

An aerial photograph of a traditional Chinese plaza. In the center is a large, ornate wooden gate with a sign that reads '山入門' (Mountain Entrance). The plaza is surrounded by several large, multi-tiered pavilions with traditional Chinese architecture, featuring curved roofs and wooden structures. A wide road with many cars runs through the background. In the foreground, a white bus is parked on the left, and a curved stone bridge with a railing is visible at the bottom. The overall scene is a busy public square in a city.

**Women and
Minorities
as Educational
Change Agents**

FINAL REPORT

Dwight Boyd and Julia Pan

Women and Minorities as Educational Change Agents

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The Focus of Educational Change in Contemporary China

Introduction

In 1996 the Canadian International Development Agency funded eleven projects in China under the general rubric of the “Canada-China Special University Linkage Consolidation Program” (SULCP). This is the Final Report for one of those projects, “Women and Minorities as Educational Change Agents.”

The work conducted in this project built upon the successes of a previous six-year project, “Canada/China Joint Doctoral Programs in Education,” also funded by CIDA from 1989-1995. This predecessor project involved the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education and seven Chinese normal (teacher-education) universities in six provinces. The work of this predecessor project focused on exchange of doctoral students and faculty between Canada and China, development of sustainable contacts between the institutions involved, and support of Chinese efforts to develop innovative curricula and improved modes of administration. The follow-up project, described here, involved as central figures many of the personnel from six of the original Chinese institutions. It was initiated in July of 1996 with a budget of \$734,198 (Can.) and concluded July 31, 2001.

The objectives of the project have focused on supporting women and minority teachers, at all three levels of education, in forms of professional development that will enable them to become dynamic agents of social change. At the tertiary level, the project has focused on women faculty in institutions of higher learning, offering opportunities for them to participate in forms of teaching and research that will enhance their leadership capacity. At the secondary level, the project has sought to support both female and male teachers in their role as moral educators and reflective practitioners in the current period of rapid social change. At the primary level, the project has focused on women and minority teachers, helping them to integrate indigenous knowledge into the curriculum to ensure the interpenetration of minority cultures into the main stream and to develop more effective approaches to bilingual education.

The work of this project has been structured around workshops and subsequent research at the six sites in China – Shaanxi Normal University, Xi’an; Central China University of Science & Technology, Wuhan; Northwest Normal University, Lanzhou; Northeast Normal University, Changchun; Nanjing Normal University, Nanjing and East China Normal University, Shanghai. Two sites concentrated on each of the three different focuses. For each workshop, lasting seven to ten days, a team of (usually) two Canadian scholars from the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto and the University of British Columbia collaborated with colleagues in the respective Chinese institution to provide theoretical, methodological, and pedagogical perspectives that might be used by Chinese scholars and teachers to

address perceived educational problems. Research projects pertaining to these problems were collaboratively designed in the first workshop, conducted by the Chinese participants, and then reported and discussed with the same Canadian team in a subsequent workshop a year to two years later. These results were then analyzed, refined, and published in the form of books, journal articles, and curricular innovations, facilitated by extended visits of twelve Chinese scholars to the two Canadian institutions. A final wrap-up conference was held to share and disseminate results and their practical implications in Lanzhou, China in May of 2001, with over 100 participants from Canada, U.S., Britain, Singapore, Korea, Australia and 15 provinces in China.

The report that follows synthesizes the project retroactively in terms of categories requested by the funding agency. After some initial description of the context of the work attempted, including critical conditions and key success factors, the main focus is on elaboration of some of the main outcomes and evidence for their impact on Chinese education policy and practice.

Context

This project has involved work with three distinct focuses: gender, minority concerns, and moral education. The work within the different focuses has overlapped in numerous ways, especially in terms of sharing the common purpose of supporting professional development of educators, at all levels of education, to become more effective agents of social change. However, the specific work conducted within each focus has had different immediate aims. Thus in each section of this report we will organize our comments in terms of the distinct focuses.

Gender

There have been a number of interrelated challenges and barriers to the development of gender equity specifically in Chinese institutions of higher education since the general opening and reform era of the 80's:

- (a) Career and job prosperity for female college graduates became more and more limited. Employers increasingly practiced gender discrimination. This led, in turn, to a passive disposition/culture among female university students, as recognized in the popular saying: "rather marrying the right man than working hard professionally."

- (b) There has been a clear decrease in the number of female administrators in higher education.
- (c) Women's participation in academic work has constantly been discouraged. Some university presidents were openly discriminatory in their rationale for limiting the number of female faculty members in recruitment efforts, arguing that if female faculty were to be increased, the academic development of their university would be jeopardized.
- (d) Significant barriers to promotion were experienced by many female faculty members.

This project has been designed, and the work in it shaped, by the intention to directly address some of these gender equity concerns in the arena of higher education. In particular, the project sought to:

- (1) Encourage female researchers and teachers to participate in the project, to create a visible and approved opportunity for women in institutions of higher learning to participate in an academic project that focused explicitly on issues of gender equity and change.
- (2) Conduct survey research on women's participation levels in higher education, in order to establish a better data base for identifying problems and their potential solutions.

