REIKO YOSHIHARA

10. FEMINIST PEDAGOGY IN EFL

INTRODUCTION

Since becoming an EFL (English as a Foreign Language) teacher at the university level, I have been asking myself what my responsibility as an EFL teacher is and how I can prepare my students for their future. I believe that our job is not just to teach grammar, vocabulary, and linguistic information, but also to promote equality, peace, justice, freedom, and human rights among all people. The importance of the social responsibility of English language teachers has been highlighted by many TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) scholars (e.g. Benesch, 2001; Casanave & Yamashiro, 1996; Cates, 2002; Peaty, 2004; Vandrick, 2009). To educate our students to become socially responsible world citizens, addressing gender issues is as important as global issues of ethnic conflict, social inequality and injustice, and environmental destruction. In this sense, feminist teaching is placed under the umbrella of global education, human rights education, and humane education.

Let me explain why I focus on feminist teaching in English language education. I have often argued that we should teach gender issues in our language classrooms in articles (Yoshihara, 2010b, 2011) and conferences (Yoshihara, 2006, 2008, 2010a, 2012). However, when I argued that we should include not only gender equality with respect to wages and laws but also violence against women, sexual harassment, and LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer) issues, hesitation and resistance from ESL/EFL teachers is sometimes aroused. I have often heard comments such as "I think teaching about gender issues is important, BUT …" and "I'm not a gender specialist. Is it okay if I teach about gender issues?" In the worst case, accusations of indoctrination or brainwashing are leveled against feminist or pro-feminist language teachers including myself.

Vandrick (1995) notes that addressing gender issues is important because often girls and women "are not taught about gender issues or given tools to fight sexism" (p. 4). In her article, she concluded that this kind of teaching should not be criticized as indoctrination and that one of the responsibilities of language teachers is to help students raise consciousness about issues of justice with a view to ending sexism. I agree with Vandrick and believe that teaching about gender issues along with language practice in ESL (English as a Second Language) and EFL classrooms raises consciousness about social equality and justice among students. One of our responsibilities is to teach equality and justice for a better world even in the

© KONINKLIJKE BRILL NV, LEIDEN, 2020 | DOI: 10.1163/9789004421783_010

language classroom. In any educational institution, progressive teachers do not tolerate discriminatory language and attitudes toward women or minority groups. Avoiding teaching about gender issues deprives students of an opportunity to learn about important topics for social equality and justice.

Hereafter, I explore the definitions, focuses, and methods in feminist pedagogy. Then, I illustrate my feminist teaching practice in the Japanese university EFL classroom.

FEMINIST PEDAGOGY

The Definition of Feminist Pedagogy

Since the engagement of the second wave feminist movement in the late 1960s in the United States, feminist scholars have earnestly discussed feminist pedagogy in the field of women's studies. The words *feminist pedagogy* first appeared in Fisher's "What is feminist pedagogy?" in *The Radical Teacher* in 1981. Fisher (1981) focused on incorporating the common experience of oppression felt by women, their awareness of feelings, consciousness-raising, and all central features of the women's movement into women's studies in higher education. She defined feminist pedagogy as "teaching which is anti-sexist, and anti-hierarchical, and which stresses women's experience, both the suffering our oppression has caused us and the strengths we have developed to resist it" (p. 20). For her, feminist pedagogy is teaching for the purposes of ending sexism and asking for social change to resist sexism.

Shrewsbury (1987) developed ideas about feminist pedagogy and attempted to theorize feminist pedagogy in relation to gender, race, class, sexuality, and other oppressions. She characterized feminist pedagogy as follows:

> Feminist pedagogy is engaged teaching/learning—engaged with self in a continuing reflective process; engaged actively with the material being studied; engaged with others in a struggle to get beyond our sexism and racism and classism and homophobia and other destructive hatreds and to work together to enhance our knowledge; engaged with community, with traditional organizations, and with movements for social change. (p. 6)

Like Fisher (1981), Shrewsbury stressed learning/teaching for ending sexism and asking for social change. However, she focused not only on sexism but also racism, classism, homophobia, and other destructive hatreds for the construction of knowledge.

