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TEACHING, LEADERSHIP, AND  
CURRICULUM STUDIES

A STUDY OF GENDERING CULTURE OF NEW TAIWANESE CHILDREN IN THEIR  
KINDERGARTEN CLASSROOMS (515 pp.)

Director of Dissertation: Janice Kroeger, Ph.D.

Current literature suggests that young children can socially construct gender identities when submitting to or resisting dominant discourses. In this study I sought to understand the gendered culture of contemporary Taiwanese kindergartens. I focused on how Taiwanese Children (NTC) and mainstream Taiwanese peers play together as they constructed gender identities in urban and rural classroom settings.

I observed and interviewed five- and six-year-old NTC and their peers as they engaged in critical gender incidents related to male, female, and cross-gender play. The research addressed how NTC and their peers enacted multiple gender performances as daily experiences continually shaped and reshaped children's gender-doing, and investigated how NTC maintained and resisted gender norms under dominant gender discourse. The research questions asked: What constitutes children's gendered knowledge and how do children perform gender culture?; and How do children represent gendered social order in class?

NTC's gender identity often represents multiple levels of gender power, which relates to issues of SES, ethnicity and family culture backgrounds. It is insufficient to examine individual NTC's gender-doing; only when her or his peer interactions have happened can gender incidents display local children's specific gender culture. As such, I explored how NTC persistently build gendered knowledge, gendered social orders and gender identities by tracking critical incidents within local school culture and family settings.

This study reveals where NTC's gender identities intersect with gendered knowledge and classroom gender culture. From these conclusions, I highlighted the importance of classroom gender norms and gender education in early childhood education. The results indicate that the constellation of gendered classroom activities makes it difficult to create the most advantageous learning environment, and that teachers need to be sensitive to different social classes, ethnicity, language and activities so NTC can co-construct gender culture with mainstream peers.