- (3) Develop new curriculum materials focussing on gender in general, and women in higher education in particular.
- (4) Design and make available new courses that utilize these materials to enable women students to form active and positive perspectives in facing the social challenges, and to facilitate their taking more control over their experience, including critical assessment of it.
- (5) Introduce new, more qualitative research approaches to gender issues to support the exposure and validation of women's experiences of gender inequities.

Minority Concerns

For many years there has been a general lack of culturally relevant and bilingual curriculum for minorities in China, such as Tibetan, Hui, and Dong Xiang. This has resulted in considerable resistance to even compulsory level schooling from minority families. This resistance is based in both cultural and economic concerns. Without curriculum material that includes respectful attention to important aspects of minority cultures, minority parents are concerned that schooling merely contributes to the erosion of their cultural heritage. This is further exacerbated by the lack of material in the minority language: any minority cultural content, e.g., Tibetan, is filtered through the Chinese language, and this in turn undercuts the capacity of the minority language to be a successful vehicle for cultural maintenance. In addition,

the material that is available tends to be perceived as irrelevant to the practical needs of the minority students, thus contributing directly to the economic disadvantage of minority students, particularly girls.

The general lack of culturally relevant and bilingual curriculum for minorities has also had direct negative educational impact on those minority students who do attend school. Achieving the same level of academic achievement has been far more difficult for minority students. This difficulty has led, in turn, to significant practical barriers to access to higher education. Government inaction in face of these problems has been grounded, in part, in both the inertia of the educational system, especially as manifested in the mandated national common curriculum, and the absence of any focussed attempt to develop appropriate educational materials. A further complication of this picture is that teachers' skills in dealing with minority and bilingual language learning problems are seldom adequate to the pedagogical tasks they face.

This project had as one of its aims the development and publication of appropriate curricula for selected minority groups, particularly in Northwest China. Criteria considered crucial for development of these curricula were:

- (a) that it would be based directly on significantly unique aspects of the minority culture;

- (b) that it must be bilingual, enabling the cultural elements to be expressed in the minority language; and
- (c) that it have a vocational element such that minority parents could see the utility of sending their children to school

A second aim was to involve minority scholars and teachers in this process of curriculum development and dissemination, to thus reinforce their perception of the mission to preserve and develop minority culture while nurturing and educating children in schools. Third, the project sought to utilize appropriate bilingual and multicultural education models from the Canadian context to serve as a flexible framework for the work on developing minority and bilingual education in China. Fourth, it was recognized that more research on minority language learning problems, utilizing current approaches in the west, were needed as a more sensitive background for the practical work. Finally, it was recognized that training teachers to use any new material developed would be crucial to successful implementation.

Moral Education

Among the major social changes occurring throughout Chinese society today, increasing credibility and value is being given to the individual. In particular, individuals' decision making, based on their own rational judgment, is being valorized more than in recent past, both within the expansion of the market economy and in less economically based social arenas. In short, people are

being given more degrees of freedom to control more aspects of their lives and are expected to function well in this freedom. This functioning includes the individual's not only making judgments about what is best for himself/herself, but also assessing appropriately the legitimate boundaries to this decision making freedom.

Schools in China are thus facing the need both to encourage the development of critical judgment in their students *and* to facilitate appreciation and acceptance of socially important boundaries to that judgment in those same students. In particular, approaches to moral education exist within this tension: emphasis is increasingly placed on the student's own moral judgment, while at the same time concern is expressed about the erosion of Chinese "traditional values," including especially, respect for authority. However, beyond anecdotal accounts based on teachers' experience, very little is known about how children and adolescents are accommodating to these basic social changes and pressures. Moral educators in particular feel the pressure of not knowing how to respond with effective pedagogical theories and practical teaching strategies to mediate this tension and to support adolescents in their interaction with it.

In addition, there has been a growing awareness over the last ten years among moral educators that traditional Chinese pedagogical approaches are not appropriate to address these tensions. In short, the concern has been that these approaches are too teacher-centered, didactic, prescriptive, and dogmatic. All of these characteristics are seen as working against the need to support the

development of critical judgment of students. There has also been increasing worry that when taken in conjunction with the practice of conflating “political education,” “ideological education,” and “moral education” these pedagogical approaches may serve to undercut the credibility and seriousness of moral education conceived as primarily involving the quality of interpersonal relations.