Although Fisher (1981) and Shrewsbury (1987) recognized feminist pedagogy as a form of feminist practice having roots in the second wave feminist movement, Tisdell (1998) created a stir in the discussion of feminist pedagogy from a poststructural perspective. She argued that poststructural feminist pedagogy focuses on issues of power in the classroom. She critically discussed the positionality of the instructor, foregrounded "marginalized" students' voices, and proposed progressive teaching ways even though there was a sense of struggle (see also hooks [*sic*], 1989). Tisdell noted that it was not enough to confront unequal power relations; rather "poststructural feminist educators maintain directive roles as challengers of unequal power relations and are proactive in working for social change" (Tisdell, 1998, p. 151) through a critical discussion.

At all events, feminist pedagogy is not simply teaching about gender-related topics but an ideology of teaching based on feminist theory. In hooks' (1989) phrase, "feminist education—the feminist classroom—is and should be a place where there is a sense of struggle, where there is visible acknowledgement of the union of theory and practice, where we work together as teachers and students to overcome the estrangement and alienation that have become so much the norm in the contemporary university" (p. 51).

Focuses of Feminist Pedagogy

I illustrate the key concepts that characterize feminist pedagogy; voice/voices, safety, empowerment, and consciousness-raising and social change. These concepts do not stand individually or separately but are interrelated historically and theoretically as well as functionally, discursively and materially. These key concepts also emerged from structural and poststructural feminist views. Additionally, to distinguish feminist pedagogy and good teaching, I explain how feminist educators perceive these characteristics of feminist pedagogy.

Voice/voices. Attention to women's voice, connected to personal experience, has been central to the teaching practices of feminist pedagogy (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, & Tarule, 1986; Briskin & Coulter, 1992; Maher & Tetreault, 2001; Weiler, 1992). Voice refers to the awakening and ability of people to speak for themselves, to bring their own questions, and to express their own responses, connected to their personal experience and abilities that have been ignored or neglected in the mainstream society and history. Because women's experience has often been ignored and neglected in the academic disciplines, feminist pedagogy values the individual voice as a way of knowing (Belenky et al., 1986). Recovering, naming, and theorizing voice has been central to developing new knowledge (Briskin & Coulter, 1992).

As a poststructural feminist pedagogue, Tisdell (1998) questioned voice only as outcome. She discussed the voice-silence dichotomy and focused her inquiry on who are silenced and what made them silent. Borrowing the idea of Goldberger (1996), she asserted that feminist educators should not assume that "silence means lack of voice, rather they should ask questions about what is 'underneath silence'" (Tisdell, 1998, p. 151). Feminist educators must consider how to include or represent the voices of those who are silent in the classroom.

Safety. For women coming to voice, feminist educators are concerned with creating a safe environment in the classroom. Belenky et al. (1986) discussed how to create environments where women can come to voice and emphasized the role of psychological safety when women express their experience. Similarly, Briskin and Coulter (1992) focused on classroom safety to encourage women to speak of their experiences. The issue of a safe atmosphere in the classroom is strongly related to the notion of coming-to-voice.

In addition, Manicom (1992) argued that a safe environment helps students not only to come to voice but also to develop feminist critique and analysis:

> Safety must be consciously constructed to allow women to speak of certain of their experiences. This dismantling and reconstructing is essential, both to deepen the feminist critique of the social world and to develop an analysis that will permit formation of alliances across differences. (pp. 378–379)

Thus, feminist educators are concerned about creating a safe environment in the classroom for students coming to voice and engaging in feminist critique and analysis.

However, interestingly noted, hooks (1989) argued that students could be empowered not only in a safe environment but also by means of “a rigorous, critical discussion” (p. 53). She asserted that although students feel empowered in an atmosphere of safety and nurture, they could also feel empowered in an atmosphere where differences, difficulty, conflict, and contradictions are confronted to make students aware of the issue of racism and sexism. Similarly, Kishimoto and Mwangi (2009) argued that feminist learning could occur in “threatening situations” and “nervous conditions” by confronting differences among students (p. 89). They explained that although confessional narratives, books or discussions proposed by women of color bring discomfort among white students, white students could learn about differences among women and become aware of the interrelated issue of racism and sexism from the stories by women of color. Feminist learning could happen not only in a mutual and safe environment but also in a tense situation.

