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AGDISTIS

‘AGDISTIS’- EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND INTERVENTION IN NON-NORMATIVE BEHAVIOUR AND GENDER BULLYING

Training Pills

WELL-BEING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR TEACHERS ADDRESSING NON-NORMATIVE GENDER EDUCATION

PROJECT NUMBER: 2022-1-ES01-KA220-SCH-000087432

Istituto d'Istruzione Superiore Margherita Hack

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SKILL UP CONSULTING TRAINING

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Contents

Module Overview 4

1. Teachers' Wellbeing 7

2. Traditional teachers' approach to multi-gender, multi-sexual students 9

3. Teachers' behaviour in diverse classes 13

4. Gender Responsive Pedagogy 16

Remarks and Conclusion 23

Module overview

The **role of teachers** today is subjected to conflicting tensions and pressures: they find themselves having to mediate between the demands of conservation and **transmission of the cultural tradition**, of which they feel heirs, and the **pressures towards innovation** which tend to overcome the centrality of school as the only training system. It seems paradoxical that the more school becomes an institution of fundamental importance in the current society, defined as the "*Knowledge Society*", the more teachers perceive themselves as belonging to a social category whose *prestige* is in decline.

The processes of **social representation**, in fact, highlight a negative perception of the role of the teacher, who often feels the object of a lack of recognition. Added to this is the widespread stereotype that teachers have a "*more comfortable life*", that they enjoy shorter working hours and longer holidays than other workers and, if stress-related disorders arise, it is often thought that this is due solely to the personal and professional inadequacy of the teachers.

This does not take into consideration that teachers work in a system full of tensions and social changes, such as the world of education, which is the point of reference for students, families and the social community where they work. In recent decades, teachers have been increasingly asked to take on the role of "**social actor**" and not simply of "**transmitter of knowledge**", with the educational task of acting as a link between the new generations and adult generations, between 20th century society and the profound changes in 21st century society, between the culture of the "*book*" and historical wisdom with the culture of audiovisuals, television, and the internet knowledge network.

Therefore the teacher today experiences an extremely articulated and complex role dynamic on which the discomforts and social conflicts are dumped, which if not attenuated and harmonized on a personal and social level, generate **discomfort and dissatisfaction** which in turn determine negative situations of stress and discomfort, with psycho-physical, social and relational consequences, which can lead to real psychiatric pathologies.

Module overview

In fact, in a *2005 study in Italy*, it was highlighted that the professional category of teachers - in contrast with the stereotypes widespread in public opinion - is subject to a **frequency of psychiatric pathologies** equal to twice that of the category of employees, two and a half times that of healthcare personnel and three times that of manual operators. In support of this research, a document from the *Italian Ministry of Labor* was cited, which highlights how among teachers there is a constant increase in the percentage of checks for suitability for work due to psychiatric pathologies, from 44.5% in the three-year period 1992-94 at 56.9% in the period 2001-03. (Source: La Medicina del Lavoro n. 5/2004). This has become once again painfully relevant after the COVID-19 pandemic.

Teacher burnout has been a topic of international importance since at least the 1980s as demonstrated by studies conducted in the United States, Great Britain, Israel, Australia, Canada, Norway, Malta, Barbados and Hong Kong. Comparative studies have also been conducted on the topic between school systems of different countries such as Italy and France, Scotland and Australia, Jordan and the United Arab Emirates, the United States and Great Britain, New Zealand and Australia.