The response of the project to this set of concerns has been to work with teacher educators, researchers, and school teachers (at the junior high school and high school levels) to develop research projects, curriculum materials, and pedagogical strategies that address more directly the educational needs of adolescents in the area of moral education. Part of this involved introducing current research theory, methodology, and instruments from western developmental psychology and moral philosophy that might potentially be useful in exploring the moral education problems perceived by the teachers themselves. Another aspect focussed on facilitating teachers’ familiarity—and comfort—with developmental theories and pedagogical approaches that focus on qualitative, age-related changes in students’ capacities to make sense of, and formulate moral judgments about, their social environment in terms of interpersonal issues such as fairness. This included experience in helping students identify, articulate, and reason about moral dilemmas that they themselves see as relevant to their lives. It further included modeling pedagogical strategies that both work with such material and do so in a way that focuses more on student-student critical discussion than on didactic orientations. Effort was also made to introduce these

ideas and methodologies in such a way as to allow room for integration with teachers’ concern for emphasizing the relevance and potential of Chinese “traditional values.” Finally, some schools were directly involved in an empirical study of “Adolescents’ Judgments of Democratic and Authority-based Decision Making,” as an attempt to develop a sounder basis for interpretation of adolescents’ thinking about some of the contemporary social changes that have moral implications for them.

Critical Conditions and Key Success Factors

Two main critical conditions for success of this project were originally identified: that all participants keep their commitments to the planned activities and that institutional support be maintained throughout the duration of the project. Although one of the six sites was somewhat disappointing on both accounts, overall both of these conditions were met with to a high degree. In fact, given the number of institutions involved, the number of different work focuses involved, and the *very high* number of individuals involved, the success in meeting these conditions is, in our judgment, remarkable.

With the one exception to be noted, participants on both sides not only kept their original commitments but also in many cases exceeded them by conceiving and initiating

related activities that were additional to those originally planned.

On the Canadian side, the 12 scholars (plus one from England) participated as planned both in the two workshops in China and in the follow-up activities of working with Chinese colleagues through email and at the time of their Canadian visits to write up research in the form of books and journal articles. Despite the occasional difficulty in maintaining ongoing communication consistently, this work added to their already busy academic schedules considerably, often with time-consuming activities that in many cases were somewhat on the margins of their main academic focuses. In this regard, special note might be taken of the several relatively junior Canadian scholars that participated in this fulsome manner despite the fact that their institutions did not recognize such activities as clearly relevant to their academic careers and promotion therein.

On the Chinese side the high level of sustained commitment to the activities of the project was on the whole equally gratifying, if not more so. Again, it is important to note that the Chinese scholars and teachers involved already had full schedules of work before the project began, and the project activities were often significant additions to this workload. Moreover, due to the significant increase in enrolments in most universities and the rapid economic changes (often resulting in the need of scholars to “moonlight” in order to maintain a reasonable standard of living), the work demands increased significantly during the years of the project, quite independently of the work for the project itself. In

this regard, the sustained commitment of the Chinese participants was exemplary. This assessment pertains both to the project activities as planned and to the numerous “spin-offs” (such as the formation of English immersion programs initiated in 32 schools in 5 different sites) that must be seen as directly related to these activities, but were not anticipated. The one somewhat disappointing exception involved personnel from one of the three universities focussing on moral education, namely, East China Normal University. In this case, the co-leader of the Nanjing/Shanghai site became more involved in other aspects of his career to the point that he dropped out of the project (e.g., did not attend the second workshop) and failed to provide sufficient support, through involving other scholars from his university, to guide the teachers from the several Shanghai schools in their project activities. The result was that with the exception of one young scholar, little if any new research was attempted, and the capacity to determine the existence of any pedagogical innovation was seriously diminished. Fortunately, since there were two universities combined in this “site” and the other co-leader from Nanjing Normal University was solidly and consistently committed throughout the project duration, the project was still viable and productive.

The institutional support in Canada, primarily from the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto and the University of British Columbia, was very strong throughout the project. This support included managing the funds involved in a careful and efficient manner despite the number of personnel and variety of sites involved. In addition, the

project benefited immensely from the consistently superb administrative work on the part of the Canadian Project Manager. The significant “in-kind” contributions of both Canadian universities in terms of both “release-time” of the scholars involved and the hosting of significant numbers of Chinese scholars for up to three months each should also be noted.

In terms of institutional support in China, with the exception of East China Normal, the Chinese universities were fully behind the activities of the project throughout its duration. Concrete indicators of this institutional support include the following: providing working and living arrangements for the workshop participants (sometimes numbering as many as 35), providing translators for the Canadian participants (most of whom did not speak any Chinese) and those Chinese participants whose English did not include sufficient academic content, and the organizing and hosting of the final “National Elements” conference in Lanzhou by Northwest Normal University. In addition, three of the participating Chinese universities have supported the activities of the project to the degree of establishing, and obtaining funding for, three new Research Institutes to *sustain* the kind of work initiated by the project after it is completed. These are: the Research Institute for Basic and Rural Education at Northeast Normal University, the Institute of Moral Education at Nanjing Normal University, and the Institute for Minority Education Research at Northwest Normal University. Another example of institutional support in China was the conference on women and Minority Education held in Xi’an in 1996, involving 40,000 RMB (approximately

\$7000 Can.) out of the University’s budget. This conference was held right before this project commenced, and was intended as both prelude and preparation for it. (Many key personnel from the current project participated, including Ruth Hayhoe, Du Fanqin, Zheng Xinrong, Wang Shulan, Yang Yongming, Wang Jiayi, Qiang Haiyan, and Fang Junming.) Finally, Prof. Fang Junming, as Dean of the Faculty of Education in Shaanxi Normal, consistently gave the project activities a high profile, viewing them as a highly significant forum for international academic exchanges, for academic and staff development, and for capacity building of the faculty, and often contributing directly to problem solving during the implementation of the project.