From a poststructural feminist view, this is an important point for feminist educators to deconstruct a dichotomy of the safe-unsafe learning environment (Tisdell, 1998). Not only hooks (1989) and Kishimoto and Mwangi (2009) but also poststructural feminist pedagogues focus on the safe and conflicting learning environment in order to develop awareness and consciousness about inequality and injustice and empower marginalized students. They situate feminist teachings in the safe-unsafe environments as the particular situation happens and the need arises.

Empowerment. Empowerment is a significant element of feminist pedagogy. Shrewsbury (1987) emphasized empowerment as one central concept of feminist pedagogy to enhance both autonomy and mutuality. She regarded empowerment “both as a way to maintain a sense of self and as a way to accomplish ends” (p. 8) and as a means of connecting "with others in mutually productive ways" (p. 8). She explained the strategies of empowerment:

> Empowering strategies allow students to find their own voices, to discover the power of authenticity. At the same time, they enable individuals to find communication with others and to discover ways to act on their understanding. Empowering classrooms are places to practice visions of a feminist world, confronting differences to enrich all of us rather than to belittle some of us. (p. 9)

Thus, empowerment enables students to find their own voices, discover autonomous subjectivities, and create a sisterly solidarity.

While poststructural feminist pedagogical theorists acknowledge the importance of empowerment in feminist pedagogy, they are at the same time concerned with feminist teacher's stance as an empowerer. Orner (1992) criticized the view that some feminist educators and critical educators assumed that they were already emancipated and able to empower students. Such educators did not question that they might be oppressors. This is an important point for feminist educators in thinking of their own position and teaching practices including interactive strategies and classroom management. When students perceive their teacher as an oppressor, they do not come to voice or speak up. Silence is common when oppressed groups come face to face with authority, even when that authority supports emancipatory politics (Freire, 1996). Feminist educators must be willing to learn from their positions.

Consciousness-raising and social change. As in Freire's (1996) liberatory pedagogy, consciousness-raising and social change are key concepts of feminist pedagogy. Consciousness-raising is an educational tool by which students become aware of social conflicts and contradictions by sharing their experiences with oppression while resisting the status quo through social action. Like Freire's liberatory pedagogy, feminist pedagogy values critical thinking. Shrewsbury (1987) discussed how important critical thinking is in the feminist classroom and asserted that critical thinking leads to personal growth and mutuality with others:

> Critical thinking, then, is not an abstracted analysis but a reflective process firmly grounded in the experiences of the everyday. It requires continuous questioning and making assumptions explicit, but it does so in a dialogue aimed not at disproving another person's perspective, nor destroying the validity of another perspective, but at a mutual exploration of explications of diverse experiences. (p. 7)

Thus, like Freire's liberatory pedagogy, feminist pedagogy rests on critical thinking and is grounded in a vision of social change.

To develop students' critical thinking, feminist educators use not only students' experiences but also their feelings (Fisher, 1981; Weiler, 1991). Early consciousness-raising groups in the 1960's American women's movement were based on friendship and common political commitments and addressed sexuality, work, family, and participation in the male-dominated leftist political movement (Weiler, 1991). In the attempt to recognize women's oppression and to change the patriarchal society, it is very important for women to begin with feelings in order to integrate an awareness of feelings into consciousness-raising. As Fisher (1981) noted, "feeling helps us define what the world is like and how we want to change it" (p. 21). Feelings in the consciousness-raising approach might be the starting point for women to aware what the world is like, identity gender inequality and justice, and commit to action for social change.

However, poststructural feminist pedagogy focuses on a transformative quest rather than an emancipatory agenda (Baxter, 2008; Cosgrove, 2003; Leavy, 2007). Poststructuralism offers feminist scholars and educators new ways of deconstructing gender norms, investigating power, and challenging the essentialism of feminist standpoint epistemology. In this way, feminist educators who support poststructural feminist pedagogy attempt to give space to marginalized or silenced voices and create small-scale, bottom-up, localized social transformation to challenge dominant discourses (Baxter, 2008).

