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Taiwan's New Citizenship Curriculum: Changes and Challenges

Shiowlan DOONG

Introduction

Every curriculum has a particular educational function that upholds the values of educational developers and society at large. In the past, due to the military confrontation between the two sides bordering the Taiwan Strait and its concerns over national security, Taiwan developed a very rigid, centralised school curriculum to control educational processes and practices. After the suspension of martial law in 1987 and the subsequent advent of free speech and a free press, increasing public criticism has been made of Taiwan's education for its inflexibility and for failing to cope with the particular needs of Taiwan's rapidly changing society. In response to public expectations and national development needs, the Ministry of Education (MOE) has adopted some measures to deal with problems in different aspects of the educational system. The development of a curriculum for citizenship education, i.e., the nine-year integrated curriculum for social studies, is one of those measures. This new curriculum not only redefines the field of citizenship education at the elementary and junior high school levels, but also changes dramatically what the field used to be in terms of scope and sequence, school and classroom practice, and the like.

This chapter seeks to explore Taiwan's citizenship curriculum development, implementation and major challenges, focusing on the elementary and junior high school levels. The analysis presented in this chapter encompasses five critical aspects. First, the analysis inquires into the contexts and underlying values of citizenship curriculum in Taiwan. Second, the analysis of the development of citizenship curriculum distinguishes between three periods and discusses these in turn. Third, the analysis examines the implementation of the current citizenship curriculum reform. Fourth, it focuses on the controversies and challenges confronting Taiwan's new citizenship curriculum. Finally, suggestions are made regarding what needs to be done in citizenship education in order to help resolve the above issues.

The Cultural and Sociopolitical Contexts

Taiwan's population (22.6 million) is comprised almost entirely of Han Chinese, with the

exception of over 450,000 indigenous people (Ministry of Interior, 2004).ⁱ Historically, Taiwan has been an island of immigrants. Early Han Chinese immigrants were principally from two groups: the Fujianese, from China's southeastern coastal province of Fujian, and the Hakka, mostly from Guangdong Province.ⁱⁱ Together, these two groups are referred to as "native Taiwanese." The last group of immigrants came to Taiwan from various parts of China with the Kuomintang (KMT, also known as the Nationalist Party) in 1949. This group is generally referred to as "mainlanders."ⁱⁱⁱ

Chinese Culture Heritage

When the early Han Chinese immigrants came to Taiwan, they brought with them Chinese lifestyles and cultural traditions. Chinese culture comprises a variety of philosophical systems such as Confucianism, Taoism, Buddhism and the like. Of these, Confucianism has been the most influential.

Based on Confucianism, traditional moral behaviour was governed by relations and respect. Confucius proposed five moral roles in human relations: the relationships between ruler and ruled, father and son, older brother and younger brother, husband and wife, and friend and friend. Each is set forth as a pair of social statuses with rights and duties that obtain between them. The first in each pair is to be benevolent to the second, and the second is to be loyal to the first. Consequently, a person's value and identity could be secured or identified only in relation to a complex web of social relationships; loyalty, obedience, filial piety, conformity and sincerity are the values emphasised in Chinese society. Thus, it is argued that Confucianism, as well as Chinese society, has a strong tendency toward collectivism (Ip, 1996).

In order to build a harmonious and peaceful society based on moral rules governing human relations, Confucianism also places great emphasis on education. Confucius believed that the purpose of education was to cultivate decency and benevolence in students and that it is of great importance to teach ethical and moral values to the young. Furthermore, it was Confucius' view that all people should have an equal and fair chance to succeed in education. His view later led to the development of an open, meritocratic examination system in the Han Dynasty (206 BC-AD 220). This examination system was the basis of the educational system and served as a means of potential upward mobility that still prevails in Taiwan today. It also impacts heavily on the way the curriculum is implemented in the classroom.

Japanese Colonialism

In 1895 Taiwan was ceded to the Empire of Japan under the Treaty of Shimonoseki after the Sino-Japanese War and became a Japanese colony for 50 years till the end of World War II. The goal of Japanese colonialism in Taiwan was to establish a unified and easily managed industrialised society from which Japan could reap benefits. Therefore the Japanese rulers engaged in remarkable efforts to develop Taiwan's industry, creating the first system of national public schools and enforcing the use of the Japanese language as

the sole medium of communication and instruction in Taiwan (Chen, 1968; Kiang, 1992; Smith, 1991; Tsurumi, 1977).

Although Taiwan was oppressed and subject to the rule of force at that time, Japanese colonialism had a critical influence on the development of Taiwan society. First, the rapid expansion of industrialisation improved standards of living across the island, creating an expanding middle-class and bringing about a Taiwanese lifestyle that differed strongly from that of the traditional Chinese lifestyle on the Mainland (Kiang, 1992). Second, before Japanese colonial control, the Fujianese, the Hakka and the Indigenous Taiwanese often could not understand one another's language. The language training imposed by the Japanese on the Taiwanese people, however, produced a common medium of communication among the Taiwanese. Also, the imposition of Japanese history and values taught in local schools served to further distinguish the knowledge the Taiwanese acquired from that of the Chinese. Together, these influences gradually created a new sense of Taiwanese consciousness differing from that of the Mainland Chinese (Kiang, 1992), and this eventually became the origin of the conflicts over national identity found in today's Taiwanese society.

