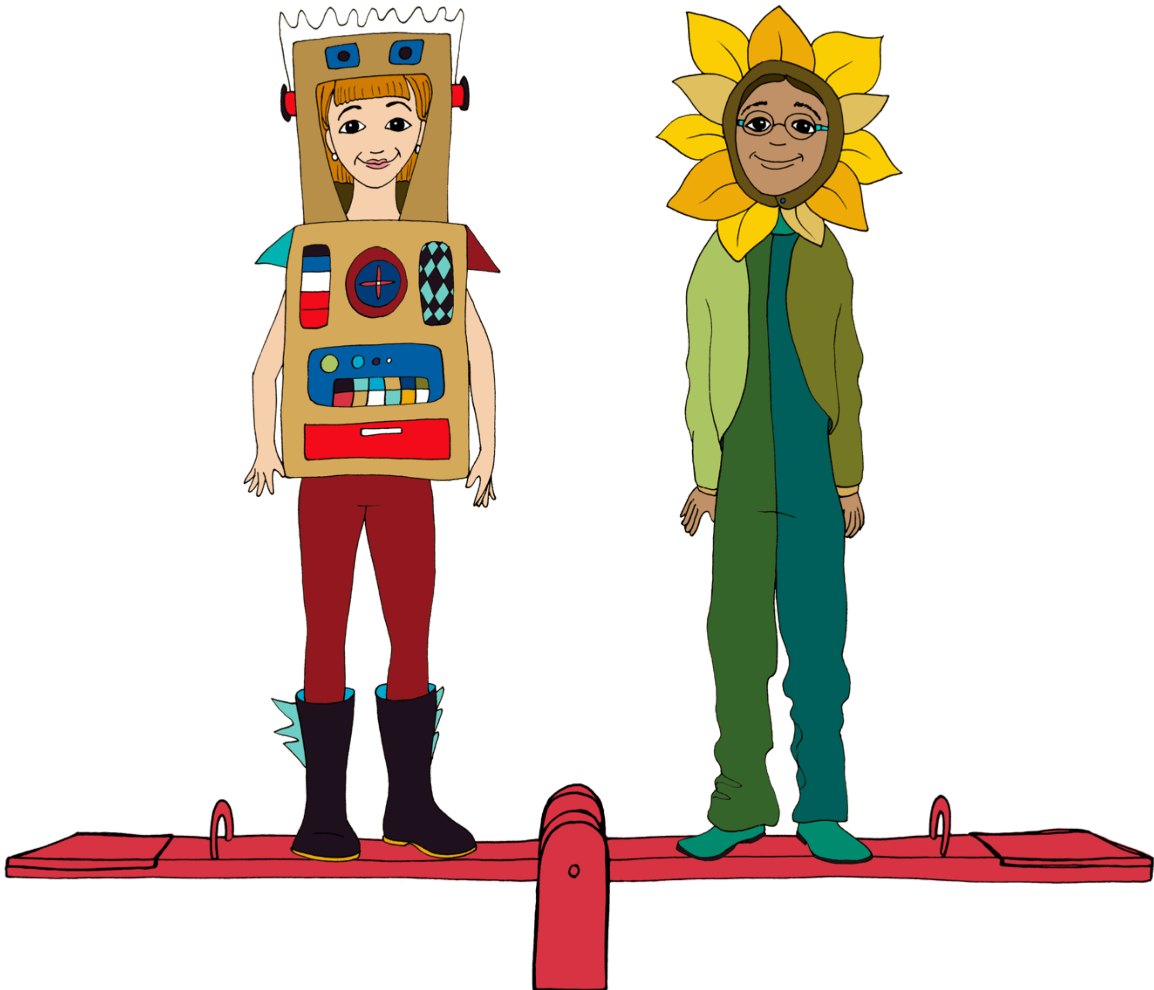
School retention and gender stereotypes

A project led by Table de concertation des groupes de femmes de la Gaspésie et des Îles-de-la-Madeleine



Intervention Guidelines for Elementary Schools in Mi'gmaq Communities

2020

Gender Stereotypes and Elementary School Children

Once they've started primary school, children already have a fairly advanced understanding of what it means to be a boy or a girl. In fact, by around 5 to 7 years of age, children understand that an individual's sex remains constant in all circumstances and the same over time, and that it is defined by biology (Boyd and Bee, 2015). Other studies suggest, however, that the construction of gender identity is dynamic and can be reshaped in children later as they develop (Mieeya and Rouyer, 2013). Whatever the case may be, when they enter primary school, children have very often already developed characteristics traditionally associated with their sex as a result of the differentiated socialization they experienced throughout their early childhood (SCF, 2018).

Development of Gender Identity

According to a conceptualization by John Robert Sylliboy (2019, p. 106), a two-spirited Mi'gmaq, the identity of a human being (*L'nu*) has four dimensions (emotional, spiritual, physical and mental) and encompasses both historical traditions and contemporary practices. Therefore, mi'gmaw children develop their gender identity while balancing its spiritual dimension, rooted in cultural traditions, and its mental dimension that reflects contemporary practices.