Methods of Feminist Pedagogy

As Crabtree, Sapp, and Licona (2009) noted, feminist pedagogy is "not only *what* we teach but also about *how* we teach" (p. 2, original italics). Even though feminist educators use gender topics, if they are teaching in traditional ways such as top-down teaching or lecture style teaching, they are missing an important opportunity to help students discover their own voice, feel empowered, raise awareness and consciousness, and build a community for solidarity and social change.

To accomplish the goals of feminist pedagogy, there are techniques and methods that can be used effectively in feminist classrooms proposed by several feminist pedagogues, which include group techniques, writing techniques, I-message communication, and extracurricular activities. However, these techniques might be shared not only by feminist educators but also by critical pedagogues and global educators. What distinguishes feminist teaching and liberatory teaching including critical pedagogy and global education is whether or not an educator embraces these techniques with feminist ideas and a goal of ending sexism and other isms. Feminist teaching has not only an anti-sexist view but also an anti-oppressive, anti-racist, and anti-heterosexist view. Hereafter, I explain feminist teaching methods.

Group techniques. For women coming to voice, using group techniques in feminist classrooms is very important. Parry (1996) proposed several group work activities including group discussion, group teaching, and group projects. Group work activities promote not only a sense of self-esteem and self-confidence but also of cooperation, and a sense of community (Parry, 1996; Schniedewind, 1987; Shrewsbury, 1987). Through collaboration in the feminist classroom, "students integrate the skills of critical thinking with respect for and the ability to work with others" (Shrewsbury, 1987, p. 7). Students also feel mastery of the subject matter and an increased sense of authority through participating in group work and small-group projects (Parry, 1996).

Of group techniques, Parry (1996) illustrated "think-pair-share" (p. 50). In a think-pair-share activity, teachers assign readings and ask open-ended or pros-cons questions about readings to the class. Students first think about an issue individually, discuss the issue in pairs, and have a discussion in the whole classroom. Parry asserted that this technique helps students both to gain an awareness of the importance of the issue and to develop critical thinking skills in relation to the topic. Schniedewind (1987) also proposed role-playing for conflict resolution and jigsaw reading for cooperation. For example, by asking students to play the roles in the issue like a pro and con debate, students start to resolve the conflict and look for new ways of perceiving the issue through several exchanges (Schniedewind, 1987). By assigning each group member one part of the course reading, jigsaw reading develops skills for cooperation (Schniedewind, 1987).

Thus, feminist educators use group techniques for a sense of autonomy, self-confidence, and cooperation among students. However, feminist educators focus not only on developing students' critical thinking skills, autonomy and self-confidence, but also raising students' awareness of the importance of community-building and connectedness. Feminist educators are concerned with building community and cooperation between the classroom and its broader environment as well as within the classroom. They hope that group work activities within the classroom will harmonize with actions toward the good of a more equal society as well as the feminist goals of liberatory research and practice.

Writing techniques. Writing techniques are one of feminist teaching methods. They include "quick" writing, reflective writing including reading response and class response, essay writing, diary writing, imaginary-letter writing, and interview writing (Parry, 1996). In particular, Parry (1996) explained the feminist meanings of journal writing:

> Journals can be used to address central feminist issues—gender, for example—and can serve as important elements of feminist teaching. By providing a safe space for self-expression, journals can help engage students in the exploration of complex ideas, such as the relationships between gender, race, ethnicity, and class. Journals help empower students who are usually silent by allowing them to develop voice and mastery. Journal entries can also serve as bases for small or large group discussions, enabling students to participate in the structuring of the class period. Journal writing is also an effective means through which students can explore the relationship between their personal experiences and theory. (pp. 47–48)

Journal writing creates the opportunity for students to express their voice/voices, which feminist pedagogy highlights. It allows them to explore their autonomous subjectivities in relation to gender, race, ethnicity, sexuality, class, language, physical ability, nationality, and religion. Journal writing can also help students connect their own feelings and experiences to their studies and the broader political context.