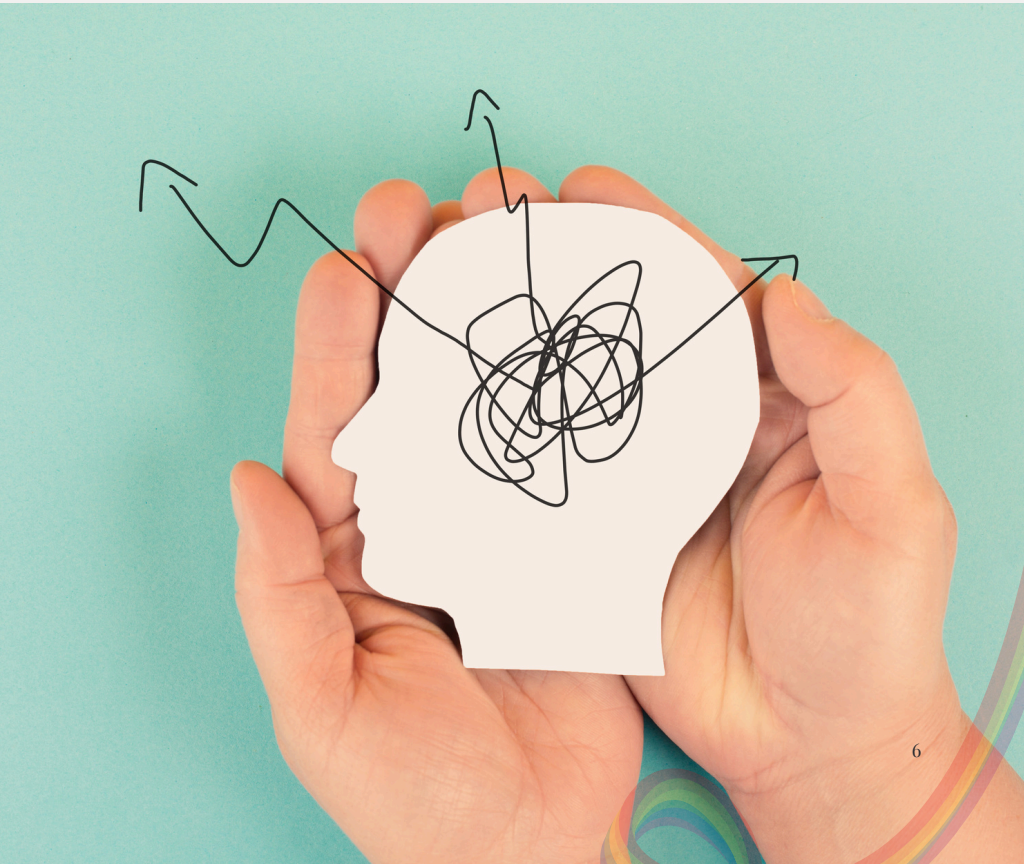
The term ***burnout*** is used in the scientific literature on work stress to express the permanent negative effects that affect the teacher's personality as a result of the psychological and social conditions in which teaching takes place, due to accelerated social change. The **causes and predisposing factors** to transform teachers' professional stress into burnout syndrome are:

- the peculiarity of the profession (relationship with students and parents, large classes, precarious situation, conflict between colleagues, constant need for updating);
- the transformation of society towards an increasingly multi-ethnic and multicultural lifestyle (growth in the number of non-EU students);
- the continuous evolution of the perception of social values (inclusion of disabled students in classes, educational delegation by the family in the absence of working parents or single-parent families);

Module overview

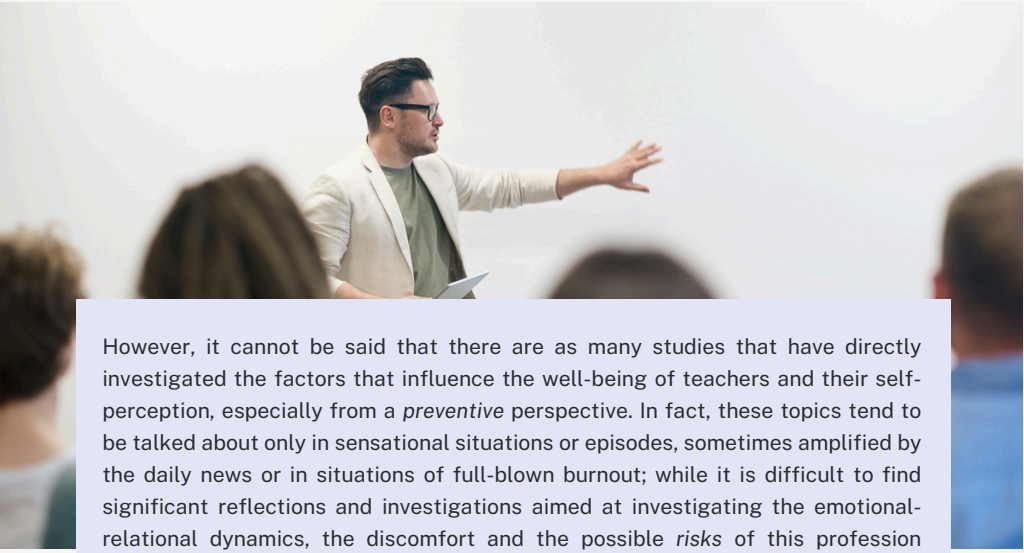
- the scientific evolution (internet and information technology) which has allowed the construction of online communities, both at the level of learning and at the level of social relations, modifying the methods and tools with which students learn knowledge and knowledge;
- the continuous succession of reforms;
- greater participation of students and families in school decisions;
- the critical transition from individualism to team work, where it is essential to know and use team teaching and collaborative learning methodologies;
- the inadequate institutional role attributed/recognized to the profession (unsatisfactory remuneration, poor consideration by public opinion, etc.).

Therefore this training package has the function of providing teachers and school managers with better tools to teach in order to respond to the needs of girls and boys; equip teachers with the resources necessary to respond to gender impacts in the classroom; and raise awareness of gender issues in education, while also safeguarding their mental health and well-being.



1 TEACHERS' WELLBEING

Students' *"feeling good"* at school is strongly influenced by the **well-being of teachers**, who are increasingly required to be a reference and trusted interlocutor for their students.
It is no coincidence that in recent years there has been talk of teachers who are "**emotionally and socially competent**", that is, capable of promoting supportive and effective relationships, motivation, management of emotions and problem behaviors in their students.



However, it cannot be said that there are as many studies that have directly investigated the factors that influence the well-being of teachers and their self-perception, especially from a *preventive* perspective. In fact, these topics tend to be talked about only in sensational situations or episodes, sometimes amplified by the daily news or in situations of full-blown burnout; while it is difficult to find significant reflections and investigations aimed at investigating the emotional-relational dynamics, the discomfort and the possible *risks* of this profession before they manifest themselves.
For several decades, a new cultural and research horizon has made its way into the scientific community, that of positive psychology created by **Martin Seligman** aimed at promoting quality of life and well-being.

The aim of this approach is to activate a change by focusing on the resources and potential of the individual *before* the discomfort and discomfort manifest themselves.
This approach leverages the psychological resources of individuals and groups, enhancing the cognitive and emotional components of well-being, referring to two strictly interconnected and complementary levels: **the personal one** (e.g. fulfillment in one's profession), and that relating to **subjective well-being**, that is, "feeling good", being overall satisfied with one's life and perceiving one's emotions on a balanced level.

1. TEACHERS' WELLBEING

The focus of interest therefore shifts from investigating the risk levels of the teaching profession, towards the level of teachers' perception in relation to which factors are capable of promoting a condition of well-being, with an eye also aimed at what are the resources at their disposal (or that they can activate).

International literature has highlighted how, even in the professional category of teachers, **well-being at work** is traced back to *personal*, *professional* and *relational* factors.
Among the **personal factors**, for example, reference is made to work identity, the reasons behind this professional choice and the sense of self-efficacy.
A teacher with a good sense of self-efficacy sets themselves challenging objectives, deploys all the resources and potential to achieve them, strongly believing in their own ability to *do it*. At the same time, in a virtuous circle like this, the teacher increases their own resilience and learns increasingly effective coping strategies.

The second factor is that relating to the **professional dimension**: the degree of personal satisfaction, gratification and involvement in work, the characteristics attributed to the organization to which one belongs and the social recognition of one's professional role, the degree of engagement, i.e. the level of physical, cognitive and emotional involvement in work and collective self-efficacy.

Finally, the third dimension concerns the **relational factors** of well-being at school, and includes the quality of relationships with management, administration, colleagues and students, with particular attention to the associated emotional experience.

It is hoped that the increasingly widespread need to guarantee **360° well-being** within the school context will stimulate interest in tackling with conviction, at the level of research and proposals for action from a preventive perspective, also all the area that specifically concerns the well-being of teachers.

2 TRADITIONAL TEACHERS' APPROACH TO MULTI-GENDER, MULTI-SEXUAL STUDENTS

What about the 50s?

In the 1950s, teachers' behavior in mixed-sex (multisexual) classes varied, but there were some common trends.
Here are a few key points:

1. Gender Segregation:

- The sense of being working class was often expressed through strict sex segregation.
- Male and female students were often separated in terms of seating arrangements, activities, and expectations.
- Teachers reinforced traditional gender roles, emphasizing different skills and behaviors for boys and girls.

2. Changing Class Identity:

- The rise in living standards during the 1950s led to a transformation of working-class values.
- Some believed that working-class life was moving toward middle-class values and existence.
- The lower classes were perceived as having less distinctive ideologies in conflict with societal norms.

3. Teacher Attitudes:

- Teachers' attitudes toward gender could mirror societal biases.
- For instance, female teachers might rate boys as more disruptive and inattentive in class than girls.

2. TRADITIONAL TEACHERS' APPROACH TO MULTI-GENDER,MULTI-SEXUAL STUDENTS

1. **Traditional Views**:
Some older educators might hold conservative views and feel uncomfortable discussing sexual diversity in the classroom.
They may prefer to focus solely on academic subjects and avoid addressing LGBTIQ+ topics.

2. **Progressive Views**:
Other teachers, regardless of age, recognize the importance of inclusivity and diversity.
They actively promote acceptance, respect, and understanding among students, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

3. **Challenges**:
Teachers face challenges in creating a safe and supportive environment for all students.
Balancing diverse perspectives, addressing potential biases, and ensuring respectful discussions can be complex.

4. **Professional Development**:
Many educators attend workshops and training sessions to enhance their understanding of LGBTIQ+ issues.
These efforts help them create a more inclusive classroom where all students feel valued.

Remember that individual teachers' views can differ significantly, and it's essential to **foster open dialogue and empathy** in educational settings. Ultimately, promoting acceptance and understanding benefits everyone in the classroom.

2. TRADITIONAL TEACHERS' APPROACH TO MULTI-GENDER,MULTI-SEXUAL STUDENTS

When faced with a multisexual class, a traditional teacher can take several steps to create an inclusive and supportive learning environment so as to cooperate with the students and learn something important from them.
They could possibly:

1. Educate Themselves: Teachers should educate themselves about gender and sexual diversity. Understanding terminology, identities, and experiences is essential for creating an inclusive classroom.

> *Do you know the difference between gender and sex? Do you understand the difference between a trans person and a non-binary person? Are you familiar with the concepts of bisexuality and pansexuality?*

2. Avoid Assumptions: Don't assume students' sexual orientations or gender identities. Allow them to express themselves and respect their privacy.

> *The external expression of a student doesn't always match their identity. A person doesn't have to "look gay" to identity as gay, and not all gay people are boisterous and quirky.*

3. Use Inclusive Language: Use gender-neutral language whenever possible. For example, instead of saying "boys and girls," say "students" or "everyone."

> *Even if you don't have trans or non-binary students in your class, language can still sometimes be sexist and mysoginistic.*

4. Inclusive Curriculum: Incorporate diverse perspectives and LGBTIQ+ history into the curriculum. Highlight contributions from LGBTIQ+ individuals.

> *Can you quote at least three LGBTIQ+ historical figures? Three LGBTIQ+ writers? Three LGBTIQ+ artists? Three LGBTIQ+ scientists? If the answer is always no, we encourage you to dive into some research!*

2. TRADITIONAL TEACHERS' APPROACH TO MULTI-GENDER,MULTI-SEXUAL STUDENTS

5. Address Bullying and Harassment: Be vigilant about bullying or discriminatory behavior. Create a safe space where students feel comfortable reporting incidents.

> *Do you know which signs to look out for? Pay attention to changes in mood, dramatic changes in grades and attitude, different group dynamics and unjustified absences in your class.*

6. Support Groups: Consider forming LGBTIQ+ support groups or alliances within the school. These can provide a sense of community and advocacy.

> *It is important for minorities to feel like they can rely on a sense of community. Encourage extra-curricular courses and programmes that can favour a sense of belonging.*

7. Guest Speakers and Role Models: Invite guest speakers or role models from the LGBTIQ+ community to share their experiences with students.

> *Many young LGBTIQ+ members don't see people like them growing up. They are in desperate need of positive role models that can make them feel seen and represented.*

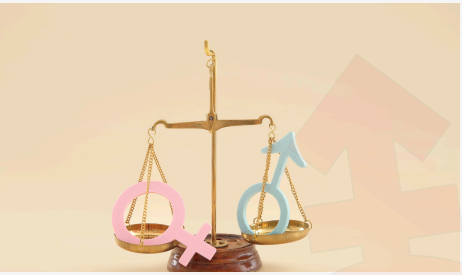
Remember that creating an **inclusive environment** benefits all students, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

3 TEACHERS' BEHAVIOUR IN DIVERSE CLASSES

The theoretical aspects of teachers' behavior in diverse classes are crucial for creating inclusive and supportive learning environments.
Let's explore some key points!

1.Gender and Sexual Diversity in Teacher Education:

- Historically, LGBTIQ+ issues have been marginalized in teacher education programs. However, there is growing recognition of the importance of addressing gender and sexual diversity.
- Teacher educators play a central role in preparing preservice teachers to create safe and affirming contexts for LGBTIQ+ students.
- By integrating queer pedagogy and supporting preservice teachers' learning around gender and sexual diversity, teacher education programs can better equip teachers to navigate complexities in the classroom.



2.Teacher Comprehension of Gender Issues:

- Teachers' understanding of gender-related topics and their ability to implement gender-responsive behaviors are essential for addressing disparities in education.
- Training teachers to recognize and support diverse gender identities contributes to more inclusive classrooms.

3. TEACHERS' BEHAVIOUR IN DIVERSE CLASSES

3.Sexuality and Sexual Education in Initial Teacher Education (ITE):

- Providing sexuality and sex education during ITE is crucial for enhancing the quality of school-based sexuality education.
- Teacher education programs should emphasize the importance of addressing sexual diversity and promoting inclusive practices.

4.Queer Teacher/Educator Identities and Pedagogy:

Research highlights three major themes related to LGBTIQ+ issues in teacher education:

- Queer teacher/educator identities
- Queer pedagogical practices
- Queer classrooms and curriculum

We have to emphasize the need for teachers and educators to engage with LGBTIQ+ topics and integrate them into their teaching and research.

Remember that **fostering an inclusive environment** is the target of any education system. We need to remember that queer pedagogy is not a fixed set of rules but rather an ongoing process of reflection, adaptation, and growth. It emphasizes *empathy*, *openness*, and a *commitment to social justice*.

3. TEACHERS' BEHAVIOUR IN DIVERSE CLASSES

Learning more about bisexuality, pansexuality, and other multisexual orientations is understanding that attraction to more than one gender is valid and diverse. In this, **AGDISTIS-module 1** can be of great help. Educating ourselves is an ongoing practice, and how we define and express identity is an ongoing journey.

Being Supportive: recognizing that bisexual and multisexual youth face unique challenges, since they statistically experience higher rates of anxiety, depression, and discrimination are the teachers' aim. Being a supportive ally by creating safer environments and advocating for the students well-being is our main target at school. We also have to remember that everyone's experience is different, so it's far better for us to approach each individual with empathy and openness.

4 GENDER RESPONSIVE PEDAGOGY

The present section aims at encouraging teachers to continuously reflect on gender issues in instructional materials, behaviours and communication. **Gender-responsive pedagogy** entails the teacher adopting a series of active teaching and learning methods and techniques, various teaching aids, developing lesson plans and organizing teaching sessions with the ultimate goal of enabling achievement of learning outcomes for boys and girls. In addition, teachers make professional judgements on learners' performance in every teaching and learning session undertaken, whether consciously or subconsciously. Using these professional judgments and translating them into feedback on the quality of individuals' work is the focus of assessment for learning. This section summarizes the relevance of gender in competence based curricula, gender-responsive teaching and learning environments, gender-responsive interactions among school community members, and gender responsive assessment.

Learning outcomes:

- To explain the relevance of incorporating gender;
- To develop teaching and learning approaches that are gender-responsive;
- To be able to handle gender-related conflicts that may arise in the classroom and beyond;
- To demonstrate an understanding of a gender-responsive outdoor learning environment;
- To identify gender-blind school facilities, indoors and outdoors, and find the possible solutions to engender them;
- To inspire gender-related positive attitudes among students and peers.
- Relevance of gender in competence based curriculum

4. GENDER RESPONSIVE PEDAGOGY

Reflective activities

1. Referring to the current CBC (competence-based curricula), share ideas with your colleagues on the following questions:

- What do you think is the importance of incorporating gender into the CBC?
- What issues are addressed by incorporating gender in the CBC?
- What are the opportunities/successes/challenges in addressing gender as a cross-cutting issue in the CBC?

*What is **CBC**? A **Competence-Based Curriculum** is a teaching programme that focuses less on what learners need to know and more on how learners apply their knowledge, skills and attitudes. Grades and fixed notions are replaced by personalised assessment methods and the individual level of competences and growth shown by the student at the end of the school year.*

Guiding questions:

- Identify the teaching and learning resources for each unit with respect to gender responsiveness.
- Analyse the gender responsiveness of learning outcomes, content and activities of each unit.
- How can gender aspects be reflected in learning activities?
- Compare the units and discuss how gender is reflected.

The introduction of a gender perspective to the curriculum aims to improve the outcome of quality teaching by enabling all students to exploit their full potential and talents without any discrimination or prejudice

4. GENDER RESPONSIVE PEDAGOGY

2. This section introduces and illustrates gender responsive teaching and learning of institutional/school **environments**. It pays attention firstly on classroom settings and arrangements. These include the layout of furniture in the class or laboratory, usage of walls for illustrations, quality and quantity of chairs and desks, and overall physical infrastructure arrangements. Secondary attention is paid to the outdoor learning environment. The outdoor facilities that facilitate learning environments include playgrounds, physical infrastructure and illustrations around the school and environments.

Reflect on your school and discuss with colleagues the following issues:

- Size and shape of desks and chairs;
- Arrangement of desks;
- Wall space and fixtures;
- Height of shelves;
- Seating positions in terms of where girls and boys sit;
- Height of the stools in the laboratory.

3. Classroom size and sitting arrangement.

Reflect on your school and discuss with your colleagues the questions below:

- Are separate spaces available for boys and for girls, whether inside or outside the classroom? And are they accessible to trans students?
- When should spaces used by boys and girls be separated?
- Do boys or girls interfere with each others' space?
- Which spaces are neutral and what characterizes them?
- Who uses the neutral/shared spaces mostly and why?
- When there is very little space, who uses it mostly?

The classroom size and sitting arrangement enable all students to participate, interact and have equal opportunities to learn, regardless of their gender. Gender sensitive teachers should be able to ensure that there are enough spaces for all. School facilities related to curriculum and other extracurricular activities could actually be widening the existing gender gap as well as gender segregation in subjects already displaying a distinct gender difference in both achievement and attitude.

4. GENDER RESPONSIVE PEDAGOGY

4.Indoor and outdoor.

Observe the two pictures below and answer the following questions:

The Guide for Strengthening Gender Equality and Inclusiveness in Teaching and Learning Materials was produced for the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in 2015.

- How are both girls and boys portrayed in pictures/drawings?
- Are the illustrations culturally appropriate and/or gender-responsive?
- Do the illustrations portray both girls and boys positively/negatively?

The indoor and outdoor illustrations appear to create a big impact than any other resources in teaching and learning. The illustrations present relatively big sizes on pages and walls, their frequency, and their relative attractiveness for students. Some illustrations may not acknowledge or encourage a range of activities or interactions between or among members of different subgroups, much less challenge social norms. Additionally, the impact of illustrations can be even greater than that of text, particularly on young children, because illustrations are much more visible and attractive to children than texts.

Illustrations of characters representing all social subgroups should be of the same size and should appear with approximately equal frequency. The characters should also appear in similar roles. More specifically related to one's gender, female and male characters should appear in open and enclosed places with approximately equal frequency (e.g., both in the house or classroom, both taking care of children etc.).

4. GENDER RESPONSIVE PEDAGOGY

A TEACHER

A TEACHER

THERE ARE NO MALE AND FEMALE CAREERS

THEY ARE NOT HELPING OUT

THEY ARE NOT DOING THEIR DUTY

HOUSECHORES ARE FOR ALL THOSE THAT LIVE IN THE HOUSE

4. GENDER RESPONSIVE PEDAGOGY

5. Teaching and learning resources.

In small groups, discuss the following points:

- Explain why we need to use gender responsive teaching-learning materials;
- Discuss the indicators of a gender responsive teaching-learning aid;
- What precautions need to be taken for teaching-learning resources to be gender responsive?
- Identify some teaching-learning resources: those which are gender responsive and those which are gender biased.

In **GRP** (**Gender Responsive Pedagogy**), the selection of teaching-learning resources should cater to gender issues. These resources include the curriculum content, textbooks and teaching aids (visual, audio and tactile materials). Teaching-learning materials help both learners and teachers address gender issues that they may come across their everyday life. All available materials and resources should be carefully selected to make sure they are not gender biased. For visual materials, especially those involving humans, teachers will ensure gender representation. As for the textbooks, the selection should cater to those with pictures, names and behaviour/practices representing both genders. Teachers should discourage teaching-learning resources that are gender discriminative.

6. Lesson planning and delivery group work.

Reflect on subject syllabuses and discuss with your colleagues the following points:

- Does the CBC say anything about gender in lesson plans?
- Is it important for teachers to include gender aspects in their lesson plans?
- What are the indicators of a genderresponsive lesson plan?
- Describe how to make a lesson plan that is gender-responsive for each unit.

4. GENDER RESPONSIVE PEDAGOGY

As a final moment of reflection, discuss and answer the following questions in relation to your school:

- What subjects are girls/boys likely to study at school?
- How should female/male students be reprimended?
- How would the girls/boys react to the consequences of their actions?
- How do girls and boys respond to questions in class?
- Who should be the class representative in a mixed class?

Classroom interactions ensure that students communicate with one another in class. By emphasizing the collaborative and cooperative nature of systematic work, students share responsibility for learning with each other, discuss different understandings, and shape the direction of the class.

It has been observed that a more student-focused class provides multiple opportunities for students to discuss ideas in small groups and may support a whole class discussion. Successful discussions are characterized by small gender-responsive group conversations, where applicable, that seek to give voice to all students and to provide sufficient time and opportunity to listen and consider the ideas of others. It is equally important that gender responsive student-student interactions and relationships should not only end in the classrooms, they should be encouraged to continue beyond the class; during extracurricular activities and even beyond the school environment.

REMARKS AND CONCLUSION

Implementation of **Gender-Responsive Pedagogy** in school requires involvement of school leaders and the entire school community. In the educative process, **parents** are indispensable partners of the school in helping students learn and develop appropriate behaviour in relation to gender equality among other values. Therefore, school leaders should solicit the parents' support for the smooth implementation of inclusive policies through consultation and communication. GRP entails school leaders and school community to monitor and evaluate instructional processes in order to achieve the overall mission and vision of the school.

On the other hand, teachers should not downplay the physical and mental toll that managing inclusion and relationships (teacher-teacher, teacher-student, teacher-parent) can have on their **mental health**. The pressure put on them to be more and more social actors in the development of pupils, from primary to the end of secondary school, imposes that teachers first of all take the necessary steps in managing their mental healht and the factors that predispose them to burn-out and exhaustion.

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