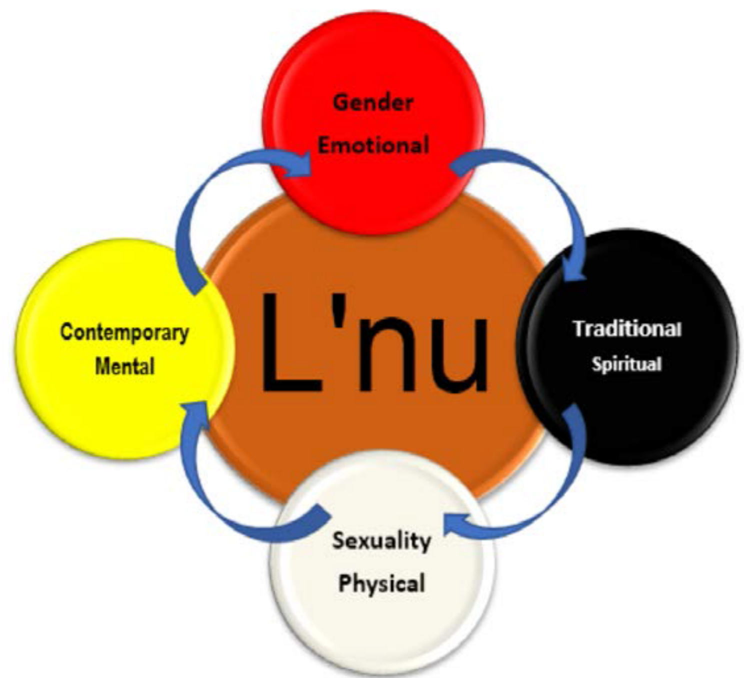


Figure 1. L'nu Model (Sylliboy, 2017)

Gender identity continues to develop throughout early childhood and usually crystallizes at around the age of seven, although in some people this can vary and continue to be reshaped throughout life (Mieeya and Rouyer, 2013). Gender identity is "an individual's gender experience which may or may not correspond to their biological sex or the one assigned at birth. Consequently, any individual may identify themselves as a man, a woman or somewhere between these two poles, regardless of their biological sex. All people—regardless of sexual orientation—have a gender identity" (LGBT Family Coalition, 2018, p. 2).

Gender identity is developing during early childhood and is usually "set" around the age of seven (Mieeya & Rouyer, 2013). This could link to the teachings of the mi'gmaw Elder Murdena Marshall: according to her and other Elders, a significant change is happening in one's life every seven years.

In many First Nations, people with a gender variant identity are called two-spirits (Sylliboy, 2017). If the definition of the term "two-spirits" changes from one Nation to another, "Albert McLeod defines it as 'a term used to describe aboriginal people who assume cross- or multiple-gender roles, attributes, dress and attitudes for personal, spiritual, cultural, ceremonial or social reasons.'" (Monkman, 2016). There is no specific word in Mi'gMaq to adequately represent this concept, although studies are under way to determine which mi'gmaw expression would represent it best (Sylliboy, 2019).

Consequently, it is possible for children of primary school age to wonder about their gender identity. And this is not necessarily directly tied to the children's interests (games, clothing, models, etc.). "So it is important to avoid thinking, for instance, that because a boy is interested in a so-called feminine activity, he sees himself as a girl, or vice versa. On the contrary, children commonly adopt behaviours that are socially attributed to the opposite sex and such behaviours have nothing to do with the gender to which a child identifies inwardly" (SCF, 2018). In those cases, it is important to value the child, validate his or her choices and interests even if they vary from the norm and let him or her explore.

Gender Stereotypes in Elementary School-aged Children

According to a study conducted in Quebec by the Conseil du statut de la femme (2016), most primary school teachers surveyed fully or somewhat agreed with the following statements:

- Girls do better in French than boys;
- The brains of boys and girls do not work in quite the same way;
- Gender differences are not the result of inequalities between men and women;
- Schools in Quebec are not adapted to the needs and specificity of boys;
- Boys need more dynamic and active educational methods; and
- Boys need to move more than girls.

However, these claims are neither based on biological characteristics nor are they scientifically founded. At birth, the brains of boys and girls differ only in reproductive function. Children between 0 and 3 years of age therefore have the same cognitive (intelligence, reasoning, memory, attention, spatial identification) and physical skills (Vidal, cited in Piraud-Rouet, 2017). The differences that develop between girls and boys are attributable to the plasticity of the brain, that is to say, its ability to transform with learning and environment (Piraud-Rouet, 2017). As for the psychological and behavioural differences between sexes, while they tend to increase from childhood to adulthood, they are nearly absent in infants and toddlers (Cossette, 2017).

When children enter primary school, most have already adopted the behaviours expected in children of their sex. Thus, in a study conducted at several primary schools in the Quebec City area, "all of the boys had internalized an evaluation model depicting masculinity based on traditional stereotypes. According to these stereotypes, a boy must be sporty, undisciplined, indifferent to academic results and able to defend himself. Boys who refuse to conform to this model are excluded from the group" (Gagnon, 1999, p. 29). Sylliboy recalls that during his childhood, boys from his Reserve that didn't embrace these stereotypes and acted effeminate were described as *epitejijewe'k*, a clearly negative term. Young boys were being told "*mu'k epitejijewey*", which meant "don't act like a little girl or don't act like a sissy" (Sylliboy, 2017, p. 23).