In addition, Parry (1996) suggests imaginary letters and interviews as worthwhile feminist writing exercises. In imaginary letters, students are asked to write to imaginary children in order to explain a difficult gender issue, write in the voice of the person concerned, or write something important that they themselves want their parents or friends to know. Students are therefore encouraged to use simple words and expressions, making it easily adaptable to ESL/EFL educational contexts. Interview writing is based on students' interviewing their mothers about women's issues and interviewing women who are involved the women's movement, female unions, and women's organizations. These efforts/assignments help students develop feminist consciousness as well as voice. In particular, writing a letter in the voice of the person concerned and interviewing others can nurture mutual respect and empathy and give students an opportunity to engage in a feminist community.

Thus, feminist educators focus on the nature of journal writing in which students can express themselves openly and freely, empower themselves, and connect between their personal experiences and their study. Readers might wonder what distinguishes journal writing advocates and feminist pedagogical educators. Feminist educators use journal writing not only for self-expression, self-reflection, and empowerment, but also for addressing "central feminist issues—gender" (Parry, 1996, p. 47) and raising feminist consciousness for gender equality and justice.

I-Message communication. Schniedewind (1981) highlighted "I-message" communication in which students express their own feelings by saying "I feel", not generalizing to "we" or "women". I-messages include students' experiences and feelings (Fisher, 1981; Weiler, 1991). I-message communication can help women recognize their oppression, feel empathy, create solidarity, and take action for social change. Schniedewind also explained an advantage of I-messages in the feminist classroom, by mentioning that "'I-messages' are easy to learn, can be shared among peers and between students and instructors, and are effective in producing an honest classroom atmosphere" (1981, p. 25). I-messages help students identify and share feelings in a personal way with other classmates and teachers, which creates an honest and trusting relationship among students and between teacher and student.

Therefore, feminist educators encourage students to use I-messages in group work and journal writing. While academic writing and speaking are normally expected to be in an impersonal tone, typically have an objective stance, and be organized with adequate detail, in feminist classrooms students are often encouraged to express their own feelings. Feminist educators are concerned with each student's feeling on the topic, connected to personal experience. They believe that this leads students to the development of critical thinking, empathy, and social actions (Fisher, 1981; Schniedewind, 1981; Weiler, 1991). In this sense, I-message communication might help Japanese students aware what the world is like, recognize inequality and injustice, and develop empathy and action for social change because there is very few opportunity for Japanese university students to express their feelings and personal experiences on the assigned topics.

Extracurricular activities. In order to connect theory to practice and sustain feminism, feminist educators encourage students who are enrolled in women's studies courses to engage in feminist activities outside the classroom (Schniedewind, 1987). Like Dewey's (1897, 1916, 1957) progressive educational theory, feminist educators try to connect classroom activities to students' lives outside the classroom.

For example, Schniedewind (1987) suggested that feminist educators encourage students to attend workshops, conferences, and events supported by feminist organizations whether or not they are held on campus (see also Vandrick, 1995). She also suggested that after studying male dominance and power relations between men and women, teachers encourage students to work as volunteers and interns in a battered women's shelter. Feminist activities ranged from marching and petitioning to letter-writing (Rose, 2009). Engaging in these activities can be a good opportunity for students to learn skills for building feminist networks and forming support systems (Schniedewind, 1987; Rose, 2009). It can also provide students the opportunity to develop feminist consciousness and engage in social actions (Rose, 2009; Webb, Allen, & Walker, 2002).

TEACHING ABOUT DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN THE UNIVERISTY EFL CLASSROOM

As a teacher-researcher, I conducted a study on teaching about domestic violence in my EFL university classrooms by using a CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) approach (Yoshihara, 2010b, 2011). I developed a 4-week unit on the topic "Domestic Violence". The class met once a week for 90 minutes. In the 4-week unit, students were required to read an article, watch a short film and a news clip, discuss the topic in a group, and write a final essay about the topic. Although I primarily instructed the class in English, I used Japanese when students did not seem to understand what I was explaining in English.