Another critical factor that was anticipated but not explicitly identified as such in the original project plans concerned the number of institutions involved on the Chinese (6) and their significant geographic separation. One aspect of this factor was the wide range of different kinds of work being done by so many different people at the different locations. Simply keeping track of all the activities, and the problems encountered, was a significant task. The Chinese Project Director, Qiang Haiyan, made solid contributions to meeting this condition successfully. In addition, during the period of Qiang Haiyan’s move to South China Normal, Wang Jiayi at Northwest Normal University functioned ably as “Acting Director.” A large part of the success was, however, achieved through the leadership of the Canadian Co-Director, Dr. Dwight Boyd, and the intense and knowledgeable work of the Canadian Project Manager (and Co-Director), Dr. Julia Pan, especially via

her numerous management trips to the different sites in China and her collaboration with Qiang Haiyan and Wang Jiayi of Northwest Normal. Another related aspect of this factor concerns the difficulties of communication, both between Canada and China, and between the Chinese institutions involved. Such communication proved difficult at times, and was often overcome only through persistence and, especially, Dr. Pan's understanding of current conditions in China and cultural differences.

Lessons Learned

- (1) The horizontal communication among Chinese partner institutions needs to be strengthened.
- (2) It is crucial to anticipate and plan for difficulties in communication.
- (3) Building on the participation and commitment of the Chinese academics who had an established track record of effective collaboration in the earlier CCULP project was a critical factor for success.
- (4) More care needs to be taken to ensure that all participants have expertise and interest in the particular areas of academic endeavor. (This pertains only to the moral education focus of the project.)

- (5) A project of this scope and diffuse nature is simply impossible without the in-depth cross-cultural sensitivity and management skills manifested by Dr. Julia Pan.
- (6) Canadian Co-Directorship was truly beneficial to the management of the overall project

Results at All Three Levels

Gender

- (1) New programs and courses established by and in collaboration with women faculty at the participating institutions include:
 - New (undergraduate) course on “Women’s Psychology” developed and taught by Wang Shulan and colleagues in the Department of Psychology, Shaanxi Normal University
 - New (undergraduate and graduate) course on “Women and Development” developed and taught by Zheng Xinrong and Shi Jinghuan in the Faculty of Education, Beijing Normal University
 - New (undergraduate) course on “Women and Education” developed and taught by Yang Min in

the Department of Education, Liaoning Normal University, Dalian

- New (undergraduate) course on “Women and Social Development” developed and taught by Hu Piing in the Women’s Study Center, Xi’an Jiaotong University
 - New university elective course for undergraduates (two classes per term, of approx. 200 students) on “Mental Health and Equal Education” (for both men and women) developed and (team-taught) by project participants and colleagues at Shaanxi Normal University
- (2) Almost all participants in the Xi’an and Wuhan workshops (approx. 45) have reported becoming more aware of gender issues and succeeding in the greater integration of gender issues, theories, and practical approaches into their existing courses in a variety of content areas, such as Introduction to Psychology, Foundations of Education, Educational Management, Comparative Education, and Higher Education.
- (3) Qiang Haiyan moved from Shaanxi Normal University to South China Normal University in the summer of 1999 and was successful in establishing a new Women’s Study Center, inaugurated on International Women’s Day, March 8, 2001.

Publications

Qiang, H. (1999). *Xingbie Chayi yu Jiaoyu (Gender difference and education)*. Shaanxi Renmin Jiaoyu Chubanshe (Shaanxi People’s Education Press).

Wang, S., Qiang, H., Yang, Y., & Fang, J. (Eds.). (2000). *Zhongguo Nudaxuesheng Fazhan yu Jiaoyu (Development and education of female university students in China)*. Shaanxi Renmin Jiaoyu Chubanshe (Shaanxi People’s Education Press).

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Hsiung, P.(1999). Transformation, subversion, and feminist activism: Report on workshops of a developmental project, Xi’an, China. *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars*, 31, (3), 47-51.