As for girls, several studies show that when merely 7 years old, girls would already like to be thinner: at this age, they can already identify a part of their anatomy that they want to improve (SCF, 2018). As soon as they enter primary school, girls are also less confident and underestimate their competencies (BBC, 2018). However, they appear to be more resistant to female gender stereotypes, particularly if they have better grades (Gagnon, 1999), which is consistent with studies that show a correlation between adherence to gender stereotypes and school leaving (Réseau Réussite Montréal, 2018). In John R. Sylliboy's mi'gmaw community, young girls who didn't embrace gender stereotypes were called *l'pa'tujewe'k*, which translates as "girl/person acting like a boy" (Sylliboy, 2017, p. 24).

Thus, boys and girls *seem* to adopt behaviours and demonstrate strengths that *naturally* differ according to sex. But these differences, however, turn out to be the result of differentiated socialization.

Differentiated Socialization

Although the family, day-care centre, toys and books for children are the primary agents responsible for the differentiated socialization of girls and boys during early childhood, this process continues at primary school: “so the teachers play a key role in this gendered socialization of pupils by extending what the children have already experienced within their families” (Epiney, 2013, p. 17). Differentiated socialization is the process of inculcating in children the behaviours expected of their sex in a manner consistent with the society in which they are growing up. Much of this differentiated socialization occurs without our knowledge. It is, therefore, essential for teachers to pay attention to the often unconscious ways in which they act differently towards the boys and girls in their classes. Attention must also be paid to what the pupils say and do: indeed, peers also play a role in this differentiated socialization through their reactions towards children who adopt or transgress against behaviours traditionally associated with their own gender. For instance, boys who demonstrate interest in things associated with girls and women (makeup, reading, beading, arts, etc.) are often excluded by their classmates, particularly the boys. This exclusion can manifest itself as insults being thrown, such as “*epitejijewe’k*” or “*kistale’k*”. In contrast, unruly boys who are talented in sports, fishing or hunting will gain the admiration of their friends as a result.

As part of this differentiated socialization taking place at primary school, “children almost exclusively establish relations with their peers of the same sex, a phenomenon that exists in almost every culture in the world (Cairns and Cairns, 1994; Karkness and Super, 1985). Boys play with boys and girls, with girls; each group plays different games and in a different place” (Boyd and Bee, 2015, p. 257). There are, of course, transgressions between boys’ and girls’ groups for some games, but the segregation generally persists throughout primary school and even into adulthood, although it becomes increasingly less rigid over time (Boyd and Bee, 2015). This boy-girl division helps reinforce gender stereotypes and accentuates differentiated socialization.

Mixed-Gender Classes

This being the case, are mixed-gender classes better? Would single-gender classes encourage a gender-free socialization of children? Would this foster the academic success of both girls and boys? Although a number of conservative circles argue in favour of single-gender school environments, “international studies conducted in various countries (the United States, Canada, United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand) clearly show that the academic results of children in single-gender classes are not better than those of children in mixed-gender classes” (Halpern *et al.*, 2011). It is also the case in Quebec: studies looking at single-sex schooling have been terminated, because “no improvement of boys’ results has been noticed. It looks like it is girls who benefit the most from single-sex schooling, but they would then be disadvantaged when the single-sex experience stops and they make their entry in, for example, gender diverse workplaces” (Réseau Réussite Montréal, 2018, p. 15). These studies also show that “segregation at school creates an artificial unisex environment that encourages sexist prejudices. In contrast, mixed-gender classes, which encourage co-operation and collaboration, reduce stereotypical attitudes. The mixed-gender school prepares children to take their place in a society where women and men interact in public and private life” (Vidal, 2017, p. 25). It brings the child to develop him or herself as a *L’nu*, a human being, and not only as a boy or a girl (Sylliboy, 2017). Therefore, to combat gender stereotypes and promote school perseverance, it is important to maintain mixed-gender classes and give preference to activities that counteract the gender segregation that occurs at school due to gendered socialization.

Sexuality Education and Early Hypersexualization

Sexuality education has been a huge issue in Mi'gma'gi (and elsewhere!) in recent years. It is crucial to acknowledge that "the residential schools time had important negative impacts, notably in how indigenous people perceive their sexuality. Not only close to half the former residents were the victims of serious physical, psychological and sexual abuses during their stay at the residential school, but also the traditional teachings related to sexuality were systematically devalued" (QNW, 2014, p. 3). Therefore, teachers and parents continue to have many questions about what children should and should not be taught about sexuality. As Quebec Native Women recommends it, breaking down gender stereotypes and raising awareness about respect and gender equality have to be part of this education.

First, sexuality is obviously not limited to the physical dimension and should not be reduced to sexual practices alone; affective, spiritual and psychological dimensions are also central to the world of sexuality. In this regard, upon entering primary school, "children may experience certain intimate behaviours such as holding hands, standing close to one another, or having strong feelings for a friend. These emotions lead them to wonder and question, even if they do not explicitly talk about them. Emotions and romantic love develop in stages and evolve as children age. So it is important to discuss emotional and romantic relationships with children, keeping in mind their level of psychosexual development. This means that the concept of romantic love would not be discussed with children before they are 8 to 11 years old, and the idea of sexual attraction would gradually be introduced only once the children are 10 to 11 years old" (SCF, 2018).