In the first week, I provided students with the material on domestic violence. As a pre-activity, I provided eleven statements about myths or facts of domestic violence (actually, all the statements were myths). I asked students to discuss their own results in a group. Then, students read "Domestic Violence" in *Gender Issues Today*, which I revised for length and difficulty, to 469 words. In order to ensure that students understood what domestic violence was, I created reading questions. I also created grammar exercises accompanying the reading and provided them to students. In the second week, students watched the video "A Love That Kills" (25 min.) made in Canada with Japanese captions and completed a worksheet that I made in English accompanying the video. In the worksheet, I asked questions including “Why do you think that Monica did/didn’t …?” and “How do you feel about this?” I encouraged them to express their feelings. I also used the video with Japanese captions because I wanted students to understand the content at the outset. In the third week, students watched a 10-minute Japanese news program about domestic violence and had a group discussion about domestic violence. I provided discussion questions designed to keep students focused on the topic. While I encouraged students to discuss the questions in English, I allowed them to speak Japanese because of their insufficient English speaking ability. However, students were asked to complete discussion questions in English. Next, I summarized their discussions in English. As an assignment, students were required to research the incident of domestic violence in Japan and outside Japan. In the fourth week, students brought the results of their research into the classroom and shared it in a group. The best researcher in each group presented her or his research in the classroom. Then, I explained how to write a cause-and-effect English essay in Japanese. Students were required to submit the English essays by the due date.

Whenever I taught this unit, I usually received positive comments from the students with regard to teaching about domestic violence even in the EFL classroom. With reference to my previous research (Yoshihara, 2010b, 2011), I presented the positive attitudes of students toward learning about domestic violence. Several students showed intellectual curiosity and awareness about domestic violence. One female student explained learning about domestic violence as follows:

> I think that we have very few opportunities to learn about domestic violence, so many students may not know about this issue. So, it was good to learn these women’s issues in this class. (From an open-ended questionnaire, Translation by the author)

One male student analyzed his own attitudes toward domestic violence, as follows:

> I’m a man, so I first thought that women’s issues had nothing to do with me. But by learning about domestic violence, I realized that it was a man’s issue too. I was very glad to learn this issue because I could have a chance to think deeply about this issue which I had not ever considered. (From an open-ended questionnaire, Translation by the author)

His realization that domestic violence is not only a woman’s issue but also a man’s issue seemed to touch on one feminist perspective toward domestic violence. This student was able to think about a subject he had never thought about before and this stimulated his curiosity about domestic violence.

Even in interviews, several students said that one reason they liked learning about domestic violence was that the topic was really new to them. Some of them mentioned that domestic violence was not discussed in high school textbooks, so they had not learned about this issue before. One male student mentioned that he wanted to learn about something new and interesting and that he wanted to educate himself by learning about sociopolitical issues and gender issues. Thus, some students expressed intellectual curiosity toward new or unknown topics.

Also, learning about gender issues seemed to raise students' social awareness. As for domestic violence, several students held misconceptions and seemed to have adopted victim-blaming attitudes. They thought that domestic violence occurs in only low-income families, that battered women might be at fault because they stayed in a violent relationship, and that domestic violence is very rare. However, after they learned about domestic violence, they seemed to understand the misconceptions and change their attitudes toward those who were/had been battered. One female student who had these misconceptions and changed her attitudes toward domestic violence stated:

> I assumed that domestic violence occurred in only a low-income family or a less educated family before I learned about it. But in fact domestic violence occurs in every society and culture, and might happen to anyone. (From an open-ended questionnaire, translation by the author)

She seemed to understand that domestic violence is not a low-income, undereducated family issue but rather had to do with power over women when she mentioned that "domestic violence occurs in every society and culture".

Another student seemed to have victim-blaming attitudes. However, she understood the reasons why a battered woman stayed in an abusive relationship with her partner and expressed her opinion by suggesting the necessity of shelters for the battered as follows:

> Before I learned about domestic violence in this class, I wondered why battered women did not escape from their abusive husband. After I learned about this issue, I knew that they were unable to escape because they depended financially on their husband and they had children. Therefore, Japanese society needs to make places (shelters) for the battered to go. (From an open-ended questionnaire, translation by the author)

These students seemed to be interested and engaged in the topic and became more aware of their own attitudes toward domestic violence. Students were aware of their previous misconceptions and stereotypes toward domestic violence, gained knowledge about the topic, its causes, and viable solutions, and finally attempted to express their own opinions about solving the problem. Awareness and changing perception might have them interested in other women's issues and lead them to personal growth, liberation, and consciousness-raising. Indeed, raising awareness and consciousness is one explicit goal of feminist pedagogy (Crabtree et al., 2009).