Zhang, X., Xu, J., Eichler, M. Gaskell, J., & Pan, J. Women teachers’ participation in Chinese Normal Universities. (To be submitted to an international educational journal)

Increased demand for consulting, collaborative research, and joint initiatives

- Qiang Haiyan, since 1997, has been a key member of a small group of five experts in different specializations consulting on the “Basic Education Project in China,” supported by the World Bank. Her responsibility has been in the area of teacher training and teachers’ service network (TSN). The TSN is a new initiative of the World Bank Project and she is the key designer and trainer. It aims to provide daily professional service and help to all school teachers in poor rural schools, where most teachers are women who seldom have the opportunity for participating in in-service training programs.
- Zheng Xinrong has been asked to be involved as a key trainer in the area of girls’ education for the TSN project this year in two national training workshops.
- As a senior professor, Associate Director of the Women’s Study Center in Shaanxi Normal University, and a leading participant in this project’s gender focus, Wang Shulan has developed a very high profile within the community. She has been asked to give approximately 100 lectures to people in the Xi’an area, with varied audiences including girls in primary and secondary schools, women teachers, women cadres/administrators and leaders, male and female bank presidents, female company managers, women workers and new unemployed women, hospital doctors and nurses, air stewardesses, rural people related to rural basic education for girls, women teachers in universities and colleges, etc. The total number of the audience has reached the level of around 20,000.
- Several project participants have been invited to participate in, and in some cases play key roles in, a large scale project initiated by the (New York based) United Board for Christian Higher Education in Asia. This project has the title of “Gender Equity and Curriculum Development” and its focal activity consists of workshops for writing four textbooks. These textbooks are in the following areas: “Gender Difference and Education” (for a new graduate course); “Mental Health and Education for Male and Female College Students” (for a new undergraduate elective course); “Pedagogy” (integrating gender issues into the required course of Pedagogy in all normal universities and colleges in China); “Psychology” (integrating gender issues into the required course of Psychology in all normal universities and colleges in China). Key scholars from our project lead the UB project, and several are active participants. The Project Directors are Qiang Haiyan and Wang Shulan; the Project Manager is Zhao Lin; and participants include Yang Yongming, Fang Junming, Wang Yonghui, Li Shaomei, and Yang Xing. Qiang Haiyan has attributed the success of the application for this project to the CIDA project experience.
- Four core members of this CIDA project have successfully applied for a major Ford Foundation Project started in 2000, entitled “Women Studies as Disciplines in Higher Education Institutions.” The

Project Director of this research endeavor is Du Fangqin and the Project sub-director for the focus on gender and pedagogy is Zheng Xinrong. Other key persons involved include Ping-chun Hsiung of the University of Toronto and Qiang Haiyan. They collectively attribute the success of this application to their CIDA Project experience.

- Since 1999, Ruth Hayhoe has been appointed Chair of the China committee of the Save the Children Fund (Hong Kong), and Qiang Haiyan has been appointed consultant to the committee. The committee's priorities focus on providing support for disadvantaged children, including especially rural children, girls, and minority children. Zhao Lin, of Shaanxi Normal University has initiated a series of projects, funded by this committee to improve the educational experience of rural girls. This included training teachers and parents to help develop girls' self-confidence and encouraging female college students to become active in a program to help rural elementary school girls. Many other projects supporting rural schools in Hubei, Qinghai, Gansu, Xinjiang, and Sichuan have also been launched in association with Chinese colleagues who are involved in the CIDA project network.
- A UK sponsored project on basic education in Gansu has been led by Prof. Wang Jiayi at Northwest Normal University, and has engaged Qiang Haiyan as the project consultant for teacher training and Zheng Xinrong as the project consultant for social development (involving issues of gender, minorities,

poverty, and disability) as a result of their experience in our CIDA project. The book on *Women and Social Development* produced by our project, as noted above, has been used as a central resource for this work.

- Personnel from Shaanxi Normal University have collaborated with the Shaanxi Women's Federation in maintaining a "hotline" service for women. This hotline was initiated by the SWF in the midyears of the project, supported by a Hong Kong agency. Since then, six of the CIDA project participants (women university teachers) have been volunteers to provide telephone-counseling service for women in the community. In addition, after taking new courses on women's issues, many female graduate students have volunteered to help with the hotline, one of them eventually replacing the chief person organizing this effort from the SWF.

Women promoted in administration

The following women participants in the project have been promoted to the identified positions during the project:

- Qiang Haiyan, Associate Director of Women's Study Center, South China Normal University and member of Provincial Political Consultation Committee
- Zheng Xinrong, Associate Dean of the Faculty of Education, Beijing Normal University

- Zhao Lin, Chair of Department of Early Childhood Education, Shaanxi Normal University
- Zhang Xiaoming, Vice-Director of Women's Study Center, Central China University of Science and Technology
- Li Yue, Dean of Education Department, Xi'an United University
- Yang Min, Director of Institute of Japanese Education Studies, Liaoning Normal University

Minority culture and language

New curricula and approaches to bilingual education and the integration of indigenous knowledge, and promotions involving further development in these areas, include:

- A new course for doctoral students on "Bilingual Teaching and Cognitive Development" was developed and taught by Fang Junming in East China Normal University.
- Fang Junming was approved to be Dean and a doctoral supervisor in 1998. He is the first such supervisor in China for a program in special education, including bilingual education.
- Wan Minggang was approved to be Dean and a doctoral supervisor in 2000 in the Faculty of Education of Northwest Normal University.

- Wang Jiayi was approved to be a doctoral supervisor in 2001 in the Faculty of Education and Director of Research Services of Northwest Normal University.