Unfortunately, affective and romantic relations are not free of sexual stereotypes. In fact, boys and girls are expected to behave differently when it comes to interpersonal relations. For instance, "when talking about a boy who says he has a girlfriend, adults are often heard to say such things as Hey, you go, kid! You've probably also heard people say things like You're quite a charmer! to a young boy who seems to be popular with several girls at the same time and who says he has more than one girlfriend. But what do people say to young girls in the same situation? It's more common to hear comments warning girls about boys or about their own seductive potential (an example that springs to mind is the myth that contends that girls who are attractive risk being sexually assaulted). [...] These spontaneous reactions send messages to children. In other words, the romantic relationship is valued for boys and synonymous with 'danger' for girls. With the best of intentions in mind, adults may, through their attitudes, reinforce the image of the 'vulnerable' woman and the man as a 'predator'. Not really ideal as a way of fostering healthy, equalitarian relationships!" (SCF, 2018). In addition, the models often provided to children feature families and hetero-normative couples, in other words, families composed of a father and a mother and couples formed by a man and a woman. In this regard, "the first discussions with children concerning affective and romantic relationships must foster inclusiveness and be non-heterosexist. The earlier children have access to a range of models, the earlier they will develop openness to sexual diversity. A strong adherence to sexual stereotypes can lead to being uncomfortable with anyone who deviates from these stereotypes, and later lead to homophobia or transphobia" (SCF, 2018).

Finally, we see early hypersexualization in children of primary school age and content that specifically targets them. Girls between the ages of 8 and 13 are increasingly targeted as consumers by the fashion, music, magazine and movie industries; pre-adolescents are one of the largest demographic cohorts since the baby boomers (Bouchard and Bouchard, 2017). The female stereotypes depicted by these media are often presented as being accessible to young girls while in reality, this is not at all the case. The models that girls, and boys as well, are encouraged to mirror are highly exaggerated and assign sexualized roles to children that are unsuitable for their psychosexual level.

Specificities About Mi'gmaw Elementary Students' Learning Styles

Although the socialization of children becomes gender-differentiated well before their arrival at primary school, it does not stop there. On the contrary, it continues and even becomes more accentuated as children contend with an educational experience that differs depending on their gender (Gagnon, 1999). This section deals with the ways in which gendered socialization modulates the characteristics of the children's learning styles and relationship with school.

First of all, gendered socialization translates into differentiated interactions with adults and peers. Adults, parents and educators, although they feel they do not act differently with children, change their behaviour depending on a child's gender. This results in different learning and in different experiences for children. The older the children, the greater the influence their peers have on their behaviour.

These differentiated interactions lead children to develop connections to school and learning that differ according to gender. A thorough understanding of these differences makes it possible to see the consequences of differentiated socialization and to start thinking about our own behaviours with children.

Learning Styles and Relationship With School

Before looking at the differentiated connection to school and learning of mi'gmaw boys and girls, let's look at a few context points related to the connection of First Nations to school as an institution. First of all, it is worth repeating that for hundreds of years, among Indigenous peoples, "teachings have been passed on within the context of the family and the community. School has been implemented just over 50 years ago; First Nations' educational tradition is then quite young and it clashed in many ways with their traditional lifestyle" (Commission de l'éducation, 2007, p. 10). The residential schools, implemented around 1900, as well as all the colonial system, negatively impacted indigenous peoples' relationship with educational institutions (Santerre, 2015). We can then say that for a majority of indigenous students and their parents, school clashes with their culture (Brabant et al., 2015) and their connection to it is tainted with mistrust. Fortunately, Audy and Gauthier (2019) highlight that according to many researchers, young First Nations members' connection to school and education is the theatre of a profound change and is becoming a lot more positive, less reactive and resistant.

According to the Canadian Council on Learning (2007), learning from an indigenous perspective is holistic and experiential, it is a lifelong process rooted in Aboriginal languages and cultures, it is spiritually oriented, it is a communal activity, involving family, community and Elders and it integrates Aboriginal and Western knowledge.

Perceptions of School Perseverance and Academic Success

It is also important to underline a few elements related to the perceptions of school perseverance and academic success among First Nations, even though it can vary from one Nation to another and from one person to another. If, in the European-inspired educational system, academic success is measured with grades, it is often the other way round in indigenous communities, where the survival of the culture and the language is equally important (Commission de l'éducation, 2007). For the Innu, for example, "**academic success is defined by parents, students and teachers more in terms of perseverance and of capacity to put in enough efforts to get passing grades. The notion of perseverance then becomes an important dimension of academic success.**" (Commission de l'éducation, 2007, p. 11). For the Inuit, ancient know-how that supports traditional lifestyles, such as knowing how to survive in tundra, is equally important (Commission de

l’éducation, 2007). Within the Innu community of Mashteuiash, it is assumed that academic success is a collective responsibility and that it is by “taking into account all dimensions of the Human Being that we achieve good health, a pride feeling and academic success. The Pekuakamiulnuatsh have a global and holistic vision of the present time and the future, and they make sure to foster the spiritual, emotional, mental and physical fulfillment of everyone” (Girard & Vallet, 2015, p. 27). Consequently, when looking at the connection to learning of young mi’gmaw boys and girls, we have to put aside the accounting view of academic success to adopt a holistic approach (St-Amant, 2003).

In that sense, the First Nations Holistic Lifelong Learning Model of the Canadian Council on Learning (2009) is a good example of how the connection to learning of many First Nations members isn’t limited to the educational institution itself, but has to be rooted in the community, to touch on many dimensions of the individual and the society, and has to be formal at certain moments, such as during the elementary schooling process, and informal at other times, such as during early childhood.

