



Ninth and twelfth grade students and parents attitudes towards the tracking of family life and sex education in simms high school
by Pamela Ruth LaRocque

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of MASTER OF SCIENCE
in Home Economics
Montana State University
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Abstract:

The purpose of this study was to determine the attitudes of ninth and twelfth grade students and their parents concerning selected aspects of teaching family life and sex education. The following aspects were examined: (1) status in the curriculum of a family life and sex education course, (2) specific topic areas that should be included, (3) grade level at which each topic area should first appear, (4) classroom structure for each specific topic area, (5) qualifications and characteristics of a family life and sex education instructor, and (6) demographic variables of the respondents in relation to their opinion regarding the teaching of family life and sex education.

The questionnaire was administered to ninth grade and twelfth grade students and their parents. Results of the research indicated that the majority of respondents favored the teaching of family life and sex education in the public schools. Ninth grade students indicated a preference for the class to be a required course of study; twelfth grade students preferred family life and sex education to be an elective course of study for any student, while parents preferred the class to be an elective, but only for students with parental permission.

The most frequently mentioned topics to be included were, in descending order, friendship, dating, management of finances, emotional control, sex differences, family structure, pregnancy, reproductive organs, puberty, and fetal development. Parents and students generally preferred topics to be co-educational and introduced at the 7-8 grade levels.

Both parents and students minimized the qualifications of age, sex, marital status, and teaching experience of a family life and sex education instructor, although students indicated a preference for the instructor to be in the 25-35 age group. All three respondent groups indicated that the most important personality characteristic of an instructor was, "the ability to talk freely and maturely without embarrassment." Several significant relationships were found to exist between parent and student attitudes. These relationships were tested by the chi-square analysis at the .05 level of significance. There were significant relationships between the sex of the parents, and the sex and religious affiliation of the ninth grade students with their attitude toward favoring, opposing, or being uncertain regarding the inclusion of family life and sex education. Twelfth grade students' demographic variables were independent with their attitudes.

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NINTH AND TWELFTH GRADE STUDENTS' AND PARENTS' ATTITUDES
TOWARD THE TEACHING OF FAMILY LIFE AND
SEX EDUCATION IN SIMMS HIGH SCHOOL

by

PAMELA RUTH LAROCQUE

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree

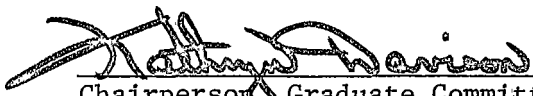
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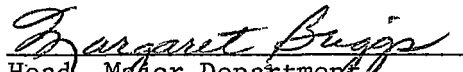
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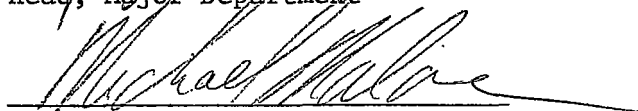
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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to determine the attitudes of ninth and twelfth grade students and their parents concerning selected aspects of teaching family life and sex education. The following aspects were examined: (1) status in the curriculum of a family life and sex education course, (2) specific topic areas that should be included, (3) grade level at which each topic area should first appear, (4) classroom structure for each specific topic area, (5) qualifications and characteristics of a family life and sex education instructor, and (6) demographic variables of the respondents in relation to their opinion regarding the teaching of family life and sex education.

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Several significant relationships were found to exist between parent and student attitudes. These relationships were tested by the chi-square analysis at the .05 level of significance. There were significant relationships between the sex of the parents, and the sex and religious affiliation of the ninth grade students with their attitude toward favoring, opposing, or being uncertain regarding the inclusion of family life and sex education. Twelfth grade students' demographic variables were independent with their attitudes.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

One controversial issue in public schools today is the question of instruction in family life and sex education. Since the challenges of the 50's and 60's, family life and sex education programs have been the target of much concern and disagreement among parents and school authorities. A number of parents have been so disturbed that they have brought legal action against their school boards to have the classes eliminated from the curriculum.

Conley and Haff (1974) reported that "limited research has been completed which investigates specific attitudes and opinions of parents and students toward the many aspects of family life and sex education" (p. 428). Libby (1970) noted similar findings in his study concerning parental attitudes toward high school sex education programs. One of the major barriers that has appeared is a presumed lack of parental support and understanding of the purposes, content, and methodology of family life and sex education. There has been a lack of communication between parents, teachers, administrators, and students as to the purposes of the program, and the philosophical approach to be taken toward the teaching or discussing of sexual knowledge, attitudes, standards, and behavior as well as toward sources of references to be used in the classroom. The Johnson-Schutt (1965) study reported that

administrators and school board members realized the need for sex education, but were hesitant to move ahead with actual programs. The two most frequent reasons for this hesitancy, as noted by Johnson and Schutt, were: "(1) lack of qualified teachers and (2) fear of public (parental) reaction" (p. 67). Because some educators fear negative parental reaction concerning family life and sex education in the public schools, the subject is often dealt with in a superficial manner, if at all.

Family life and sex education provides that kind of education which aids the young person to understand that sex and sexuality involves an interpersonal relationship which is integrated with, and guided by, many factors in marriage, such as values, companionship, responsibility, and aspirations. Benjamin Schlesinger says that:

Family life education, since it includes sex education, may be one area of the school curriculum in which we should involve parents. The emotional aspect of the material as well as the factual presentations will surely spill over into the home. Thus, we would have to include the parent in our progress in this area.
(Somerville, 1967, p. 389)

Is it not incongruous that in a nation in which family life and sexuality is obviously regarded highly that we value formal family life and sex education so little? It is unfortunate that many regard family life and sex education as being limited to such concerns as physical aspects and knowledge of contraceptive devices while in reality it is concerned with the emotions, values, and total context

of human development.

Gordon (1975) revealed certain facts that reflect a pox that is upon parents, teachers, school authorities, and students today:

A record 800,000 teenage pregnancies in 1974, most of them occurring out-of-wedlock and unwanted; abortions among minors increasing to an all-time high of 400,000 during 1974; adolescent venereal disease reaching epidemic proportions, second only to the common cold in frequency. (p. 37)

Family life and sex education cannot propose to be the preventative for premarital pregnancy, divorce, venereal disease, drug, and alcohol abuse. It can aid the student in intelligent decision making, setting goals that will provide opportunities to formulate effective approaches to deal with today's social issues and at the same time remain compatible with the objectives of the community.

Thus, a general philosophy has developed that the topic of family life and sex education should be avoided or treated with kid gloves. Is this cautious and fearful attitude warranted today? Do students and parents really differ widely in their perception of family life and sex education? It would be helpful for school authorities and teachers to know what parents and students think and feel about family life and sex education, so that their attitudes and opinions may be considered in the planning of programs. Such an awareness would lead to improved communication and increased trust between parents, students, teachers, and school officials involved in family life and sex education programs.

Need for the Study

The families' difficulties, in the transition from an agricultural to a technological society and in fulfilling the functions regarding the affectional and personality needs of its members, could be factors related to the increase of teenage marriages, divorce, premarital pregnancy, and venereal disease.

In 1977 Montanans married at a rate paralleling the national rate. There were 9.9 marriages per thousand population in Montana and 9.9 per thousand nationally. Montana recorded 7547 couples married in 1977, a 2.1 percent increase over the 7390 marriages recorded in 1976. Of this 7547 group, 2132 brides and 800 grooms were between the age of 15-19 years (Knight, 1977, p. 61).

Cascade County recorded 827 couples married in 1977 whereas 594 marital terminations were recorded for the same period. Montana reported 4813 marital terminations in 1977. The number of marital terminations annually is now more than twice that of a decade ago (*Ibid*, p. 67).

The number and percentage of out-of-wedlock births to Montana residents continues to rise, increasing from 1293 or 10.26 percent in 1976 to 1469 or 11.04 percent in 1977. In 1953 only 1.75 percent or 291 of the births were out-of-wedlock. Mothers of children born out-of-wedlock are markedly younger than married mothers. One-half of all Montana women giving birth in 1977 were 24.6 years of age or younger,

whereas one-half of the mothers of out-of-wedlock babies were 19.7 years of age or younger (*Ibid*, p. 15). Cascade County reported 146 out-of-wedlock births in 1977 (*Ibid*, p. 67).

The abortion rate in Montana has been approximately half that of the United States as a whole with the number of abortions increasing each year. Montana reported 1803 abortions in 1976 with the modal age occurring at 18 years, 2539 abortions were reported in 1977 with one-half of the women less than 21.86 years of age. The ages of women aborted in 1977 ranged from 13-48 years. The proportion of abortions involving single women increased from 59 percent in 1975 to 63.5 percent in 1976 and to 65.5 percent in 1977. Nineteen abortions involved women less than 15 years of age, while 862 involved women 15-19 years of age (*Ibid*, p. 52).

Montana has reported 2196 cases of venereal disease in 1977, with Cascade County reporting 256 cases (*Ibid*, p. 76). With these staggering facts, the emerging data clearly indicate a need in Montana for family life and sex education programs incorporated in the public schools.

Family life and sex education programs cannot prevent the increase in teenage marriages, divorce, premarital pregnancy, and venereal disease. It can help the students understand themselves as a sexual being, as a family member, as a potential parent, and as a citizen.