However, there were a few negative comments about domestic violence, as well. One male student mentioned that he felt that he was being blamed when he was learning about domestic violence because he is a man. He seemed to take this issue personally on the basis of his own gender and was not able to regard domestic violence as power over women. Also, another male student commented that he did not like learning about domestic violence because the issue was too close to him. I should have been more concerned with these students when I introduced this kind of sensitive gender topic. I might give them a choice to leave the classroom if it is difficult for them. On the other hand, I had a complex feeling about several male students' comments. In open-ended questionnaires, interviews, and conversations after class, some of the male students commented that, as a man, the guy who beat up his girlfriend was disgusting. This positive comment may, however, also imply a hidden message that women are weak, so men should protect them. It signifies that the students may unwillingly advance the discourse of the hegemonic masculinity of straight men.

CONCLUSION

I ask you, "What is your responsibility as an EFL teacher?" Although each EFL teacher might have different teaching beliefs, it is important that she or he is conscious of and engages with social equality and justice in her or his classrooms because what happens in the classroom is not separated from what happens in our society. Teaching about domestic violence and other women's issues in the language classroom benefits all female students—whether or not they are victims of abuse in a relationship. It also benefits male students who feel no particular connection to these gender issues because it provides an opportunity to question their assumptions and change their perceptions (Vandrick, 1997). Teaching about gender issues evokes insights, enriches students, and changes students' lives. Using gender-related topics also gives teachers and students an opportunity to work together for gender equality and justice. It may lead to personal and social change. The language classroom should not be regarded as an apolitical site, but rather a site for consciousness-raising and social change.

ACKNOWLEGEMENTS

I would like to thank Multilingual Matters for their kind permission to use selected portions of my book *The Socially Responsible Feminist EFL Classroom* (2017) for this chapter.

REFERENCES

Baxter, J. (2008). Feminist post-structuralist discourse analysis: A new theoretical and methodological approach? In K. Harrington, L. Litosseliti, H. Sauntson, & J. Sunderland (Eds.), *Gender and language research methodologies* (pp. 243–268). Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan.

Belenky, M., Clinchy, B., Goldberger. N., & Tarule, J. (Eds.). (1986). *Women's ways of knowing; The development of self, voice, and mind*. New York, NY: Basic Books.

Benesch, S. (2001). *Critical English for academic purposes: Theory, politics, and practice*. New York, NY: Erlbaum.

Briskin, L., & Coulter, R. P. (1992). Feminist pedagogy: Challenging the normative. *The Canadian Journal of Education, 17*(3), 247–263.