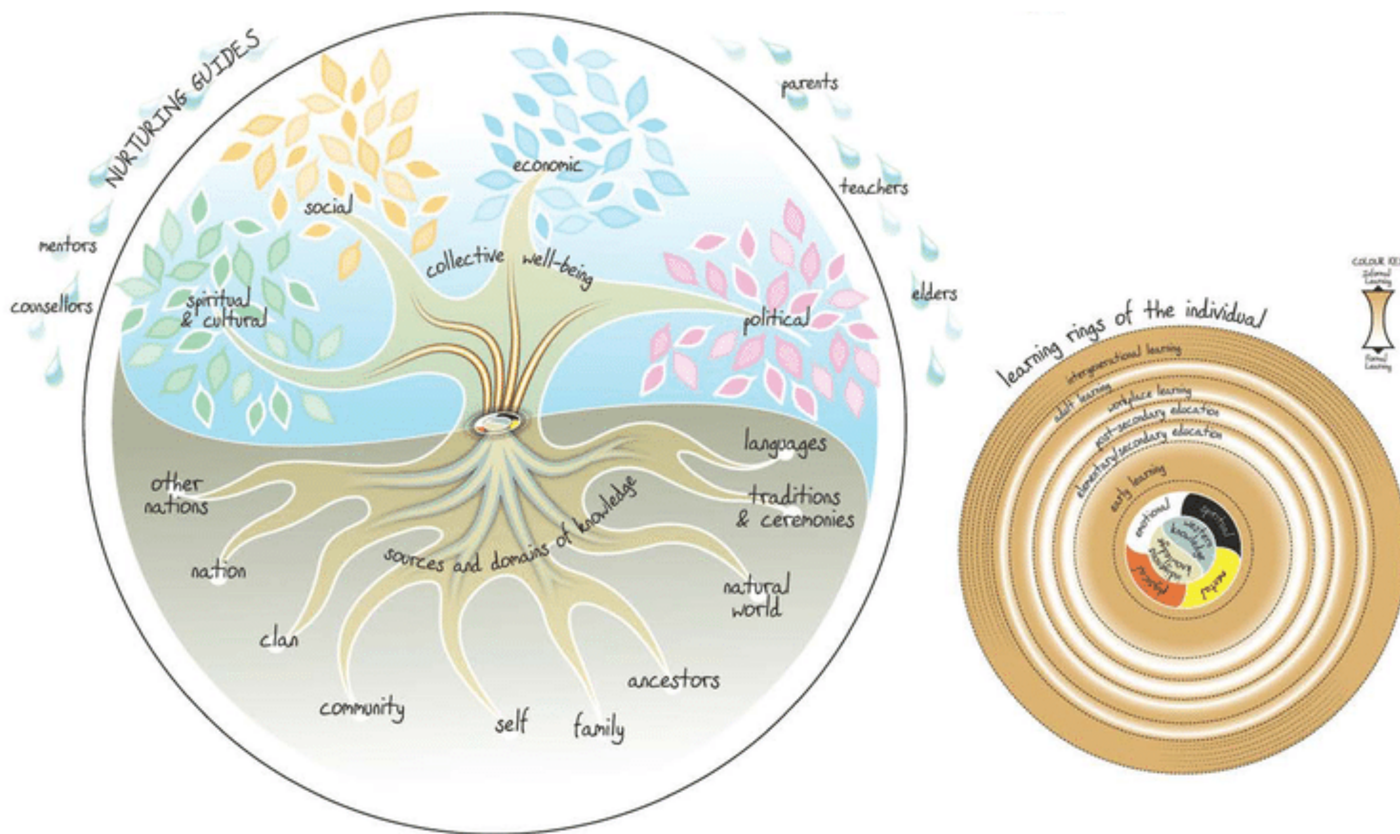


FIGURE 2. FIRST NATIONS HOLISTIC LIFELONG LEARNING MODEL (CANADIAN COUNCIL ON LEARNING, 2009)

The following observations are drawn from various studies on the subject and represent observed trends mainly in non-indigenous contexts (Conseil du statut de la femme, 2016; Epiney, 2013; Gagnon, 1999; Secrétariat à la condition féminine, 2019), as very few studies have been done on this topic (Davison et al., 2004; Saint-Amant, 2003; Sylliboy, 2017). They are not absolute facts about boys and girls. Individual children adhere more or less markedly to the multiple stereotypes associated with their sex.

General Observations

Interactions with adults and peers

1. Girls are generally more open to fraternizing with boys than vice versa.
2. Girls are clearly rejected in sports by boys, particularly during recess.
3. Most pupils, girls and boys, prefer mixed classes at school.
4. A number of media models associate body image and being sexy with being popular with one's peers. This desire to be popular is not new, but today there seems to be a closer association with sexuality.
5. Boys are encouraged more to play with trucks by their parents and girls, with dolls.
6. Toys parents buy for their boys and girls are not the same colour.
7. Parents are more abrupt with their sons and gentler with their daughters.
8. Parents interpret the reactions of their daughters and sons differently (for instance, a girl who cries is sad whereas a boy who cries is angry).

Learning styles and relationship with school

1. Textbooks today continue to present stereotyped views of men and women, as well as of indigenous men and women, and still render invisible certain inequalities between women and men and between native and non-native women.
2. Boys are questioned more often when new concepts are introduced while girls are questioned primarily at the end of a class.
3. When tests and assignments are evaluated, girls are judged and congratulated for their form (neat writing, careful presentation, good conduct, work) while boys are judged and congratulated for the content of their work and their performance (skill, intelligence, giftedness, creativity).
4. The comments concerning difficulties experienced by girls tend to refer to cognitive considerations and feedback focuses on a need to return to basics and concerns about the pupil's general comprehension. In the case of boys, these same difficulties are perceived as being more punctual in nature and primarily related to their behaviour.

Observations concerning girls

Interactions with adults and peers

1. Girls put more effort into their interpersonal relations.
2. Girls enjoy transmitting their knowledge to younger children.
3. For girls, their school girlfriends are of great importance and they often talk with them about anything at affects the school environment.
4. Girls appreciate the human qualities of their teachers or at least, expect to see those qualities in their teachers. They perceive those qualities positively.
5. Girls receive compliments from their teachers as much for their behaviour as for their academic performance: they would appear to be quiet, dynamic, disciplined although sometimes talkative, in accordance with female stereotypes.
6. When it comes to homework and lessons, mothers—who are primarily responsible for overseeing these tasks—give their daughters more leeway to organize how they go about doing their work.
7. The segregation and stereotypes that girls are subject to encourage them to adopt behaviours of resistance by seeking to build coalitions within their gender category.
8. In terms of hobbies, parents direct their daughters primarily towards fine arts and individual sports, since such activities appear to have characteristics (for instance, quiet and artistic talent) that are perceived as being intrinsic to girls.

9. Girls are asked to lend a hand more often than boys to tutor students experiencing difficulties or to help the teacher, which reinforces the stereotype of the girl responsible for the care and well-being of others.

Learning styles and relationship with school

1. Girls see learning as something that relates to self-actualization: learning enables them to look to the future and to value themselves.
2. Resilience in a school context is stronger with indigenous girls than with indigenous boys (Saint-Amant, 2003).
3. They see the benefits of what is being taught and even enjoy subjects they find difficult.
4. Girls experience a lot of stress during exam periods.
5. Girls believe more strongly that perseverance will guarantee them of a better future.
6. Girls prefer to work in teams with other girls, claiming that boys don't work hard enough.
7. Girls are very concerned about their success and this is why they spend as much time as possible in class. They are calmer and less impulsive than boys, and follow rules and instructions more closely.
8. The self-esteem of girls who have poor grades suffers: they are convinced their grades will never earn them the recognition of others.
9. Girls have higher occupational aspirations than boys: their career choices require more schooling.

Observations concerning boys

Interactions with adults and peers

1. Boys who do well and have a positive relationship with school are more likely to be bullied and excluded socially, precisely because they do not fit in with the group culture of boys.
2. Similarly, boys who do not like sports or who are not good at sports are rejected by other boys because they don't correspond to masculine criteria concerning physical performance. In addition and as a result, these boys are subjected to homophobic slurs such as "*epitejijewe'k*" (boy/person who acts like a little girl / like a sissy) or "*kistale'k*".
3. Rejection is more common for boys and is often based on male gender stereotypes or transgressions, that is, behaviours deemed female ("*epitejijewe'k*").
4. Boys do not appreciate a teacher's authority or teachers who are considered "too tough". They see them as authoritarian figures who are against pleasure and fun, and not as pedagogues.
5. Stereotypes are very common in sports where boys self-evaluate on the basis of their performance or physical strength.
6. At recess, boys tend to instigate physical and verbal violence more often.
7. When it comes to homework and lessons, mothers—who are primarily responsible for overseeing these tasks—give their sons more guidance than they do their daughters.
8. Boys volunteer less often for tasks suggested by their teacher and are more selective: the tasks have to correspond to so-called masculine activities connected to recreation (like bringing in the ball after recess) or ones that require them to display physical strength (like carrying a pile of books).
9. Similarly, boys tend to contribute more when performing physical tasks, which reinforces the belief that strength is a masculine quality.
10. Boys are quickly introduced by their parents to hobbies that give them the opportunity to express their dynamism and inventiveness; examples include group sports, hunting, fishing and technological activities.
11. Adults in school environments give more of their time to boys, who on the whole receive more encouragement, criticism, listening and praise than girls.

12. In addition to being asked to answer questions more often, boys are given more complex instructions and their spontaneous interventions earn more responses.
13. Teachers pay attention more quickly when boys are turbulent, since they are reputed to be more agitated. Consequently, they notice this behaviour more often, which reinforces their initial beliefs.

Learning styles and relationship with school

1. Boys are more likely to have a negative relationship with school; they have no or little liking for school and prefer sports and recreation. For them, school often brings to mind boredom, restrictions and obligations.
2. In the case of boys who say they like school, it's because, for them, school is primarily a place where they take part in activities. Masculine sociability, sports and recess encourage boys to enjoy school in the short term.
3. School work is considered an unpleasant task.
4. Boys are not as comfortable at school as girls and are more permeable than the latter to disturbances, to a change in teachers for instance.
5. School is less important to boys.
6. More boys don't know what they want to do later. More boys think they'll do the same thing as their fathers do (in contrast to girls and their mothers) and would like to have jobs in their fields of interest or connected to their favourite recreation activity.
7. Boys often overestimate their capacities to resolve the problems presented to them.
8. The greater attention given to boys apparently helps them build their self-confidence.
9. Boys speak in class more often and more spontaneously in response to questions from teachers, and interrupt in class more often than girls.
10. According to a study conducted with Nova Scotian teachers, mi'gmaw boys who get good grades are accused by their peers of trying to be white, to adopt white values (Davison et al., 2004).

General Recommendations

To encourage all children to stay in school, deconstruct gender stereotypes and keep children from adhering to them as much as possible, it is crucial to put into practice a feminist pedagogy, one that ultimately aims to eliminate the inequalities existing between men and women. According to Penny Welch (1994: 156), all feminist pedagogies are based on three principles, their common goal being to:

- Establish egalitarian relations in the classroom;
- Ensure that students feel valued as individuals; and
- Use the students' experiences as a source of learning.

To these principles, Burke and Jackson would add that "the pedagogical activity should be transformative" (Pagé, Solar and Lampron, 2018, p. 8). According to Toulouse (2016, p. 5), in an indigenous perspective, "It is critical that the space is welcoming and fosters consistency in expectations regarding respectful behaviour, acceptance of difference and risk taking in learning."

Building on these principles, this information sheet provides a number of general recommendations that you can integrate into your pedagogical practice to deconstruct gender stereotypes with primary school pupils. To help you target your actions, this sheet deals with seven different themes: interactions with children, proposed activities and models, reading and writing, sex education and hypersexualization, actions on the part of the team, actions to take with the parents and self-reflection. For each of these themes, there are a series of general recommendations followed by more specific recommendations for boys and for girls. The goal is not to further differentiate between boys and girls but simply to recognize that at this age, gender-based socialization has already had an impact and some stereotypes acquired by boys and by girls need to be dealt with differently.

Interactions with children

General recommendations

1. Vary your teaching practices to reach as many children as possible and allow all individuals in your class to learn in the way that works best for them. For example, alternate between individual and team activities, hands-on and lectures, in-class and outdoor activities, directed and exploratory learning situations, etc.
2. Help children to think critically about gender stereotypes by:
    a. encouraging reflection and raising awareness whenever you spot an opportunity;
    b. openly criticizing stereotyped images in the public space;
    c. drawing attention to gender stereotypes while using web applications on their tablets and computers, or when playing video games;
    d. questioning the stereotypes or prejudices perpetuated by students or other people; and
    e. Correcting the impression that there are specific activities for women and others for men.
3. Create a climate conducive to learning and self-expression by:
4. Reacting to sexist, racist, inappropriate and discriminatory words;
5. Not challenging children who do not comply with stereotypes and by correcting children who make comments about these behaviours or make fun of them; and
6. Encouraging children to show open-mindedness regarding the choices of other children and by showing them that an individual's gender does not limit that person's toy and activity options.

7. Teach children to respect others and that making fun of others will not be tolerated. Teach children how to respond to the mockery and discuss the consequences of bullying.
8. Raise your pupils' awareness every day about the use of the following slurs: sissy, queer, girlie boy, fag, homo, fruit, dyke, lesbo, butch, tomboy, *epitejijewe'k*, *kistalèk*, *l'pa'tujewe'k*, etc. Intervene systematically to show that the use of such terms is unacceptable.
9. Encourage all students equally.
10. React verbally when faced with situations involving inequality and discuss them with the children to deconstruct stereotypes, encouraging them to change their perceptions and adopt more equalitarian values.
11. Compliment the children for whom they are and not for their appearance.
12. In sports where gender stereotypes are highly prevalent, intervene quickly when you hear someone say something discriminatory.
13. In physical education class, avoid asking two pupils to take turns picking classmates to make up their teams because this encourages intimidation and reinforces stereotypes; instead, set up the teams yourself before the beginning of class.
14. Feminize texts and expressions so that everyone feels included in what you write and when you speak to pupils and their parents.
15. Verify the children's perceptions and feelings of competency regarding some subjects like English and math as well as the values they attach to those subjects to intervene discreetly:
16. Girls experience more anxiety and often feel less competent than boys in math. They need support and encouragement; and
17. Boys often attach less importance to English and reading. They should be encouraged early to discover the enjoyment these subjects procure.
18. Reassure the children in their capacities, while recognizing their preferences and especially, insist that anything is possible for girls and for boys.
19. Speak to the children about equality between women and men. Transmit equality-related values.
20. Allow boys and girls to speak equally, by inviting boys and girls to speak in turn for instance.

Recommendations for boys

1. Find alternatives to suspension and expulsion for dealing with unruly boys.
2. Stimulate their emotional learning and help them learn to express emotions more easily. Value emotions.
3. Encourage their artistic talents.
4. Foster their adhesion to the value of academic success; encourage them to see this as a value for both men and women.

Recommendations for girls

1. Be vigilant about the invisible needs of girls. Attention must be paid to signs of dropping out in girls, who are not as often labelled as potential drop-outs and who more often internalize their difficulties.
2. Try to make transitions easier, particularly the transition from primary to secondary school, since girls are more sensitive during this transition.
3. Value and encourage girls to speak in class (make sure they have parity during class discussions, introduce practical tools and activities to build confidence in public speaking, etc.).

4. Reduce stereotype threat[1] by introducing a reinforcing discussion at the beginning of an activity, pointing out that all pupils can do well in the activity.
5. Act preventively to foster good self-esteem and a healthy body perception in girls.
6. Encourage girls to speak in class.