Sociopolitical Transformation

Taiwan was returned to the Republic of China (ROC) under the leadership of the KMT in 1945. Nevertheless, Japanese colonial approaches distanced the Taiwanese locals from their former Mainland counterparts, and the February 28 Incident^{iv} escalated the hostility between the locals and the new arrivals from the Mainland.

The KMT government withdrew from continental China to Taiwan in 1949 after being defeated by the Communist regime in the civil war. Under immense and continuous threat from the Communist regime, the KMT government resolved to develop Taiwan into a fortress in the Taiwan Strait and to achieve national development through a series of measures. The KMT transplanted the constitution and state structure of the ROC from Mainland China to Taiwan. The main purpose of this measure was to maintain the fiction that Taiwan was a province of the ROC and the KMT regime was its sole legitimate government (Chen, 1997). In addition, mass media and education were used to (a) eradicate Japanese influence, (b) re-identify with Chinese tradition, (c) inculcate Taiwanese people with the concept of Taiwan as a bastion of anticommunism, (d) instil a nationalist spirit in the people, and (e) reinforce the legitimacy of the KMT regime (Chen, 1997; Xu, 1993). Moreover, martial law was imposed to direct control of Taiwan by the military and to suppress all organisations, groups and activities challenging the leadership of the KMT.

In the 1980s, a political transition began to take place in Taiwan. This transition can be characterised by two related directions: democratisation and Taiwanisation. The development of these two directions is intertwined with the KMT's striving to maintain its leadership of Taiwan and the issue of Taiwan's national identity.

Democratisation. The KMT maintained authoritarian rule by enforcing martial law for four decades. It was not until the mid-1980s that a series of critical events gave rise to

the dawn of a political transition. The KMT took a series of democratisation measures to ease the increasing challenges from a grass-roots movement of political opposition. The first political opposition party in Taiwan, the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), was established in 1986. One year later, martial law was lifted, which led to more liberalisation measures, including the abolition of bans on the mass media, official tolerance for public demonstrations, legalisation of public discussion of Taiwan's independence, and the institutionalisation of multiparty competition in elections. On March 18, 2000, the citizens of Taiwan voted to choose the first president from the DPP, Chen Shuibian, who advocates the independence of Taiwan. The peaceful transfer of power from the KMT to the DPP indicated Taiwan's political transition from an authoritarian dictatorship to a pluralistic representative system. The democratisation also resulted in the loosening of the government's central control and the gradual formation of an autonomous civil society. Different pressure groups have emerged that have played a more active role in the discussions and formulation of public policies, which eventually led to the recent educational reform in Taiwan.

Taiwanisation. After being expelled from the United Nations in 1971, the KMT began to employ a policy of Taiwanisation to promote the idea of Taiwan as homeland of Taiwan's people. Therefore, more native Taiwanese were recruited into the higher echelons of the state structure. Especially the promotion of Lee Tenghui in 1984 to become the first native Taiwanese Vice-President, and later President and leader of the KMT in 1988, were important milestones. After taking up the presidential office, Lee started to redefine the national identity of Taiwanese people, and marginalise the political claims of his KMT predecessors to the leadership of the KMT over the whole of China. It was the first time the KMT recognised the fact of a "divided China." Since then the consciousness of Taiwan as an independent political entity has been stressed and is carried on by President Chen Shuibian. This development also further deepened the conflicts over national identity among the Taiwanese people and influenced the curriculum reform concerning citizenship.

The Development of the Citizenship Curriculum

Citizenship curriculum is political by its nature. The knowledge that becomes embodied in the citizenship curriculum is a significant historical and sociopolitical artefact (Kliebard, 1992). The development of citizenship curriculum in Taiwan also corresponds to Taiwan's sociopolitical transition, for which three main periods can be distinguished: the nationalistic citizenship curriculum (1950s to mid-1980s), the transitional citizenship curriculum (mid-1980 to 1990s), and the integrated citizenship curriculum (2000 to present).

The Nationalistic Citizenship Curriculum

The period of the nationalistic citizenship curriculum in Taiwan was obviously bound by Taiwan's politics and Chinese culture. Because of the strong tendency towards collec-

tivism in Chinese culture heritage and out of concern for national security, during this period Taiwan developed a very rigid, centralised educational curriculum to control educational processes and practice. Taiwan's central government has long played an important and decisive role in education. It has engaged in substantial efforts to shape its contents and methodology via national standards and unified government-published textbooks. The MOE was authorised to set up national curriculum standards to guide most educational activities. All textbooks were published by the National Institute for Compilation and Translation (NICT), a governmental educational institute under the MOE. Besides, due to the desire to eradicate Japanese influence, re-identify with Chinese tradition and the view to "reconstruct the Mainland in the future" held by the late President Chiang Kaishek^v, the citizenship curriculum had a strong China-centred and anticommunist orientation.

In 1953, Chiang Kaishek published *The Supplementary Statements on Education and Recreation for the Principle of Livelihood*, in which he defined and analysed the goals, scope and contents of citizenship education. Taiwan's citizenship curriculum was guided by this document for decades (Huang & Chiu, 1991). Chiang argued that education was responsible for the KMT government's being defeated by the Chinese communists. The failure of education on the Mainland was especially related to the fact that young people lacked national spirit and did not truly understand traditional Chinese moral virtues and the Three Principles of the People (Tsai, 2002), the teaching of Dr Sun Yatsen that became the foundation of the ROC. From this point of view, citizenship curriculum should place emphasis on fostering students' national spirit and moral values, based upon the teaching of Dr Sun Yatsen and Chinese culture heritage. This view of citizenship curriculum, which centred on a nationalistic education, was clearly reflected in an official document of the Ministry of Education (1972):

In our education, common courses shall be based both on the teaching of Dr. Sun Yatsen and on the Eight Chinese Moral Virtues: loyalty, filial piety, mercifulness, love, faithfulness, righteousness, harmony, and peacefulness. (p.3)

School subjects related to citizenship curriculum included "Life and Ethics" and "Social Studies" in the elementary school, along with "Civics and Morality," "History," and "Geography" at the junior high level. These subjects generally aimed at developing students' (a) understanding of the development of the Chinese nation and the change of its territory, (b) understanding of the importance of Taiwan as a base for recovering Mainland China, (c) appreciation of Chinese superior nationality and national spirit, (d) comprehension of the teachings of Sun Yatsen and Chiang Kaishek and their contribution to the nation, (e) willingness to love and build the local community and the nation, and (f) appreciation of Chinese culture, modern world culture and democracy. The content of each subject is summarised as follows (Ministry of Education, 1975, 1983):

- Life and Ethics: 18 key moral virtues, including filial piety, diligence, cooperation, observance of the law, bravery, patriotism, honesty, frugality, respon-

- sibility, sense of shame, perseverance, justice, peace, etc.
- Social Studies: knowledge of history, geography, civics and government, as well as the teachings of Sun Yatsen and Chiang Kaishek
 - Civics and Morality: civic knowledge regarding education, society, politics, economics, law, and culture, along with “Code of Daily Life Behaviour” which encompassed moral virtues similar to those of “Life and Ethics” at the elementary level
 - History: national (China) history, world history; a very small portion of post-1949 Taiwan history was covered in national history
 - Geography: national (China) geography, world geography; a very small portion of Taiwan geography was covered in national geography

In sum, from the 1950s to the mid-1980s, the policy of “Recovery of the Mainland” had a significant impact on the design of citizenship curriculum. Education was to become a “symbolic battlefield” in fighting against Communism (Tsai, 2002). Thus, citizenship curriculum in this period was regarded as a means of building a “mental defence” that protected Taiwan through an invisible fortress of loyalty and an ever-present sentinel of caution in every citizen’s mind. It legitimised the ruling authority of the KMT government and built national identity in Taiwan’s people by cultivating students’ appreciation of Chinese culture heritage and the teachings of Sun Yatsen and Chiang Kaishek. The content of the curriculum was China-centred, ideology-driven and morality-based. The primary intent of the curriculum was to inculcate students with the so-called responsibilities of recovering lost territory and freeing their compatriots in the Motherland and ending their enslavement by the evil communists. As a result, although the development of democratic citizenship was cited in the curriculum standards, the cultivation of loyal citizens who were law-abiding, patriotic and respected the government’s authority was indeed the real focus of citizenship curriculum in this period (Doong, 2002). It was nationalistic and by its very nature a case of moral education.

The Transitional Citizenship Curriculum

With the termination of martial law in 1987, the opposition determined to challenge and change the KMT-monopolised education system. From the opposition’s perspective, the educational establishment in Taiwan was one of the most conservative institutions utilised by the KMT as a means of brainwashing and political socialisation. Citizenship curriculum was especially criticised for indoctrinating students with the authoritarian nationalist ideology (Wu, 1998). Meanwhile, in 1988, the power of the KMT government was passed to Lee Tenghui. Because of Lee’s background and attitude towards national identity,^{vi} the government took several major steps to “de-Sinicise” the citizenship curriculum. The revision of citizenship curriculum standards in 1993 (elementary level) and 1994 (junior high level) emphasised nationalistic education and ideological indoctrination much less. Nationalistic terminology, such as “Chinese superior nationality,” “national spirit,” “anticommunism” and “recovering Mainland China” was

downplayed or even excluded from the curriculum. Instead, space was created for local identities, issues and characteristics, which had been suppressed in the past, to be reinstated, such as the history of pre-1949 Taiwan, local ethnic identity and local cultures.

There were changes made in the school subjects related to citizenship curriculum during this period. At the elementary level, “Life and Ethics” was merged with “Health Education” into a new subject titled “Morality and Health.” In addition, because of the rise of Taiwanese consciousness, two new subjects were officially incorporated into school citizenship curriculum, “Homeland Studies” for elementary level from third to sixth grades and “Understanding Taiwan” for junior high level in seventh grade. These two subjects were regarded as remedies for students’ lack of knowledge of local history, geography, culture and the contemporary development of Taiwan. Also, due to the teaching of “Understanding Taiwan” in seventh grade, “Civics and Morality,” “History,” and “Geography” were taught only in eighth and ninth grades. The following points summarise the content of the citizenship-related subjects in the transitional period (Ministry of Education, 1993a, 1994):

- Morality and Health: 8 key moral virtues, including filial piety, observance of the law, patriotism, honesty, frugality, humanity, courtesy, and justice
- Social Studies: history, geography and social sciences regarding individual, family, school, local community, Taiwan, China and the world
- Civics and Morality: social sciences, knowledge of anthropology, sociology, psychology, political science, economics, law and culture, along with “Codes of Daily Life Behaviour” which encompassed honesty, patriotism, observance of the law, humanity, filial piety, courtesy, frugality, justice, social morality, responsibility, cooperation, and respect
- Understanding Taiwan: Taiwan’s society, geography, and history
- History: national (China) history and world history
- Geography: national (China) geography and world geography

