover, for the sake of fairness, teachers only take into consideration the same-workplace seniority when it comes to job assignment. This stifles teacher migration between schools and sets the stage for teacher alienation that occurs in a given school. In what follows, special attention is given to the metaphorical phrases embedded in participants' comments. Such teacher-generated metaphors, as discussed in greater detail below, clearly reflect teacher preferences about where to teach and whom to teach in a given school, and also guide the way how teachers structure the seniority-based career ladder.

5.4 The Metaphors of Step-Mother Class and Heavenly Teaching Positions

In previous sections, this study discusses two background ideologies of Taiwan – reluctant welfarism and Confucianism – that respectively take shape as the formal government-initiated policy (i.e., exclusive welfare programs for teachers) and the informal school-level norm (i.e., the practice of seniority-based teacher placement), under which Taiwan's primary teachers intentionally bear profit-driven motives and further construct the sweeting-up career ladder. I

now turn to explore teacher-generated metaphors that specifically indicate what participating teachers like and dislike about teaching positions in a given school. Such figurative language commonly shared by the focal teachers, I argue, demonstrates the very phenomenon of teacher alienation in which teachers embark on intra-school mobility away from powerless students. To a certain degree, these metaphorical statements of my informants reflect their understandings about within-school teacher sorting.

As discussed previously, Taiwan's primary teachers dislike holding stressful positions that are required to provide extra support for disadvantaged students. Accordingly, teachers devalue and negatively label such hefty school jobs. When being asked about the most undesirable work at school, Teacher A, a Taiwan's primary teacher who offered educational service for over thirty years, voiced his perspective in the following conversation (Interview, October 16, 2021):

1	Me:	when you began your career (.)
2		which school position did you take on (.)
3		do you remember that↑
4→	Teacher A:	I remember when I was a new teacher (.)
5→		I was asked to take on the step-mother class (0.2)
6		I HAD NO CHOICE
7		I HAD TO TAKE OVER IT
8	Me:	step-mother class:: (0.5)
9		what do you mean by that
10	Teacher A:	at school (.)
11→		teachers dislike teaching a class=
12→		=that has many disadvantaged students (0.2)
13		then (.) disadvantaged students are orphaned (0.5)
14		if a teacher is asked to take over that disadvantaged class (.)
15→		he/she becomes the step-mother of those orphaned students (0.5)
16		I can tell you confidently (0.2)
17		most teachers dislike taking over the step-mother class (.)
18→		so:: usually new teachers have to take it

Teacher A highlighted the classroom that has a large number of vulnerable students as the most unwelcome school position deliberately shunned by his colleagues (lines 11–12). In particular, such an undesirable working condition is negatively labelled by Taiwan's primary teachers as the step-mother class (lines 5 and 17), in which disadvantaged students are intentionally disregarded and alienated by most teachers. As might be expected, the burden of teaching neediest students usually falls on the shoulder of beginning teachers who have the least power and are unable to reject the request from school authorities (lines 4 and 18). The result is that Taiwan's primary teachers generally start their career with the most challenging assignments of instructing students who struggle with school work, and that primary schoolers from disadvantaged backgrounds are often exposed to inexperienced, novice teachers.

In contrast, when talking about the most desirable position accessible to primary teachers in my research site, participating teachers unanimously refer to the work of single-subject teachers that instruct art, music, or P.E. lessons as their ideal school position. In the following excerpt from an interview with Teacher B, who currently had a low seniority status and wrestled with teaching unruly sixth graders, described difficulties in reaching the position of art teachers in her workplace (Interview, October 23, 2021):

19	Me:	if you can choose any position in your school (.)
20		which position will be your favorite (.)
21	Teacher B:	the position of art teachers (.)
22		OF COURSE (.) no doubt about it (.)
23		it's the position that teachers like the most
24	Me:	why did you say so
25	Teacher B:	at school (.)
26		the position of single-subject teachers=
27		=is a very easy job that is hard to get (0.5)
28		we ((teachers)) often say (.)

29→		the jobs of art teachers are heavenly teaching positions (0.2)
30		because all they need to do=
31		=is ask students to bring their drawing materials (.)
32		and then let students complete their drawings during the class
33		(0.5)
34		THAT'S ALL↓ (.)
35		they need not prepare their lessons before the class (0.2)
36		they don't have to deal with student affairs
37	Me:	what did you mean by saying heavenly teaching positions
38→	Teacher B:	I mean (.) the positions of single-subject teachers are joyful (.)
39→		because their courses are not bounded by school exams (0.5)
40→		also they have little contact with students (0.3) their positions=
41→		=are like the heaven that keeps a distance from the secular world
42	Me:	in your workplace now (.)
43		who is the one that teaches the art class
44	Teacher B:	well:: a male teacher that has 32 years of seniority=
45		= takes charge of the art class at my school (0.3)
46→		uhm::: it's the norm that veteran teachers have first priority=
47→		=for being assigned to teach such a practical subject (.) definitely

To be clear, the metaphor of heavenly teaching positions (line 29) illustrated by Teacher B has multiple layers of meaning. First, it recognizes the academic freedom exclusively owned by single-subject teachers that take charge of practical discipline areas (lines 38–39), in which the instructional activities of focal teachers are not constrained by regularly-scheduled school exams. Second, it reflects relatively low degrees of teacher-student interactions (line 40) experienced by single-subject teachers, through which they are able to distance themselves from student-related affairs (line 41), and accordingly benefit from such a reduced workload. Together, given the high-level pedagogical freedom and the low rate of teacher-student contact, the cushy job of single-subject teachers naturally gains the popularity among Taiwan's primary teachers who intend to engage in output restriction. As noted earlier, the seniority status of the focal teacher

determines his/her job placement at a given school. High-seniority teachers, needless to say, is prioritized over low-seniority ones for holding these single-subject teaching positions (lines 46–47), regardless of whether they possess adequate subject matter knowledge.

In short, the focal teachers create metaphors to indicate different school positions depending on the workload respectively attached. The position that requires teachers to perform the role of caregivers in an effort to empower disadvantaged students is negatively marked with a metaphor of step-mother class, while the one that allows little teacher-student contact is positively labeled with a figurative phrase of heavenly teaching positions. Generally, the step-mother class that has many disadvantaged primary schoolers is often assigned to beginning, inexperienced teachers who have difficulties learning the ropes. On the other hand, the work of single-subject teaching is closely guarded by veteran, experienced teachers that have approached the end of their careers. The result is that neediest students have limited access to experienced teachers, and that teachers' expertise is not compatible with the subject matters they take charge of, ending up with a pedagogical mismatch between teachers and students. As noted earlier, critical pedagogy essentially demands higher levels of teacher effectiveness and requires teachers to regularly teach beyond their daily routines. It is believed that senior teachers are more competent in handling such a challenging task (Darling-Hammond, 1995; Kalogrides, Loeb, & Béteille, 2013). Nevertheless, the aforesaid metaphors reveal an improper pairing between inexperienced teachers and disadvantaged pupils, consequently threatening the extension of critical pedagogy into Taiwan's primary schools.

5.5 Summary: The Silence of Revisionism in Taiwan's Primary Schools

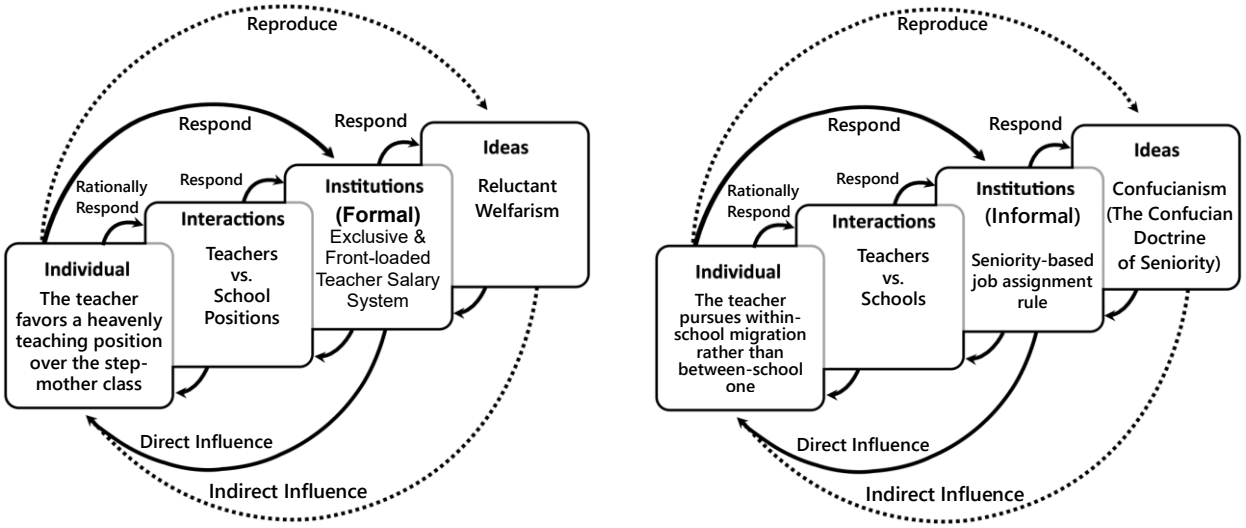
Teacher alienation that occurs in my research site takes the form of teacher mobility away

from neediest students within a given school. Two background ideologies prevalent in Taiwan, namely reluctant welfarism and Confucianism, are associated with this frustrating phenomenon. The former produces exclusive monetary rewards attached to Taiwan's teaching jobs, by which the focal teachers' profit-driven motives are reinforced, and their counterproductive work behavior is thus performed with a desire for better labor benefits, such as keeping away from what focal teachers metaphorized as the step-mother class, or marching toward the so-called heavenly teaching positions (as shown in the left panel of Figure 5.1 on page 115). The latter has a direct impact on the school code regarding teacher placement, in which the focal teachers are assigned to different positions based on their current-workplace seniority, accordingly stifling inter-school teacher migration and confining the scope of teacher alienation to a specific school community (see the right panel of Figure 5.1 on page 115). Together, the formal institution of exclusive teacher welfare released by Taiwan's government that adopts reluctant welfarism, and the informal norm of seniority-based job assignment that is inextricably intertwined with the ideological system of Confucianism, jointly contribute to within-school teacher alienation revolving around the focal schools.

Freire re-envisions education as an empowerment intervention for the oppressed students through his revisionist practice of critical pedagogy (Grady, 2003). However, in my research site of Taiwan, primary teachers that are motivated by extrinsic rewards intentionally turn their backs on close-to-student positions in order to benefit from a reduced workload. Consequently, such workplace alienation reported by participating teachers operates as a limit-situation for critical pedagogy and then silences the possibility of extending Freire's revisionist agenda into Taiwan's elementary classrooms.

Figure 5.1

The Culture Cycle of Teacher Alienation That Occurs in Taiwan's Primary Schools



CHAPTER VI: TEACHER SOCIALIZATION THAT WORKS AGAINST LIBERATORY MODELS OF EDUCATION IN TAIWAN'S PRIMARY SCHOOLS

> Our educational institutions are so deeply invested in a banking system, teachers are more rewarded when we do not teach against the grain. The choice to work against the grain, to challenge the status quo, often has negative consequences. – bell hooks (1994, p. 203)

> In the end, the teachers, who intended to be change agents, were altered by the system, thus becoming change(d) agents. – Betty Achinstein & Rodney Ogawa (2011, p.140)

> Banking education is like COVID, while pre-service teacher education that embraces the progressive vision of teaching is like the vaccine. In Taiwan, every teacher receives the vaccine before he/she begins the career. However, the vaccine-like teacher education rarely causes long-term effects on us [in-service teachers]. After increasingly immersing ourselves in the profession, we [teachers] fall prey to COVID-like banking education very quickly in that it is much easier and much more rewarding for us to bank our students than to liberate them! (Teacher E, Interview, October 15, 2021)

6.1 Chapter Overview: The Negative Pedagogical Shift of Taiwan's Primary Teachers

It is believed that teachers should provide student-centered instruction as a way to meet the needs of diverse learners, and to empower the powerless children. As significant throughout my participants' narratives, however, the cases of teacher socialization that are hostile to such pupil-friendly pedagogy commonly exist in Taiwan's primary schools, ending up with little room for Freire's teaching model to take shape. Although Taiwan's teachers typically receive four-year preservice training, they tend to face powerful socializing forces when beginning their classroom instruction, which may dramatically wash out their initial, progressive perspectives. Within Taiwan's primary schools, the influential socialization mechanism is tied with two background ideologies – credentialism and the Confucian doctrine of mediocrity. The former is the dominant cultural belief highly related to Taiwan's high-stakes entrance exam system, which externally prescribes student learning with testing materials and evaluates a teacher's effectiveness based on

his/her score-raising capacity. The latter is one of the core values of Confucianism internally absorbed by the school community, through which teachers embrace the idea of neutrality and deliberately function as keepers of the status quo to avoid being too critical on their pedagogy. Together, a significant number of the focal teachers who are influenced by both external and internal socializing forces habitually turn a blind eye to the problematic school reality, and are accordingly unable to change the system they work in. The sections below draw on participating teachers' voices to surface the phenomenon of teacher socialization in my research site. What will become clear is that the socialization outcome of Taiwan's primary teachers leads to a limit-situation that collapses the spirit of progressivism embedded in critical pedagogy.

6.2 School Norms of Teach-To-Testing Abided by Taiwan's Primary Teachers

In Taiwan, the general public commonly demonstrate a high regard for credentialism and firmly believe that an outstanding college diploma may help open the door to a rewarding career. Taiwan's students, to get into selective universities, are required to stand out from high school graduates nationwide that take part in competitive placement exams. Although Taiwan's middle-school entrance exams have been abolished for decades[34], the primary school outcomes of young children, in parents' minds, still function as a reliable predictor of college and career readiness. For this reason, parents generally expect their children to score high marks on school exams. Such scores-oriented expectations of parents and the underlying belief of credentialism directly condition the way how teachers behave in the classroom and strongly define what it is like to be a competent teacher at Taiwan's primary school. Coincident with this trend, three of the focal teachers unanimously argued,

[34] In 1968, Taiwan's government abolished the nation-wide entrance exam to middle schools and thereby extended compulsory education from six to nine years. However, everyday teaching in Taiwan's primary schools nowadays is still affected by the long-lasting exam tradition (Chou, 2014).

> The logic of parents is that if children don't perform well at primary schools, they are very likely to do poorly at secondary schools, and then will have little chance to get into selective universities, finally ending up with low-paid jobs. [Me: Mm.] My current school is located at the low-income district where many disadvantaged children reside. For low-SES families, parents usually want their children to have school success in order to achieve upward social mobility. Based on my own observation, I notice that *low-SES parents tend to care much about their children's test scores* [emphasis added] at school. Unsurprisingly, they don't want their children, in the future, to do the same low-wage jobs as theirs. (Teacher E, Interview, October 15, 2021)

> Parents only care about test scores performed by their own children. They hardly take notice of whether teachers carry out moral and character education for their children. Parents will not interfere with my instructional activities unless their children perform badly on school exams. *From the perspective of parents, the teacher who can maximize student achievement is a competent instructor* [emphasis added]. In contrast, the teacher who fails to prepare students for school exams is typically seen as an ineffective educator. (Teacher H, Interview, October 30, 2021)

> When parents themselves were school-aged kids, they had been taught to pass tests. Then, after they become adults, parents likewise want their children to do well on school exams. Certainly, *the belief of credentialism* [emphasis added] has been ingrained in their minds. [Me: Mm.] Every semester, my students need to regularly take two school-wide exams, namely mid-term and final exams. Most parents cannot accept the low scores performed by their children on those two exams. (Teacher B, Interview, October 23, 2021)

In recent years, Taiwan has moved into an era of shrinking school enrollment due to declining birth rates country-wide, through which parents are increasingly granted a freer choice of school that highly threatens the operation of primary schools surrounded by low-income neighborhoods. District X, the location of my research site, hosts a significant number of disadvantaged students from working-class and migrant backgrounds. As a result, participating teachers are inevitably subject to the market discipline and wrestle with how best to retain a smaller pool of primary schoolers through boosting parental satisfaction with visible and positive student outcomes. Teacher H, a female second-grade educator that has worked at School X2 for over twenty years,

articulated an awareness around the increased parental choice of schools, and how that affected her pedagogical stance:

> My salary all comes from students. Needless to say, *no students, no teachers* [emphasis added]. [Me: Mm.] When I began my career 24 years ago, my class had 35 students. But now, I only serve 23 kids in my classroom. My school that is located in the low-income area has difficulties attracting students from other affluent districts, so that school enrollment drops every year. I can tell you, nowadays our school education has been turned into a form of business, in which parents tend to seek the schools that can meet their needs. Although our government has encouraged primary teachers to engage students in happy learning and children-centered pedagogy, I attempt not to comply with that. Well, I care about what parents want rather than about what government officials have argued. (Teacher H, Interview, October 30, 2021)

Explicit in Teacher H's statement is a conspicuous notice that the reduced demand for public schooling which comes with Taiwan's birth decline has obviously converted educational goods into commodities, and that the growth of Taiwan's education market makes it necessary for teachers to prioritize student achievement over progressive education vehemently promoted by the government. It can be argued that, in the face of enrollment drops, Taiwan's teachers must be more efficient in satisfying consumer demands for desirable student outcomes. Another focal teacher made similar claims regarding parental interference fueled by the deeply-rooted ideology of credentialism. When asked about the school norms of catering to parents, Teacher B, a male sixth-grade teacher, stated the following (Interview, October 23, 2021):

48	Me:	do you care about parents' opinions
49	Teacher B:	>OF COURSE< (.)
50→		they are <u>customers</u> (.) I cannot turn my back on their needs
51	Me:	but:: parents are not the person who pays you salaries (.)
52		why do you care about their needs
53→	Teacher B:	hey (.) if they don't enroll their kids in this school (.)
54→		I and my colleagues will lose our jobs (.)
55		I'm particularly <u>afraid</u> of hearing parents complain to me that (.)

56		>I am not satisfied with my child's scores in this school< (.)
57		>I'm gonna transfer my kid to other higher-achieving schools<
58		(0.5)
59→		well (0.2) you have to think (.)
60→		one parent transfers his/her child out of this school (.)
61→		other parents may follow
62		(0.5)
63		then (.) my school will be in trouble
64	Me:	as I know (.) in Taiwan parents have to send their kids=
65		=to a school within the home district
66→	Teacher B:	yup (.) but they can easily change their residency status
67		(0.3)
68→		well (.) an intra-district transfer is not an issue for parents
69	Me:	uhm:: okay (.) then:: what did you do to get rid of parental=
70		=pressures you have faced
71	Teacher B:	parents often compare the performance of different teachers (.)
72→		so:: if my students continuously score high grades on exams (.)
73→		I have no worries about parents arguing with me

This quote reveals Teacher B's perception toward the school conditions in which student learning outcomes are highly customer-oriented (line 50). Teacher B also highlighted why it is crucial to take seriously the academic concerns of parents (lines 53–54), and how easily parents launch an inter-district transfer for their children to pursue more desirable student achievement (lines 66, 68). Acknowledging that a teacher's failure to teach to testing may trigger parental complaints and increase the risk of losing students, Teacher B deliberately engages in the banking model of education as a means for survival (lines 72–73).

Specifically, to ensure student success on school exams, the focal teachers employ a range of classroom management techniques to keep students concentrated on textbook lessons. Across my interview data, first of all, participating teachers report that classroom quietness is the key to effective instruction and greater achievement by students. That is, for Taiwan's primary teachers,

a silent classroom environment can be conducive to maximizing student engagement in regular curricular activities. The skills of classroom control, therefore, are fundamental to competence as a teacher in Taiwan. Teacher I, a senior male teacher who has instructed primary schoolers in Taiwan for more than two decades, voiced his perspective on the strong association between classroom control and teacher competence as follows:

> Recently, a male teacher who holds a PhD degree came to work in my school. One day, I walked by his classroom, and I got shocked. I noticed that his classroom was entirely a mess. Some of his students chased each other around, while a few others jumped onto the tables and screamed loudly. [Me: Oh!] Yes, he is a doctor. But so what? He has no ability to control his classroom. I will never say that he is a competent teacher because his classroom looked like a jungle. (Teacher I, Interview, October 3, 2021)

Since classroom control plays a crucial role in competent teaching which aims to boost student achievement on school exams, it is reasonable that Taiwan's primary teachers develop effective strategies to restrict student utterances. In the following excerpts, two of participating teachers demonstrate how they use vocal attention-getters to create an orderly, quiet classroom. Firstly, Teacher E stated (Interview, October 15, 2021),

74	Me:	please describe your method of classroom management
75	Teacher E:	well:: simply put
76		(0.3)
77		I have <u>only</u> <u>one</u> mouth (.)
78		but my 23 students have 23 mouths (.)
79		so:: if my students don't <u>close</u> their mouths (.)
80		I cannot proceed through textbook lessons as scheduled
81	Me:	how do you do to calm your classroom
82	Teacher E:	uhm:: I develop my own attention-getters to silence students
83		(0.5)
84		uhm:: let's say (.) when I discover my classroom is noisy (.)
85→		I'll instantly and loudly utter the word ATTENTION (.)
86		then (.) my students need to <u>promptly</u> answer me back with=

87→ =the term YES SIR
88 Me: is that working every time
89 Teacher E: uhm:: it mostly works (.) with very few exceptions
90 (0.5)
91 in most cases (.) my students quiet down right away=
92 =after they say YES SIR to me

Secondly, like Teacher E, Teacher H who currently taught second-graders and worked in the same primary school X2 described her own attention-getters that sought to quickly calm down the class. She said (Interview, October 30, 2021),

93 Me: how many textbook units do you need to teach per week
94 Teacher H: well (.) in terms of core subjects such as mandarin and math (.)
95 I have to finish teaching one unit or more per week
96 (0.5)
97 otherwise (.) my students can't catch up in time for school exams
98 Me: how do you do to keep your teaching on schedule
99 Teacher H: most importantly (.) the classroom needs to be quiet
100 (0.3)
101 if students keep talking to each other (.)
102 my class may lag behind schedule
103 Me: how do you do to quiet your classroom
104 Teacher H: uhm:: just like my colleagues (.)
105 I create my own attention-getters to silence students (.)
106→ to be clear (.) when I utter BIG WHITE SHARK=
107 =during the class
108 my students know that they should answer me immediately=
109→ =by saying CLOSE YOUR MOUTH
110 (0.5)
111 well (.) my students are second-graders (.)
112 they kind of like to interact with me in such a funny manner
113 Me: is that working every time
114 Teacher H: yup (.) because my attention-getters give children a hint=
115 =that they should shut their mouths

Both Teacher E and Teacher H emphasized the need to employ attention-getting techniques (lines

85, 87, 106, 109) to control the classroom. They did so in order to keep pupils focused on teacher talk, get through textbook materials quickly without student interruptions, and accomplish lesson plans organized for the exam schedule, which helps promote desired student achievement. Such attention-getters that produce student silence, significantly, have become an essential element of school norms abided by Taiwan's primary teachers who tailor their teaching to the test.