Proposed activities and models

General recommendations

1. Multiply nature-inspired activities or outdoor activities as commercial books and toys are often carrying gender stereotypes.
2. Invite children to take part in a range of activities involving both boys and girls (particularly in sports) since this will foster collaboration instead of competition between genders.
3. Work on gender stereotypes with the children (particularly with boys who adhere to them more).
4. Support and encourage the academic, occupational and social aspirations of children, in their perceptions and in real life. Help them become convinced that anything is permitted and possible, regardless of gender.
5. Show children different occupational role models (for instance, a fisherwoman, a male nurse). Encourage them to see themselves doing a job that takes their own interests into account, without gender stereotyping.
6. Put in place measures to encourage girls and boys to consider all educational options.
7. Value all forms of employment; all are important for society.
8. Encourage girls and boys to improve their strength and physical abilities by taking part in activities such as soccer, dance or martial arts so they learn to control their bodies and develop a sense of body competence.
9. Offer children a variety of tasks and responsibilities and encourage them to switch them from time to time.
10. Encourage children to choose toys and activities they tend to ignore.
11. Offer activities that combine artistic and sports competencies to encourage boys to become involved in cultural practices and girls, in physical activities. Implement promotional campaigns to support this.
12. When communicating and promoting activities, make efforts to connect with girls and boys equally. Think about using female models for posters, sports assemblies, achievement honouring activities, etc.
13. Avoid gender stereotypes when designing learn and evaluation situations (LES) and exercises.
14. Invite pupils to obtain copies of toy catalogues, particularly at Christmas time, ads or magazines and look at the stereotypes they transmit together.
15. Encourage children to build multiple interests by offering them a wide variety of books, games and toys.
16. Help children perfect their competencies by inviting them to participate in activities usually reserved for members of the opposite gender (for instance, offer girls construction games and boys, artistic creation activities).
17. Avoid giving stereotyped answers, or place them into the context in which they were produced.

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[1] When working on the same assignment (a geometry exercise), girls do better if they are told it's a drawing exercise that if they are told it's a math exercise. This phenomenon is call *stereotype threat* and can be mitigated by reaffirming the competencies of all pupils at the beginning of the assignment.

Recommendations for boys

1. Offer all boys, including those who do not perform as well academically, opportunities demonstrate their competencies at school.
2. Invite boys to play roles to help them improve their socio-affective language and capacities.
3. Invite boys to do tasks stereotypically associated with the opposite sex, such as washing dishes, sweeping, tidying and caring for a young child (at the day-care centre, for instance, if the context permits).
4. Propose activities that help develop fine motor skills.

Recommendations for girls

1. Invite girls to use building games so they can build their fine motor skills and relation to space.
2. Invite girls to do tasks stereotypically associated with the opposite sex, such as finding a solution for fixing a chair or helping with the yard work.
3. Teach them visuospatial aptitudes: visualization, measurements, how to evaluate distances and depths, mental navigation, etc.
4. Stimulate their visual attention, perception of space and reactivity.
5. Introduce computer science and its functionalities.
6. Encourage girls to participate in ideological debates and to speak in public.
7. Plan activities for girls that will build their self-confidence.

Sexuality education and hypersexualization

1. Organize activities to raise the awareness of the children about the issue of hypersexualization.
2. Organize workshops and games with the children to engage in a dialogue about gender identities.
3. Encourage pupils to reflect on what it really means to “have a girlfriend” or “have a boyfriend” and discuss with them their concept of love:
4. Rather than focusing on the individual child’s gender (you as a girl/you as a boy), adopt a non-stereotyped approach that more closely encourages discussion of interested, non-judgmental issues related to the development of feelings of love by asking, for instance: “What does the expression being in love mean to you?”
5. Encourage children to think about the differences between the desire to please, being in love and the effects of peer pressure on children of their age.
6. Offer to answer their questions and show them that their curiosity about sexuality is legitimate.
7. Pay attention to gender diversity in your interactions with children, with regard to their own gender and that of their families. This can be done by reading stories that present different models of couples and families.
8. Deal with the issue of gender roles and stereotypes and their effects on relations between boys and girls.

Reading and writing

1. Keep some books containing gender stereotypes to inspire discussion with the children and help them build their critical thinking.
2. Give preference to reading and activities that feature original representations and a range of characters as well as qualities and behaviours that differ from traditional models and, as much as possible, that are members of First Nations.

3. Offer children books featuring characters with a variety of genders or that are gender-neutral.
4. Use technology to stimulate reading and writing.
5. Combine academic activities, notably reading and writing, with physical or mobility activities.
6. Suggest books whose female characters are active, courageous and adventurous.

Team work recommendations

1. Make a list of the pupils who participate in extracurricular or school-organized activities along gender lines to identify which activities are more popular with the boys and which, with the girls; try to offer a combination of these activities in which boys and girls both take part.
2. Foster safe means of transportation to take pupils to activity venues and arrange adequate schedules to encourage girls to participate.
3. Reflect on an institutional policy respecting interventions for students with non-standard gender identities and their integration.

Actions to take with parents and the community

1. Make parents and community members aware of the aptitudes children develop through the various games, toys and activities they're offered and show that such aptitudes are beneficial to all children, both girls and boys.
2. Make parents and community members aware of the correlation that exists between adherence to gender stereotypes and academic perseverance.

Self-reflection

1. Build self-reflection practises: be vigilant and examine your own (often unconscious) attitudes towards children. For instance, one teacher filmed her class and realized that she didn't behave in the same way with girls as she did with boys.
2. Examine your own stereotyped behaviours. Be aware that you serve as models for the children in your classes.

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