Comparing this list to the citizenship curriculum in the nationalistic period, several observations can be made based upon the content analysis of curriculum documents and textbooks. First, the teachings of Sun Yatsen and Chiang Kaishek were no longer emphasised in the citizenship curriculum, and the amount of overtly ideological content declined notably. The citizenship curriculum in this period was more social science-oriented and organised as a simplified introduction to the social sciences. Second, this was the first time the history of Taiwan was made a subject of study in the citizenship curriculum in Taiwan. Third, Chinese history and geography were still referred to as “national” history and geography in those subjects; however, in the subject “Understanding Taiwan,” Taiwan was no longer described as a periphery of the ROC, but as a political entity. Besides, learning about historical Taiwan and the spirit of Taiwan changed from being forbidden to being legally recognised knowledge. Fourth, the concepts of “anticommunism” and “recovering the motherland” were removed from the curriculum; instead, “defending Taiwan with determination” and “courage against

external military threat" (referring to Mainland China) became two of the emphases. Fifth, the interdisciplinary curriculum pattern at the junior high level was first shown in the subject "Understanding Taiwan." Finally, moral education remained one of the foci of the curriculum but its weight was reduced.

The Integrated Citizenship Curriculum

Before the new millennium, education in Taiwan was a highly centralised institution. The Constitution of the Republic of China makes it clear that education is of such great importance to the nation that it was placed under the central government and funded by the nation's broad-based tax structure. Beginning from the early 1990s, a wide range of social groups were formed which devoted themselves to making changes in formal education. Among those groups, the Humanistic Education Foundation, the Housewives League, the Academy for Invigorating Teachers, and the April 10 League of Educational Reform Movement are most identifiable. These reformist groups found different interests at different levels and in types of education, but they spoke with one voice in their challenge to the legitimacy of the old-time "monocracy," which had implanted nationalism in all aspects of formal education. Hence, they were earnestly eager to remove the old-fashioned mechanisms and to free Taiwan's education systems completely from the control of centralised administration. They were particularly keen to abolish the joint entrance examinations, deregulate the textbook policy and remove the government's control over school curricula (Liu & Doong, 2002; Yang, Wu, & Shan, 2001).

In 1994, the Seventh National Education Conference pointed out the need for improving the rigid, centralised education system as a response to reform requests. The Premier then established a cabinet-level ad hoc Commission on Educational Reform (CER) to take on the task of identifying practical strategies for restructuring the education system to meet the need of the new century. After two years of study and inquiry, the *Consultants' Concluding Report on Education Reform* (Commission on Educational Reform, 1996) was released. The report highlighted five major reform recommendations: deregulation, engaging students, making education accessible, raising education quality, and promoting a society of lifelong learning. To implement the reform proposals, the *Twelve Education Reform Mandates* were approved to be accomplished within a five-year period (Educational Reform Task Force Committee, 1998). Among the reform programmes and policies, the nine-year integrated curriculum was of most importance in bringing about radical changes in elementary and junior high school education.

Previously the junior high school subjects were taught separately and were not linked with elementary subjects in function. In the new curriculum, the traditional subjects were replaced by seven major learning areas so as to avoid confining students within the boundaries of a subject and overlooking students' ability to integrate what they have already learned. The seven learning areas include "language arts," "health and physical education," "social studies," "arts and humanities," "mathematics, science and technology," and "integrated activities."

This new curriculum attempts to reduce the number of school subjects by integrating subjects of a similar nature. In the citizenship education domain, “Morality and Health,” “Civics and Morality,” “Geography,” “History,” and “Understanding Taiwan” at elementary and junior high levels are all integrated as “Social Studies.” Moreover, the traditional, centralised curriculum standards were replaced by non-prescriptive *Grade 1-9 Curriculum Guidelines*. The content of the new citizenship curriculum is organised around nine thematic strands to integrate the concepts and generalisations of the history subject and the social science disciplines. The goals and the nine thematic strands of the new curriculum are listed in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1 Goals and Thematic Strands of Taiwan’s New Citizenship Curriculum

Category	Content
Goals	To understand the environment, humanity, diversity and issues of local and other communities. To comprehend the interaction of people, society, culture and ecology, and the significance of environment protection and resource exploitation. To enrich the essential knowledge of social sciences. To develop the identity and concern of homeland and nation, and global views. To cultivate democratic literacy, appreciation of the rule of law, and responsible attitudes. To nurture self-understanding and self-realisation, as well as positive, self-confident and open attitudes. To develop abilities of critical thinking, value judgement and problem solving. To strengthen abilities of social participation, decision making and action. To cultivate abilities of expression, communication and cooperation. To develop interest in and abilities of inquiry, and information processing.
Thematic strands	People and time People and space Change and continuity Meaning and values Individuals, groups and interpersonal interactions Power, rule and human rights Production, distribution and consumption Science, technology and society Global connection

There are some other significant characteristics found in the new curriculum guidelines. First, the new curriculum adopted a flexible and integrated approach to meet individual needs, social needs and to cultivate competent citizens with international vision. Critical thinking, problem solving, civic participation and social concern are stressed more than acquiring knowledge of the social sciences. Second, in social studies the new curriculum distinguished between several stages of learning according to the structure of knowledge concerned, and recognised the continuity principles of the psychological development of learning. Third, competence indicators were set for each thematic strand in each learning stage. The expression “competence indicator” was a new phrase proposed in the *Grade*

