

Title

Literature-Based Human Rights Education in Taiwan: Teaching Migrant Worker Narratives for Social Inclusion in a Chinese Language Classroom

Research Overview

This classroom-based practitioner study examines how migrant worker narratives can be integrated into Taiwanese senior high school Chinese language education. Through literature-based reading, legal comparison, group discussion, and perspective-taking activities, the lesson guided students to reconsider migrant workers not merely as labor providers, but as members of a shared society.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study is to explore how literature-based pedagogy can support human rights education and intercultural understanding in a senior high school Chinese language classroom in Taiwan. In Taiwanese society, migrant workers are often discussed through economic, labor, or policy perspectives, while their emotional experiences, cultural identities, and human rights are less visible in language education. This invisibility can lead students to understand migrant workers mainly through stereotypes, media fragments, or family employment experiences. The study therefore asks how literary and nonfiction narratives can help students move from viewing migrant workers as distant others to recognizing them as individuals with family responsibilities, cultural backgrounds, legal constraints, and emotional lives. The broader aim is to demonstrate how local classroom innovation in Taiwan can contribute to global conversations on migration, intercultural learning, social inclusion, and education for human dignity.

Research Methods

This study adopts a classroom-based practitioner research approach. The teaching materials included three Chinese-language texts: *A Staircase 1.6 Meters Wide* by Yu-Ling Ku, *The Mirror Reflecting You and Me* by Tien-Hsin Chu, and *Junxing Street No. 224* by Yu-Ling Ku. These texts were supplemented with reports and migrant-worker advocacy resources from Taiwanese media and civil society platforms, including *The Reporter* and *ONE-FORTY*. The original teaching design aimed to guide students to discuss migrant worker issues through literary reading and group inquiry, with the goal of increasing understanding and empathy toward migrant workers. The instructional design included three major stages. First, students read and compared literary and nonfiction texts to identify different representations of migrant workers and caregivers. Second, students worked in groups to examine migrant workers' labor conditions, including wages, working hours, cultural adaptation, employer-worker communication, and legal restrictions. Third, students compared textual representations with real-world labor regulations and discussed possible actions for improving migrant workers' conditions. The lesson also used group discussion, ORID-based reflection, legal comparison, and four-corner debate to help students articulate their positions and reconsider their assumptions. Classroom data included student discussion records, group responses, teacher observation, and reflective statements. The analysis focuses on qualitative changes in students' language, especially how their descriptions of migrant workers shifted before and after the lesson.

Results and Discussion

The classroom evidence suggests that students' understanding of migrant workers shifted from simplified stereotypes toward more empathetic and structural interpretations. Before the lesson, some student responses associated migrant workers with negative terms such as lazy, runaway, criminal, sitting casually in public spaces, or gathering in groups. After the lesson, students produced more empathetic and action-oriented responses, including recognizing migrant workers' family responsibilities, reflecting on fair labor treatment, and considering how employers and families might avoid exploitative practices. The teaching evidence documents this change by contrasting negative pre-lesson impressions with post-lesson responses such as sacrificing for family, not becoming exploitative employers, and sharing caregiving responsibilities rather than placing them entirely on one migrant worker. The discussion activities also helped students connect literary interpretation with social analysis. Instead of treating migrant workers as an abstract social issue, students examined how labor systems, employer expectations, language barriers, cultural differences, and legal limitations shape migrant workers' lived experiences. Through textual comparison and legal inquiry, students identified how literary narratives reveal forms of exclusion that may otherwise remain invisible in everyday life. The four-corner debate further asked students to consider concrete responses, such as higher wages, shorter working hours, or alternative forms of employer support. These activities suggest that empathy alone is insufficient unless it is connected to institutional understanding and civic imagination. The findings indicate that Chinese language education can become a meaningful space for human rights education and intercultural learning. Literature allows students to encounter the emotions, constraints, and dignity of marginalized groups, while structured discussion and legal comparison help them connect empathy with social responsibility. This case contributes a practical model for integrating literature, social justice, and global citizenship education in an East Asian secondary school context. It also shows how a local classroom practice in Taiwan can participate in broader global conversations about migration, social inclusion, and education for human dignity.

Keywords

Migrant Workers; Human Rights Education; Chinese Language Education; Literature-Based Pedagogy; Social Inclusion