Casanave, C. P., & Yamashiro, A. (Eds.). (1996). *Gender issues in language education* (Keio University Monograph No. 5, ERIC ED425652).
Cates, K. (2002). Teaching for a better world; Global issues and language education. *Human Rights Education in Asian Schools, 5*, 41–52.
Cosgrove, L. (2003). Feminism, postmodernism, and psychological research. *Hypatia, 18*, 85–112.
Crabtree, R., Sapp, D. A., & Licona, A. C. (Eds.). (2009). *Feminist pedagogy: Looking back to move forward*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.
Dewey, J. (1897). My pedagogical creed. *School Journal, 54*, 77–80. Retrieved from http://dewey.pragmatism.org/creed.htm
Dewey, J. (1916). *Democracy and education.* Retrieved from http://www.ilt.columbia.edu/publications/dewey.html
Dewey, J. (1957). *The school and society* [Gakko to shakai] (S. Miyahara, Trans.). Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press. (Original work published in 1900).
Fisher, B. (1981). What is feminist pedagogy? *The Radical Teacher, 18*, 20–24.
Freire, P. (1996). *Pedagogy of the oppressed* (M. B., Ramos, Trans.). London: Penguin Books. (Original work published in 1970)
hooks, b. (1989). *Talking back: Thinking feminist, thinking Black*. Boston, MA: South End Press.
Kishimoto, K., & Mwangi, M. (2009). Critiquing the rhetoric of "safety" in feminist pedagogy: Women of color offering an account of ourselves. *Feminist Teacher, 19*(2), 87–102.
Leavy, P. L. (2007). Feminist postmodernism and poststrucutralism. In S. N. Hesse-Biber & P. L. Leavy (Eds.), *Feminist research practice: A primer* (pp. 83–108). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
Maher, F. A., & Tetreault, M. K. (2001). *The feminist classroom: Dynamics of gender, race, and privilege* (Expanded ed.). Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.
Manicom, A. (1992). Feminist pedagogy: Transformations, standpoints, and politics. *Canadian Journal of Education, 17*(3), 365–389.
Nakagawa, J. (Ed.). (2005). *Gender issues today*. Tokyo: Tokyo Shuppan Service Center.
O'Donoghue, A. (Director). (1999). *A love that kills* (a documentary film). Canada: Documentary Productions Ltd. and The National Film Board of Canada.
Orner, M. (1992). Interrupting the calls for student voice in "liberatory" education: A feminist poststructuralist perspective. In C. Luke & J. Gore (Eds.), *Feminism and critical pedagogy* (pp. 192–210). New York, NY: Routledge.
Parry, S. (1996). Feminist pedagogy and techniques for the changing classroom. *Women's Studies Quarterly, 24*(3–4), 45–54.
Peaty, D. (2004). Global issues in EFL: Education or indoctrination? *The Language Teacher, 28*(8), 15–18.
Rose, S. (2009). The protest as a teaching technique for promoting feminist activism. In R. D. Crabtree, D. A. Sapp, & A. C. Licona (Eds.), *Feminist pedagogy: Looking back to move forward* (pp. 171–175). Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.
Schniedewind, N. (1981). Feminist values: Guidelines for teaching methodology in women's studies. *The Radical Teacher, 18*, 25–28.
Schniedewind, N. (1987). Teaching feminist process. *Women's Studies Quarterly, 15*(3–4), 15–31.
Shrewsbury, C. (1987). What is feminist pedagogy? *Women's Studies Quarterly, 15*(3–4), 6–14.
Tisdell, E. J. (1998). Poststructural feminist pedagogies: The possibilities and limitations of feminist emancipatory adult learning theory and practice. *Adult Education Quarterly, 48*(3), 139–157.
Vandrick, S. (1995). Teaching and practicing feminism in the university ESL class. *TESOL Journal, 4*(3), 4–6.
Vandrick, S. (1997). Feminist teaching in the mixed classroom. *Peace Review, 9*(1), 133–139.
Vandrick, S. (2009). *Interrogating privilege: Reflections of a second language educator*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.
Webb, L. M., Allen, M. W., & Walker, K. L. (2002). Feminist pedagogy: Identifying basic principles. *Academic Exchange Quarterly, 6*(1), 67–72.
Weiler, K. (1991). Freire and a feminist pedagogy of difference. *Harvard Educational Review, 61*(4), 449–474.

Weiler, K. (1992). Teaching, feminism, and social change. In C. M. Hurlbert & S. Totten (Eds.), *Social issues in the English classroom* (pp. 322–337). Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English.

Yoshihara, R. (2006). *Feminist pedagogy and EFL*. Paper presented at the Meeting of JALT Gunma Branch, Gunma, Japan.

Yoshihara, R. (2008). *Feminist thinking and EFL education: How do university students raise feminist thinking through content-based instruction?* Paper presented at the Annual Conference of Eibeibunkagakkai, Tokyo, Japan.

Yoshihara, R. (2010a). *English education for change: Gender issues in EFL classes*. Paper presented at the Annual Conference of JACET, Miyagi, Japan.

Yoshihara, R. (2010b). Teaching women's issues in an EFL classroom: What do students learn? *Eibeibunka, 40*, 229–242.

Yoshihara, R. (2011). Learning and teaching gender and sexuality issues in the EFL classroom: Where students and teachers stand. *Journal and Proceedings of the Gender Awareness in Language Education, 4*, 5–21. Retrieved from http://www.gale-sig.org/galejournalv4.pdf

Yoshihara, R. (2012). *Raising gender consciousness: EFL classes in Japan*. Paper presented at the Annual Conference in JALT, Hamamatsu, Japan.

Yoshihara, R. (2017). *The socially responsible feminist EFL classroom: A Japanese perspective on identities, beliefs and practices*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters.