

## Evaluation and Physical Education : the making of the sex

In this communication we will analyze the effects of gender on physical education evaluations in the classroom. Our results, observed on several thousand notes, show that gender strongly structures the processes of socialization throughout society, profoundly contributing to our unconscious behaviors, mobilizing every thought, in the most harmless of interactions, and consequently, for teachers, every evaluation. The analysis of the notes between girls and boys seems to us to be a relevant indicator in the study of the social construction of the difference of the sexes. The evaluation can be seen as reading the behavior which engages inevitably an implicit theory of the heavy stereotypes regarding the behavior pupils of both sex.

Generally speaking, an evaluation is used to indicate the act by which, about an event, about an individual or about an object, we emit a judgment by referring to one criterion or some criteria. Evaluation, be it formal or informal, is everywhere - in appreciations, in feedbacks, on bulletins, in comparisons or in decisions. Evaluation is socially present in various forms as it is bound to the human cognitive processes.

However, it is important to note that gender is a central theme influencing evaluations. We can thus question whether the physical education teacher knows exactly what he or she evaluates. The act of teaching is far more than simply relaying the formal curriculum to pupils. Because of the different methods of evaluation, along with the concept of hidden curriculum, it is clear that evaluation criteria are not always as transparent as we would like them to be.

The criteria of evaluations are falsified because teachers representations lead to perceptive bias and can be deductive and partial. The practice of teaching decision-making processes is based on representations which relate back to implicit standards. Such representations often precipitate the commencement of the evaluation. When the category-specific membership of an individual is known (sex, Professional Social Category-PSC, etc.), the teacher tends to automatically attribute stereotypes and expectations based on the category to which the student belongs. Educative information is therefore selected, modified or in order for the student to fit more appropriately in the category. Likewise, evaluative arrangements and notes can be arranged to best suit the preconstructed reality of an educator. The social phenomenon is coined the Pygmalion effect (Rosenthal and Jacobson, 1968).

The gender sex is particularly bound to the physical education notes for the high school diploma. Boys have higher scores in secondary school examinations by 1 or 2 points. It would thus seem inconceivable to teachers that girls are capable of the same averages as the boys in physical education.

Often in physical education what varies is the intensity, the duration of the exercises and more certainly the tables of quotation or evaluation of the physical value... in brief the feminine physical education is only a limited male education. We observe the construction of the myth of girls' fragility (Dowling, 2000).

Thus, a positive stereotype on a pupil allows him to win several points where a negative stereotype can cause the loss of such points respectively. The evaluation confirms a "double-standard". The concept of "double-standard" relates to two different interactions according the pupils sex. Facing the same behavior, the evaluation will be different depending on whether the pupil is a girl or a boy. The "double-standard" is equally powerful in evaluations of the behavior and in educational requirements. We find it in the interactions of teachers. Notes finalize this process of expectations and provide concrete examples of the impact of gender on physical education evaluations.