Publications

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Siegel, L., Fang, J., & Wang, J. (Eds.). (2001). *Shaoshu Minzu Shuanyu Jiaoxue de Lilun yu Shijian (The theories and practices of bilingual teaching of minority education in China)*. Shaanxi Renmin Jiaoyu Chubanshe (Shaanxi People's Education Press).

Wan, M., & Wang, J. (1999). Multi-cultural curriculum research in Chinese minority education: Indigenous teaching curriculum development in Gan-nan Tibetan region. *Curriculum Studies* (Beijing: Central China Educational Research Institute), 1, 28-38.

Increased demand for training and joint school/university projects

- Fang Junming was active in 1999 in the national training workshops in the “World Bank Project” described above, working with approximately 200 teachers. He is also a participant in the “UB” project described above.
- Wan Minggang and Wang Jiayi have been asked to serve as key trainers in two national training workshops of the “World Bank Project” this year, focusing on minority education.
- Wang Jiayi developed a project through the Hong Kong Save the Children Fund (described above) to improve the learning environment of schools in poverty areas of the Northwest, based on the collaboration among himself, his graduate students and school personnel in these areas.

Moral Education

Changes introduced by teachers in course curriculum and new courses:

- Yuan Guilin developed new curriculum on the topic of “Moral Education in Western Countries” for graduate students at Northeast Normal University.
- A new course on “Moral Education Theory and Practice in Secondary Schools” was developed by Yuan Guilin, Northeast Normal University, now taught three times to approx. 150 students.
- A new course on “Moral Education and Action Research Methods for Secondary Teachers” was developed by Yuan Guilin, Northeast Normal University, now taught twice to approx. 110 adult students.
- Yuan Guilin was approved to be a doctoral supervisor in 1999 in the Faculty of Education of Northeast Normal University. He was also awarded a Fulbright Fellowship for a year of study at Louisiana State University for the 2000-2001 academic year.

Publications

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Yuan, G.(1999). Comments on the secondary school curriculum and textbook reform. *Textbook and Teaching Methods*, 19.

Yuan, G. (1999). Study moral philosophy and improve moral practice. *Journal of Moral Education Information*, 2.

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Tan, D. (Ed.). (2001). *Special Issue of the Social Science Edition of Academic Journal of Ninjing Normal University*. .

Huang, X. Y., & Boyd, D. A contemporary chinese adaptation of Kohlbergian moral pedagogy: Philosophical and cultural interpretation.” (To be submitted to the *Journal of Moral Education*).

Increased demand for collaborative research projects and training by university personnel, from schools and community

- Tan Dingliang was invited to lecture in the national training workshops for teachers (approx. 200) as part of the “World Bank Project” described above.
- Yuan Guilin was invited by Lu Jie at Nanjing Normal University to consult on that university’s contribution to the ninth five-year plan (1995-2000) concerning “Towards the 21st Century: Establishing New Moral Education Structures in Schools.” His role was to lead one sub-project on “Exploring the Theoretical Foundations of Moral Education in the Schools of the New Century.”

Unintended Results and Spin-offs

Gender

The well-known Chinese feminist Prof. Li Xiaojiang moved the Women's Museum that she had established at Henan University to Shaanxi Normal University during the first year of our project. One of the reasons for this move was the strong support climate that she witnessed at Shaanxi for women's studies and her participation (along with several colleagues) in the first workshop conducted there on women college students' development.

Minority culture and language

Before this project there were only a few scattered articles in foreign language education journals in China referring to bilingual education and language immersion models used in Canada. Although a number of teachers had developed an interest in experimenting with these methodologies in Chinese classrooms, they had neither resources nor guidance. In 1997, after the systematic orientation in language immersion teaching theories and practice provided by the Canadian scholars in the minority bilingual education research workshop in northwest China, the first Chinese-English Immersion Experiment Program (for students 4-12 years old) was initiated in Shaanxi Normal University. This program, directed by Profs. Qiang Haiyan and Zhao Lin, has now been extended to 21 kindergartens and 11 elementary

schools in 6 cities, including Xi'an, Beijing, Nanjing, Guangzhou, Chengdu, and Lanzhou. Linda Siegel, from the University of British Columbia, has provided on-going input in terms of program design, curriculum design, research methodology, evaluation indicators, and teacher training.

Two noteworthy examples in rural poverty areas of Gansu are two experiments initiated by school personnel who were participants in the bilingual workshops and saw the importance of this kind of educational intervention. The first is the "Tibetan Primary School," in which the children come from a mixed area of Tibetan and Han. Most of the children do not have good Tibetan language, and the teaching language was Chinese. The experiment has been to adopt Tibetan as the teaching language in this school. In a second school in Gansu, the "Xiahe Secondary School," the students are all Tibetan. However, the rural students' language level in both the mother language and Chinese is very low. Whereas the school used to utilize solely Chinese as the teaching language, the experiment has been to adopt Tibetan as the teaching language for science courses.

Wan Minggang and Meng Fanli, a woman Dean at Xinjiang Normal University, have jointly applied to the Hong Kong Save the Children Fund for a project to meet the basic needs of minority children's' schooling in three rural schools in the Tulufan minority area and of minority women teachers in this area.