1-9 Curriculum Guidelines. A competence indicator is operationally synonymous with the learning goal. Rhetorically, competence indicators serve to define a common language among their users, such as textbook editors and reviewers, teachers, students, parents, administrators and test developers. All of the nine thematic strands comprise different numbers of corresponding competence indicators.^{vii} Fourth, the new curriculum identifies six major issues teaching is to be infused by, namely gender education, environmental education, information technology education, human rights education, home economics education and career development education. Fifth, moral education, which was an explicit emphasis in the old curriculum, was dramatically reduced in importance in the new curriculum, while social diversity and multicultural issues were highlighted more than ever before. Citizenship curriculum becomes an arena for the consolidation and transmission of democratic ideals and for engendering respect for ethnic differences and cultures. Finally, according to the competence indicators the proportion of time devoted to Taiwan's culture, history and geography is larger than that devoted to China. Nevertheless, the issue of national identity became more implicit and appears only once in the curriculum goals, but never in the competence indicators.

The Implementation of the New Citizenship Curriculum

The new citizenship curriculum began to be implemented simultaneously in Grade 1, Grade 4 and Grade 7 in August 2002. Since then, a series of new steps have been taken in schools, including the introduction of flexible integrated curriculum, the development of school-based curriculum and the decentralisation of textbook control.

Flexible Integrated Curriculum

Ideally, the purposes of the nine-year integrated curriculum are to simplify the learning content, reduce students' heavy learning load, provide students with flexible curricular options, improve students' abilities to integrate knowledge, think critically and solve problems, and foster basic skills and the lifelong learning attitude necessary for modern citizenship (Ministry of Education, 2003a). Therefore, the flexible integrated curriculum captures the fundamental spirit of the new curriculum.

Instead of regulating rigid learning periods for every learning area, every grade and every school, the curriculum guidelines empower the Committee of School Curriculum Development for each school to determine the learning periods to be assigned for each learning area, based on the following rules^{viii} (Ministry of Education, 2003a):

- Learning periods of Language Arts account for 20%-30% of the area learning periods, while the learning periods of the following six learning areas account for 10%-15% of the area learning periods respectively: Health and Physical Education, Social Studies, Arts and Humanities, Mathematics, Integrative Activities.

- Schools calculate the total number of learning periods for each learning area for the whole school year or a semester, according to the above proportions. Schools arrange weekly learning periods according to their real situation and the needs of instruction.
- The time for each period should be approximately 40 minutes for elementary schools and 45 minutes for junior high schools. However, schools may adjust the time for each period, the weeks of each semester, and the arrangements of grades and classes according to specific circumstances of curriculum implementation and the needs of students.
- Schools are empowered to organise and conduct activities for alternative learning periods (including activities for the entire school or all the grades).

Additionally, the curriculum guidelines make it very clear that the implementation of each learning area should follow the principles of integration and include the adoption of team teaching. The policy of flexible and integrated curriculum has led to a major change in the practice of citizenship curriculum. That is, teachers are encouraged to teach more than one subject area to meet the goal of curriculum integration. For example, teachers of “Civics and Morality” need to teach “History” and “Geography” simultaneously, and vice versa. This change not only reshapes the teaching profession in citizenship education but also causes some problems, which will be discussed later.

School-Based Curriculum Development

School-based curriculum is one of the intended goals of the new curriculum reform in Taiwan. It is carried out as part of the policy of curriculum decentralisation with the hope of making every school a centre for curriculum innovation and every teacher a curriculum designer. The *Grade 1-9 Curriculum Guidelines* provide a greater degree of autonomy for teachers and schools in designing their own curriculum and teaching activities to meet the diverse needs of pupils, schools and communities. Thus, the new curriculum consists of alternative learning periods, which account for 20% of the total learning periods for the development of school-based curriculum. According to the curriculum guidelines, schools are empowered to organise and conduct activities for alternative learning periods, carry out curriculum or activities designed to correspond to goals and objectives of the school, provide optional courses for learning areas, implement remedial teaching programmes and conduct group counselling or self-learning activities.

Based on the *Guidelines* and for the development of school-based curriculum, each school is required to set up its own Committee of School Curriculum Development, and give teachers and parents enough flexibility to work together to design 20% of the curriculum. The functions of this committee are to (a) complete the school curriculum plan for the coming semester by the beginning of the current semester; (b) determine the learning periods for each learning area for each grade; (c) review textbooks written by the school staff; (d) develop topics and activities for teaching; and (e) be responsible for

the curriculum and instruction evaluation (Ministry of Education, 2003a). Members of the Committee of School Curriculum Development include the representatives of school administrators, teachers for each grade and each learning area, and parents. Scholars and professionals may also be invited to join the committee for counselling when necessary.

Furthermore, to encourage development and innovation of school-based curriculum, measures for school-based curriculum evaluation are also proposed by the MOE and local government authorities. The MOE is responsible for setting up Academic Attainment Indicators to evaluate the implementation of curriculum by local government authorities and individual schools. Local government is responsible for visiting schools on a regular basis in order to understand the implementation of curriculum, and to provide solutions for problems occurring in the implementation process. Government funding for school-based curriculum development is provided by both the central government and by local government.

Although Taiwan does not have a strong tradition of teachers' involvement in curriculum decision-making and innovation, these policy decisions taken by governments have indeed generated some encouraging changes, especially in elementary schools. More and more principals support and are involved in school-based curriculum development. Teachers are more aware of their role in professional development, and their sense of curriculum ownership has increased. Parents have also been welcomed to participate in curriculum innovation and practice to a greater degree (Chen & Chung, 2002). Furthermore, to better utilise limited resources, some schools located in the same geographical area have been working co-operatively to modify the school-based curriculum and turn it into a community-based curriculum. The result has been very beneficial to all the school teachers and students who have participated in the innovation of the community-based curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2003b).

Decentralisation of Textbook Control

Completely opening up the junior high textbook market to private publishers has been one of the critical policies of the nine-year integrated curriculum. Before the 1990s, all textbooks for primary and secondary schools were compiled and published by the NICT. Teachers were required to cover the same material in the same time frame with the same textbooks. Under this policy of centralised control, teachers did not have the opportunity to design their own sets of materials to meet the needs of their students, taking into account individual differences.

In 1991, the MOE took the first step towards the eventual lifting of its ban on textbook writing and publishing. Aside from the standardised version published by the NICT, privately published textbooks for arts and craft were first approved and adopted in junior high schools. Later, in 1995, the MOE extended its policy of deregulation to elementary schools by giving them a free hand to select any MOE-approved textbook. In 1999, the MOE took a further step by granting the right to choose textbooks to senior high schools. However, it was not until the implementation of the nine-year integrated

curriculum in 2002 that the MOE completely opened up the junior high textbook market to private publishers as well (Ministry of Education, 2002e).

The ultimate goals of the decentralisation of textbook control was to replace the government's domination of curriculum development with a school-based system and to ensure that teachers assumed the central role in curriculum design (Shan, 2000). The shift in the power to write and publish textbooks from the central government to the private sector signifies today's much greater freedom in Taiwan's educational system.

Controversies and Challenges

The introduction of the nine-year integrated curriculum is the biggest curriculum reform in Taiwan's education history. However, there are gaps between goal and practice, ideal and reality. This curriculum reform, implemented in a short period of time, has had to confront severe challenges.

Controversies over Curriculum Guidelines and Patterns

There have been a number of controversies over the new curriculum guidelines in terms of the appropriateness of curriculum integration, the "Americanised" direction of the curriculum, vagueness of the guidelines, decline in teaching time and avoidance of national identity issues.

Appropriateness of curriculum integration. One major criticism is that integrating primary and junior high school curricula is inappropriate. Critics of the reform question the rationale for the so-called nine-year integrated curriculum. They argue that there are differences between elementary and junior high education in terms of students' needs in learning and in their psychological development. The pressure junior high students face in having to sit for the senior high school entrance examination marks a further difference between junior high and elementary (Chang, 1999). The new curriculum ignores the special needs of students at each educational level. Second, it is argued that one of the tasks for junior high education is to prepare students for senior high school life. The new nine-year curriculum not only fails to fulfil this task but also creates a big gap and inconsistency between junior and senior high education (Liu & Doong, 2002). Third, since 1996, the MOE has been encouraging and helping local governments to establish a six-year combined high school system which includes junior and senior high school students within a unified school government, educating students from the age of 12 to 18. There were 61 combined public high schools established as of the school year 2000, and a number of junior high schools are in the process of transforming into combined high schools (Ministry of Education, 2001d). Thus, critics of the reform argue that a six-year integrated curriculum for junior and senior high education is more appropriate than one that combines the elementary and junior high levels.

Americanised direction of the curriculum. There are a lot of similarities between the *National Standards for Social Studies* of the United States and Taiwan's *Grade 1-9 Curriculum Guidelines* (Liu, 2003; Liu & Doong, 2002). Both disciplinary scholars and

teacher educators in Taiwan criticised the new curriculum as “Americanised.” They argued that the curriculum guidelines mimicked American thematic standards without considerations of divergent cultural, social and educational contexts between Taiwan and America (Chang, 1999; Liu & Doong, 2002). Thus critics have addressed the need to investigate what is taken to be worthwhile knowledge in Taiwan’s society, so as to establish more appropriate curriculum guidelines for Taiwan’s social, cultural and educational context (Doong, 2003).

Vagueness of the curriculum guidelines. Scholars and teachers questioned the possibility of implementing those guidelines given the fact that they are overwhelmingly vague in nature. The curriculum standards have created difficulties on account of their alleged vagueness when used by scholars as guidelines for writing textbooks (Liu & Doong, 2002). As a result, different versions of textbooks present completely different and often widely divergent knowledge. Many teachers have reported that students have difficulties adapting to the de-standardised textbooks (“Education Reforms,” 2003).

Decline in teaching time. The teaching time for social studies in the new curriculum has been reduced drastically. According to the curriculum guidelines, the learning periods of social studies account for 10%-15% of the total area learning periods. The reality is that most schools assign only 10% of the total area learning periods to social studies, and that alternative learning periods are only assigned to “high status” subjects, such as English and Mathematics. The teaching time for social studies has been cut down approximately from six periods to three periods per week. The “status” of citizenship-related subjects is even lower than it was already since the so-called curriculum reform. Table 3.2 compares the teaching times between the old and the new citizenship curriculum.

Avoidance of national identity issues. Some social groups criticised the new citizenship curriculum for failing to deal with the issues of national identity. They argued that citizenship curriculum should aim at promoting pupils’ appreciation of “Taiwanese subjectivity.” The curriculum should be designed with a view that Taiwan is an independent entity; that “our” history is Taiwan’s history; that “our” geography is Taiwan’s geography; and that Chinese history and geography should be studied as foreign history and geography (Southern Taiwan Society, Eastern Taiwan Society, & PEN Taiwan, 2003). They also argued that the history of the ROC before 1949 should be included in Chinese ancient history, not the history of Taiwan. From their point of view, Dr Sun Yatsen is not the “Father of the Nation,” but a “foreigner” (“Gov’t Plans,” 2004). Moreover, in one interview by a journalist, the Minister of Education, Tu Chengsheng,^{ix} claimed that Taiwan’s education system needs to teach children and teenagers to recognise the history and culture of their land. He believes “elements” of Taiwan play an important part in the development of children’s personality and knowledge, and that these can be conveyed through coursework in the humanities and social sciences, including the subjects language, literature, history, geography and civics. He indicated that the Ministry of Education will write a new curriculum that clearly demonstrates how the local elements could be compiled into the nine-year integrated curriculum (Huang, 2004). The debate about national identity issues created by the citizenship curriculum is heating up, indeed.

Table 3.2 Comparison of Teaching Time of the Old and New Citizenship Curriculum

Year/Version	Title of Subject	Periods per Week		
		Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
1994 Curriculum Standard for Junior High School	Understanding Taiwan	3	0	0
	Civics and Morality	0	2	2
	History	0	2	2
	Geography	0	2	2
	Total	3	6	6
2000 Grade 1-9 Curriculum Guidelines	Social Studies	3	3	3
	Total	3	3	3

Constraints on School-Based Curriculum Development

In two recent studies (Chen & Chung, 2002; Doong, 2003), some implementation difficulties and constraints were identified in the development of school-based curriculum. First, most school administrators and teachers were frustrated because the vagueness of the curriculum guidelines failed to provide a clear enough picture for them to set the goals and directions for school curriculum.

Second, teachers in Taiwan have become highly dependent on national standards and uniform textbooks. As a result, most are not sufficiently motivated or have the necessary experience and ability to develop and design their own curriculum. Many teachers claimed that they had never been trained to do curriculum design and evaluation so they did not possess the knowledge and skills required to develop school-based curriculum. Some teachers gave as the main reason for their participation in the school-based curriculum development pressure from their principals and directors of Academic Affairs.

Third, while some teachers did express interest in and have tried some curriculum innovation at classroom level, they felt, however, that they did not get enough administrative support in providing necessary reference materials, working space, in-service training courses or workshops, and external help from advisory specialists. They also indicated that the shortage of time was a major problem standing in the way of doing curriculum design. Besides, teachers thought that the necessary partnership of teachers working as a team to develop school-based curriculum was lacking. Problems frequently arose in the partnerships and it was rather difficult for them to reach consensus as to what should be included in or excluded from the curriculum.

Finally, Taiwan is a society in which a fanatical belief in the value of education has long existed. To some extent, this belief includes a corrupted form of so-called “school promotionism” – the phenomenon of focusing on climbing up the school ladder to reach university and college as the preferred route to success. Most school administrators and teachers were afraid that the school-based curriculum would increase “unnecessary” study burdens on students and even lower their competence level in the senior high school entrance examination. As a result, some teachers indicated that school-based

curriculum was only good for a “curriculum design contest”, but was never a realistic and useful school practice at the junior high level.

Issues of Interdisciplinary Instruction

In implementing the nine-year integrated curriculum, teachers need to be able to design and develop curriculum utilizing an interdisciplinary approach. However, there are gaps between the ideal and the reality, particularly at the junior high school level. In the past, the teaching of citizenship education at the junior high schools was mainly covered in one subject, “Civics and Morality.” Both “History” and “Geography,” which shoulder tremendous responsibility in terms of citizenship education in the United States, had never been considered a part of citizenship education in Taiwan. “History,” “Geography” and “Civics and Morality” were isolated subjects at the junior high level. There are different teacher education departments at normal universities for history, geography, and civics and morality. Social Studies has never been an integrated field in Taiwan.

Additionally, history and geography are more academically-oriented than citizenship-oriented in the standard teacher education programmes. Teachers of “Civics and Morality” have never been trained to teach history and geography. Similarly, political science, law and economics, and social sciences are not required courses and are not even offered in history and geography teacher education programmes. Nor have teacher education programmes ever offered courses on how to integrate knowledge of those disciplines in their curriculum and teaching. In other words, teachers of “History,” “Geography” and “Civics and Morality” at the junior high school have not been trained to teach integrated social studies.

Unfortunately, the MOE and local governments offered very limited opportunities for workshops providing in-service teacher training in this regard. Neither has any long-term effective teacher re-education plan been proposed to date. As a result, teachers at the junior high schools feel very anxious about the new curriculum due to their lack of professional knowledge and teaching skills for other subjects (Liu & Doong, 2002). In a survey reported in January 2003, 90% of teachers polled admitted that they are having problems teaching the new curriculum. In addition, a large number of frustrated teachers who have found it hard to keep up with the new curriculum have been submitting requests for early retirement (“Education Reform,” 2003). Therefore, the sweeping and radical changes from the discipline-based curriculum to the integrated curriculum have resulted in a deep gap between ideal and reality.

Problems of Textbook Writing

Problems also arose from the decentralisation of textbook control. There are no longer standardised versions of textbooks for all school levels. Different privately published textbooks vary in content, scope and sequence. As a result, students are forced to read as many versions of textbooks as they can so as to get a high score in the senior high school entrance examination (Hsu, 2001). Research also found that most publishers do their best

to design the integrative social studies textbooks, but it is still difficult for them to reach the goal of real curriculum integration. Besides, the textbook editors fail to thoroughly deal with interdisciplinary knowledge and issues. Therefore, curriculum integration never happened in the writing of textbooks (Wu, 2002).

Conclusion

A significant curriculum reform such as Taiwan's nine-year integrated curriculum requires no less than the restructuring of education. Fundamentally, it involves the reallocation of societal authorities and values. In practice, it also involves a series of compromises among diverse groups and efforts to reach an accord with the public priorities of society. By its very nature, curriculum reform is a political activity, with the process of developing Taiwan's citizenship curriculum clearly demonstrating the political nature of curriculum reform. Taiwan's citizenship curriculum was once, under the leadership of Chiang Kaishek, a means of "de-Taiwanisation," aimed at "recovering the Mainland." It is now regarded as an instrument of "de-Sinicisation" by Chen Shuibian's administration to push for Taiwan's independence. Interestingly, although Chiang and Chen took very different stands on the issue of Taiwan's national identity, they both used citizenship curriculum as a battlefield in fighting against communist China. The citizenship curriculum in Taiwan was and still is a very party-political issue and driven by ideology.

Furthermore, no matter how comprehensively or carefully a curriculum has been developed, the ultimate test of the curriculum is the way it is implemented and experienced by teachers and pupils in the classroom. Taiwan's new curriculum reform has been criticised for lacking sufficient dialogue with those directly involved in education, such as teachers, students and parents, as well as putting too much emphasis on easing controls on the curriculum without feasible implementation strategies. Moreover, the citizenship curriculum guidelines were also criticised for their Americanised direction, which obviously followed in the footsteps of U.S. curriculum standards.

Taiwan's citizenship curriculum is at a crossroads. Having had only a relatively short time for its implementation, it is hard to tell whether the new reform policies will survive the challenges. However, there will be no future for Taiwan's citizenship education if Taiwan's educational policy-makers remain in favour of imported Americanised knowledge, or are getting stuck in the mud of the unification-independence battle. The sooner they wake up to the gravity of the flaws in the curriculum reform policies, the better the curriculum will be able to cultivate good citizenship among the pupils. Therefore, it might be necessary for all educational policy-makers, particularly the MOE, to quickly establish an effective mechanism for diagnosing flaws in policies, testing the results of curriculum reform, mapping out implementation strategies, and, most importantly, for investigating what is considered worthwhile knowledge in Taiwan. The latter is clearly needed if a consensus is to be reached by concerned groups for more appropriate curriculum guidelines in Taiwan's context. It is the author's sincere hope that these steps will be seen in the very near future.

Notes

- ⁱ The indigenous people are comprised of 12 tribes: Amis, Atayal, Paiwan, Bunun, Rukai, Puyuma, Tsou, Saisiyat, Yami, Thao, Kavalan and Truku. They are Malayo-Polynesian and speak various Austronesian languages. Collectively, they comprise less than 2% of Taiwan's total population (Council of Indigenous Peoples, 2004).
- ⁱⁱ These two groups comprise about 85% of the Han population, with Fujianese outnumbering Hakka by about three to one.
- ⁱⁱⁱ As of 2004, Mainlanders account for less than 15% of the Han population.
- ^{iv} During the immediate postwar period, the KMT administration of Taiwan was repressive and corrupt, leading to local discontent. As a result, tensions between the local Taiwanese and the new arrivals from the Mainland increased in the intervening years. Anti-Mainlander violence flared on February 28, 1947, prompted by an incident in which a cigarette seller was injured and a passer-by was shot dead by KMT authorities. For several weeks after the February 28 Incident, the rebels held control of much of the island. The KMT then assembled a large military force that attacked Taiwan, killing many Taiwanese and imprisoning thousands of others. (Retrieved November 11, 2004, from The Free Dictionary Com Website, <http://encyclopedia.thefreedictionary.com/228%20Massacre>).
- ^v President Chiang Kaishek and his son, President Chiang Chingkuo, had governed Taiwan from 1949-1988, a total of 40 years.
- ^{vi} Lee Tenghui was born in Taiwan and educated in the public school system during the Japanese colonial period; he later studied in Japan and then in the United States. Although he was once a member and the leader of the KMT, he has a strong sense of Taiwanese consciousness and advocates the independence of Taiwan. Lee was in power for twelve years, from 1988-2000.
- ^{vii} The role of the competence indicators in the Grade 1-9 Curriculum reform is similar to those found in academic standards in the standards-based education reform in the U.S.A. Both seek to establish clear and challenging academic standards for all students, to help all students to achieve standards and to prepare them for success in the 21st century.
- ^{viii} The total learning periods for each grade vary. For example, the total learning periods for Grade 7 are 32-34, which comprise 28 area learning periods and 4-6 alternative learning periods.
- ^{ix} Tu became the Minister of Education in May 2004. He is a historian who has been advocating reforms in Taiwan's history education. The subject "Understanding Taiwan" is based upon his "concentric circle theory", in which "elements of Taiwan" predominate. He also proposed a new Taiwan map layout, which turns the current map 90 degrees counter-clockwise, with Taiwan on top of China instead of on its right.