Moreover, classroom control is highly associated with teacher authority over students. The primary educators in this study recognize teacher authority as absolutely necessary with regard to classroom management. The hierarchical teacher-student relationship that comes with teacher authority essentially creates an authoritarian classroom atmosphere, which facilitates student engagement in teacher-centered instruction and also functions as a barrier to dialogical pedagogy. Teacher B, a male, low-seniority teacher who instructed the core subjects of reading and math for sixth-graders, explained why he considered classroom authority a critical element of didactic lectures, and how that led to his pedagogical shift:

> Sixth-graders are like small adults. They are inclined to challenge my authority by doing the opposite of whatever I tell them to do. For instance, when I ask them to open their reading textbooks, some defiant ones just keep their books closed. Well, to prevent such student defiance, I would say, a teacher definitely needs to *establish absolute authority over students* [emphasis added] at the beginning of the school year, so that students are more likely to do what the teacher asks them to do. Without creating classroom authority in advance, the teacher may wrestle with student discipline problems and then lose valuable instructional time. [Me: Mm.] When I was a new teacher, I attempted to treat my students like a friend. However, some disrespectful students overstepped the mark and continuously disrupted class proceedings. Consequently, I wasted too much class time dealing with discipline issues, and many of my students did poorly on school exams due to the loss of precious in-class time. From then on, I learned that I should *set and maintain teacher-student relationship boundaries* [emphasis added] so as to turn mouthy children into tight-lipped ones. I cannot afford to spend too much time disciplining children and not enough time preparing them for exams. (Teacher B, Interview, October 23, 2021)

While indicating teacher authority as an essential component of classroom management, Teacher B highlighted two major functions of classroom authority that are conducive to lecture-based instruction. On one hand, it helps teachers bring down the challenges posed by defiant students rather than to earn respect and trust from learners. On the other hand, it helps instructors spend more time teaching to the test and less time addressing discipline issues. Such teacher authority that is geared toward classroom control and maximizing instructional time, I argue, grows out of teachers' pragmatic responses to job demands, which largely smooths the way for rote learning and banking instruction. Moreover, parents also play an active role in legitimizing the normalcy of teacher authority over students. Teacher A, a male veteran who instructed the exam-required subject of social studies for fourth-graders at School X1, drew the connection between parental expectation and teacher authority. He stated,

> In most cases, parents dislike their children to be taught by old teachers. But if old teachers are very good at controlling the classroom, they will be welcomed by parents. In my current school, old teachers tend to be very rigid with standards and exercise absolute authority over their students. Their classrooms are usually quiet and orderly, in which defiant or low-achieving students may be required to do extra homework as a punishment. For that reason, parents strongly favor this kind of old teachers who are best able to elicit student obedience to authority and accordingly ensure student success on school exams. (Teacher A, Interview, October 16, 2021)

To be clear, classroom authority emphasized by my participants were reflective of teachers' cost-benefit calculations and parents' logic of consequences. For focal teachers, presenting themselves as an authority figure is the most efficient way to suppress classroom chaos and maintain student participation in textbook learning. They don't need to make great efforts designing their courses in innovative ways to boost student engagement. All they need to do is wear a poker face and speak in a loud, high-pitched voice when delivering the classroom lecture. For parents, then, teacher authority is an essential element in developing high-achievers, and normally signals an

authoritarian classroom atmosphere characterized by strict discipline and punishment, in which children's misbehavior that threatens learning outcomes occurs less frequently. Together, teacher calculations on how to teach, along with result-oriented parental concerns, jointly contribute to the prevalent of the hierarchical teacher-student relationship across Taiwan's primary schools.

Another way that the focal teachers ensure student success on exams is to have children take practice tests intensively ahead of the scheduled exam. As discussed earlier, the content of textbooks is used as the primary source for designing exam questions. To this end, participating teachers develop speeded-up habits of teaching and have students proceed their textbook learning at an accelerated pace so as to preserve more in-class time for implementing pre-exam quizzes. Usually, experienced teachers finish teaching exam-required textbook units a few days, or even a few weeks, before the exam date, by which students can have more chance to review textbook lessons and practice answering sample questions similar to those in the formal exam. Teacher E, a male third-grade homeroom teacher, articulated how his style of textbook teaching was affected by other mainstream colleagues. He said,

> When I teach the core subjects, such as math and mandarin, I prefer to finish instructing textbook units that will be included in the exam as quickly as possible. This is because I would like to reserve an adequate amount of in-class time for students to take practice tests, so that most of them can do well on the exam. [Me: Mm.] When I began my career, I was frequently supplementing the textbook with extracurricular readings, and thereby finished teaching textbook units just right before the exam date. As a result, many of my students performed badly on exams due to the lack of in-class time taking practice texts. From then on, I imitated the teaching habits of senior colleagues who usually *handled textbooks at a rapid pace* [emphasis added] and granted students more in-class time to do mock exams. (Teacher E, Interview, October 15, 2021)

Explicit in Teacher E's narratives is a socialized awareness that the speed of textbook teaching largely determines student performance on exams, and that the teaching approach learned from

senior colleagues are necessary for teacher survival when facing exam-driven norms of Taiwan's primary schools. In this view, classroom instruction has become a speed race to cover textbook lessons, in which winners of the race can produce better student outcomes while the losers may experience incidents of academic failure among students. Teacher B, a male sixth-grade teacher, described the pressure he had perceived when senior teachers outpaced him in such a speed race of textbook instruction,

> Some of my senior colleagues like to show off their accelerated pace of textbook teaching. When the exam date was approaching, one of them came to my classroom and proudly said, "Hey, I have finished teaching my textbook lessons and started to have my students take pre-exam quizzes." This always makes me nervous and drives me to teach textbook units more quickly. Well, I'm just afraid that my slower pace of textbook instruction will do harm to my students' exam results. (Teacher B, Interview, October 23, 2021)

The speed race of textbook instruction experienced by Teacher B largely limits the opportunities for critical pedagogy to take place at Taiwan's primary classroom. As noted previously, critical pedagogy requires teachers to teach beyond the surface knowledge of school textbooks, as well as to engage students in "reading between the lines to expose and interrupt embedded, dominant narratives, power dynamics, and perceived normalcy espoused by and hidden in the text." (Borsheim-Black et al., 2014, p. 125). In my research site, the speeded pace of textbook learning apparently weakens students' ability to examine and question the official knowledge, ending up with unconsciously taking the dominant discourse for granted.

The accelerated mode of textbook instruction also has an impact on the way how teachers handle the evidence from the textbook. Typically, as a focal teacher teaches through the textbook, students are asked to underline the main points of readings with colored ink, which functions as a visual reminder for rote learning and drill exercises. As a result, highlighting textbook passages turns out to be an ending point when Taiwan's primary teachers implement a specific curricular

unit. Teacher H, a female second-grade teacher, reported her own experiences about textbook use and related consequences as follows (Interview, October 30, 2021),

116	Me:	how do you use textbooks in your social studies class
117	Teacher H:	uhm:: you know (.) the content of textbooks is used for exams
118		(0.3)
119		so:: whenever I teach a social studies class (.)
120		I always ask my students to underline textbook passages=
121		=that are crucial for exam preparation
122	Me:	could you give me some examples
123→	Teacher H:	well (.) if the textbook mentions a specific person (.)
124→		a specific date (.) or a specific place
125		(0.5)
126		I will ask my students to underline those exam-related texts
127		(0.5)
128		for instance (.) the social studies textbook indicates that=
129		=Taiwan has nine aboriginal tribes
130		(0.3)
131		then (.) I had students use their pens to underline the titles=
132		=of those indigenous peoples
133	Me:	you mean (.) the school exam assesses students' rote memory=
134		on the group name of each aboriginal tribe in Taiwan↑
135	Teacher H:	you bet (.)
135		because school exams cannot have confusing questions
137		(0.3)
138		exam questions must have only one clearly correct answer (.)
139		so:: textbook passages that contain objective facts (.)
140→		such as the texts about people (.) date (.) and place (.)
141		usually will be used to design exam questions
142		(0.5)
143		thus (.) my students need to underline those factual texts=
144		and memorize them in order to get good grades on exams
145	Me:	do your colleagues address the textbook in the same manner
146	Teacher H:	I would say (.) as long as teachers who teach core subjects (.)
147		all of them handle the textbook in the same way as I do (.)

148 this is a rule of thumb when preparing students for exams (.)
149 no exceptions
150 (0.5)
151 when I was a child (.) my school teacher did the same thing (.)
152 from past to now (.) nothing changes in terms of textbook use

To be clear, when teaching through the textbook, Teacher H and her colleagues placed a higher value on objective knowledge worth being memorized, such as the facts of who the Taiwanese aborigines are, when a specific social event occurs in Taiwan, and where it takes place (lines 123, 124, 140), instead of encouraging students to think critically on what they have read. In reality, the culture of Taiwan's aboriginal tribes has been chronically made invisible in school curricula by the Han majority[35]. Teacher H, in the above quote, evidently tended not to surface and discuss such cultural exclusion experienced by Taiwan's aborigines when teaching her social studies class with the textbook as a guidance. Consequently, textbook instruction of the focal teachers operates as a vehicle for banking education, rather than as a means to help learners develop reasoning and critical thinking skills.

In concert, one of the socializing forces that assimilate Taiwan's elementary teachers into the school norms of teach-to-testing stems from the deeply-rooted and widespread ideology of credentialism, which presumes school success as the key to a rewarding career, and is mulishly embraced by parents of school-aged children. The strength of this socializing force that is tied with parental expectation has grown significantly in recent years due to Taiwan's low birth rate and increased school choice. In the face of elevated parental pressure, participating educators who serve the primary schools in District X – a disadvantaged urban area of Taipei City – adopt

[35] In Taiwan, over 95 percent of the population are Han Chinese while only about 2 percent of the Taiwanese are aborigines (Butcher, 2019). Although, in the past decades, Taiwan has launched a series of education reforms on the basis of multiculturalism, the culture of aborigines remains marginalized in primary school textbooks (Tsao, 2008).

various classroom management strategies to promote pupil achievement and accordingly retain a small pool of student body, such as maintaining classroom quietness, establishing the teacher's unilateral authority, teaching textbook units at an accelerated pace, and having students underline textbook passages that are crucial for exam preparation. The frustrating results are that students' diverse voices are ignored during the learning process, and that the dominant values and interests embedded in the textbook are left unattended. Taken together, the focal teachers, influenced by such a strong socializing force that emerges from the belief system of credentialism, inevitably espouse what Freire (1970/2002) criticized as the banking model of education, making it hard for critical pedagogy to take place in their classrooms.

6.3 The School Culture of Mediocrity Embraced by Taiwan's Primary Teachers

The socializing forces, which revolve around Taiwan's primary schools and strongly impact teachers' preferences about how to teach and what to teach, not only emanate from consumers of education – parents, but also are constructed by the school community that embraces the culture of mediocrity. Through analyzing how the focal teachers make evaluative judgments about their colleagues' on-the-job performance, it becomes clear that Taiwan's primary schools customarily celebrate the norm of being mediocre, in which teachers with outstanding performance ordinarily elicit sharp criticism for doing well, and are maliciously labeled by school staff as eccentric. To a certain degree, such a school climate of mediocrity that upsets high-achievers has its destructive impact on workplace productivity and undermines teacher engagement. Teacher B, a male sixth-grade teacher, was keenly aware of this mediocre norm that plagued his school, and accordingly modified the teaching approach that he initially adopted. Teacher B posited,

> In my school, if a teacher likes to teach creatively or critically, he/she will be seen as a thorn in the flesh. This is because his/her outstanding performance makes other colleagues feel

> threatened. As I observe, such a critical, creative teacher tends to be marginalized by peers at work. [Me: Mm.] In my case, when I began my career, I liked to frequently change my classroom decorations based on the curricular activities that I was going to implement. Then, some senior colleagues stopped by my classroom and sourly said, "Hey, come on, you have worked too hard, take it easy, okay?" "Oh, it looks like you have lots of free time decorating your classroom. Since you are mostly free, please come to my classroom another day. My classroom needs new decor!" [Short sigh] They are kind of like sour grapes! [Me: Um.] I was really sick of their trash talk. So, I stopped decorating my classroom frequently. From then on, my senior peers seldom said something bad when coming to my classroom. (Teacher B, Interview, October 23, 2021)

Teacher B's sentiments reflect ironical facts that hard work at a school usually arouses criticism instead of praise, and that keeping in line with the so-so performance of school staff can largely avoid envious hostility. To clarify, such a school norm of mediocrity that stubbornly plagues my research site has a root in the Chinese philosophy, namely the so-called Zhong Yong[36]. Teacher C, a female high-seniority educator who currently served the primary school X1, was similarly consciousness about this negative school climate and illustrated how her awareness of mediocrity was linked to the Confucian legacy of Zhong Yong. She indicated,

> *Teachers can hardly tolerate differences* [emphasis added]. I mean, when a teacher chooses to stand out from the school community, he/she kind of seeks trouble for himself/herself. That is, if a teacher does teach critically at school, only one-fifth of school colleagues may sincerely admire his/her critical teaching, while the other 80 percent are likely to denigrate such an ambitious effort. [Me: Mm.] Since a long time ago, Confucius has taught us that a well-behaved person is the one who can comply with *the conduct code of Zhong Yong* [emphasis added]. It is the traditional Chinese virtue, which encourages people to behave modestly and humbly in order to avoid triggering public hostility against them. It is the practical wisdom of social life. [Me: Hm.] Well, in my case, *I prefer not to outshine my school colleagues* [emphasis added]. I merely do my work in the same way as others do, so

[36] Zhong Yong has been regarded by Confucius and Confucian scholars as a prime virtue of social life, which is translated as the Doctrine of the Mean (Yang, et al., 2016). Literally, the word Zhong means moderation while the term Yong connotes harmony. Together, Zhong Yong indicates that "one should know where and when to keep a low profile" (Qin, 2014, p. 294) so as to avoid potential conflicts.

> that I won't incite hostility and taunting in my peers. [Me: Is Zhong Yong widely adopted by teachers?] Well, I'm confident to argue that every school is in the same situation as mine. Basically, *Zhong Yong is a good excuse for not working hard enough* [emphasis added]. Since teacher salary does not vary by on-the-job performance, it is not difficult to see that teachers don't do their best at work. As a teacher, even though my teaching performance is not extraordinary, I can still receive the same amount of income, why should I work hard? (Teacher C, Interview, October 10, 2021)

Here, Teacher C pinpointed that the Confucian doctrine of Zhong Yong has normalized teachers' mediocre practices as an appropriate workplace behavior, and that such an inertial school climate is nurtured by teachers' benefit-cost calculations. Her assertive statement, "every school is in the same situation," reflects the prevalence of this mediocre school norm in my research site and beyond. Given the strong impact of mediocrity on teacher performance, it is predictable that the focal teachers who are anti-mediocre may receive punitive treatments from peers. As a case in point, two of my participants, Teacher K and Teacher J, have been penalized with the increased workload when attempting to teach against the grain. They shared,

> Last Thursday, the district superintendent visited my school and stopped by my classroom to observe students' learning activities. Actually, it was the third time this month my class had been observed by visitors. [Me: Why so many visitors in your class?] Well, I think, this might be because I teach beyond the school routine. Usually, I engage my fifth-graders in discussions when teaching a reading class, in which students brainstorm feasible solutions to current social problems, such as climate change and the COVID-19 pandemic. To a certain degree, my critical teaching draws attention from visitors. [Me: Mm.] Honestly, I don't mind whether visitors stop by my classroom frequently. But, you know, I'm kind of nerve-wracking when being observed. It seems to me that the more critically I perform teaching practices, the more often visitors observe my class. I do feel stressed and anxious about this. (Teacher K, Interview, October 17, 2021)

> I currently take charge of technology courses at my school; the way how I evaluate students' learning outcomes is different than that of my colleagues who teach core subjects. I assess students through the use of portfolios that collect their digital files which they produce in my technology class. The school principal knows about my current practices of portfolio

> assessment. He came to my classroom last week and said, "Your teaching performance is pretty special! I wanna let you know that you have been chosen to represent our school in an upcoming, inter-school competition regarding creative teaching." [Me: Sounds great!] Not at all! Obviously, my unique method of student assessment has attracted more work to me. I'm feeling kind of unbalanced, you know, in that my colleagues who assess their students merely with test scores never need to join any teacher-related contests on behalf of our school. (Teacher J, Interview, October 31, 2021)

Paradoxically, the above quotes reveal that the more productive teachers are with their classroom practices, the heavier workload they have to address. Such highly polarized work assignments, to some degree, have stirred up focal teachers' critical consciousness that further problematizes the status quo. As noted earlier, Taiwan, since the early 2000s, has initiated a series of progressive education reforms to improve its exam-driven school system. However, such progressive burdens of school reforms, under the mediocre school climate prevalent across my research site, may be disproportionally placed on the shoulders of participating teachers who are more willing to teach critically, such as the aforementioned examples of Teacher K and Teacher J. In this sense, the focal teachers that are pedagogically more productive and innovative tend to be free-ridden[37] by their mediocre colleagues, which, as might be expected, potentially reduces the total number of critical primary teachers in District X.

The school culture of mediocrity that is tied with the Confucian doctrine of Zhong Yong not only confines teacher engagement to routine work, but also fosters teacher neutrality toward the issues of politics and controversy. Specifically, the stance of neutrality meticulously adopted by the focal teachers is a pedagogical decision to avoid classroom conversations around political

[37] American economist Mançur Olson (1965) articulated that a prevailing problem associated with the provision of public goods is free-riding, in which the highly able are exploited by the less able. In the cases of Teacher K and J, their outstanding productivity and contributions were conveniently enjoyed by other mainstream colleagues that did not make the same efforts as they have done – the free riders.

topics and other controversial issues, such as LGBTQ-related matters. In Taiwan, the principle of political neutrality in teaching has been backed up by the Educational Fundamental Act, arguing that public schools cannot engage students in any political activity. What results is a neutral and silent classroom in which teachers intentionally take an apolitical stance, and are incapable of disclosing their political opinions with students. In other words, the focal teachers, to ensure a sense of security in carrying out curricular activities, have been turned into a non-starter when it comes to discussing politics in the classroom. Teacher E, a male third-grade veteran teacher that has accumulated over 20 years of seniority at school X2, offered his perspective about political neutrality commonly embraced by Taiwan's primary teachers. He argued (Interview, October 15, 2021),

153	Me:	how do you tackle political issues in your class
154	Teacher E:	well (.) students sometimes ask me about whether Taiwan is=
155		=an independent country
156		(0.2)
157		or about which presidential candidate I would choose to support
158		(0.5)
159		I <u>always</u> <u>remain</u> <u>silent</u> on students' political questions (.)
160		at school I'm <u>apolitical</u> (.)
161		I refuse to express my political views in the classroom (.)
162		because such political issues are entirely <u>irrelevant</u> to my courses
163		(0.5)
164→		when I began my career (.)
165→		I was told <u>not</u> <u>to</u> discuss anything political during the class
166	Me:	what will happen if you do talk about politics in class
167→	Teacher E:	parents and school administrators will surely complain about me
168		(0.5)
169		in their opinions (.)
170→		kids are <u>immature</u> individuals easily influenced by teachers (.)
171→		so:: if teachers say anything political in class (.)

172→		children's political beliefs will be affected
173	Me:	do you agree with what parents and administrators have said
174	Teacher E:	um::: I think (.)
175		for college students (.) teachers can talk about politics in class
176		(0.2)
177		but for primary schoolers who are <u>not</u> <u>mature</u> <u>enough</u> (.)
178		politics is <u>too</u> aggressive (.)
179		I had better <u>remove</u> <u>it</u> <u>completely</u> from my class
180	Me:	do your colleagues address political issues in the same way
181	Teacher E:	OF COURSE (.) we speak the same language
182		(0.2)
183		our view is that talking about politics is <u>not</u> our business

Teacher E made it clear that he strictly complied with the bureaucratic demand requiring teachers to stay away from anything politics-related when engaging students in classroom learning (lines 164–165). His orientation to teach neutrally is out of fear towards administrative censure and parental backlash (line 167), and also, I argue, reflects the school culture of mediocrity that celebrates moderation and harmony, as well as that labels aggressive pedagogies as eccentric. Explicit in Teacher E's remarks is the assumption that positions primary students as immature, passive learners who have no ability to think critically and are easily influenced by teachers' political talk (lines 170–172). Such a problematic assumption has made Teacher E's instruction synonymous with the act of indoctrination. In this sense, Teacher E's apolitical teaching practices fall prey to what Freire (1970/2002) criticized as the banking model of education.

The focal teachers, meanwhile, avoid and silence any classroom conversations on the issue of homosexuality in that they may elicit harsh repercussions from conservative parents if this unwelcome matter of gender diversity finds its way into their classrooms. Such a school tradition of teacher neutrality that silences and excludes LGBTQ-inclusive education not only delivers to students a prejudiced lesson that homosexuality is an abnormal gender identity, but also renders

homosexual students as invisible minorities whose educational needs are systematically being marginalized. Teacher I, a male veteran teacher who currently took charge of health courses at the school X3, briefly explained why it was difficult to include homosexual-related materials in his curricular activities. He indicated the following (Interview, October 3, 2021),

184	Me:	how do you address the LGBTQ issue in your health class
185→	Teacher I:	oh:: it is a very dangerous issue
186		(0.3)
187		I mean (.) it has been seen as a taboo topic at primary schools (.)
188		few teachers dare to teach it (.)
189→		I don't wanna touch it either
190	Me:	Taiwan has legalized same-sex marriage in 2019
191	Teacher I:	yup (.) but in parents' minds (.)
192→		it is too early for primary schoolers to approach this issue
193		(0.5)
194→		so:: I always keep my instruction away from it (.)
195		otherwise (.) I'll hit the headlines
196		from time to time (.)
197→		primary teachers in other schools did hit the headlines because=
198→		=they bluntly had students learn about the issue of homosexuality
199		(0.5)
200		I don't wanna become any of them (.)
201		I don't wanna hit the headlines
202	Me:	what will you do if your class has a gay student
203	Teacher I:	um:: well (.) in that case (.)
204→		I'll hold my tongue and keep silent
205		(0.2)
206→		I won't particularly mention his gay identity in my class
207		(0.3)
208		I believe (.) my colleagues will do the same thing as I'm doing

This quote demonstrates Teacher I's mediocre and indifferent responses to the forbidden issue of homosexuality (lines 185, 189). In particular, the mainstream media that repeatedly broadcast the

tragic incidents of pro-LGBT teachers had functioned as a socialization mechanism in shaping Teacher I's passive and silent attitudes toward the promotion of gender diversity (lines 194, 197–198). As might be expected, sexual minority students in his class are very likely to experience invisibility and be treated like an elephant in the room (lines 204, 206). Again here, primary schoolers were perceived as underdeveloped individuals that lacked critical thinking skills, and that needed to be protected and isolated from gender-sensitive curricula (line 192). The disappointing result was that Teacher I performed as a custodian of the status quo rather than as what Freire (2005) called the "cultural worker" who dares to teach the taboo and celebrate student diversity.

In a nutshell, the school culture of mediocrity, a socializing force generated from the teacher community, strongly affects my participants' pedagogical decisions about how to teach and what to teach. It is linked to the Confucian legacy of Zhong Yong that emphasizes the prime virtues of moderation and harmony, which in turn leads to the so-so teaching performance and politically neutral stance of focal teachers. The power of this mediocre norm in my research site has been further strengthened through marginalizing and penalizing ambitious, aggressive colleagues that attempt to teach innovatively and critically. Needless to say, my respondents who espouse this dominant culture of mediocrity are more inclined to disengage from critical pedagogy that has educators actively perform beyond school routines on a regular basis.

6.4 The Metaphor of One-Eye Monkeys

The focal teachers who have internalized socialization mechanisms prevalent in Taiwan's primary schools, namely the norm of teach-to-testing and the dominant culture of mediocrity, tend to experience a progressive-traditional shift in their pedagogical perspectives. It is evident

that these socialized teachers intentionally unsee sexual minority students, unhear the diverse voices of disadvantaged learners, and undo the practices of critical pedagogy. Teacher B, a male sixth-grade teacher who currently worked in the school X1, revealed a teacher-generated metaphor – one-eye monkeys – that is widely used to portray the symptom of socialized teachers who have turned a blind eye to the problematic status quo after increasingly immersing in the profession. He vividly described this metaphor and the parable related to it,

> The school is like a jungle, in which many monkeys live. All the monkeys live there have only one eye. One day, a new monkey that has two eyes comes from outside and into this jungle. Suddenly, this new monkey runs into a one-eye monkey in the jungle and says, "OMG! What's wrong with you? You look so weird, are you okay?" The one-eye monkey just smiles and doesn't say anything. [Me: Mm hm.] At this moment, more one-eye monkeys show up, and they welcome this new monkey to the jungle. Day by day, years after years, the new monkey is gradually isolated by other one-eye monkeys in that it looks different from its companions. In order to be accepted by its companions, the new monkey decides to blind one of its eyes with a stick. [Me: Oh!] Well, *I am the monkey that blinds one of the eyes* [emphasis added]. In the school, if I open both of my eyes, I see many things unjust. For example, teachers punish their students who perform poorly on the exams. Teachers turn their back on disadvantaged kids who need extra help. Teachers run their own private tutoring institutions outside of schools and don't do their best in the school. In fact, I have learned to turn a blind eye to those unjust things and try my best to imitate what my school colleagues have done in front of me. Then, I get accepted and feel comfortable at school. (Teacher B, Interview, October 23, 2021)

The metaphor of one-eye monkeys, according to Teacher B's description, has four layers of meanings tied with the phenomenon of teacher socialization that occurs in Taiwan's primary schools. First, it reveals the anti-Freirean, dehumanizing classroom practices of socialized teachers who intentionally turn a blind eye to the problematic status quo which celebrates the banking model of education. Second, it indicates the reversal of focal teachers' pedagogical beliefs – the shift from progressive perspectives to traditional ones – as they are chronically

situated in the exam-driven school environment. Such a pedagogical regression shared by socialized teachers is likened to human beings who have degenerated into primitive monkeys. Third, it shows that de-socialized teachers are outnumbered in my research site. Teachers who are assimilated into conservative school norms, in other words, tend to be in the majority. This is why Teacher B willingly unsaw his school's unjust reality – or to say, intentionally blinded one of his eyes – in order to get accepted by the teacher community. Fourth, it captures the subjective aspect of teacher socialization process, in which it is teachers' rational decision leading to their negative pedagogical shift. As Teacher B mentioned above, he refused to challenge the status quo by critically opening both of his eyes. Taken together, the metaphor of one-eye monkeys clearly reflects teacher preferences about what to teach and how to teach it. Such metaphorical language that describes the frustrating result of teacher socialization also resonates what Zeichner and Tabachnick (1981) have argued – the wash-out effect of school experiences on teachers' initial progressive concerns.

Two of my participants, Teacher L and E, when asked about the negative pedagogical shift they have experienced after immersing themselves in the profession, reported the crucial events occurring at school that propelled them to withdraw their ideals. Specifically, in the case of Teacher L who was a female low-seniority teacher currently teaching the subject of English in the school X3, she altered her instructional approach from inquiry-based to lecture-based owing to the school principal's occasional, unpleasant intervention. She stated,

> When I began my career, I liked to engage students in classroom discussions. But, you know, when students started their discussions, the classroom inevitably became very noisy. I clearly remember that, one day, the principal walked by my noisy classroom. He frowned at me through the classroom window. He looked so unhappy that I calmed down my class right away. After school on that day, he called me to his office. Upon entering his office, he

> handed me a brochure and stated, “Take time to read through it! It will be very helpful for your instruction.” [Me: What was it about?] Well, the content of that brochure was about how to quiet down a noisy class. [Me: Did you read that book?] No, not exactly. But, after that, if not necessary, I would not let students discuss too much during my class. (Teacher L, Interview, October 8, 2021)

Teacher L’s recalling highlights the importance of classroom control in competent teaching. Her initial attempt to engage students in classroom discussions conflicted with the principal’s concern about classroom orderliness, so that she decided to change her preferred pedagogical stance and assimilated herself into school norms characterized by teacherly authority and teacher-talk. Here, Teacher L who accepted rather than challenged the status quo frustratingly fell back on the old-fashioned method of teaching she originally worked against, eventually leading her to become what Teacher B formerly metaphorized as the “one-eye monkey” experiencing the reversal of pedagogical beliefs.

Likewise, Teacher E, a male veteran third-grade teacher who attended the Paulo Freire Institute Summer Program at UCLA several years ago, switched his teaching approach from critical pedagogy to traditional one after confronted with the school culture of mediocrity. He indicated,

> For me, critical pedagogy accomplishes nothing but only increases my workload. My school has visitors very often. When visitors come to school, they like to see something creative, and they like to see teachers demonstrate critical pedagogical practices. [Me: Mm.] If today I exercise critical pedagogy very often, my classroom will be filled with visitors. I dislike visitors to observe and bother my teaching activities. So, to keep my classroom undisturbed and to reduce my workload, I have chosen to distance myself from critical pedagogy and other progressive, student-centered teaching approaches, just as many of my colleagues have done in this school. (Teacher E, Interview, October 15, 2021)

Apparently, Teacher E’s rational calculation stirred up his reckless disregard for critical teaching, albeit the fact that he was knowledgeable about Freire’s proposal to some degree. Teacher E, like

many other teachers in the school X2, articulated that he would be free from increased workload and unwanted intervention by simply doing the minimum and teaching directly to the grain. As such, his pragmatic response to the school culture of mediocrity not only perpetuates traditional pedagogical practices but also draws him into what Teacher B previously metaphorized as "one-eye monkeys" that intentionally unsee problematic school reality and undo critical pedagogy.

In short, this teacher-generated metaphor of one-eye monkeys reflects the wash-out effect of teacher socialization, which is marked by the negative pedagogical shift of focal teachers when gradually integrated into the school community. Additionally, the parable related to this metaphor acknowledges a relatively large number of socialized, anti-Freirean teachers in my research site, further intensifying an already difficult situation of critical pedagogues who seek to de-socialize themselves and carry out the cultural work proposed by Freire. Since critical teachers are in the minority and face an unfriendly school environment, they need to figure out a variety of coping strategies to circumvent and negotiate the institutional constraints around them. Such strategic struggles of focal teachers that insist on teaching critically will be discussed in greater length in Chapter VII.

6.5 Summary: The Silence of Progressivism in Taiwan's Primary Schools

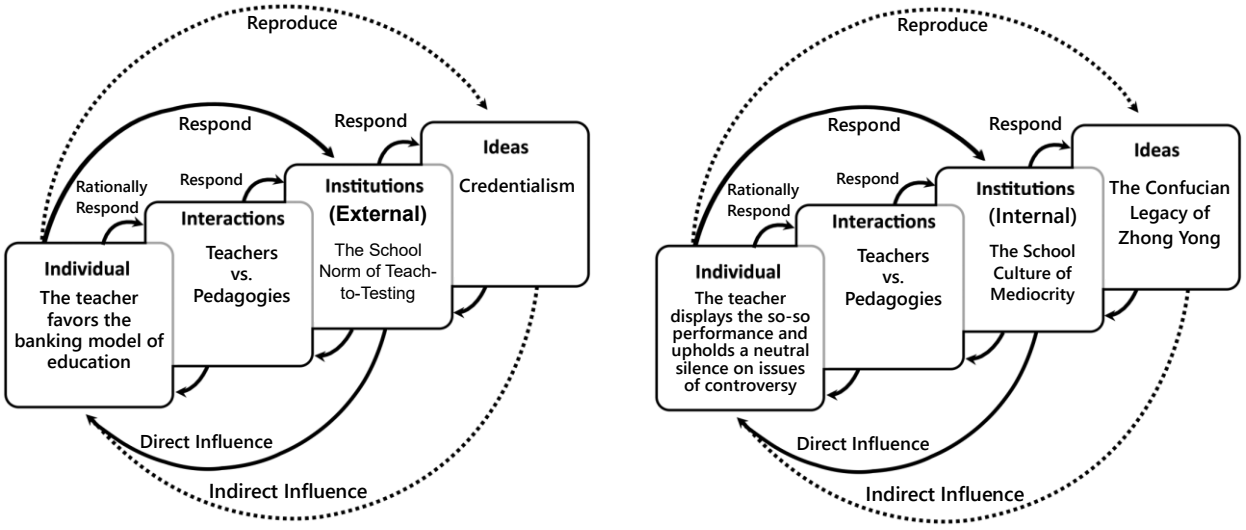
Teacher socialization that takes place in my research site evidently leads to the progressive-traditional pedagogical shift of focal teachers. Two background ideologies influential in Taiwan, namely credentialism and the Confucian legacy of Zhong Yong, are tied with the socialization mechanisms of focal schools and dramatically define what focal teachers ought to teach and how they teach it. The former produces the external school norm of teach-to-testing, by which my informants actively implement the banking model of education and purposely employ a variety

of classroom management techniques, such as instigating classroom control, exercising teacherly authority, accelerating textbook-based instruction, and engaging pupils in rote learning, so as to boost student outcomes and further meet scores-oriented expectations of parents (as shown in the left panel of Figure 6.1 on page 142). The latter takes shape as an internal school code of mediocrity that strongly regulates the subject teachers' on-the-job performance, through which many of my participants intentionally deliver mediocre teaching outputs and uphold a neutral silence on the issues of politics and controversy, consequently marginalizing a couple of radical focal teachers that attempt to teach innovatively and critically (see the right panel of Figure 6.1 on the next page). In concert, the external socializing force of teach-to-testing fueled by the ideological system of credentialism, and the internal socializing impetus of mediocrity closely aligned with the Confucian virtue of Zhong Yong, together account for the phenomenon of teacher socialization growing within and across my focal sites.

In Freire's agenda of truly liberatory schools, teachers play the role of cultural workers that eagerly implement progressive pedagogy and promote student-centered learning (Knoester & Yu, 2015). However, in my research site of Taiwan, primary teachers that socialize themselves into school norms typically have a poor vision on student outcomes and display a low engagement in critical teaching. In consequence, such socialized teachers are unable to cautiously examine the problematic status quo, leading them to become what Teacher B metaphorized as "one-eye monkeys" having little chance to transform the environment they work in. Needless to say, the bureaucratic socialization experienced by focal teachers functions as a limit-situation for critical pedagogical practices and silences the likelihood of extending Freire's progressive proposal into Taiwan's elementary classrooms.

Figure 6.1

The Culture Cycle of Teacher Socialization That Occurs in Taiwan's Primary Schools



CHAPTER VII: NEGOTIATION STRATEGIES OF CRITICAL PEDAGOGICAL TEACHERS IN TAIWAN'S PRIMARY SCHOOLS

> If the school or college has a rigidly policed curriculum with mandated texts or frequent standardized testing, then the space for empowering education will be restricted. Critical teachers in these circumstances find ways to create space by teaching *around* the restrictions. – Ira Shor (1992, p. 131, author's emphasis)

> I have a female friend who was a former primary teacher. Her teaching style was extremely radical and had no compromise. She always designed open ended testing questions for her students, such as 'if you had a chance to meet Confucius in person, what question would you like to ask him?' However, parents and school authorities disliked her problem posing pedagogy. In the end, she quit her teaching job after having consistent conflicts with the school community. In my view, she was stupid. She was a loser who had no idea about *making compromise* [emphasis added]. (Teacher F, Interview, March 12, 2022)

7.1 Chapter Overview: Reflective Actions of Critical Primary Teachers in Taiwan

The phenomena of teacher alienation and teacher socialization that evidently take place in Taiwan's primary schools, on one hand, leave little room for teachers' critical pedagogical practices, and on the other hand, they dialectally facilitate the growth of critical consciousness among a small number of reflective educators. This section focuses on describing the intentions and endeavors of Taiwan's critical primary teachers that strategically teach against school norms and carefully address taboo topics in the hostile school environment. In what follows, I begin with discussing the moral emotion of teacher guilt, which is the main driver that sensationally triggers teacher reflection. Teacher guilt, I discovered, is essentially tied with two aspects of reflective practice: teacher reflection on negative colleagues, or on past schooling experiences. Next, I describe the strategies of impression management that Taiwan's critical primary teachers exploit to teach critically in the school environment where banking education has dominated. Teachers' coping strategies, as I found, vary by the subject matters they teach. Also, to perform

critical pedagogy, critical teachers engage in impression management not only through making use of the existing structural openings but also through tactfully creating the structural opportunities. Lastly, I wrap up critical teachers' coping strategies with the metaphor of chameleon, which frequently appears in my participants' narratives.

7.2 Teacher Guilt: The Main Driver Behind Teachers' Critical Pedagogical Practices

Among my twelve participants, five of them did strive for exercising critical pedagogy in Taiwan's primary schools where the banking model of education has dominated. The motives that drive their pedagogical decisions are tied with a feeling of teacher guilt, which stems from their critical reflection on negative colleagues, or on past schooling experiences. Specifically, the development of such teacher reflection essentially varies by teacher demographics. Below, I describe each type of teacher reflection in turn and explain how they are associated with the social-class origins of focal critical teachers.

7.2.1 Teacher Reflection on Negative Colleagues

Teacher K, a female fifth-grade educator that comes from a middle-class family, reported how the situation of teacher alienation occurring in her workplace triggered her motivation to teach critically. When asked to identify the drive behind her critical orientation, she stated (Interview, October 17, 2021),

209	Me:	why do you want to work as a primary teacher
210	Teacher K:	well (.) I <u>admit</u> that I come to teach for stable income
211		(0.3)
212		but (.) I <u>won't</u> maximize my profits by doing harm to students
213	Me:	why do you mean by that
214→	Teacher K:	umm:: I mean (.) <u>many</u> of my colleagues=
215→		=turn their backs on disadvantaged kids
216		(0.2)
217→		at school (.) <u>few</u> teachers are willing to take over the class=

218→		=that has many disadvantaged students
219	Me:	how about you
220		(0.5)
221		do you like to teach disadvantaged kids
222→	Teacher K:	honestly (.) I see many of my colleagues as <u>negative</u>
223		(0.3)
224		Since I cannot discipline my colleagues (.)
225		I <u>discipline</u> <u>myself</u>
226		(0.2)
227		I require myself to behave <u>differently</u> from my colleagues
228		(0.5)
229→		I <u>push</u> <u>myself</u> to take over the class that is disregarded=
230→		=by my colleagues
231		(0.2)
232→		if not (.) I feel <u>guilty</u>

Explicit in Teacher K's remarks is her critical consciousness toward the phenomenon of teacher alienation, in which focal teachers intentionally turn their backs on disadvantaged students (lines 214–215, 217–218), consequently making it difficult to facilitate empowerment around neediest youth. Teacher K, through reflecting on her negative colleagues that selfishly alienate themselves from the students in need (line 222), engendered a strong sense of guilt (line 232) in response to teacher alienation that occurred at her workplace, which prompted herself to keenly reach and support powerless children disregarded by her fellow members (lines 229–230).

Similarly, two other teachers, also from middle-class backgrounds, reflect on their negative colleagues, and accordingly decide to work against the grain of teacher alienation by performing differently in the school community. They shared,

> It is very difficult to reach my colleagues after school hours. Many of them often turn off their smart phones as soon as they leave the school. [Me: Why do they do so?] Well, they don't want to have parents or students disturb their private time. They place a higher value on out-of-school time than on in-school time. [Me: How about you?] In my case, I always encourage my students contact me through Facebook or phone call. I dislike turning my

> back on students after school hours in that I disapprove of the indifferent attitudes expressed by my colleagues. [Me: Mm.] Honestly, I carry out home visits every semester to better understand my students in their neighborhoods. In my school, I am the only one teacher that commits to doing so. No other colleagues follow my path. [Me: Okay. I see.] Certainly, I come to teaching for the balance between work and family. But even so, I still care about my students outside the school's walls. (Teacher F, Interview, October 24, 2021)
>
> A great thing for being a school teacher is that I can increase my income through earning a graduate degree. To this end, many of my colleagues pursue a master's degree in the early stage of their careers. [Me: Mm hm.] As I observe, my colleagues tend to fast-track their master's degrees by enrolling in the graduate program of leisure and sports management. [Me: Why?] Well, it is easy to get into, and also it is not difficult to graduate from. [Me: Oh!] Besides, I often notice that my colleagues who are concerned about time-to-degree compose their master's theses during the class. In so doing, students' learning has been considerably threatened. [Me: Sounds bad.] In my case, I don't wanna become the kind of teachers around me. This is why I expose myself to Freirean scholarship produced by Peter McLaren and Henry Giroux. [Me: Do you plan to pursue a master's degree?] Yup, but I won't pursue my own profits at the expanse of students' learning quality. (Teacher J, Interview, October 31, 2021)

Teacher F's and Teacher J's narratives reflect their clear awareness about workplace alienation characterized by focal teachers' rational calculations and counterproductive work behavior, as well as about how such teacher alienation potentially threatened the scope and quality of student learning. In this sense, both of them saw their colleagues as negative reference groups, through which they decided to perform differently from the teachers around them. Teacher F who went against his indifferent colleagues was concerned about the home life of students and thereby conducted home visits regularly after school hours. Teacher J resolutely exposed himself to Freirean scholarship in that he looked down on his profit-seeking colleagues who deliberately fast-tracked their master's degrees at the expanse of students' learning quality. Apparently, the calculating, output-restricted practices of school colleagues stir up Teacher F's and Teacher J's critical consciousness that problematizes the reality of teacher alienation in my research site.

7.2.2 Teacher Reflection on Past Schooling Experiences

Teacher G, a female veteran that has a working-class origin, develops her critical awareness in a different manner from what the focal teachers above have described. It is the biographical profile, she contended, that facilitates her questioning on the situation of teacher alienation, and that molds her into a critical teacher committed to supporting powerless students. She stated the following (Interview, October 9, 2021),

233	Me:	why do you want to teach critically
234→	Teacher G:	well (.) when I was a school-aged kid (.)
235→		I encountered many <u>bad</u> <u>teachers</u>
236		(0.5)
237→		so:: I teach critically in order to behave <u>differently</u> from=
238→		=those bad teachers who taught me before
239	Me:	what was the bad thing your former teacher has done for you
240	Teacher G:	um:: for example (.) when I was a fifth-grader
241		my female teacher run her own private tutoring business=
242		=outside of the school
243		(0.5)
244		she asked me to receive her private tutoring class after school
245	Me:	did you say yes
246	Teacher G:	no (.) I grew up in a low-income family
247		(0.3)
248		I could not afford the tuition of private tutoring (.)
249		so:: I <u>rejected</u> my teacher's request
250	Me:	what was the reaction of your former teacher
251→	Teacher G:	she was unhappy and asked me to transfer to another school
252	Me:	that sounds bad (.) actually
253	Teacher G:	I am now a teacher (.)
254→		I will <u>never</u> turn my back on low-income students
255		(0.2)
256→		or else I'll <u>hate</u> myself

Here, Teacher G recalled the unpleasant memory of her school days (lines 234–235), in which

her former primary teacher was hostile to the student, like her, with a low-income origin (line 251). Clearly, she herself was the victim of teacher alienation when being a primary student. Teacher G, to repair the trauma she had experienced and to avoid a feeling of guilt (line 256), drew strength from the frustration of her past and then committed herself to educating low-income students (line 254). Stated differently, negative schooling experiences of Teacher G have fostered her critical consciousness and motivated her to become the kind of teachers who dare to teach against the grain (lines 237–238).

Likewise, Teacher D whose demographic background is similar to disadvantaged students' reflects on her past schooling experiences and accordingly makes up her mind to teach critically. When to describe the orientation of her critical practices that challenge traditional school norms, she responded (Interview, October 6, 2021),

257	Me:	do you allow students to challenge your authority
258	Teacher D:	definitely (.) without question
259		(0.3)
260		if a student publicly argues with me (.)
261→		I'll be respectful of his/her opinions and=
262		=further ask him/her to explain the rationale
263		(0.5)
264		as I observe (.)
265→		the students who like to challenge my authority=
266→		=are those coming from disadvantaged families
267		(0.3)
268→		I tend to put myself in their shoes (.)
269→		in that I have a disadvantaged social origin as well
270	Me:	you mean (.) your family background has an influence on=
271		=your current teaching job
272	Teacher D:	exactly (.)
273→		recall the days when I was a child (.)
274→		I often received corporal punishment from my school teachers

275		(0.5)
276→		’cause I disliked following the rules set by my teachers
277		(0.2)
278		I was <u>not</u> the kind of decent students who=
279		=always met teacher expectations (.)
280		so:: my former teachers were <u>hardly</u> friendly to me (.)
281		hah hah
282	Me:	I see
283	Teacher D:	anyhow (.)
284→		I <u>don’t</u> expose my students to the authoritative education=
285→		=I myself have gone through
286		(0.5)
287→		otherwise (.) I <u>won’t</u> <u>forgive</u> myself (.) seriously

This quote pinpoints the drive – an urge to eschew teacher guilt (line 287) – behind Teacher D’s counter-action toward the authoritative model of education (lines 284–285). She explained why disadvantaged students in her class were allowed to interrogate teacherly authority (lines 265–266, 268–269), and how her traumatic learning experiences resulted in a democratic classroom environment she currently created (lines 273–274, 276). As discussed previously, teacher-student demographic match may yield desirable conditions to engage students in critical learning. In the case of Teacher D, her social origin is linked to that of students who grow up in economically distressed areas, so that she is able to teach from the perspective of powerless students and foster a respectful climate in the classroom (line 261). In brief, Teacher D regarded her former primary teachers that embraced teacherly authority as negative role models, and utilized such frames of reference to enact a pedagogy that valued students’ voices and democratic principles.

7.3 Negotiation Strategies of Taiwan’s Critical Primary Teachers

This section discusses the strategies critical focal teachers employ to negotiate institutional constraints and safely integrate critical pedagogy into their everyday teaching. These strategies

vary by the subject matters they currently take charge of. To clarify, for focal teachers who teach academic subjects and have less pedagogical freedom, their strategies seek to reach the balance between academic efficiency and critical teaching. On the other hand, for focal teachers who are in charge of practical subjects and have much pedagogical freedom, their strategies focus on probing the limits of public tolerance for taboo teaching. These two types of strategic struggles demonstrated by critical focal teachers will be discussed in greater length below.

7.3.1 Coping Strategies of Critical Primary Teachers Who Teach Academic Subjects

In Taiwan's primary schools, academic subjects, such as reading and math, are bounded by standardized testing, and consequently operate as a kind of harsh limit-situations that and allow little room for critical pedagogical practices. For that reason, critical focal teachers who instruct academic subjects need to strategically balance school demands with critical teaching. In what follows, I first illustrate the coping strategies of three participants – Teacher D, F, and K – who carefully balance competing pedagogical priorities in an attempt to teach against the grain. Next, particular attention is directed to the strategic alliance exercised by one critical teacher – Teacher K – who develops a supportive community network to collectively effect change.

7.3.1.1 The Inside/Outside Strategy

Classroom control, as the focal teachers have reported above, is fundamental to competent teaching in Taiwan, through which primary teachers often establish a hierarchical relationship with students to effectively wield teacherly authority in the classroom. In resorting to such an authoritarian pedagogy, Taiwan's primary teachers fail to care about their students. Teacher K, a female fifth-grade educator, interrogates such uneven power relationships and critically exercises a caring pedagogy by working more closely with her students. When asked about her everyday interactions with students at school, Teacher K depicted what it meant to be a sister-like teacher

as follows (Interview, March 11, 2022),

288	Me:	please describe your strategy of classroom management
289	Teacher K:	uhm (.) I like to approach my students
290		to understand their feelings and concerns
291		(0.2)
292		I dislike distancing myself from them (.)
293→		so:: in my classroom (.)
294→		I like to behave and teach like a sister (.) rather than a mother
295	Me:	how about your colleagues (.)
296		do they like your teaching approach
297→	Teacher K:	honestly (.) my colleagues dislike my approach (.)
298		in their opinions (.)
299		the closer students approach the teacher (.)
300		the more likely it is for students to challenge teacher authority
301		(0.5)
302		so:: my colleagues often keep a distance from children
303	Me:	how can you fit in to the school community (.)
304		if you behave differently from your colleagues
305	Teacher K:	I think my strategy is that
306		(0.2)
307→		with my colleagues around (.)
308→		I behave like a mother-like teacher=
309→		=then::within my own classroom (.) I act as a sister-like teacher
310		(0.5)
311→		I feel like a chameleon (.)
312		when attempting to approach my students more closely

Here, Teacher K saw sister-brother relationships with students inside the closed classroom (lines 293–294) as central to her strategic resistance against the maternal form of teacherly authority embraced by co-working teachers. As a sister-like teacher, she run the risk of being socially excluded by peers. Acknowledging the public hostility toward her progressive pedagogy (line 297), Teacher K articulated the need to operate her critical practices under the radar – that is, behind the classroom doors – while also relating to pupils in a maternal manner if her colleagues

were around (lines 307–309). To be clear, she did not openly challenge the school's authoritarian climate; instead, she executed her critical approach of classroom management when the situation allows it. Consequently, Teacher K's chameleon-like struggles (line 311) make it possible for her to behave as the kind of progressive educator she aspires to be, but still fit in socially with fellow members.

Structural openings that allow critical pedagogy to take place without open conflict with the restrictive school community not only exist in enclosed classrooms but also can be found outside of regular school sessions. Teacher D, a female low-seniority teacher who currently taught the core subject of English for fourth-graders, unlocked potential pedagogical opportunities during school holidays, and thereby engaged her students in meaningful learning. She stated (Interview, March 6, 2022),

313	Me:	in your English class (.)
314		how do you engage students in meaningful learning
315	Teacher D:	well (.) English is the <u>core</u> subject included in school exams
316		(0.5)
317		so:: I have to engage students in textbook learning (.)
318→		particularly during the semester
319		(0.3)
320→		it's <u>hard</u> for me to teach <u>beyond</u> textbook pages
321	Me:	I can see that
322	Teacher D:	for me (.)
323→		I would say:: the <u>school</u> <u>break</u> is a good opportunity to=
324→		=have my students learn <u>meaningfully</u>
325	Me:	what do mean by that
326→	Teacher D:	well (.) I mean I design meaningful <u>vaca</u>[<u>tion</u>] assignments=
327	Me:	[hm:]
328→	Teacher D:	=that connect their school learning and their community culture
329		(0.5)
330	Me:	sounds great

331	Teacher D:	one of the summer vacation assignments I designed for=
332		=fourth-graders was that
333		(0.3)
334		I asked them to describe their community in simple English (.)
335		and:: shared their descriptions with classmates=
336		=after the new semester began
337	Me:	how did your students feel about their vacation assignments
338→	Teacher D:	most of them felt excited in that (.)
339→		they could apply English to their daily lives
340		(0.5)
341→		I remember (.) my immigrant students did a very good job=
342→		=introducing their community festivals in English (.)
343		°heh heh° this is what meaningful learning should look like

This excerpt reveals several key points of critical Teacher D's strategic struggle with the core-subject instruction that is bounded by standardized testing: limited opportunities for teaching beyond the textbook when the school was in session (lines 318, 320), how school holidays could have become critical moments that engaged students in meaningful learning (lines 323–324), and successfully promoting students' desire to learn through connecting vacation homework with their lives outside of school (lines 323–324). Particularly, Teacher D's school-break assignments enabled vulnerable students to thrive educationally (lines 341–342). As such, it is evident that the school's institutional control does not persist all year round but is relatively weak amid its recess, in which the core-subject teacher is likely to open up spaces for critical teaching.

7.3.1.2 The Hybrid Strategy

Structural openings not only exist in weak power spots of the schooling system, but also can be created by the teacher's action of strategic compromise. For focal teachers, adapting critical pedagogy to school demands may generate new possibilities out of the restrictive system. One feasible technique is to seek the balance between critical teaching and student achievement.

When being asked how to blend together both traditional and progressive pedagogies, Teacher F, a male teacher who currently instructed the core subject of natural science for sixth-graders, offered the following (Interview, March 12, 2022),

344	Me:	how do you teach critically in your natural science class
345→	Teacher F:	well (.) I adopt three-to-one principle to teach critically
346	Me:	what do you mean by that
347	Teacher F:	for primary schoolers (.) each class is 40 minutes long (0.3)
348		in my natural science class (.)
349→		30 minutes are used for textbook instruction (.)
350→		for the rest of 10 minutes (.) I teach beyond the textbook
351	Me:	can you give me an example
352	Teacher F:	um:: during my natural science class (.)
353		students often ask me a lot of science questions=
354		=that are related to their daily lives (0.5)
355		such as whether nuclear power is safe (0.3)
356		or like (.) whether genetically modified soybeans are edible
357	Me:	these science questions are pretty good
358	Teacher F:	although satisfying students' curiosity is important (.)
359		my principle is that (0.2)
360→		I need to have students complete the textbook exercises=
361→		=that are scheduled for each class first (0.5)
362		so:: I always tell my students (.)
363		let's discuss these questions at the last 10 minutes of the class
364	Me:	I see
365	Teacher F:	you know (.) I cannot spend too much time on student discussion
366		(0.2)
367		and then have a delay in the delivery of textbook instruction (0.5)
368→		<I need to reach a balance>
369	Me:	mm hm
370	Teacher F:	in other words (.) my textbook instruction comes first (0.3)
371		followed by student discussion on their own science questions
372		(0.7)
373		I admit that the latter is more meaningful for student learning (.)
374→		but I should prioritize the former to ensure student achievement

Here, Teacher F engaged in hybrid teaching practices (line 368) and set up the appropriate ratio of traditional teaching to critical one (line 345). In so doing, critical pedagogy was being de-prioritized (lines 360–361, 374) and made up just a quarter of scheduled class time (lines 349–350). That said, his balancing effort is characterized by a small share of classroom dialogue and a large proportion of textbook lecture, resonating what Lloyd (2007) called "a little progressivism and a lot of traditionalism" (p. 344). Through such a mixture of traditionalism and progressivism over teaching methods, Teacher F ensured his survival in the conservative school environment and also preserved his progressive perspectives on teaching.

Likewise, Teacher K, a female fifth-grade teacher who currently instructed the core subjects of reading and math, skillfully negotiates competing pedagogical priorities via hybrid teaching practices. Driven by a desire to involve her students in more meaningful learning activities, she wins the support from parents to create the space needed for curricular changes. When to explain the idea of hybridity in her critical teaching, she said (Interview, March 11, 2022),

375	Me:	how do you teach beyond the textbook
376	Teacher K:	um:: I dislike confining student learning to classroom instruction
377		(0.3)
378		I prefer to engage my students in <u>off</u>-<u>campus</u> activities
379	Me:	how can you do so
380	Teacher K:	well (.) in each semester (.)
381		I arrange field trips for my students at least <u>twice</u> <u>a</u> <u>month</u> (0.5)
382		in order to do so (.)
383		I need to get permission and support from <u>parents</u> in advance
384	Me:	I see
385	Teacher K:	so:: when I meet parents during the teacher-parent conference
386		(0.2)
387		I make a <u>deal</u> with them
388	Me:	what kind of deal do you make with parents
389→	Teacher K:	I tell parents that I'll take care of their children's <u>test</u> <u>scores</u> (0.3)

390		I tell parents that I teach to testing (.)
391		no children in my class will score badly on school exams (.)
392→		I promise parents about that (0.5)
393		but in return (.)
394→		I ask parents to agree on my planned class trips to=
395→		=museums and local community landmarks
396	Me:	sounds great
397→	Teacher K:	but I would say (.) field trips that are held twice a month are=
398→		=the upper limit of my class (0.5)
399		too many class trips may negatively affect students' test scores (.)
400→		I need to take care of both ends

Teacher K articulated the importance of hybridity when teaching beyond school textbooks (line 400), and expressed that she would be granted more academic freedom by parents if children's test scores were secured in advance (line 389). She, through earning the trust of parents with guaranteed student achievement (line 392), strategically created a structural opportunity of engaging learners in extra-curricular activities (lines 394–395). On the other hand, she carefully balanced the class time spent on textbook-based instruction and meaningful off-campus learning activities to prevent student failure on school exams (lines 397–398). For Freire, the banking model of education cannot coexist with critical pedagogy. However, according to Teacher K's remarks, score-boosting instruction needs to be blended with critical learning in that the former is highly prioritized over the latter by the school community. To this end, banking education has functioned as a precondition to successfully extending critical pedagogy into Taiwan's primary classroom.

7.3.1.3 The Strategic Alliance: Sisterhood-Based Collaboration

Critical focal teachers not only individually employ coping strategies to negotiate school demands but also collaboratively effect change through the network woven by intimate peers. For instance, Teacher K, a female fifth-grade teacher who currently instructed the core subjects

of reading and math, fosters social bonds with like-minded women colleagues to collectively overcome the institutional constraints tied with core-subject teaching, through which powerless students in her classroom have access to culturally responsive curriculum created by a team of critical teachers. She reported her collective struggle against the classroom routine as follows (Interview, March 11, 2022),

401	Me:	do you have any immigrant children in your classroom
402	Teacher K:	yup (.) currently <u>two</u> immigrant children in my classroom
403		(0.5)
404		they were born to mothers from Vietnam
405	Me:	how do you take care of their learning needs?
406	Teacher K:	to be honest (.) they do not perform well at school (0.3)
407→		hmm:: but you know (.) I am busy with <u>teaching</u> <u>to</u> <u>test</u> and=
408		=not familiar with Vietnamese language and culture
409		(0.5)
410		so:: I need somebody else to <u>help</u> me with that
411	Me:	how to get the help you need
412→	Teacher K:	well (.) I can tell you TEACHERS ARE <u>SELFISH</u>
413		(0.2)
414→		<u>no</u> colleagues wanna collaborate with me (.)
415→		so:: I turn to my <u>sisters</u> for help
416	Me:	sisters↑ (0.3) what do you mean by that
417→	Teacher K:	my school has three female teachers=
418→		=whom I have an <u>intimate</u> relationship with (0.5)
419→		we develop an <u>intimacy</u> <u>group</u> (.)
420→		in that we began working here at the same time (.)
421		we call ourselves as <u>Flower</u> <u>Four</u>
422	Me:	how do you interact with your sisters at school
423→	Teacher K:	well (.) at least once a week (.)
424→		we <u>group</u> <u>together</u> to air our complaints about the routine work
425		(0.3)
426→		we find <u>comfort</u> in each other (.) we <u>trust</u> each other (0.2)
427		this is why <u>we</u> <u>can</u> develop our own curriculum=

428 =to fit the needs of immigrant students

Explicit in Teacher K's narratives is a critical awareness that the core-subject teaching is bounded by school exams (line 407), and that the school climate of mediocrity is hostile to her partnership offer (lines 412, 414). She, to successfully find workplace allies committed to empowering the powerless students, took advantage of her intimate relationships with sisterly peers (lines 417–418), and thereby utilized such bonds of sisterhood as the foundation of her critical teamwork (line 415). To clarify, the sisterhood that Teacher K was referring to essentially had a root in shared conditions and experiences among a small group of female teachers (lines 419–420). It goes beyond the superficial working relationships of teacher colleagues and instead involves mutual trust that is more reciprocal in nature (line 426). She and her team members regularly engaged in face to face, emotion-based interactions (lines 423–424) to reinforce group ties and the spirit of oneness. Consequently, it is through such a strategic alliance – sisterhood-based collaboration – performed by Teacher K and her sisterly peers that situational demands linked with core-subject teaching are likely to be negotiated collectively in school settings where the norm of being mediocre is significant.

7.3.2 Coping Strategies of Critical Primary Teachers Who Teach Practical Subjects

For the focal teachers who teach a non-academic, practical subject, like art or technology, their teaching practices are not bounded by school exams, consequently allowing more room for critical pedagogy to take place. That said, practical subjects operate as the kind of modest limit-situations that are less hostile to student-centered instruction. In what follows, special attention is given to the negotiation strategies of practical-subject teachers who deliberately draw on higher levels of pedagogical freedom to empower students through teaching the controversial issues.

7.3.2.1 The Marginality Strategy: Utilizing the Marginal Status of Practical Subjects

Teacher G, a female veteran who has more than 30 years of teaching experience in Taiwan's primary education. She currently instructed the non-academic subject of art in the school X2. Earlier in her interview, Teacher G remarked that, for most her career, she served as a homeroom teacher who needed to instruct core subjects and address student affairs. Until five years ago, she began working as a practical-subject teacher that provided art lessons for students. Given that she had extensive experience in both core-subject teaching and practical-subject teaching, Teacher G clearly understood the advantage of the latter over the former when it comes to critical teaching practices. She voiced (Interview, March 5, 2022),

429	Me:	what subject do you teach currently
430	Teacher G:	um:: at school I teach the art class for sixth-graders
431	Me:	do you use the textbook for your course
432	Teacher G:	well (.) the school provides textbooks for me and students (.)
433→		but I don't strictly follow the textbook to teach (0.3)
434→		I prefer to self-design curricular activities for students
435	Me:	sounds good
436→	Teacher G:	since my class has no mid-term and final exams (.)
437		I can decide whether I use the textbook to teach or not (0.5)
438		typically I evaluate student performance based on the artifacts=
439		=that they create in my class
440	Me:	have parents or school authorities ever intervened in your class
441	Teacher G:	hardly (.)
442		my art class is not the core subject strongly tied with testing (0.2)
443→		I can have students discuss loudly during the class (.)
444→		parents and school administrators won't complain about that
445		(0.5)
446		the school community allows me to do so
447	Me:	so:: you have much freedom to determine what and how to teach
448	Teacher G:	yup (.) you bet
449	Me:	even the taboo issue (.) like homosexuality
450	Teacher G:	well (.) most teachers don't teach the issue of homosexuality
451		(0.2)

452→		but I insist on doing so
453	Me:	why
454→	Teacher G:	I see myself as an artist teacher (.) not an art teacher (0.3)
455→		when I was a school-aged kid, my art classes were very tedious
456		(0.5)
457→		the only thing I did in art classes was drawing (.) nothing else
458	Me:	sounds bad
459	Teacher G:	now I have the chance to teach students about art (.)
460→		I won't let my art class look like the ones I have gone through
461	Me:	mm hm
462	Teacher G:	since my class is not bounded by testing (.)
463→		I can do many pedagogical experiments to see whether my=
464→		=critical teaching is accepted by the school community or not
465		(0.7)
466→		I do bring in the issue of homosexuality to my art class (.)
467→		but I am still wrestling with it (0.5)
468→		in that it is the most sensitive topic for primary education (0.2)
469→		although I have lots of freedom to give it a try (.)
470→		I need to be careful about it and teach it in a tolerable manner

Here, Teacher G pinpointed the academic freedom possessed by practical-subject teachers whose instructions were not bounded by mandated curriculum (line 433) and standardized testing (line 436). Such a high level of pedagogical flexibility enabled a practical-subject teacher like her to self-design meaningful lessons (line 434) and engage pupils in classroom discussions frequently (line 443) without worrying about close supervision and intensive monitoring (line 444). The very reason why Teacher G insisted on teaching critically to empower students was that she positioned herself as an artist teacher rather than merely as an art teacher who focused lessons on teaching students how to draw (line 457). Specifically, she reflected on her undesirable schooling experiences and refused to become the kind of art teachers who taught her before (line 460). Driven by her critical motive, Teacher G was committed to teaching the taboo in the classroom (line 452). Although she did take advantage of academic freedom to exercise critical pedagogy

(lines 463–464), Teacher G still struggled with the adaption of taboo teaching to the conservative school community (lines 466–470). More detail about Teacher G's coping strategies for dealing with taboo issues will be reported below.

Likewise, Teacher J, a male practical-subject teacher that is in charge of technology courses in the school X3, exploits the marginality of his discipline area to teach critically. He voiced his perspectives on the marginal situation of practical-subject teaching, and how it is beneficial for critical pedagogical practices (Interview, March 18, 2022):

471	Me:	which school position do currently you hold
472	Teacher J:	I am a practical-subject teacher (0.3)
473		I currently teach the technology class for fifth-graders
474	Me:	how do you feel about your current teaching position
475→	Teacher J:	well (.) the practical-subject teacher has lots of freedom (.)
476		in my case (0.2)
477→		I don't need to deal with student-related affairs (0.3)
478→		I can fully focus on designing my own curricular activities (0.5)
479		in my view (.)
480		single-subject teachers can be very good or can be very bad (0.2)
481→		I mean (.) they may use their freedom to teach critically
482→		or they may misuse their freedom and do nothing
483	Me:	how about your case
484→	Teacher J:	well (.) I commit myself to critical pedagogy (0.3)
485→		I expose myself to Henry Giroux's and Peter McLaren's books=
486→		=about critical pedagogy (0.5)
487→		their thoughts have a great influence on my teaching
488	Me:	can you give me an example
489	Teacher J:	in my technology class (.)
490→		I have students use the internet to produce their own media=
491→		=projects that explore social issues in the local community
492		(0.8)
493→		if today I were a homeroom teacher instructing core subjects (.)
494→		I could not do the same thing (0.5)

495→ in that I had to deliver textbook lessons and teach to testing

Teacher J's comments reveal that practical-subject teachers have higher academic freedom than their academic-subject counterparts (lines 475, 477–478, 493–495), and that such a high degree of teacher autonomy might be critically exploited to empower the students in need (line 481), or be arbitrarily misused to deliver mediocre performance[38] (line 482). As presented earlier, the focal teachers typically recognize the marginal position of practical-subject teaching as a rewarding shelter that can largely distance themselves away from burdensome student-related affairs. But in Teacher J's case, Freirean scholarship had a profound impact on his pedagogical perspectives (lines 484–487), so that he chose to critically exploit his professional independence associated with the marginal subject matter of technology, and accordingly engaged students in conducting media projects that connected classroom learning with local culture (lines 490–491), through which the subtractive nature of primary schooling was eliminated to a certain degree. Taken together, the marginal condition of practical-subject teaching may function either as a critical zone for curricular change or as a passive site for slacking off – all depending on correspondent teachers' pedagogical orientations and decisions. For Teacher J, he settled on the former in that he saw his alienated colleagues as negative role models, as I have reported above.

7.3.2.2 The Transformative Strategy: Softening the Hard Edges of Taboo Issues

[38] As an example in point, Teacher C and I who respectively instructed practical subjects of music and sports, rarely made good use of their high-level pedagogical autonomy to teach critically. Both of them engaged students in critical learning only on particular occasions. When asked about integrating critical pedagogy into everyday teaching, Teacher C said, "Basically, in my music class, I have students learn about classic and folk music contained in the textbook. But if my classroom activities need to be observed by colleagues, I will attempt to get my students more engaged by displaying the songs they aspire to hear in class. Honestly, I don't do it often if not needed." (Teacher C, interview, October 10, 2021). Likewise, Teacher I added, "When I engage students in sports learning, I prefer to have them move around rather than have them talk and discuss. But, there is an exception. If school visitors show up in my sports class, I may have students discuss about sports-related issues. Classroom visitors always like to see students open their mouths and share their opinions, you know." (Teacher I, interview, October 3, 2021). Cleary, Teacher C's and I's critical teaching was ceremonial. They mishandled academic freedom that was tied with their practical-subject instruction.

Critical pedagogy requires teaching to be political in that the "apolitical educational practice does not exist." (Freire, 1998, p. 39). In the critical classroom suggested by Freirean scholarship, teachers foster a constructive dialogue with students through discussions of controversial issues, by which learners are empowered to acknowledge diverse perspectives, figure out achievable solutions to real-world problems around them, and envision a more inclusive society. As stated previously, however, the school culture of mediocrity that plagues my research site has generally fostered teacher neutrality toward the issues of controversy. Added to this, Taiwan's Educational Fundamental Act strictly forbids public school teachers from discussing politics and religion in the classroom. Meanwhile, fears of parental backlash against the issue of gender diversity also stir up teacher reluctance to teach critically about homosexuality. To this end, for critical teachers committed to tackling highly controversial topics in classroom practices, they need to employ a scheme of strategic compromise, rendering taboo topics more tolerable to the school community. As a case in point, two of my participants, Teacher J and Teacher G, safely incorporate forbidden issues into their courses based on such a tactical initiative. Specifically, when asked to depict the feasible method of lifting politics onto the classroom table, Teacher J who currently taught the practical subject of technology uttered the following (Interview, March 18, 2022):

496	Me:	how do you teach the political issues in your technology class
497	Teacher J:	well (.) in my class I have students use the internet to find and=
498		=read political news and videos that they are interested in
499		(0.5)
500→		but I am still careful about my instruction of political issues (0.3)
501	Me:	what makes you think so
502→	Teacher J:	well (.) for parents and school authorities (.)
503→		the issues of domestic politics are so sensitive that they should=
504→		=not be discussed in the classroom (0.5)
505→		while the issues of international politics are more welcome (.)

506→		so:: my class focuses more on the latter than on the former
507	Me:	sounds great
508	Teacher J:	particularly when I engage students in political discussions (.)
509→		I won't place my own assumptions in the forefront (0.5)
510→		instead I let students reach their own conclusions by <u>discussing</u>
511		(0.7)
512→		For instance (.) I don't reveal my political party preference=
513→		=in front of students (0.3)
514→		I have students read political news on the internet and then=
515→		=decide which political party they are going to support
516	Me:	I see (.) then (0.2)
517		how do you address the issue of Taiwan's independence
518	Teacher J:	actually teachers are <u>forbidden</u> to surface this issue on campus
519		(0.5)
520		so:: I address it in an <u>alternative</u> way (0.3)
521→		I mean (.) I teach this taboo issue in the <u>European</u> context (.)
522	Me:	can you explain more about that
523→	Teacher J:	well (.) the tension between Ukraine and Russia is very <u>similar</u>=
524→		=to that of Taiwan and China (0.7)
525		recently there is a conflict between Ukraine and Russia (0.3)
526→		I seize the chance to use <u>Ukraine</u> as an example to describe the=
527→		=situation of <u>Taiwan</u> (.) and to discuss the issue of <u>independence</u>
528	Me:	what was the reaction of school colleagues toward your effort
529→	Teacher J:	well (.) they have no reasons to criticize my taboo teaching (0.3)
530→		in that I tackle the issue of Taiwan's independence <u>indirectly</u> (.)
531		and I focus my class on <u>international</u> <u>politics</u> and <u>world</u> <u>events</u>

In introducing political issues to the classroom, Teacher J deliberately adopted the approach of strategic compromise (line 500), through which his class sought to address international politics instead of sensitive domestic ones (lines 503–506). In so doing – teaching about political issues that arose in the international context – he was able to facilitate political conversations with his students while avoiding open conflict with school authorities and parents (line 502). Moreover, Teacher J's politics-inclusive teaching did not impose certain political beliefs or ideas on pupils

(lines 509, 512–513). Instead, he exposed students to discussion activities that revolved around political issues, in which learners claimed control over their own political learning and reached their own understandings as a result (lines 510, 514–515). The excerpt above also demonstrates the way how Teacher J deals with the political taboo – Taiwan's independence from China – in his classroom (line 521). Given that the geopolitical condition of Ukraine and Russia is similar to that of Taiwan and China (lines 523–524), he had students understand the reality of China's diplomatic pressure on Taiwan by drawing parallels to the Russia-Ukraine conflict (lines 526–527), through which he successfully circumvented public criticism (lines 529–530) when teaching about the highly sensitive political topic – Taiwanese nationalism. In concert, when bringing politics onto the classroom table, Teacher J softens the hard edges of political issues by contextualizing them (i.e., situating discussions of politics in the international context) and by parallelizing them (i.e., addressing the political taboo of Taiwan's independence with a parallel example from Europe), so that he safely creates a politics-inclusive learning environment in politics-unfriendly school settings.

Another practical-subject teacher, Teacher G, who currently instructed the art class for 6th-graders, included the taboo element of religion in her teaching practices. When to describe the way how she combined art lessons and religious issues, Teacher G said (Interview, March 5, 2022),

532	Me:	how do you address the issue of religion in your art class
533→	Teacher G:	well (.) the relationship between art and religion is <u>close</u> (0.2)
534		each religion has many fascinating artifacts (0.5)
535		so:: on one hand (.) I introduce religious artifacts for students=
536		=to appreciate (0.3)
537→		also (.) I tell <u>inspiring</u> <u>stories</u> related to these religious artifacts
538	Me:	sounds good

539 Teacher G: you know (.) children love listening to stories (0.3)
540 Me: exactly
541→ Teacher G: well (.) the bible stories can help students learn about <u>forgiveness</u>
542 (0.5)
543→ and stories told by the Buddha teach pupils about <u>compassion</u> (.)
544 in my view (.)
545→ religious stories are wonderful resources for <u>character</u> <u>education</u>
546 Me: this is a good idea
547 Teacher G: compared to useless textbook knowledge (.) I argue (.)
548→ <u>religious</u> <u>stories</u> touch students' hearts (.)
549→ provoke affective resonance (0.3)
550→ and assist them in developing good virtues and habits

Teacher G articulated that the intimate association between art and religion decently legitimized the surfacing of religion in her art classroom (line 533). In linking religion with art, she stressed that the stories told by religious artifacts provided fertile ground for moral instruction (line 545), and that the pro-social virtues of students, like forgiveness (line 541) and compassion (line 543), might be positively developed when they were exposed to heart-touching religious stories (lines 548–550). To be clear, Teacher G curtails the taboo nature of religion-related classroom talk by "storyizing" it – raising the issue of religion in her art class through its inspirational stories (line 537) – so that she is able to present religion as an acceptable subject and relieve herself from the charge of religious indoctrination.

Moreover, besides strategically and safely approaching religion in the classroom, Teacher G who radically identified herself as an artist teacher rather than merely as an art teacher, as I have reported above, made adaptations to the highly sensitive issue of homosexuality in an attempt to bring it onto the classroom table. Describing how it is possible for primary students to access the taboo topic of gender diversity, she stated (Interview, March 5, 2022),

551 Me: how do you address the issue of homosexuality in your art class

552 Teacher G: well (.) it is a very hard topic to address (.) it's too sensitive (0.2)
553→ so:: during my class (.) I approach it in a compromised manner
554 Me: how do you do so
555 Teacher G: um:: because teachers are not allowed to directly teach the issue=
556 =of sexual diversity at school (.)
557→ I make an adjustment to it (0.2)
558→ I focus some of my art lessons on challenging gender norms (0.5)
559→ I encourage students to stop seeing gender as binary opposites
560 Me: can you give me an example
561 Teacher G: sure (.) in one of my art lessons (.)
562→ I showed sixth-graders a series of thought-provoking images (.)
563→ like boys dancing ballet or boys wearing pink clothes
564 Me: what was the reaction of your students
565 Teacher G: they kind of felt strange and could not accept what they saw (0.5)
566→ I converted their weird feelings into a teachable moment (0.2)
567 I asked them °what'll you do if you don't agree on my pictures°
568 (0.7)
569→ tolerance and respect are the answers that I expect to hear
570 Me: sounds good (0.3)
571 as I know (.) Taiwan has legalized same-sex marriage
572→ Teacher G: yup (.) but in primary schools (.)
573→ the climate is still hostile to the issue of homosexuality
574 (0.5)
575 if this issue becomes more welcome in the future (.)
576 I will teach it more directly (0.2)
577→ so far (.) I have to make a compromise (.)
578→ I can only teach it indirectly (0.5)
579→ nonetheless (.) I still hope my gender-inclusive teaching can=
580→ =have students more tolerant and respectful of differences
581 (0.7)
582→ since my art class is not bounded by school exams (.) I can=
583→ =continuously test the limits (.) test how far I can go in this issue

Teacher G's narratives reveal her clear awareness of the limit-situation in which she is absolutely forbidden to teach the taboo issue of homosexuality. Acknowledging the pedagogical constraints

imposed by the school community, she took a step backward, made a compromise on this banned topic, and alternatively centered her critical teaching around the relevant and more acceptable subject of gender crossing. In her view, teaching about gender diversity aimed to foster a caring community in which students treat others with respect and sympathy. Such a goal could also be reached by challenging gender norms – traditional masculinity and femininity – absorbed by children. When students no more see feminine men or masculine women as deviant, they might be ready for celebrating gender diversity. In sum, Teacher G softens the hard edge of homosexuality issue by replacing it with a less sensitive topic of gender crossing. But she did not satisfy with the status quo, and she would exploit the academic freedom of her art class and change with the change. To this end, extending critical pedagogy into primary school is not a linear process, but a process of constant struggle. Until now, Taiwan's climate at primary school is not open enough, so that she needed to wrestle with hostile school norms and modify critical teaching practices to an acceptable level.

7.4 Summary: Chameleon-Like Struggles of Taiwan's Critical Primary Teachers

Through analyzing my interview data, I reveal that five out of twelve participating teachers strategically negotiate school constraints and successfully perform critical pedagogy in their own classrooms. First of all, their critical pedagogical practices are typically motivated by the moral emotion – a feeling of teacher guilt – which originates from their critical reflection on the school community. For focal teachers who come from middle-class backgrounds, such as Teacher F, J, and K, they reflect on their negative, socialized colleagues and thereby enhance their orientations to teach critically. On the other hand, focal teachers with a working-class origin, such as Teacher D and G, make up their minds to empower disadvantaged kids through reflecting on their former, alienated instructors who frustrated them with unpleasant learning experiences. Together, the

development of such teacher reflection essential for facilitating critical pedagogy varies by teachers' social-class profiles.

Second, the ways how critical foal teachers negotiate the limit-situations at school vary by the subjects they teach. Specifically, core-subject teachers – Teacher D, F, & K – whose teaching practices are bounded by standardized testing and mandated curriculum have little academic freedom to teach critically, so that they exploit existent structural openings (e.g., Teacher K's autonomy inside her enclosed classroom and Teacher D's school-break assignments) or create potential structural opportunities (e.g., Teacher F's hybrid practices that leave room for critical pedagogy; Teacher K's sisterhood-based collaboration that enhances critical teamwork) to teach against the grain. Comparatively, practical-subject teachers – Teacher G and J – who do not need to prepare students for school exams draw on higher levels of pedagogical freedom to empower children through taboo teaching. Although the marginality of their discipline areas allows more room for critical pedagogy to take place, they employ the approach of strategic compromise to soften the hard edges of controversial issues, like contextualizing and parallelizing the political issues (Teacher J), story-izing the religious issues (Teacher G), and addressing the taboo issue of homosexuality in an indirect manner (Teacher G). These critical focal teachers, through adapting critical pedagogical practices to school demands, are able to leave positive impressions on the conservative school community while preserving their cherished perspectives. Collectively, the aforementioned negotiation strategies of critical focal teachers involve being aware of where, when, and how to teach against the grain and teach taboo issues. Drawing on the metaphor of chameleon mentioned by Teacher K who carefully enact critical pedagogy, I call the situation-wise, balancing efforts of critical focal teachers that skillfully negotiate competing pedagogical priorities as chameleon-like struggles.

CHAPTER VIII: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In this concluding section, I summarize empirical findings that answer research questions, discuss my results with theoretical perspectives of the culture cycle and impression management, conduct a typological analysis of teacher responses toward critical pedagogy, facilitate the dialogue between my findings and the reviewed literature, and eventually reach the conclusion that wraps up four recurring themes presented in the course of this study.

8.1 Summary and Discussion

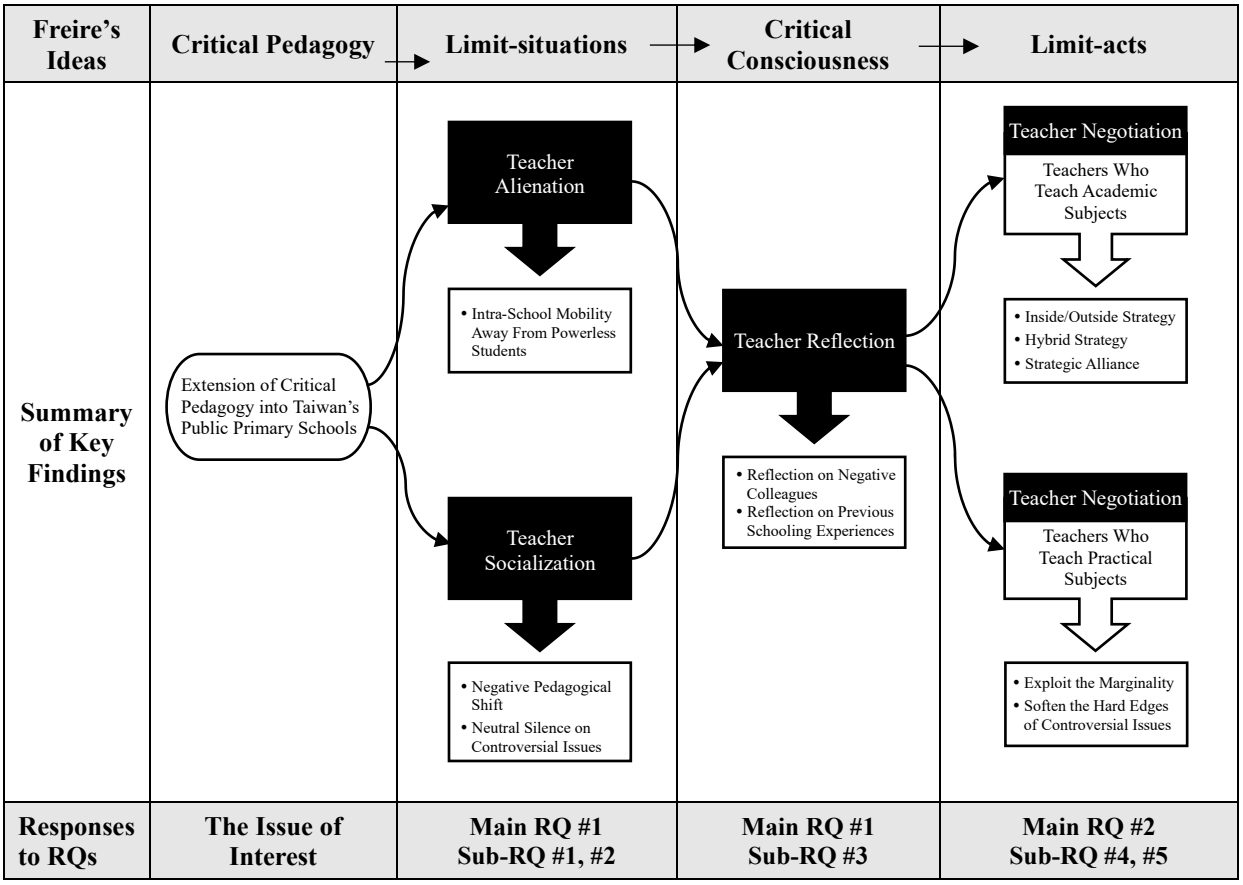
This section begins with summarizing my findings obtained from participants' narratives and document analysis. Next, I locate my research outcomes in theoretical perspectives of the culture cycle that examines the impact of macro-level social forces which function as limit-situations, and of impression management that investigates the limit-acts – the micro-level teacher strategies toward structural limitations.

8.1.1 Summary of Key Findings That Answer My Research Questions

This study examines the extent to which, and the ways in which, Taiwan's primary teachers perform critical pedagogy in their own classrooms. Drawing on empirical data collected from 12 public teachers who educate urban primary students in District X of Taipei, I identify four major themes that capture the lived experiences and insider perspectives of research participants. These themes that summarize my findings not only respond to my research questions but also resonate with Freire's ideas regarding limit-situations, critical consciousness, and limit-acts respectively. Figure 8.1 on the next page visualizes four recurring themes that are associated with Freire's concepts and answer my research concerns.

Figure 8.1

A Summary of Empirical Findings That Respond to Freire's Ideas and to Research Questions



Teacher alienation and teacher socialization are first two main themes that emerge from the focal teachers' narratives. In Taiwan's primary schools, they operate as powerful barriers – what Freire (1970/2002) referred to as "limit-situations" – to critical pedagogical practices. The former takes the form of teacher mobility away from powerless students within a given school, while the latter is marked by the negative pedagogical shift and politically neutral stance of focal teachers who increasingly immerse themselves in the primary school. Together, these two discouraging factors jointly contribute to the limited number of critical primary teachers in my research site. Such frustrating phenomena of teacher alienation and teacher socialization occurring within and across the focal schools provide evident answers to my main question #1 and sub-questions #1 & #2

regarding the extent to which focal teachers exercise critical pedagogy in the classroom.

Teacher reflection is the third main theme repeatedly highlighted by five participants who did move critical pedagogy from text to classroom reality. It is developed by their questioning on the limit-situations mentioned above. That said, the undesirable working conditions of teacher alienation and teacher socialization dialectally facilitate the growth of what Freire (1973) called critical consciousness among a small number of reflective focal teachers. Specifically, the development of such critical consciousness is motivated by their critical reflection on negative colleagues (e.g., Teacher F, J, and K who come from middle-class families), or on past schooling experiences (e.g., Teacher D and G who have a working-class origin). This theme of teacher reflection responds to my main question #1 and sub-question #3 concerning the motivating factors behind non-traditional teaching practices of critical focal teachers.

Teacher negotiation is the fourth theme that characterizes the strategic struggles – in Freire's (1970/2002) own words, "limit-acts" – of five focal teachers in an attempt to teach against the grain and teach the taboo. The ways how these critical teachers negotiate the school's limit-situations vary by the subjects they teach. Academic-subject teachers whose classroom instruction is heavily constrained by testing, like Teacher D, F, and K, seek to balance competing pedagogical priorities when teaching critically. Their balancing acts include making use of time and space in which institutional control is relatively weak (Teacher D & K: the inside/outside strategy), setting up the appropriate ratio of critical teaching to traditional one (Teacher F: the hybrid strategy), and resorting to intimate bonds of sisterhood as the basis of critical teamwork (Teacher K: strategic alliance). On the other hand, practical-subject teachers that have higher levels of pedagogical freedom, including Teacher G and J, exploit the marginality of their discipline areas to address taboo issues in class. They deliberately employ the scheme of strategic

compromise to soften the hard edges of controversial topics, such as teaching politics with international and parallel cases (Teacher J), teaching religion with its inspiring stories (Teacher G), and teaching homosexuality with the relevant but less sensitive issue of gender crossing (Teacher G). These coping strategies related to the theme of teacher negotiation resolve my main question #2 and sub-questions #4 & #5 considering the structural opportunities that the focal teachers may exploit to get involved in critical pedagogy.

These four themes identified in my empirical data– teacher alienation, teacher socialization, teacher reflection, and teacher negotiation – have shown that critical pedagogy can and does take place in Taiwan's primary schools where the banking model of education is dominant. They demonstrate the dialectal relationship between teacher agency and school constraints. Teacher alienation and teacher socialization, to a certain degree, threaten the implementation of critical pedagogy in Taiwan' primary schools, but they also dialectally trigger teacher reflection and set the stage for the follow-up teacher negotiation.

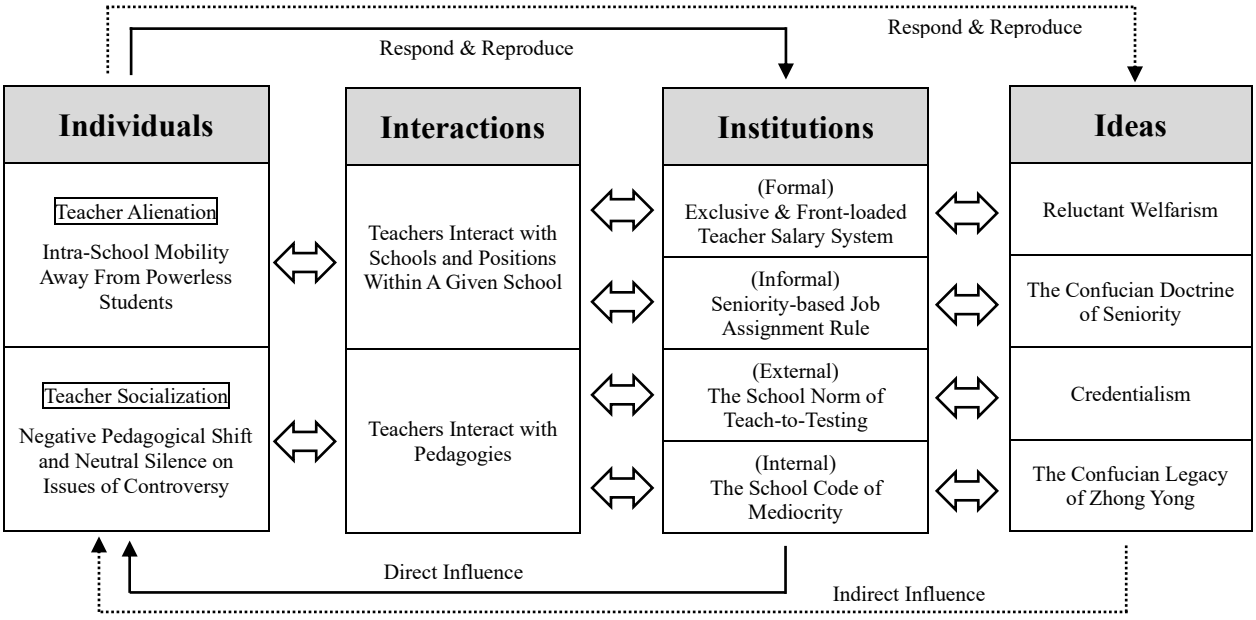
8.1.2 Discussion of Key Findings with My Theoretical Perspectives

This study adopts two theoretical perspectives, namely the culture cycle and impression management, to inform my data analysis and interpretation. First, I employ the idea of the culture cycle to examine contextual factors that contribute to teacher alienation and teacher socialization occurring within and across the focal schools. I visualize my results in Figure 8.2 (see page 174).

As far as teacher alienation is concerned, two background ideologies at *the ideas level* – reluctant welfarism and the Confucian doctrine of seniority – are associated with this undesirable working condition in Taiwan's primary schools. The former is embraced by Taiwan's ruling elites that are concerned about regime stability, and it consequently gives rise to the formal, exclusive teacher welfare system at *the institutions level* that attracts academically talented youth

Figure 8.2

The Culture Cycle of Teacher Alienation and Teacher Socialization in Taiwan's Primary Schools



into the teaching profession. The latter is adopted by the school community to legitimate an informal job assignment rule at *the institutions level* that governs the matter of teacher placement, through which the amount of same-school seniority plays a crucial role in determining who can first occupy the cushy teaching position that has less workload and is free from student-related affairs. Furthermore, at *the interactions level*, the focal teachers who come to teaching for extrinsic incentives rationally avoid unnecessary inter-school migration and remain at a given institution to accumulate same-school seniority credits, which can translate to a more rewarding job assignment without the need to address the trivial matters of students, particularly those of children that come from disadvantaged backgrounds. Lastly, at *the individuals level*, such an intra-school career movement of Taiwan's primary teachers leads to the phenomenon of teacher alienation at a given school, in which senior, experienced teachers fill the cushy posts that allow little contact with powerless students while novice, inexperienced teachers

are forcibly assigned to teach vulnerable children, ending up with an improper pairing between teachers and neediest students as well as a harsh limit-situation for critical pedagogical practices.

With regard to teacher socialization, two cultural beliefs at *the ideas level* – credentialism and the Confucian legacy of Zhong Yong – have a strong impact on the socialization mechanisms of Taiwan's primary schools and drastically condition what the focal teachers ought to teach and how they teach it. The former, at *the institutions level*, catalyzes the external school norm of teach-to-testing, which is strengthened by parental choice of schools, and is marked by the emphasis on the pedagogical practices of rote learning and classroom control. The latter fleshes out an internal school code of mediocrity at *the institutions level*, which disciplines the school community from within, encourages the delivery of mediocre teaching performance, and requires teacher neutrality in the face of controversial issues. Moreover, at *the interactions level*, the focal teachers who are subject to both external and internal socializing forces in a given school favor traditional pedagogies over progressive ones, and exclude those instructional activities aiming to challenge the status quo. Lastly, socialized focal teachers, at *the individuals level*, who have completely abided by the school norms of teach-to-testing and mediocrity experience a negative pedagogical shift – from progressive to traditional – and stubbornly maintain a neutral silence on the issues of controversy, making it hard for critical pedagogy to take place in their classrooms.

Given the above rationale, it is evident that the contextual factors threatening critical pedagogical practices of the focal teachers, which is the concern of my sub-question #2, include the following: 1) at *the ideas level*, the political ideology of reluctant welfarism and the cultural beliefs of credentialism and Confucianism – the doctrine of seniority and the legacy of Zhong Yong – exert a profound effect on how the focal teachers make sense of their work lives. Within

these ideologies, those who get hired by the government as a teacher, continuously remain in the same workplace, prioritize student achievement over other educational objectives, and avoid aggressive teaching practices are guaranteed a rewarding career in Taiwan' primary schools. It is predictable that, then, alienated and socialized teachers who comply with these background ideas and pursue material benefits at the expense of student empowerment are largely concentrated in the focal sites. And 2) at *the institutions level*, the government-initiated policy of teacher welfare, along with school-level rules regarding teacher placement and instructional standards, which are the concrete products of background ideas mentioned above, directly regulate the way how focal teachers build career paths and make pedagogical decisions. Specifically, the formal institution of front-loaded teacher compensation, as well as the informal school rule of seniority-based job placement, create extrinsic incentives for the focal teachers, many of whom shirk cross-school transfers and remain at the same school consistently to pursue the positions with lower workload. On the other hand, school-level norms of teach-to-testing and mediocrity provide restrictions on the pedagogical practices of focal teachers, a significant number of whom are discouraged from teaching beyond established routines and addressing controversial issues. Foreseeably, the focal teachers that benefit most from Taiwan's education system are those who choose to enact intra-school mobility away from disadvantaged pupils, convert pedagogical stances from progressive to traditional, and uphold a neutral silence on the issues of politics and controversy. As a result, the focal teachers' rational responses to the incentives and restrictions explicitly conveyed by aforesaid institutions eventually provoke the limit-situations of teacher alienation and teacher socialization, in which neediest students have little access to senior, experienced teachers, and children studying at the focal schools are hardly exposed to critical learning.

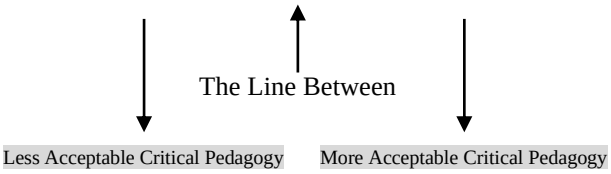
All in all, the idea of the culture cycle informs my study by indicating: 1) the contextual, extrinsic factors – background ideas and institutions mentioned above – that discourage focal teachers from teaching critically; and 2) the interplay between extrinsic factors and intrinsic ones – namely, profit-driven teaching motives and benefit-cost calculations of the focal teachers – in shaping the limit-situations that disrupt the extension of critical pedagogy into focal schools. The aforementioned culture cycle not only exists in but also branches out of my research site, as my empirical findings have shown – particularly the assertive saying of Teacher C, "I'm confident to argue that every school is in the same situation." It is the mutual attraction between institutional-level structures and individual-level teacher practices, I contend, that has made this culture cycle prevalent and difficult to change. That said, the deliberate efforts of focal teachers play a critical role in reproducing of this vicious cycle, which resonates Denscombe's (1982) observation about the collusion between structure and agents as far as teacher socialization is concerned.

Even though the culture cycle of teacher alienation and teacher socialization is evidently long-standing and prevalent in my research site, it is not the whole story of focal teachers' real-life experiences. These limit-situations not only function as a barrier to classroom practices of critical pedagogy in the focal schools, but also dialectally serve as a potential facilitator to stir up counteractions among a small number of reflective participants. In this study, I use the concept of impression management – or, alternatively stated, selective self-presentation – developed by the symbolic interactionist Erving Goffman (1959) to explain the coping strategies of five critical focal teachers who skillfully negotiate situational demands in an effort to teach against the grain. Table 8.1 on the next page demonstrates the ways how their strategic struggles are related to Goffman's notion of impression management.

Table 8.1

Wrapping up Focal Teachers' Negotiation Strategies with the Idea of Impression Management

	Teacher Negotiation Strategies	Impression Management		Structural Openings	
		Selective Concealment	Selective Revelation	Existing	Created
Core-Subject Teachers	The Inside/Outside Strategy (Teacher K & D)	Outside the classroom	Inside the classroom	○	
		School is in session	School is not in session	○	
	The Hybrid Strategy (Teacher F & K)	Prioritizing critical pedagogy	One-fourth of class time spent on dialogic instruction		○
		Prioritizing critical pedagogy	The limited number of off-campus learning activities		○
	Strategic Alliance (Teacher K)	With other mainstream colleagues around	Within the small group formed by sisterly, like-minded peers		○
Practical-Subject Teachers	The Transformative Strategy (Teacher G & J)	Domestic politics	International politics	○	
		Religious doctrine	Religious stories	○	
		Gender diversity	Gender crossing	○	



Teacher K and Teacher D, two of my participants who instruct academic subjects of reading and math, employ the inside/outside strategy to engage students in critical learning. The former conceals her teaching philosophy – being a sister-like teacher – in front of school colleagues and reveals such a caring pedagogy inside the closed classroom, while the latter undoes her critical practices – linking students' school assignments with their community lives – in regular school days and then surfaces her own pedagogical interests on school breaks. Such an inside/outside strategy exploits existing structural openings – the closed classroom and the school recess – to

make possible the implementation of critical pedagogy in a hostile school environment where the banking model of education is dominant.

Teacher F, a male teacher that instructed the academic subject of natural science for sixth-graders, adopted the hybrid strategy – balancing critical pedagogy with institutional demands – to preserve his progressive perspectives on teaching. He chose to obscure his radical orientations by de-prioritizing critical pedagogy and then displayed it in an appropriate proportion. His three-to-one ratio of traditional teaching to critical one made it feasible for him to both fulfill school requirements and exercise non-traditional, dialogic instruction. Likewise, Teacher K, a female fifth-grade teacher who taught reading and math courses, was also involved in hybrid teaching practices. She tended not to overly expose her students to non-traditional pedagogy. Instead, she conditionally carried out a few critical, off-campus instructional activities after seeking parental support with secured student achievement. Taken as a whole, such a hybrid strategy potentially creates structural opportunities out of the restrictive school environment – a moderate amount of class time is specifically spent on critical pedagogy. In this sense, core-subject teachers, Teacher F and K, are able to teach against the grain but also get accepted by the school community.

In addition to her individual strategic struggles, Teacher K also collaboratively engendered change through critical teamwork. Being aware of the school norm of mediocrity that threatened team-based resistance against classroom routines, she laid low her critical project – developing culturally responsive curriculum for immigrant pupils – when other mainstream colleagues were around. Meanwhile, she disclosed and advanced her ambitious proposal within the four-teacher group formed by sisterly, like-minded peers. Such a strategic alliance – sisterhood-based collaboration – performed by Teacher K carves out structural opportunities that enable the focal

teachers to collectively teach beyond mandated lessons and standards.

Relatively, practical-subject teachers, including Teacher G and J, drew on higher levels of pedagogical freedom to empower students through taboo teaching. They, to render their radical practices highly tolerable to school authorities and parents, took up the transformative strategy with a focus on softening the hard edges of taboo issues, such as politics, religion, and homo-sexuality. That said, they attenuated the unwelcome elements of taboo topics – domestic politics, religious doctrine, and gender diversity – and concentrated classroom conversations on the more acceptable features of these issues – international politics, religious stories, and gender crossing. The reason why such a transformation process of taboo teaching can occur in Teacher G's and J's classes is that the marginality of their discipline areas functions as an existent structural opening, making it possible for them to probe the limits of their critical teaching, and accordingly try out practical ways to teach the issues of controversy.

In concert, the aforementioned negotiation strategies of critical focal teachers involve being aware of where, when, and how to teach against the grain and teach taboo issues. Alternatively stated, their strategic struggles are associated with taking advantage of the appropriate conditions in which institutional regulations are relatively weak – the proper time (e.g., school breaks), the proper location (e.g., behind the closed classroom), and the proper materials (e.g., transformed taboo issues) – so as to engage students in critical learning without direct conflict with school norms. At its core, the strategic negotiation of critical focal teachers – Teacher D, F, G, J, & K – seeks to articulate the line between what is less acceptable and what is more acceptable when it comes to critical pedagogy (as shown in Table 8.1). Through repressing their counter-hegemonic practices in harsh limit-situations, surfacing them in right conditions, and transforming them to a

tolerable level, the aforesaid critical focal teachers are able to leave positive impressions on the conservative school community while extending critical pedagogy into their classrooms.

8.2 Typological Analysis of Teacher Responses Toward Critical Pedagogy

As my evidence has reported, the responses of focal teachers to critical pedagogy vary by the moral emotion – a feeling of teacher guilt – they have, and by the subjects they teach. That is, the factors of teacher guilt and subject matter determine the extent to which the focal teachers teach critically in my research site. Given this rationale, I use "teacher guilt" as the row variable and "subject matter" as the column variable to construct a 2 × 2 matrix below (see Table 8.2). Such a typology table classifies my twelve participants into four different categories according to their strong versus weak feelings of teacher guilt, and according to the academic versus non-academic subject matter that each of them currently takes charge of.

Table 8.2

Typology of Focal Teachers' Responses to Critical Pedagogy

		Subject Matter	
		Academic	Non-academic
Teacher Guilt	Strong	Jugglers (Teacher D, F, K)	Mavericks (Teacher G, J)
	Weak	Regressors (Teacher A, B, E, H, L)	Geysers (Teacher C, I)

For the focal teachers who have a strong sense of teacher guilt and are in charge of the academic subject, including Teacher D, F, and K, they make up their minds to exercise critical pedagogy in the face of harsh limit-situations caused by the school norm of teach-to-testing, and accordingly endeavor to balance competing pedagogical priorities – exam-oriented instruction and critical

teaching – in order to empower the powerless and support culturally diverse learners. As a case in point, Teacher D, a female teacher who currently taught the core subject of English for fourth-graders, expressed earlier that her guilt feelings might surface if she behaved no differently from the traditional, authoritarian teachers who taught her before, so that she committed herself to teaching critically, and that she, during the school break in which pedagogical constraints are relatively weak, designed culturally responsive assignments for immigrant students. Moreover, Teacher F, a male teacher who currently instructed the core subject of natural science for sixth-graders, previously mentioned that he might confront a strong sense of shame if he imitated his negative colleagues who were semi-detached from the profession and cared little about students' learning needs. For that reason, he engaged in hybrid teaching practices and regularly spent one-fourth of class time on meaningful dialogue with students when addressing the exam-required subject of natural science. Similarly, Teacher K, a female fifth-grade teacher who currently instructed the core subjects of reading and math, stated that she would be filled with disgrace if she were subject to teacher alienation demonstrated by her lousy colleagues. To this end, she decided to become the kind of critical teachers totally different from her negative colleagues, by which she nurtured a more even relationship with students – the sister-brother relationship with students – behind the classroom doors, won parental trust to add community-connected learning activities into the already-tight schedule of school routine, and collaborated with intimate, like-minded peers to develop culturally responsive curriculum for immigrant kids. Taken as a whole, given their hybrid pedagogical practices that consider both ends of school demands and critical teaching, I label the aforesaid three teachers as "Jugglers" to indicate their balancing efforts.

Comparatively, the focal teachers who are driven by profound feelings of teacher guilt and

manage non-academic subjects, like Teacher G and J, exercise critical pedagogy more radically and more frequently than their core-subject counterparts through integrating controversial issues into their daily lessons. This is because the modest limit-situations of their discipline areas that are entirely free from school exams release higher levels of pedagogical independence, enabling critical pedagogy to take place significantly in Teacher G's and J's classes. Specifically, Teacher G, a female veteran who delivered art courses for sixth-graders, indicated that the past traumatic schooling experiences strengthened her will to teach critically, and that she would experience an immoral emotion if she mistreated low-income students in the same way as her former primary teacher had done. In consequence, she radically identified herself as an artist teacher, deliberately took advantage of much pedagogical freedom tied with her art lessons, and proactively figured out what sort of contents could be accepted by the school community as far as teaching about religion and homosexuality was concerned. Likewise, Teacher J, a male teacher who instructed the technology class for fifth-graders, pinpointed that intense feelings of distress might rush over him if he pursued material rewards at the expanse of students' learning quality – which was often seen around his mainstream colleagues as a result of teacher alienation. Hence, he aggressively exposed himself to Freirean scholarship and critically engaged pupils in classroom conversations that centered on global political issues. Taken together, considering their high-level pedagogical independence as well as radical practices of taboo teaching, I label these two practical-subject teachers as "Mavericks" to describe their freedom-laden, rebellious struggles against school routines.

Conversely, five focal teachers in my research site – Teacher A, B, E, H, and L – who retain a weak sense of teacher guilt and take over academic subjects, blindly absorb traditional values

aligned with harsh limit-situations, docilely socialize themselves into expected roles marked by inculcation and mediocrity, and greatly revealed hostility to the progressive model of education, albeit that, to some degree, all of them are knowledgeable about critical pedagogy. Specifically, Teacher A, a male, high-seniority teacher that instructed the core subject of social studies for 4th-graders, passively altered his classroom management style from democratic to authoritative when confronted with soaring parental expectations on children's school success. Teacher B, a male sixth-grade teacher who taught reading and math courses, surrendered to collegial pressure that encouraged a speed race of textbook instruction, consequently proceeding his students' textbook learning as efficiently as other mainstream teachers did. Teacher E, a male third-grade veteran that taught the academic subjects of reading, math, and social studies, was warned not to discuss anything political in front of students when beginning his career, by which he strictly complied with school demands and exercised apolitical teaching practices to stay away from administrative censure and parental backlash. Teacher H, a female, high-seniority teacher who educated second-graders with the exam-required disciplines of reading, math, and social studies, took for granted the pedagogical assumption that her mediocre colleagues firmly embraced – student achievement lied at the center of competent teaching – with which, when teaching academic subjects through textbooks, she placed a higher value on objective knowledge worth being memorized, instead of encouraging students to think critically on what they had read. Teacher L, a female teacher who delivered the academic lessons of English to second-graders, changed her instructional approach from inquiry-based to lecture-based owing to the school principal's preference over conventional pedagogies that emphasize classroom control. All in all, given the reversal of these five teachers' teaching beliefs – the shift from progressive perspectives to traditional ones – during their career,

I label them as “Regressors” to portray such a pedagogical regression.

Lastly, the remaining two participants in this study – Teacher C and I – who evidently lack teacher guilt in strength and address non-academic lessons, seldom take advantage of their high-level pedagogical autonomy to exercise critical pedagogy. Both of them engage pupils in critical learning only when required to do so by the school community. That said, their critical teaching functions merely as a curricular show for the potential audience, or simply as a classroom ritual aimed at meeting bureaucratic demands, rather than as a counter-hegemonic praxis that overturns the status quo. To clarify, Teacher C, a female veteran who handled the non-academic subject of music for first-graders, stated earlier that she was quite reluctant to teach beyond textbook pages unless being asked to open her classroom for peer observation[39]. In her music class – generally and principally – she offered lessons about classic and folk music documented by the prescribed curriculum. Only if she had to make teaching more public would her music instruction explicitly involve students in meaningful learning that focused on popular songs and cartoon music, which were inextricably intertwined with the everyday lives of youth. Teacher I, a male, high-seniority teacher who instructed the practical discipline of sports for third-graders, disengaged pupils from critical learning except when school visitors came in to observe his classroom. He, as a physical education teacher, usually passed down sports-related skills to students through a command style of instruction – that is, students reproduced the model demonstrated by the teacher. But, as soon as classroom visits occurred occasionally with a view toward evaluating the teacher’s democratic practices, he intentionally altered his pedagogy from the didactic style to the progressive one, by

[39] According to the curricular policy launched by Taiwan’s Ministry of Education (2014), public-school teachers need to open their classrooms to the school community for observation and feedback at least once in a school year. For that reason, Teacher C was required to display her classroom instruction with fellow members around.

which students were guided for productive discussions on the sports-related issue of controversy, such as the link between race, social class, and sports – tennis is considered a sport for the white while golf is seen as a sport for the rich. Teacher I is, so to speak, a two-faced instructor teaching critically only if needed. Together, since both of them teach against the grain from time to time, which makes critical pedagogical practices ceremonial, I label Teacher C and I as "Geysers" to index their irregular, occasional responses toward critical pedagogy.

In addition to categorizing twelve participating teachers based on two individual attributes that they report to this study, including teacher guilt and pedagogical autonomy behind a given subject matter, I respectively represent the strength and weakness of these characteristics with symbols "+" and " – ," by which I translate Table 8.2 to Table 8.3 that sequentially demonstrates the extent to which focal teachers exercise critical pedagogy on the basis of their personal traits mentioned above.

Table 8.3

The Extent to Which Focal Teachers Exercise Critical Pedagogy in The Classroom

Teacher Guilt	Pedagogical Freedom Tied with the Subject	Pattern of Teacher Performance	Critical Pedagogical Practices
+	–	Jugglers (Teacher D, F, K)	Happening Moderately
+	+	Mavericks (Teacher G, J)	Happening Significantly
–	–	Regressors (Teacher A, B, E, H, L)	Not Happening
–	+	Geysers (Teacher C, I)	Happening Occasionally

Judging from the table above, Teacher D, F, and K, all of whom are labeled as Jugglers – whose

depressive guilt[40] is strong but pedagogical freedom is limited – have critical pedagogy take place moderately in their everyday teaching. In the face of harsh limit-situations tied with core-subject instruction, they de-prioritizing critical pedagogy and then display it in a compromised manner.

Teacher G and J, both of whom are labeled as Mavericks – whose depressive guilt is strong and pedagogical freedom is elevated – have critical pedagogy occur seriously in their practical-subject teaching. The modest limit-situations of their discipline areas that are not constrained by standardized testing and mandated curriculum let out higher levels of professional independence, allowing Teacher G's and J's critical teaching to surface in a significant way.

Teacher A, B, E, H, and L, all of whom are labeled as Regressors – whose depressive guilt is deficient and pedagogical freedom is also meager – tend not to enact critical pedagogy when addressing their core-subject classes. The harsh limit-situations associated with their academic courses, as well as a lack of motivation to teach against the grain, ultimately have them undergo a negative pedagogical shift – from progressive to traditional – in the course of teaching career, making it difficult for critical pedagogy to become part of their routine practices.

Teacher C and I, both of whom are labeled as Geysers – whose depressive guilt is low but pedagogical freedom is lofty – exercise critical pedagogy occasionally when engaging students in practical-subject learning. Even though their non-academic lessons, to a certain degree, have curricular flexibility that enables critical pedagogy to happen frequently, they make classroom activities more meaningful and empowering for children only on particular occasions, in which

[40] The notion of teacher guilt, as I illustrate here, is synonymous with Hargreaves's and Tucker's (1991) argument about depressive guilt, which indicates that ambitious teachers tend to experience guilt-ridden feelings when being required to comply with conservative school norms.

their teaching is required to operate publicly for school colleagues or visitors to observe. For that reason, Teacher C's and I's critical pedagogical practices are intermittent – or to say, a deliberate swing between traditional teaching and critical one – depending on whether their classrooms are open to the potential audience.

In sum, the number of focal teachers who attempt to teach critically, as Table 8.3 has shown, is relatively smaller than that of their counterparts that occasionally or never exercise critical pedagogy. More specifically, less than half of participating teachers – Teacher D, F, G, J, and K – have ever made efforts to engage students in critical learning, and only two of them – Teacher G and J who instruct practical subjects – have critical pedagogy integrated heavily into everyday teaching. It is the robust limit-situations of teacher alienation and teacher socialization occurring in my research site, as I discuss earlier, contribute to such a small body of critical focal teachers. Since confronted with a marked numerical disadvantage in the school community, these critical pedagogues need to employ coping strategies of impression management in order to safely and successfully teach against the grain, which has been reported in the previous section.

8.3 The Dialogue Between My Findings and The Reviewed Literature

My findings that revolve around the above-mentioned four major themes not only resonate with the reviewed scholarship but also fill the knowledge gap left by the existing literature. Table 8.4 on the next page illustrates the dialogue between my findings and the prior studies examined above.

The theme of teacher alienation reported in this study indicates that, to have a reduced workload, the focal teachers intentionally distance themselves from disadvantaged students within a given school, and that, after accumulating same-workplace seniority credits, they

Table 8.4

The Dialogue Between My Findings and The Reviewed Literature

Themes	My Findings	Resonate	Fill the Gap	The Reviewed Literature
Teacher Alienation	Teacher alienation that happens in Taiwan's primary schools takes the form of teacher mobility away from neediest students within a given school.		✓	A huge volume of studies have reported how teacher sorting occurs between schools while little research has explored within-school teacher sorting, particularly at the primary school level. (Kalogrides, Loeb, & Béteille, 2013).
Teacher Socialization	The school norm of teach-to-testing and the school culture of mediocrity jointly account for the negative pedagogical shift experienced by the focal teachers.	✓	✓	Prior studies did investigate the impact of accountability policies on shaping teacher socialization (e.g., Achinstein & Ogawa, 2011; Zeichner & Tabachnick, 1985). However, few studies have been conducted to examine the internal socializing force that regulates the teacher community from within.
Teacher Reflection	The development of teacher reflection varies by teachers' social-class profiles. Focal teachers who come from working-class families reflect on their traumatic schooling experiences while their counterparts with a middle-class origin reflect on negative colleagues.	✓	✓	Prior studies on the motivations of critical teachers did explore the cases of working-class teachers (e.g., Gorlewski, 2008; Liggins, 2014), but they scarcely included middle-class teachers as research subjects.
Teacher Negotiation	The inside/outside strategy	✓		Teaching critically under the radar (Smith, 2013).
	The hybrid strategy & the transformative strategy	✓		Teaching critically around the restrictions (Shor, 1992).
	The marginality strategy	✓		Teaching critically in the cracks (Schultz, 2017).
	The strategic alliance that considers both intellectual and affective dimensions of teacher solidarity.	✓	✓	Positive reference groups function as a power base for school improvement (Nias, 1985), which highlights the intellectual aspect of teacher collaboration.

usually march into cushy positions – that is, seeking employment as a single-subject teacher who has no need to manage student-related affairs – at their long-serving institutions. Such an intra-school career movement enacted by Taiwan's primary teachers explicitly differs from the pattern of between-school teacher migration that has been extensively documented by prior Western

studies, as I mentioned earlier in the second chapter. A large body of U.S. studies, Kalogrides, Loeb, and Béteille (2013) argued, have explored how teacher sorting occurs between schools while little research has been done to understand within-school teacher sorting, particularly at the primary school level. To this end, my findings about within-school teacher mobility that happens in Taiwan's primary schools do make a meaningful contribution to the knowledge base on teacher alienation.

With regard to the theme of teacher socialization, this study asserts that two different types of socializing forces prevalent in Taiwan's primary schools – the external norm of teach-to-testing and the internal code of mediocrity – jointly account for the negative pedagogical shift experienced by the focal teachers. Previous research on teacher socialization did investigate the impact of top-down, external socializing forces, such as state-mandated standards (Achinstein & Ogawa, 2011) or technical control (Zeichner & Tabachnick, 1985), on determining what teachers teach and how they teach it. However, few studies have been conducted to examine the internal socializing force that regulates the teacher community from within, like the culture of mediocrity in this study. Seen in this light, my findings that take into account the influence of both external and internal socializing forces in shaping pedagogical perspectives of Taiwan's primary teachers certainly add a new layer to the literature on teacher socialization.

As far as the theme of teacher reflection is concerned, my work reveals that negative frames of reference, such as negative colleagues and negative schooling experiences, sensationally fuel the growth of critical consciousness and moral emotion – feelings of depressive guilt – among a handful of participating teachers. To clarify, the development of such reflective thinking that molds a small body of focal teachers into critical pedagogues essentially differs by social class.

The focal teachers who come from working-class households – Teacher D and G – question the status quo and resolutely enact critical pedagogy through reflecting on their traumatic schooling experiences, while their counterparts who have a middle-class origin – Teacher F, J, and K – see their colleagues as negative role models, by which they determine to teach critically and perform differently from the instructors around them. On one hand, my results about teacher guilt – more clearly, the disposition of depressive guilt experienced by a handful of focal teachers – related to teacher reflection are in line with the argument of Boyle and Woods (1996) who recognized the role of depressive guilt in shaping teacher resistance against bureaucratic demands. On the other hand, this study also reveals that the way how middle-class teachers initiate critical reflection is different from that of working-class teachers. Prior studies on the motivations of critical teachers, as I discuss earlier in Chapter II, did explore the cases of working-class teachers who launched themselves into reflective practices and accordingly sought employment at low-income schools (Gorlewski, 2008; Liggins, 2014), but they scarcely included middle-class teachers as research subjects. For that reason, my work has compensated for the lack of scholarly coverage on the development of critical consciousness among middle-class teachers.

Lastly, the theme of teacher negotiation identified in my empirical data shows that there are five different coping strategies adopted by critical focal teachers to safely and successfully teach against the grain, most of which parallel the ones garnered from previous studies. For example, Teacher D's and K's inside/outside strategy – presenting critical pedagogy selectively in time and space that are bounded by relatively weak institutional control – resonates with Smith's (2013) suggestion of teaching critically under the radar. Teacher F's hybrid strategy – balancing critical pedagogy with student achievement – as well as Teacher G's and J's transformative strategy –

softening the hard edges of taboo issues in order to render critical pedagogy highly tolerable to the school community – echo what Shor (1992) referred to as "teaching around the restrictions" (p. 131). On top of that, Teacher G's and J's marginality strategy – exploiting the marginal status of practical subjects to lift controversial topics onto the classroom table – is in accordance with Schultz's (2017) proposal of teaching critically in the cracks of curricular structure. Teacher K's strategic alliance – seeking like-minded colleagues to instigate critical teamwork – coincides with Nias's (1985) scheme of positive reference groups as power bases for school improvement. It is worth noting that, despite the correlation between Teacher K's coping strategy and Nias's point of view, the latter focuses heavily on the intellectual dimension of teacher collaboration and pays little attention to affective issues in collective struggles of teachers. This study indicates that the affective relationship between Teacher K and her like-minded colleagues is what enables critical teamwork to steadily take place in Taiwan's primary school that celebrates the culture of mediocrity. In light of this, my findings about Teacher K's sisterhood-based collaboration, which considers both intellectual and affective dimensions of teacher solidarity, serve to complicate and enrich our understanding of collective resistance among a small group of teachers.

All in all, my findings that center around four aforementioned themes have reached beyond just resonating with the existent scholarship. It is specifically the contextual difference between Taiwan's education system and that of Western countries, I contend, that has this study uncover and fill research gaps related to the themes above. The Confucian traditions prevalent in Taiwan, which promote the doctrine of seniority and the legacy of Zhong Yong, especially account for my gap-filling study outcomes. As noted earlier, these conventional norms tied with Confucianism not only confine the scope of teacher alienation to a given primary school, but also complicate

the scheme of teacher socialization by showing mediocrity as an additional, internal socializing force that disciplines the school community from within, both of which – intra-school teacher alienation and the socializing mechanism of mediocrity – have thus far been understudied in the literature. Given that workplace alienation of the focal teachers occurs within a given school, and that one of the occupational socialization mechanisms comes from inside the teacher group, my participants, in comparison with their Western counterparts, are confronted with a more hostile school climate that goes against critical pedagogy. For that reason, the focal teachers, in addition to their acquaintance with Freirean scholarship, need extra affective, volitional impetus to initiate their critical practices – such as Teacher K's sisterhood-based collaboration, and depressive guilt shared by Teacher D, F, G, J, and K who emotionally teach against the grain. To conclude, as this study has somehow bridged the blank of the literature on themes discussed above, my findings do hold meaningful lessons for critical pedagogy implemented beyond the Western horizon.

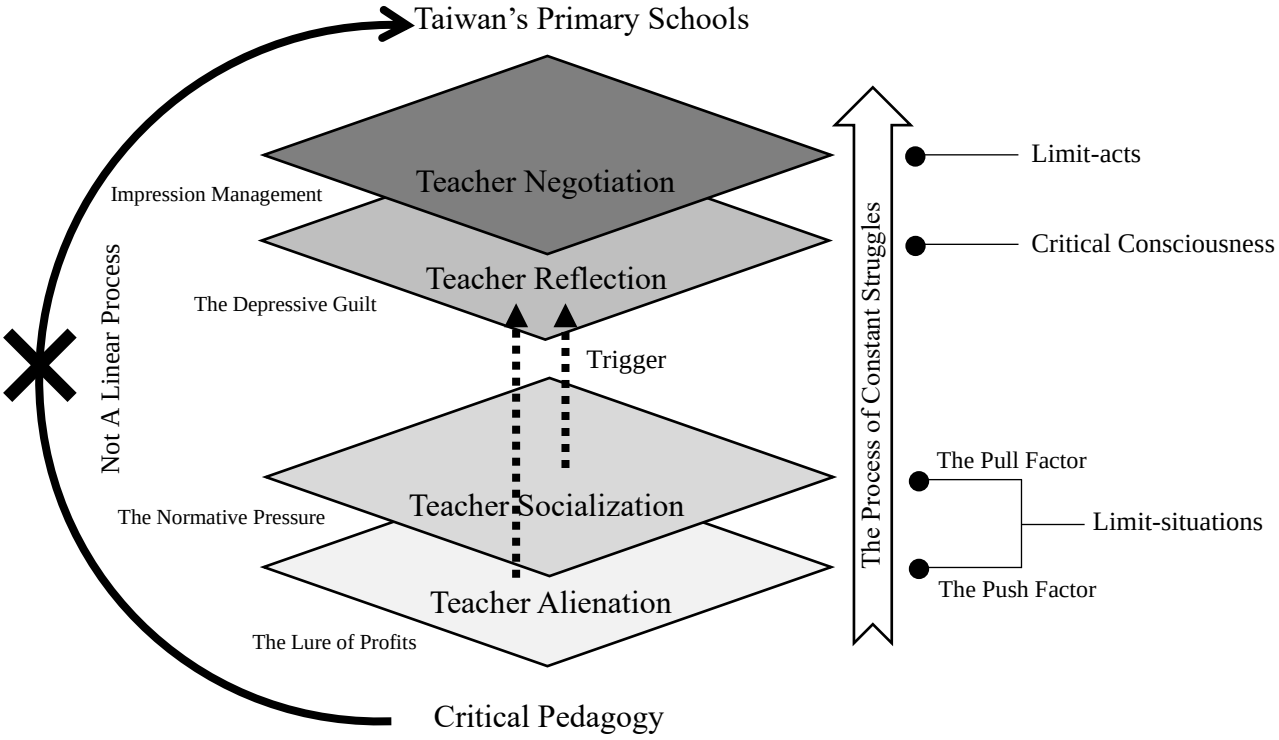
8.4 Conclusion

Through analyzing insider perspectives of twelves public primary teachers in District X, the disadvantaged urban area of Taipei City, I reach the conclusion that critical pedagogy could and did take place in Taiwan. I visualize my concluding remarks in Figure 8.3 (see page 194), which presents the identified themes in layers to characterize the interplay of their relationships.

To clarify, extending critical pedagogy into Taiwan's primary schools is not a linear process (in the left part of Figure 8.3, I indicate such a non-linear process by placing a cross mark on the long, curved upward arrow that points from critical pedagogy to Taiwan's primary schools). It is a complicated procedure, instead, characterized by focal teachers' constant struggles that involve confronting the barriers, developing critical consciousness, and taking strategic actions (in the

Figure 8.3

The Interplay of Four Recurring Themes Identified in This Study



right part of Figure 8.3, a vertical, bottom-to-top arrow reflects such an intricate operation, which stretches across four layers of identified themes). Frist of all, teacher alienation, the bottom-most layer in Figure 8.3, operates as one of the potential barriers – in Freire's (1970/2002) own phrase, "limit-situations" – to critical pedagogy exercised in the focal schools. It is considered a push factor that propels senior, experienced teachers away from powerless students. In my research site, teacher alienation takes shape as teacher mobility away from disadvantaged children within a given primary school of Taiwan. Two root causes are found to be associated with such intra-school teacher alienation that occurs in Taiwan, including profit-driven teacher recruitment and seniority-based teacher placement. The former is relevant to exclusive teacher welfare programs run by Taiwan's government that adopts reluctant welfarism, through which the focal teachers

are attracted to the teaching profession mainly for its competitive remuneration, and many of them deliberately look for job openings with more desirable labor returns, such as keeping away from the specific school position – what Teacher A called "the step-mother class" – that needs to serve a large body of vulnerable pupils, or seeking the appointment as a practical-subject teacher – what Teacher K metaphorized as the heavenly teaching post – that is allowed to have the low degree of teacher-student interactions. The latter is intertwined with the ideological belief of Confucianism that emphasizes a strong concern for seniority, under which the focal teachers primarily take into consideration same-workplace seniority when it comes to job assignment, accordingly stifling inter-school teacher migration and confining the scope of teacher alienation to a given primary school. As a result, low-seniority, inexperienced teachers are concentrated in difficult-to-teach positions that host a significant number of powerless students while high-seniority, experienced teachers surround themselves with easy-to-teach ones that stay away from student-related affairs, ending up with a mismatch between instructors and learners (e.g., Teacher A recalled that he had to take over "the step-mother class" when beginning his career), as well as an improper pairing between teacher expertise and subject matters (e.g., Teacher C, whose expertise centered around piano and drama, was disallowed to teach the practical subject of music before being considered a veteran). In brief, teacher alienation that takes place in my research site is all about the lure of profits, by which teacher preferences toward whom to teach and where to teach are determined. Judging from empirical data above, only a handful of the focal teachers – Teacher D, F, G, J, & K – can resist such an enticement of extrinsic interests and devote themselves to empowering the powerless. Given the numerical strength of focal teachers who pursue material rewards and turn their backs on the students in need, it is challenging for critical pedagogy to widely circulate in Taiwan's primary classrooms.

Second, teacher socialization, the second-lowest layer in Figure 8.3, works as another limit-situation for critical pedagogy enacted in the focal schools. It is considered a pull factor that stimulates the assimilation of focal teachers into traditional school norms. In my research site, teacher socialization features the negative pedagogical shift – from critical to conventional – as well as the growing neutral orientations of focal teachers as they gain greater seniority within a given school. Two socializing forces account for such a reversal of pedagogical perspectives among them, namely the school norm of teach-to-testing and the school culture of mediocrity. The former is fueled by the ideological system of credentialism that presumes school success as the key to a rewarding career, through which the focal teachers fervently exercise the banking model of education and deliberately adopt a set of classroom management techniques in order to boost student achievement and further meet scores-oriented expectations of parents, such as maintaining classroom quietness (Teacher E & H), establishing teacherly authority (Teacher A & B), addressing textbook instruction at an accelerated pace (Teacher B & E), and having students underline textbook passages that are crucial for exam preparation (Teacher H). The latter is closely aligned with the Confucian virtue of Zhong Yong that celebrates the prime virtues of moderation and harmony, by which many of my informants intentionally deliver the so-so teaching performance (Teacher B & D), espouse a neutral silence on controversial issues (Teacher E & I), and avoid being too critical on their pedagogy (Teacher E & L). In consequence, socialized focal teachers who have entirely complied with aforesaid school norms tend to unsee powerless students, unhear the diverse voices of disadvantaged learners, and undo the practices of critical pedagogy, eventually leading them to become what Teacher B metaphorized as “one-eye monkeys” that turn a blind eye to problematic school reality. In short, teacher socialization is all about the normative pressure, under which teacher preferences toward what to teach and how

to teach are conditioned. As far as twelve participating teachers are concerned, more than half of them – Teacher A, B, C, E, H, I, & L – completely internalize school norms after immersing themselves in the profession, and are accordingly unable to transform the status quo they face and experience. To be clear, only five of the focal teachers – Teacher D, F, G, J, & K – resolutely desocialize themselves from traditional school codes and perform the role of critical pedagogues who dare to teach against the grain for student empowerment. Given that desocialized teachers are outnumbered in the focal schools, children who study there, to a certain degree, have limited exposure to critical learning.

Third, although two potential limit-situations – teacher alienation and teacher socialization – threaten the extension of critical pedagogy into the focal schools, they also dialectally function as a facilitator that stirs up reflective thinking – in Freire's (1973) own words, the awakening of critical consciousness – among a handful of ambitious focal instructors. Teacher reflection, the second-highest layer in Figure 8.3, manifests the enactment of teacher agency that motivates several focal teachers to perform differently from their mainstream colleagues (in the middle part of Figure 8.3, I represent the structure-agency dialectic by placing two dotted upward arrows that span from the layers of teacher alienation and teacher socialization to that of teacher reflection). The development of such teacher reflection, according to my empirical data, is tied with a moral emotion – teacher guilt, or to say, a sense of depressive guilt – and essentially varies by teachers' social-class profiles. Specifically, participating teachers with a working-class origin, such as Teacher D and G who endeavor to reduce guilt feelings triggered by the practices of banking education, commit themselves to empowering disadvantaged children through introspecting deeply about their former, alienated teachers that disappointed them with undesirable learning experiences. On the other hand, for the focal teachers who come from middle-class households,

such as Teacher F, J, and K who seek to avoid an immoral emotion elicited by internalizing school norms, they reflect on the negative, socialized colleagues around them, by which their orientations to teach critically are further strengthened. Taken together, teacher reflection is all about the guilt-ridden mindset, with which critical focal teachers identified in this study move beyond negative frames of reference, including negative colleagues and negative schooling experiences, consequently initiating follow-up coping strategies for overcoming institutional constraints so as to successfully engage students in critical pedagogy.

Fourth, teacher negotiation, the top-most layer in Figure 8.3, marks the strategic struggles – what Freire (1970/2002) referred to as "limit-acts" – of critical focal teachers with the purpose of teaching critically in restrictive school settings. The strategies these critical teachers employ to negotiate the school's institutional constraints vary by the subject matters they currently take charge of. To clarify, for focal teachers who teach academic subjects and have less pedagogical freedom, their strategies seek to reach the balance between academic efficiency and critical teaching. On the other hand, for focal teachers who are in charge of practical subjects and have much pedagogical freedom, their strategies focus on probing the limits of public tolerance for taboo teaching. At its core, teacher negotiation is all about impression management, by which critical focal teachers selectively present critical pedagogy in occasions where institutional control is relatively weak, so that they are able to leave positive impressions on the conservative school community while behaving as the kind of critical pedagogue they aspire to be.

In conclusion, the process of extending critical pedagogy into Taiwan's primary schools is challenging rather than smooth. The focal teachers who seek to teach critically must resist the lure of profits and override the normative pressure. According to my evidence, such extrinsic interests and school norms are so powerful that the relative majority of focal teachers choose to

turn their backs on critical pedagogy. Fortunately, the limit-situations trigger critical reflection among a handful of participating teachers who determine to challenge the status quo in order to avoid their guilt-ridden feelings. These critical focal teachers, as a numeric minority that are oppressed by the school community, engage in limit-acts, employing a set of coping strategies to resolve the tension between their critical interests and contextual constraints, so that they are able to safely negotiate restrictive circumstances when teaching against the grain. Put differently, their strategic struggles are tied with impression management, through which the identified critical teachers selectively present critical pedagogy in appropriate conditions and vigilantly render it to an acceptable level. Briefly, I signify their situation-wise, balancing efforts that are produced during this challenging process as chameleon-like struggles, and entitle such "more acceptable" critical pedagogy "the pedagogy *by* oppressed teachers."

CHAPTER IX: IMPLICATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

In this final section, I begin with offering meaningful implications for Freirean scholarship, qualitative methodology, and the field of primary education. Next, I consider limitations of this study and offer suggestions for future studies. Lastly, I wrap up this study with a few final words.

9.1 Implications

Although this research is mainly located in the context of Taiwan, my findings can still offer important lessons for the broader academic community in that, evidently, the present study has verified the possible fit between critical pedagogy and public schools. The detailed explanation of my meaningful contributions to Freirean scholarship, qualitative methodology, and primary school practices of critical pedagogy will be provided below.

9.1.1 Theoretical Implications for Freirean Scholarship

This study highlights the importance of hybridity – balancing critical pedagogy with student achievement – when primary teachers seek to teach critically in restrictive school settings. Also, I consider the role of negative emotion, namely teacher guilt, in facilitating critical consciousness and reflective thinking among a small body of critical primary teachers. For Paulo Freire, critical pedagogy cannot coexist with the banking model of education that primarily prepares pupils for school exams. My findings challenge his either/or pedagogical assumption, and pinpoint that adopting the “middle” stance between critical pedagogy and traditional one largely ensures the survival of critical focal teachers in hostile, acritical school environments. For instance, Teacher F and K in this study endeavor to balance competing pedagogical priorities and set up the proper ratio of critical teaching to traditional one when teaching against the grain. This kind of hybrid

strategy that adapts critical pedagogy to school demands – rather than entirely eliminating the use of traditional pedagogy – potentially creates structural opportunities out of the restrictive system, which may hold meaningful lessons for Freirean scholarship. On the other hand, Freire did stress the role of positive emotions, such as love and mutual trust, in developing education for critical consciousness (Sherman, 1980). However, he paid little attention to the upside of negative emotions – such as the guilt-ridden feelings experienced by critical focal teachers in this study – that may trigger and enhance teacher agency for effecting change. My study shows that teacher reflection is closely tied with teacher guilt, which sensationally fuels the growth of critical consciousness among a handful of primary teachers who move beyond negative frames of reference – negative colleagues and negative schooling experiences – and further make up their minds to exercise critical pedagogy. This evidence adds a new layer to Freirean scholarship on the driving force behind critical consciousness. Since Freire's work excludes the "in-between" pedagogical stance and downplays the potential power of negative emotions, my findings that articulate the significance of hybridity and teacher guilt in implementing critical pedagogy do have serious implications for Freire's pedagogical theory.

9.1.2 Methodological Implications for Qualitative Research

Theme identification is an essential task for qualitative researchers. In this study, thematic schemes are developed not only through the inductive process of data reduction, but also through the deductive approach of metaphorical analysis. That said, I adopt a hybrid method of inductive and deductive analysis to interpret empirical data and to identify major themes. Table 9.1 on the next page lists the metaphors embedded in focal teachers' narratives.

Table 9.1

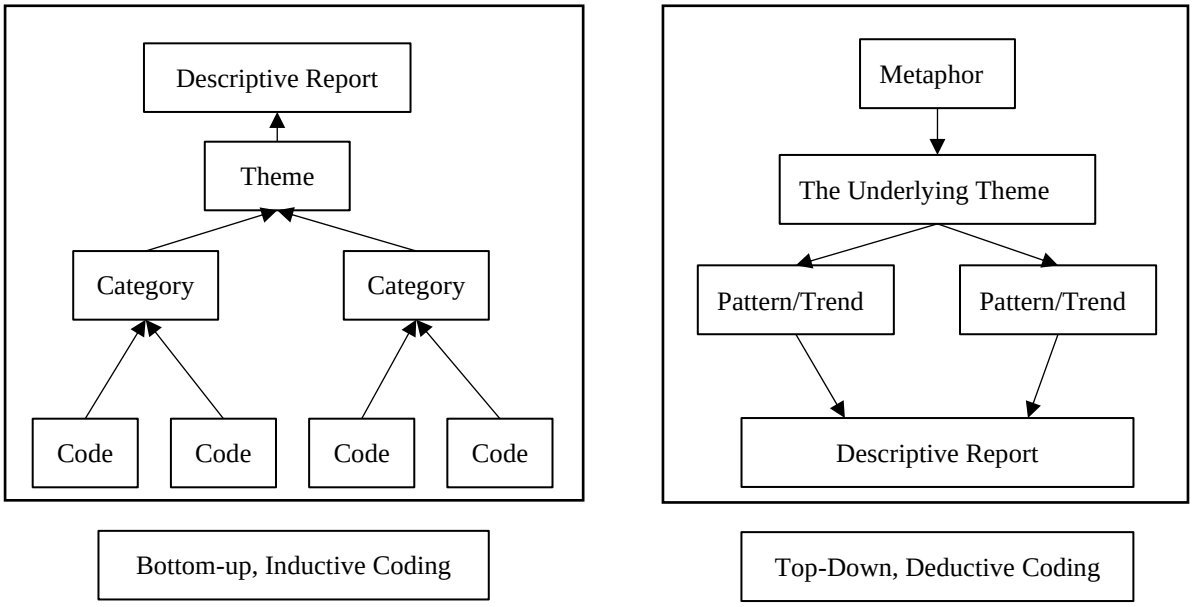
The Metaphors Embedded in Participants' Narratives

Metaphors	Meanings	The Underlying Themes
One-Eye Monkeys	The teacher who assimilates himself/herself into school norms, and thereby turns a blind eye to student-centered learning.	Teacher Socialization
The Step-Mother Class	The classroom that mainly serves disadvantaged youth often experiences within-year turnover. The step-teacher who takes over the class is like a step-mother, struggling to win the hearts of vulnerable children abandoned by the former teacher. Because of its difficult-to-teach feature, this classroom tends to be disregarded by experienced teachers.	Teacher Alienation
Heavenly Teaching Positions	The school positions of practical-subject teaching that can largely exclude student-related affairs are likened to Heaven. Given their relatively lower workload, such posts of practical-subject teaching are seen as the most desirable jobs in Taiwan's primary schools and, then, are aggressively pursued by alienated teachers.	Teacher Alienation
Chameleon-Like Teachers	Critical focal teachers who perform like a social chameleon strategically engage in impression management as a way to negotiate competing pedagogical priorities, so that they can preserve their valued beliefs from collegial influence while juggling school demands.	Teacher Negotiation

It is quite common to see qualitative researchers identify emergent themes with a bottom-up coding approach when analyzing the data (as shown in the left panel of Figure 9.1 on page 203). It occurs less frequently in qualitative research that data analysts look for participant-generated metaphors and further deduce the underlying themes behind them (Ryan & Bernard, 2003) (see the right panel of Figure 9.1).

Figure 9.1

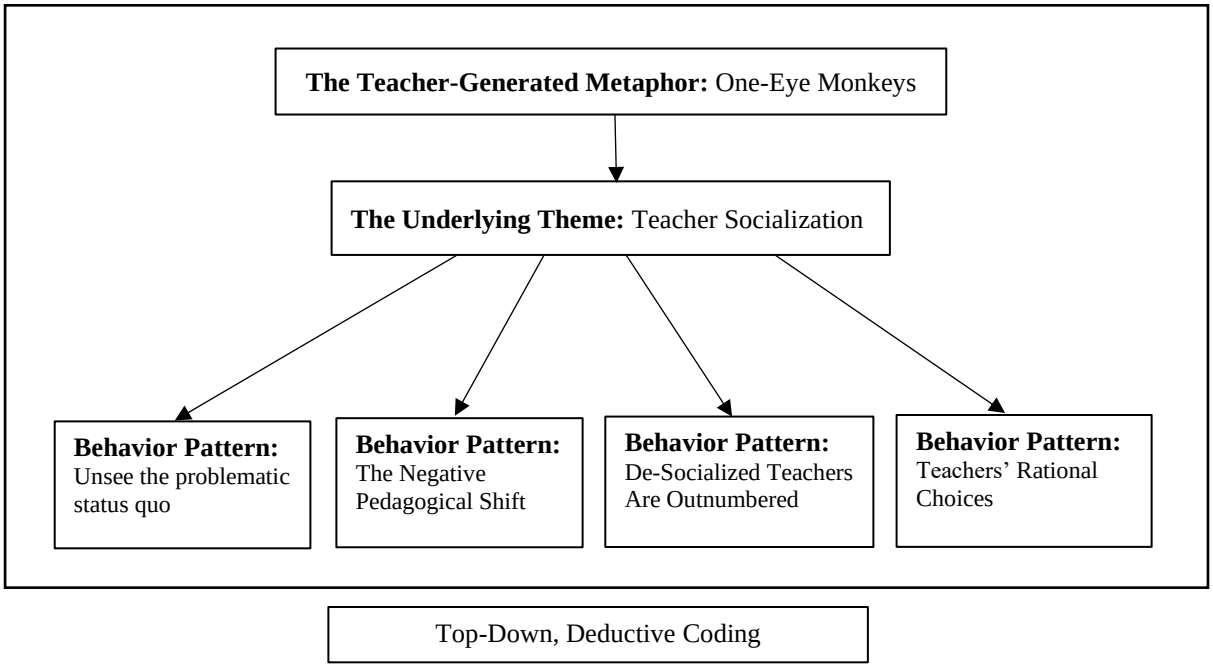
The Comparison Between the Bottom-Up Coding and The Metaphorical Coding



In this study, I illustrate that deductive coding – searching the metaphors created by participating teachers and linking them to theoretical concepts elicited from the reviewed literature, such as the notions of teacher alienation and teacher socialization – can offer an entry point for theme identification. For instance, Teacher B, a male sixth-grade teacher in this study, portrayed the symptom of socialized teachers with the metaphor of one-eye monkeys, of which the underlying theme has to do with the idea of teacher socialization, and four behavior patterns of socialized teachers are accordingly manifested (as shown in Figure 9.2 on page 204). In light of this, linguistic metaphors may guide qualitative researchers to capture participants' emic points of view, and to explore the focal phenomenon from an insider's perspective. Briefly, my efforts to make sense of metaphors shared by the focal teachers allow me to discover underlying themes in a deductive manner, which provides a valuable lesson for future qualitative studies.

Figure 9.2

The Deductive Coding with the Metaphor of One-Eye Monkeys



9.1.3 Pedagogical Implications for Primary Classroom Practices

This study has revealed that the ways how critical focal teachers negotiate restrictive school demands vary by the subjects they teach. Practical-subject teachers, such as Teacher G and J, who needn't teach to testing take advantage of the pedagogical freedom tied with their discipline areas to address taboo issues in a transformative manner. The academic-subject teacher, Teacher K whose classroom instruction is heavily constrained by testing and mandated curriculum, seeks like-minded, intimate colleagues to instigate critical teamwork, in which each team member is ardently cooperative and takes a supporting role in effecting pedagogical changes that interrupt classroom routines. As discussed previously, the existing literature on real-world implementation of critical pedagogy is excessively geared toward portraying the successful struggles of single teachers that teach academic subjects and, therefore, little attention has been given to the lived experiences of critical teachers that take charge of non-academic, practical courses, and of those

who initiate collective actions for student empowerment. Since this study documents the critical practices of practical-subject teachers – Teacher G and I – who make good use of marginality tied with their discipline areas, and also considers the critical teamwork performed by the core-subject teacher – Teacher K – that utilizes social bonds of sisterhood as the foundation for teacher collaboration, my findings may meaningfully inform future Freirean studies regarding the negotiation strategies of non-academic-subject teachers and the collective struggles among a group of like-minded instructors. More specifically, this study highlights the crucial role of social bonding – sisterhood – plays in creating a supportive teacher community. It also emphasizes the necessity of curricular marginality for successful critical pedagogical practices. Freirean scholars that are concerned about primary classroom practices of critical pedagogy, I contend, can use the lessons gained to spur further investigation into the aforesaid, understudied issues.

9.2 Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

This study primarily focuses on critical pedagogical practices of Taiwan's primary teachers and recruits twelve in-service teachers from working-class backgrounds or from middle-class households as participants. Accordingly, my work is restricted in scope by geographic location, participant traits, and the level of schooling. First, this study was conducted in the context of Taiwan so that my findings could not represent all the voices of primary teachers in Asia. This highlights a need for more studies undertaken in other East Asian countries, like China, Japan, and South Korea, whose schooling systems are similarly influenced by the ideologies of Confucianism and credentialism – as discussed earlier, these Asian traditions operate as potential barriers to the implementation of critical pedagogy in Taiwan's primary schools. An insightful comparative study might also be done regarding the pedagogical differences between Asian teachers and their Western counterparts – whose classroom practices are less affected by the

aforementioned ideologies – as far as critical teaching is concerned. Second, this study purposely recruited teacher participants that came from working-class or from middle-class families, and excluded subjects who belonged to a racial minority group. It is possible that racial minority teachers might make up their minds to teach critically – just as working-class teachers did in this study – through reflecting on past, undesirable schooling experiences. Since my work does not elaborate on the role of race in the development of teacher reflection, it serves as a reminder that racial identity might be a facilitating factor that drives minority teachers to perform differently from their mainstream colleagues, and that more research is needed concerning the impact of teachers' race on their critical pedagogical practices. Third, this study concentrated on primary education and did not extend investigation into secondary schools, in which, according to Kalogrides, Loeb, and Béteille (2013), the inhumane practices of ability grouping and tracking that worked against critical pedagogy often occurred. To this end, there exists a need for future efforts that examine the struggles of secondary teachers who overcome harsh limit-situations so as to teach critically. This can spark insightful conversations around how critical pedagogy finds its way into middle and high schools. In sum, as the impact of Freire's work on public education continues to grow, and judging from my study limitations mentioned above, I suggest that future researchers who are concerned about the implementation of critical pedagogy in public schools can attempt to conduct case studies in other East Asian countries, carry out a comparative analysis of critical pedagogy enacted by Asian teachers and their Western peers, include racial monitory teachers as subjects, and stretch out investigations into secondary education. In so doing, relevant research outcomes may help to complicate and enrich our understandings about the possible fit between critical pedagogy and public schools worldwide.

9.3 Final Words: The Art of Teacher Adaptability in Critical Teaching

Teaching is often seen as a form of art in that good teachers are good performers creatively engaging students in classroom activities and skillfully accommodating instruction to learners' diverse needs (Torres, 2015). In the case of critical teaching, then, it needs to be presented as an art of teacher adaptability, and teachers have to act like an impression manager manipulating the images they give off to the school community, as this study has shown. Simply put, the focal teachers who face harsh limit-situations tied with academic-subject instruction intentionally de-prioritize critical pedagogy and then display it in a compromised manner. When addressing non-academic subjects that operate as modest limit-situations and are structured by relatively weak institutional control, those teachers manifestly embody critical pedagogy in everyday teaching. Such adaptive, chameleon-like struggles make it possible for focal teachers to behave as the kind of critical pedagogue they aspire to be, but still fit in socially with other mainstream colleagues. This sort of teacher negotiation characterized by hybridity and strategic compromise, I argue, is a precondition for critical teaching that takes place in the hostile school environment, which could be understood as the representing of critical teachership[41] that ensures teacher survival in an attempt to teach against the grain.

Critical pedagogy, this study shows, can and does occur in Taiwan's primary schools where the banking model of education is dominant. Nevertheless, the premise is that critical teachers must master the art of adaptability and behave like social chameleons adapting their cherished interests to situational demands. Such chameleon-like teachers, I advocate, are the right kind of instructors needed by critical pedagogy that seeks to find its way into public schools.

[41] Graber (1989) coined the term of "studentship" to wrap up the tactics – such as fronting and cheating – that student teachers adopted to complete their training programs easily and successfully. Relatively, in this study, I create the notion of "critical teachership" to encapsulate the negotiation strategies that critical focal teachers employ to safely and successfully extend critical pedagogy into their workplaces.