A new Institute for Minority Education Research has now been established and funded at Northwest Normal University by the Ministry of Education.

Moral education

Yuan Guilin, Northeast Normal University, arranged for 6 principals from Chinese schools and 2 colleagues to travel to Vancouver and visit schools in that area. Project personnel hosted them and arranged for their visits and for translation services.

A new Research Institute for Basic and Rural Education has now been established and funded by the Ministry of Education at Northeast Normal University.

A new Institute of Moral Education has now been established and funded by the Ministry of Education at Nanjing Normal University. Mary Lou Arnold and Dwight Boyd, OISE/UT, have accepted positions as “advisor and guest professor” for the purpose of future research collaboration.

Final Assessment

The project has already had, and will likely continue to have for the next several years, considerable demonstrable impact at all levels, in terms of policy, institutions, and community/individual concerns. As the focus of the work has been quite diffuse (covering three distinct focuses of research and pedagogy) and this work has been conducted in six different sites, it is impossible to track all of the potential impacts in this report. However, some of the notable highlights include the following.

China is currently engaged in substantial, nation-wide curriculum reform, the results of which will be initiated in two to three years. The general aim is to loosen central control of curriculum to some extent and to build into the curriculum both regional variations and more engagement with the conditions of social change in China today. There are six centers for this curriculum reform and research established by the Ministry of Education, in different normal universities representing different regions. The center in Northwest Normal University is responsible for some of this curriculum-related research and for developing relevant regional curriculum in the northwest part of China. Both Wang Jiayi and Qiang Haiyan are actively involved in these efforts. They report that the outcomes of our project’s work on minority culture and language issues are contributing directly to this reform. In addition, the new curriculum will emphasize content areas that are not focused on knowledge acquisition, but are closer to what is known in

the West as “child-centered” approaches that emphasize the development of personality, abilities, emotions, and values. It will also emphasize the integration of subject areas, e.g., the integration of moral education with science for grades 1 and 2 as “moral education and life.” Qiang Haiyan also reports that these latter changes are being influenced by some of the work done by participants in our project in the area of moral education.

National priorities for educational research have recently been established for the tenth five-year plan (2001-2005). This is a core document establishing orientation and guidelines for Chinese scholars who are applying for research projects and funds in education. Personnel from our project have been influential in shaping these national research priorities. Of particular note is the influence of Zheng Xinrong. As a result, “rural girls’ education” and “women’s education” have been identified as two of these priorities. This influence will promote the development of educational research related to gender issues across the whole of China. To support this initiative, Professor Ping-chun Hsiung, a core member of this project, will direct a Summer Institute on Feminist Pedagogy and Program Development in Women Studies for 12 Chinese women faculty members at the University of Toronto in 2002, with the partial support from the Ford Foundation.

The Chinese Ministry of Education has recently (2000) initiated a campaign to promote academic development in specified priority areas through the establishment and funding of “National Bases for Humanities and Social Studies.” The application for approval of these “bases” at

particular universities is extremely competitive. Each priority area has only one base, and it is intended to function as a national academic center for research in the priority. Thus, each year almost half of the academic staff of the base should be invited from other institutions to do research in the base. It is better equipped and funded than most such centers. And it should serve, therefore, as a national base for knowledge production and transfer. It is this Ministry initiative that has resulted in the successful establishment of the three new research institutes at Northeast Normal, Northwest Normal, and Nanjing Normal mentioned above. Through the leverage of these bases, project personnel will have significant influence on the direction of future work on moral education, minority bilingual education, minority cultural learning, and rural basic education.

These new national-base research institutes can also legitimately be viewed as concrete evidence of sustainability of aspects of the project’s work. In each case, there are long-term commitments of personnel, institutional support, and significant funding to enable the continuation and development of research and pedagogical innovations initiated in this project. In addition, in some cases this sustainability will be further facilitated by the continued connection with Canadian scholars. Thus, for example, Linda Siegel has plans to continue to work on collaborative research and the immersion programs supported by the Institute at Northwest Normal. And, as already noted, Mary Lou Arnold and Dwight Boyd have three-year appointments as “advisor and guest professor” with the Institute for Moral Education at Nanjing Normal University. These

appointments will facilitate several trips back to China after this project is over for further collaboration. The collaboration will include working with Tan Dingliang at Nanjing Normal and Charles Helwig at the University of Toronto on their research, funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, on adolescents' views about different forms of government and on the teaching of values in family and school.

The efforts and contribution of Qiang Haiyan as a key member of the "Teachers' Service Network" of the "World Bank Project" has already been commended by a senior Bank official (Mr. Beemer) and the Director of the Loan Office of the Ministry of Education, Bai Sizhang. This work is having a major helpful impact on large numbers of teachers in rural areas, most of whom are women, who for the first time have an opportunity for in-service training. Greater appreciation of how gender issues impact their lives can be expected.

The *Tibetan Culture Reading Book* is a "first of its kind" in China, a genuinely unique and important result that is already having significant impact across northwest China. This textbook was first published in 1999 and was the outcome of innovative collaborative work between Chinese scholars, minority scholars, and minority teachers. This entailed empirical work, action research with teachers, collaborative writing, and vetting with Tibetan leaders. This activity alone can be said to have had significant impact. But the actual textbook produced, even more so. It was immediately commended by the Director of Minority Education Sector in the Ministry of Education, and received favorable attention from

provincial governments, Tibetan religious communities, and minority schools. It has received public praise from both Tibetan religious bodies and ordinary Tibetan people. The textbook has now been experimented with in 8 Tibetan schools since publication, and the Hong Kong Save the Children Fund has ordered 1000 copies for the poorer schools in Gansu and Qinghai. Our project has also found funds to publish another 1500 copies as a response to the numerous requests from different minority communities conveyed to us by Wang Jiayi and Jia Luo. In addition, recognizing that this impact would be sustainable *only if* teachers in minority schools understand the book's significance and are comfortable in using it, our project also found the funds for sponsoring a five-day workshop for training 40 teachers to use the new material, May 11-15, 2001, at the Northwest Minorities University in Lanzhou. Participants were very positive in their support of the book, but also went on to develop plans for improving it to accommodate regional and demographic differences.

The significance of this output in terms of its impact can be understood in terms of four points.

- (1) It filled a glaring gap in the development of indigenous knowledge based curricula for minority students as the most forceful media for maintenance of the cultural inheritance of national minorities in China.
- (2) The actual activity of producing the book cultivated and supported the cultural consciousness of a group

of Tibetan teachers and student-centered researchers in curriculum development.

- (3) It has already stimulated curriculum reform and development beyond its own scope. This locally initiated and produced textbook and its favorable acceptance on all sides has changed the conventional expectation of the need for central government domination of curriculum design: it has become a concrete good example of effective decentralized curricular innovation (in, for example, the current national curriculum reform activity noted above).
- (4) Finally, it has also stimulated the Tibetan religious community to view public education in a more positive and cooperative way, because the development team consulted with numerous religious leaders and scholars to solicit their input, both in the development phase and the evaluation phase. As a result, Tibetan religious culture became an integral part of the book, and appreciation of this has been expressed.

The English immersion experiments have had impact parallel in significance to the Tibetan textbook. As already noted, it is now part of programs in 21 kindergartens and 11 elementary schools across China. As an indication of this impact it should be noted that the work has attracted researchers from 4 foreign language institutions and 5 teachers' universities to conduct substantial research on these new methods. Within three years since the initial program, they have published 5 academic papers, 3 books (including teachers'

workbooks), and they have held 2 conferences and 5 training workshops for approx. 80 teachers. This work has already had a major impact on changing the efficiency and effects of teaching English as a second language by providing a new perspective on bilingual education, and it is serving as a framework for current policy reforms. In addition, since most language teachers are women, by establishing them publicly as pioneering teachers and researchers the immersion program has also served to improve women's social and professional leadership. The Minister of Education visited Shaanxi Normal University to observe the program, and the Ministry of Education subsequently granted funding for the research. In addition, China Education Press has reported on the program. Thus it is accurate to say that the experiments have generated broad social and government support and public acclaim.

These immersion experiments have been so successful that they are also having localized community impact. Parents constantly visit schools and observe the classroom teaching even though many of them do not understand English. They report how happy they are that their children understand everything in class without a word in Chinese. Parents are also directly involved: they buy the immersion books and study along with their children so that they can communicate with them in English at home when the children need help. Competition to enroll children in these immersion schools is becoming very stiff. For example, one couple wanted their child to study in the grade two immersion class in the Xi'an elementary school, but the principal would not allow it because the class was already too large. So the

couple tried hard to “go through the back door” by getting notes from the Director of the Provincial Education Committee and the President of the Foreign Language Institute to put pressure on the Principal to relent. Another example occurred at the Boluo school. The immersion program had planned to enroll 120 children. However, approx. 300 parents stood in line from midnight until 8:00 a.m. in hopes that they would be successful in having their children admitted.

The textbook *Women and Social Development* produced by our project has also already had a major impact of the development of curriculum on women’s issues at universities across China. It is known to be in active use at Tianjin Normal University, Beijing Normal University, Shaanxi Normal University, Nanjing Normal University, Liaoning Normal University, Capital Normal University, China Women’s College, and Xi’an Jiaotong University.

Finally, according to Qiang Haiyan, this project has also had significant impact in terms of greatly increasing the general level of knowledge of Canadian education in China. Even though there are more than 20 Canadian Study Centers in Chinese universities, few pay any attention to Canadian education. There is now one Canadian Education Center that seeks to fill this gap at Shaanxi Normal University, established by Ruth Hayhoe, the Director of the previous CCULP project. A book entitled *Canadian Basic Education Today*, authored by Qiang Haiyan and based on her project experience and research with Canadian colleagues will be published this year.