APPENDICES

Appendix A. The Semi-Structured Interview Protocol

1. Background Questions

a) Could you tell me about your educational journey, from grade school through college?

b) Why did you make a decision to enter primary teaching?

c) Where did you receive your teacher training? What did you learn from it?

d) Describe your understanding of critical pedagogy.

2. Questions Regarding Teacher Preferences Toward Where to Teach and Whom to Teach

a) What is your career goal in teaching? How will you plan to pursue it?

b) If you can choose any position in your school, which position is your favorite? Why?

c) If you can determine the students you teach, what kind of student is your favorite? Why?

d) Do you like to take over the class with many disadvantaged students? Why? Or Why not?

3. Questions Regarding Teacher Preferences Toward What to Teach and How to Teach

a) What teaching method do you adopt most frequently? Why? How about your colleagues?

b) Do you change your teaching method during your career? Why? Or Why not?

c) How do you teach the taboo issues (e.g., Taiwan independence or LGBTQ) in class?

d) Does your classroom management focus on controlling student noises? Why? Or Why not?

4. Questions Regarding Teacher Motives Behind Critical Pedagogical Practices

a) What motivates you to exercise critical pedagogy?

b) Why do you insist on performing critical pedagogy?

c) When do you begin putting critical pedagogy into practice?

d) When you teach critically, what are the responses from your colleagues?

5. Questions Regarding Teacher Strategies Used to Exercise Critical Pedagogical Practices

a) What obstacles/challenges, if at all, have you experienced during the implementation of critical pedagogy? How have you overcome them?

b) What success have you had in extending critical pedagogy into your classroom? To what do you attribute your success?

c) What are the opportunities that you use to teach critically in the school?

Appendix B. The Informed Consent Form

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Chameleon-Like Struggles: Negotiation Strategies of Critical Teachers in Taiwan's Public Primary Schools

You are invited to join this study conducted by Jiing-Tzer Jehng, a doctoral student in Social Sciences & Comparative Education Program at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), Graduate School of Education and Information Studies, who is under the mentorship of Carlos Alberto Torres, Ph.D. You are chosen as an eligible participant in this research project because you are currently an in-service primary public-school teacher in Taiwan. Your decision to participate in this research is entirely voluntary. Whether you take part in this study or not will not influence your relationship with the researcher.

Purpose of The Study

This research project aims to conduct a phenomenological study on the critical pedagogical practices of primary teachers in Taiwan. The data you offer will help the researcher explore the ways how Taiwan's primary teachers extend critical pedagogy into their own classrooms, which will increase the representation of Asian teachers' voices in Freirean scholarship.

Procedures

If you agree to join this study, you will be asked to receive one remote interview of about 1 hour in length, which will be carried out via an online communication app, Zoom. The interview will ask you to provide information about your demographics, teaching motivation, preferences toward whom/where/what/how to teach, and efforts of exercising critical pedagogy. Also, you will be asked to provide information about the instructional materials that you currently use, and the school calendar that structures your daily routine.

The Potential Risk/Discomfort to Participants

The potential risk/discomfort of joining this study is that you might feel tired or bored when receiving the remote interview. If you do have any uncomfortable feelings during the interview process, the researcher will be open to hearing your concerns.

Potential Benefits to Participants

You may not benefit directly from joining this study, but your contributions can certainly improve the understanding of critical pedagogical practices in the context of Asian elementary

education. Moreover, your contributions may potentially generate meaningful implications for policy makers to improve teacher education programs.

Payment for Participation

You will not obtain any monetary payment. Instead, at the end of this study, you will receive a delicate gift as a thank you for your participation. In addition, you will get a hard copy of this study's final report.

Confidentiality

Your interview will be audio-recorded and then transcribed verbatim for analysis. You have the right to review, edit or erase the research tapes of your participation in whole or in part.

The researchers will do their best to make sure that your private information is kept confidential. Information about you will be handled as confidentially as possible, but participating in research may involve a loss of privacy and the potential for a breach in confidentiality. Study data will be physically and electronically secured. As with any use of electronic means to store data, there is a risk of breach of data security.

Your data, including de-identified data may be kept for use in future research.

Participation and Withdrawal

If you choose to join this study, you can withdraw your consent and discontinue your participation at any time. There will be no penalty if you do leave the study early. You may refuse to answer some of the interview questions but still stay in this research project.

Identification of The Researcher

If you have any questions, comments or concerns about the participation, please feel free to contact:

- Jiing-Tzer Jehng, PhD student, Social Sciences & Comparative Education Program, Graduate School of Education and Information Studies, University of California, Los Angeles. 530 Veteran Avenue #209A, Los Angeles, California 90024, (323) 823-6917.

Rights of Research Participants

If you have questions about your rights as a research subject, or you have concerns or suggestions and you want to talk to someone other than the researchers, you may contact the UCLA OHRPP by phone: (310) 206-2040; by email: participants@research.ucla.edu or by mail: Box 951406, Los Angeles, CA 90095-1406.

Appendix C. Examples of Interview Coding

Note: The details of each code, category, and theme are reported in the table below.

Me: If you can choose any position in your school, which position is your favorite?

Teacher A: Well, when it comes to workload, everybody always prefers the lower one. **(TPP; AFT/PD)** Then, how to make my work less burdensome? Keep myself away from students! **(TPP/WHOM; AFT/SB/ISTM)** Just that simple! As long as I need not to deal with student affairs, I can get off work on time, **(AFT/PD/NMI)** and I can have more leisure time, because I don't need to communicate with annoying parents at all after school hours. (Interview, October 16, 2021)

Me: Do you change your teaching method during your career?

Teacher E: Honestly, yes! I would say, banking education **(SFT/SN)** is like COVID, while pre-service teacher education that embraces the progressive vision of teaching is like the vaccine. In Taiwan, every teacher receives the vaccine before he/she begins the career. **(TP/TPK)** However, the vaccine-like teacher education rarely causes long-term effects on us [in-service teachers]. **(TCP/CHA)** After increasingly immersing ourselves in the profession, we [teachers] fall prey to COVID-like banking education very quickly **(SFT/SC/NPS)** in that it is much easier and much more rewarding for us to bank our students than to liberate them! **(TPP/HOW)** (Interview, October 15, 2021)

Me: Do you allow students to challenge your authority?

Teacher D: Definitely, without question. If a student publicly argues with me, I'll be respectful of his/her opinions and further ask him/her to explain the rationale. As I observe, the students

who like to challenge my authority **(SFT/SN/CC/TA)** are those coming from disadvantaged families. I tend to put myself in their shoes in that I have a disadvantaged social origin as well. **(TP; TR/TSC)**

Me: You mean, your family background has an influence on your current teaching job?

Teacher D: Exactly! Recall the days when I was a child, I often received corporal punishment from my school teachers **(TP/TB)** because I disliked following the rules set by my teachers. I was not the kind of decent students who always met teacher expectations. So, my former teachers were hardly friendly to me. Hah-hah!

Me: I see.

Teacher D: Anyhow, I don't expose my students to the authoritative education I myself have gone through. **(TR/TSC/PSE)** Otherwise, I won't forgive myself. **(TM/TC; TR/TG)** Seriously! (Interview, October 6, 2021)

Me: How do you teach beyond the textbook?

Teacher K: Um, I dislike confining student learning to classroom instruction. **(TM/TC)** I prefer to engage my students in off-campus activities. **(TPP/WHAT; TPP/HOW)**

Me: How can you do so?

Teacher K: Well, in each semester, I arrange field trips for my students at least twice a month. In order to do so, I need to get permission and support from parents in advance. **(SFT/SN/PC)**

Me: I see.

Teacher K: So, when I meet parents during the teacher-parent conference, I make a deal with them. **(TCP/OPP)**

Me: What kind of deal do you make with parents?

Teacher K: I tell parents that I'll take care of their children's test scores. I tell parents that I teach to testing. **(SFT/SN)** No children in my class will score badly on school exams. I promise parents about that. But, in return, I ask parents to agree on my planned class trips to museums and local community landmarks. **(TCP/SUC)**

Me: Sounds great!

Teacher K: But I would say, field trips that are held twice a month are the upper limit of my class. Too many class trips may negatively affect students' test scores. **(TCP/CHA)** I need to take care of both ends. **(TNS/CST/HYB)** (Interview, March 11, 2022)

Table 10.1

All Detailed Codes, Categories, and Themes Related to Participant Interviews

I. Codes and Categories Associated with Interview Protocol

MARK	CODE/CATEGORY	CODE/CATEGORY DESCRIPTION	EXAMPLE QUESTIONS
1	Teacher Profiles (TP)	The characteristics and background information of participating teachers.	This item is a category developed from the following two codes.
1.1	Teacher Biography (TP/TB)	The schooling and teaching experiences of a teacher.	"Could you tell me about your educational journey, from grade school through college?"
1.2	Teachers' Pedagogical Knowledge (TP/TPK)	The teacher's understandings about critical pedagogy.	Describe your understanding of critical pedagogy.
2	Teacher Pedagogical Preferences (TPP)	The teacher's preference toward a certain type of pedagogy over the others.	This item is a category developed from the following four codes.

2.1	Teacher Preferences on Where to Teach (TPP/WHERE)	The teacher's preference toward a certain type of school position over the others.	If you can choose any position in your school, which position is your favorite? Why?
2.2	Teacher Preferences on Whom to Teach (TPP/WHOM)	The teacher's preference toward a certain type of student over the others.	Do you like to take over the class with many neediest students? Why? Why not?
2.3	Teacher Preferences on What to Teach (TPP/WHAT)	The teacher's preference toward a certain type of instructional material over the others.	How do you address taboo issues (e.g., LGBT) in class?
2.4	Teacher Preferences on How to Teach (TPP/HOW)	The teacher's preference toward a certain type of teaching method over the others.	What kind of pedagogy do you adopt most frequently?
3	Teacher Motivation (TM)	The reasons behind teachers' willingness to engage in teaching.	This item is a category developed from the following two codes.
3.1	Teacher Motivation to Teach Primary Kids (TM/TPK)	The motives that drive participants to become a primary teacher.	Why did you decide to enter primary teaching?
3.2	Teacher Motivation to Teach Critically (TM/TC)	The motives that drive participating teachers to become a critical pedagogue.	Why do you insist on enacting critical pedagogy?
4	Teachers' Critical Pedagogical Practices (TCP)	The classroom practices of participating teachers who attempt to perform critical pedagogy.	This item is a category developed from the following three codes.
4.1	Challenges for Critical Teaching (TCP/CHA)	The factors that discourage participating teachers from exercising critical pedagogy.	What challenges have you experienced during the implementation of critical pedagogy?
4.2	Opportunities for Critical Teaching (TCP/OPP)	Structural opportunities exist in elementary schools, which enables participating teachers to engage in critical pedagogy.	What are the opportunities that you use to teach critically in the school?
4.3	Successful Practices of Critical Pedagogy (TCP/SUC)	Teacher practices that successfully engage Taiwan's primary students in critical pedagogy.	What success have you had in enacting critical pedagogy in your classroom?

II. Codes, Categories, and Themes Developed by Inductive Analysis

MARK	CODE/CATEGORY/THEME	CODE/CATEGORY/THEME DESCRIPTION	INTERVIEW EXCERPTS
5	Alienated Focal Teachers (AFT)	The focal teachers who alienate themselves from the classes that have a large number of disadvantaged students.	This item is a theme developed from the following two categories and seven codes.
5.1	Profit-Driven Teaching Motives (AFT/PD)	The focal teachers are motivated to enter the profession with profit-related reasons.	This item is a category developed from the following three codes.
5.1.1	Reluctant Welfarism (AFT/PD/RW)	Taiwan's government that embraces reluctant welfarism exclusively provides generous material rewards for public school teachers, through which the focal teachers perceive and position themselves as an economically advantaged group.	"Taiwan's government only takes care of its employees. Since I work as a public-school teacher, I never need to worry about my job security." (Teacher H, interview, October 30, 2021)
5.1.2	Monetary Rewards (AFT/PD/MR)	Financial incentives provided by Taiwan's government to attract the academically talented into the teaching profession.	"If I didn't become a music teacher right now, I could only work as a private music tutor whose pay is pretty low. Frankly, the money issue drives me into my current job." (Teacher C, interview, October 10, 2021)
5.1.3	Non-Monetary Incentives (AFT/PD/NMI)	Non-cash benefits granted by Taiwan's government to recruit high-achieving youth into the teaching profession.	"I have a good balance between work and life. According to my observation, many teachers come to teaching for such a healthy work schedule. Well, I do, too!" (Teacher I, interview, October 3, 2021)

5.2	Seniority-Based Job Placement (AFT/SB)	The focal teachers are placed to different teaching positions based on how long they are employed in a given school.	This item is a category developed from the following four codes.
5.2.1	The Confucian Doctrine of Seniority (AFT/SB/CDS)	Confucianism that emphasizes a strong concern for seniority has been adopted by Taiwan's primary school community to legitimate an informal job assignment rule governing the matter of teacher placement.	"According to my own experience, school positions are assigned to teachers mainly based on their seniority rather than on their expertise." (Teacher C, interview, October 10, 2021)
5.2.2	Intra-School Teacher Migration (AFT/SB/ISTM)	Given that a teacher's seniority status in his/her current workplace is the lone determinant for job assignment, the focal teachers often remain at a given institution to strive for more satisfactory positions.	"As soon as I changed my work location, my seniority immediately got reset to zero.… To this end, most teachers are reluctant to engage in inter-school mobility." (Teacher H, interview, October 30, 2021)
5.2.3	Sweeting-Up Career Trajectory (AFT/SB/SU)	The more senior the focal teacher, the more likely he/she is to hold the cushy position at school. As such, the focal teachers construct a sweeting-up career ladder on the basis of seniority.	"In my school, young teachers are required to take up demanding jobs while senior teachers can choose any school positions they want." (Teacher L, interview, October 8, 2021)
5.2.4	Teacher-Student Mismatch (AFT/SB/TSM)	The improper pairing between inexperienced teachers and disadvantaged students.	"At school, teachers dislike teaching a class that has many disadvantaged students.… So, usually new teachers have to take it." (Teacher A, interview, October 16, 2021)

6	Socialized Focal Teachers (SFT)	The focal teachers that socialize themselves into school norms and perform as custodians of the status quo.	This item is a theme developed from the following two categories and twelve codes.
6.1	School Norms of Teach-To-Testing (SFT/SN)	The external socializing forces in Taiwan's primary schools that guide teacher conduct, which are marked by the emphasis on the pedagogical practices of rote learning and classroom control.	This item is a category developed from the following seven codes.
6.1.1	The Belief of Credentialism (SFT/SN/BC)	The social norm fueled by Taiwan's exam-driven education system, which presumes school success as the key to a rewarding career.	"The belief of credentialism has been ingrained in parents' minds.… Most parents cannot accept the low scores performed by their children on school exams." (Teacher B, interview, October 23, 2021)"
6.1.2	Parental Choice of Schools (SFT/SN/PC)	The educational choices made by parents to determine where to enroll their children in school.	"My salary all comes from students. Needless to say, no students, no teachers.… Nowadays our school education has been turned into a form of business, in which parents tend to seek the schools that can meet their needs." (Teacher H, interview, October 30, 2021)
6.1.3	Classroom Control Techniques (SFT/SN/CC)	A variety of tactics that the focal teachers use to keep their students focused on classroom instruction.	"I have only one mouth, but my 23 students have 23 mouths. So, if my students don't close their mouths, I cannot proceed through textbook lessons as scheduled." (Teacher E, interview, October 15, 2021)

6.1.3.1	Maintaining Classroom Quietness (SFT/SN/CC/CQ)	The focal teachers reduce classroom noise levels to ensure that teaching activities run smoothly as scheduled.	"The classroom needs to be quiet. If students keep talking to each other, my class may lag behind schedule." (Teacher H, interview, October 30, 2021)
6.1.3.2	Establishing Teacher Authority (SFT/SN/CC/TA)	The focal teachers create an authoritarian classroom atmosphere to facilitate student engagement in teacher-centered instruction.	"A teacher definitely needs to establish absolute authority over students at the beginning of the school year, so that students are more likely to do what the teacher asks them to do." (Teacher B, interview, October 23, 2021)
6.1.3.3	Speed-Up Habits of Textbook Instruction (SFT/SN/SU)	The focal teachers have students proceed their textbook learning at an accelerated pace so as to preserve more in-class time for implementing pre-exam quizzes.	"I imitated the teaching habits of senior colleagues who usually handled textbooks at a rapid pace and granted students more in-class time to do mock exams." (Teacher E, interview, October 15, 2021)
6.1.3.4	Highlighting Textbook Passages (SFT/SN/CC/HT)	The focal teachers have students underline the main points of class readings with colored ink, which functions as a visual reminder for rote learning and drill exercises.	"Whenever I teach a social studies class, I always ask my students to underline textbook passages that are crucial for exam preparation." (Teacher H, interview, October 30, 2021)

6.2	The School Culture of Mediocrity (SFT/SC)	The internal socializing force prevalent in Taiwan's primary schools, which disciplines the teacher community from within, boosting so-so teaching outputs and also encouraging teacher neutrality in the face of taboo issues.	This item is a category developed from the following five codes.
6.2.1	The Confucian Legacy of Zhong Yong (SFT/SC/ZY)	Zhong Yong has been regarded by Confucian scholars as a prime virtue of social life, which emphasizes moderation and harmony.	"Since a long time ago, Confucius has taught us that a well-behaved person is the one who can comply with the conduct code of Zhong Yong. It is the traditional Chinese virtue, which encourages people to behave modestly and humbly in order to avoid triggering public hostility against them." (Teacher C, interview, October 10, 2021)
6.2.2	The So-So Teaching Performance (SFT/SC/SS)	The teaching performance delivered by focal teachers celebrates mediocrity and confines teacher engagement to routine work.	"To keep my classroom undisturbed and to reduce my workload, I have chosen to distance myself from critical pedagogy.…just as many of my colleagues have done in this school." (Teacher E, interview, October 15, 2021)
6.2.3	Social Exclusion of Critical Colleagues (SFT/SC/SE)	The focal teachers who exercise critical pedagogy are socially excluded by their conservative colleagues.	"In my school, if a teacher likes to teach creatively or critically, he/she will be seen as a thorn in the flesh. This is because his/her outstanding performance makes other colleagues feel threatened." (Teacher B, interview, October 23, 2021)

6.2.4	Teacher Neutrality (SFT/SC/TN)	The stance of neutrality adopted by the focal teachers who meticulously avoid classroom conversations around political topics and other controversial issues.	"I always remain silent on students' political questions. At school, I'm apolitical. I refuse to express my political views in the classroom." (Teacher E, interview, October 15, 2021)
6.2.5	Negative Pedagogical Shift of Focal Teachers (SFT/SC/NPS)	The focal teachers experience the reversal of pedagogical beliefs – from progressive to traditional –as they gain greater seniority within the focal schools.	"When I began my career, I liked to engage students in classroom discussions.… But, after that, if not necessary, I would not let students discuss too much during my class." (Teacher L, Interview, October 8, 2021)
7	Teacher Reflection (TR)	The reflective thinking developed by focal teachers who critically question problematic school reality and commit themselves to teaching against the grain.	This item is a theme developed from the following two categories and two codes.
7.1	Teachers' Social-Class Profiles Matter (TR/TSC)	The development of teacher reflection essential for facilitating critical pedagogy varies by teachers' social-class profiles.	This item is a category developed from the following two codes.
7.1.1	Reflection on Negative Colleagues (TR/TSC/NC)	Critical focal teachers who have a middle-class origin see other mainstream colleagues as negative role models, by which they determine to teach critically and perform differently from the instructors around them.	"Honestly, I see many of my colleagues as negative.… I require myself to behave differently from my colleagues. I push myself to take over the class that is disregarded by my colleagues." (Teacher K, interview, October 17, 2021)

7.1.2	Reflection on Past Schooling Experiences (TR/TSC/PSE)	Critical focal teachers who come from working-class backgrounds make up their minds to enact critical pedagogy through reflecting on their past, traumatic schooling experiences.	"When I was a school-aged kid, I encountered many bad teachers. So, I teach critically in order to behave differently from those bad teachers who taught me before." (Teacher G, interview, October 9, 2021)
7.2	Teacher Guilt (TR/TG)	It is the guilt-ridden mindset that critical focal teachers may have when being required to comply with conservative school norms.	This item is a category also associated with two codes above. "I don't expose my students to the authoritative education I myself have gone through. Otherwise, I won't forgive myself!" (Teacher D, interview, October 6, 2021)
8	Teacher Negotiation Strategies (TNS)	The coping strategies that center around the techniques of impression management are employed by critical focal teachers to negotiate the tension between their critical interests and the institutional constraints around them.	This item is a theme developed from the following two categories and five codes.
8.1	Strategies of Core-Subject Teachers (TNS/CST)	The negotiation strategies adopted by academic-subject teachers whose teaching practices are bounded by school exams.	This item is a category developed from the following three codes.
8.1.1	The Inside/Outside Strategy (TNS/CST/IO)	The teacher strategy that presents critical pedagogy selectively in time and space which are bounded by relatively weak institutional control.	"My strategy is that, with my colleagues around, I behave like a mother-like teacher. Then, within my own classroom, I act as a sister-like teacher." (Teacher K, interview, March 11, 2022)

8.1.2	The Hybrid Strategy (TNS/CST/HYB)	The teacher strategy that focuses on seeking the balance between critical teaching and student achievement.	"I adopt three-to-one principle to teach critically. In my natural science class, 30 minutes are used for textbook instruction. For the rest of 10 minutes, I teach beyond the textbook." (Teacher F, interview, March 12, 2022)
8.1.3	The Strategic Alliance (TNS/CST/SA)	The teacher strategy that focuses on seeking like-minded, intimate colleagues to instigate critical teamwork.	"My school has three female teachers whom I have an intimate relationship with. We develop an intimacy group. We call ourselves as Flower Four.…We find comfort in each other. We trust each other. This is why we can develop our own curriculum to fit the needs of immigrant students." (Teacher K, interview, March 11, 2022)
8.2	Strategies of Practical-Subject Teachers (TNS/PST)	The negotiation strategies adopted by non-academic-subject teachers whose instructions were not bounded by mandated curriculum and standardized testing.	This item is a category developed from the following two codes.
8.2.1	The Marginality Strategy (TNS/PST/MAR)	The teacher strategy that exploits the marginal status of practical subjects to lift controversial topics onto the classroom table.	"The practical-subject teacher has lots of freedom. In my case, I don't need to deal with student-related affairs. I can fully focus on designing my own curricular activities." (Teacher J, interview, March 18, 2022)

8.2.2	The Transformative Strategy (TNS/PST/TRA)	The teacher strategy that softens the hard edges of taboo issues in order to render critical pedagogy highly tolerable to the school community.	“Because teachers are not allowed to directly teach the issue of sexual diversity at school. I make an adjustment to it. I focus some of my art lessons on challenging gender norms.” (Teacher G, interview, March 5, 2022)

Appendix D. Gail Jefferson's Transcription Notations Adopted in This Study

Table 10.2

The Meanings of Jefferson's Transcription Symbols Used in This Study

Symbol	Meanings and How They Are Used
[word]	Square brackets mark the overlap between the speech of the interviewer and that of the interviewee.
(.)	A dot enclosed in parentheses connotes a brief pause between the speaker's utterances, which lasts less than 0.2 seconds
(0.5)	The number enclosed in parentheses refers to the speaker's short silence in tenths of a second. In this case, (0.5) means a half-second pause in speech.
word	The underscore sign denotes that the spoken word is stressed by the talker with increased volume or with higher pitch.
WORD	Capital letters indicate the speaker's loud talk.
word::	Colons are used to represent the stretched sound.
word= =word	Equal signs used in pairs signify the linkage between two utterances spoken by the same speaker.
>word<	Inward arrows indicate the accelerated pace of the speaker's talk.
<word>	Outward arrows indicate the decelerated pace of the speaker's talk.
°word°	Degree signs are used to mark the low-volume speech.
((word))	The word enclosed in double parentheses refers to the transcriber's comment or description.
word↑	The upward arrow indicates a rising pitch in an utterance
word↓	The downward arrow indicates a falling pitch in an utterance
→word	The side arrow is used to highlight a specific line of the transcript that can be presented as supporting evidence to justify the analyst's claims.

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