The Little (1970) study revealed that about two-thirds of the community leaders, the educators in grades 9-12, and the students in grades 9-12 indicated that courses in family life and sex education are not available in their high schools. About one in ten students, educators, parents, and community leaders believed courses of that type should not be available. Among those who thought family life and sex education should be available, a typical response was that courses should be available for anyone who wishes to enroll. This study also revealed that the most pressing needs for improvement in Montana's schools were: "(1) relevance of subjects to student's future needs, (2) the relevance of subjects to student's present needs, and (3) students learning about themselves" (*Ibid*, pp. 2-3).

Creels' (1971) study revealed that over three-fourths of the total sample of Montana superintendents, school board chairmen, and trustees believe a course in family life and sex education would meet the top educational needs of the Little study.

Thus, if school teachers and authorities are aware of the attitudes and opinions of parents and students concerning family life and sex education; supportive programs can be planned and implemented to meet the needs and interests of the students. Goals and recommendations can be formulated to assist the student in dealing with today's social issues. This enhancement would create improved communications, support an understanding between parents, students, teachers, and school

officials regarding family life and sex education programs in the public schools.

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study was to determine attitudes and opinions of parents and students concerning selected aspects of teaching family life and sex education at Simms High School in Simms, Montana.

In order to accomplish the major purpose of this study, specific objectives were formulated. These objectives were:

1. To determine the nature of the relationship between parent attitudes toward the teaching of family life and sex education in the public schools and:
 - A. Age range
 - B. Occupation
 - C. Educational level
 - D. Sex
 - E. Marital status
 - F. Number of children in the family
 - G. Age of children
 - H. Religious affiliation
 - I. Frequency of church attendance
 - J. Background in a family life and sex education course
2. To determine the nature of the relationship between student attitudes toward the teaching of family life and sex education in the public schools and:
 - A. Age range
 - B. Grade level
 - C. Sex
 - D. Status in the family
 - E. Religious affiliation
 - F. Frequency of church attendance
 - G. Background in a family life and sex education course

3. To identify specific topic areas of family life and sex education that should be included in the course content as perceived by parents and students.
4. To determine the grade level category at which each specific topic area of family life and sex education should *first* appear in the public schools as perceived by parents and students:
 - A. K-3
 - B. 4-6
 - C. 7-8
 - D. 9-10
 - E. 11-12
 - F. Not at all
5. To determine the classroom structure of each specific topic area that is included in a family life and sex education course as perceived by parents and students:
 - A. Only males
 - B. Only females
 - C. Co-educational
 - D. Separately to males and females
6. To determine qualifications and characteristics of an acceptable family life and sex education instructor as perceived by parents and students:
 - A. Sex
 - B. Marital status
 - C. Age
 - D. Years of teaching experience
 - E. Selected personality characteristics
7. To determine the status in the curriculum of a family life and sex education class in the public schools as perceived by parents and students:
 - A. Required course of study
 - B. Elective course of study for any student
 - C. Elective course of study, but only for students with their parents' permission
 - D. Not available as a course of study

8. To determine the nature of the relationship that exists between parent and student attitudes and opinions concerning selected aspects of family life and sex education in the public schools:
 - A. Specific topic areas that should be included in the course content
 - B. Grade level categories at which each specific topic area should first appear
 - C. Classroom structure for each specific topic area
 - D. Qualifications and characteristics of an acceptable family life and sex education instructor
 - E. Status in the curriculum of a family life and sex education course

Assumptions

The following assumptions underline this study:

1. Parents and students in Simms, Montana have sufficient knowledge in family life and sex education to interpret the questionnaire.
2. A relationship exists between parent and student attitudes and opinions concerning the teaching of family life and sex education.
3. A family life and sex education program would help meet the needs, interests, and concerns of today's youth.
4. Students and parents are resources through which needs, interests, and concerns regarding the teaching of family life and sex education can be determined.

Limitations

The following limitations were recognized by the investigator in this study:

1. The student population surveyed was limited to ninth and twelfth graders enrolled at Simms High School in Simms, Montana.
2. The population surveyed was limited to parents of the participating student groups in Simms, Montana.
3. The population of students was limited to those students not yet married.
4. The ninth grade population was limited to those students between the age of 14-16 years.
5. The twelfth grade population was limited to those students between the age of 17-19 years.

Definition of Terms

Some terms throughout this paper may have a variety of interpretations. The following terms used in the study are listed and defined in order to clarify their usage.

ATTITUDE: The predisposition or tendency to react specifically towards an object, situation, or value; usually accompanied by feelings and emotions (Good, 1973, p. 49).

COURSE CONTENT: The specific organized subject matter in a major area of study.

CO-EDUCATIONAL: The educational system in which students of both sexes attend the same class.

CURRICULUM: A systematic group of courses or sequences of subjects in a major field of study that contribute directly to the learning of the student.

ELECTIVE COURSE OF STUDY: Any of a number of studies from which the student is allowed to select (Good, 1973, p. 208).

FAMILY LIFE AND SEX EDUCATION: A course of study that includes all the educational measures, processes, and principles designed to constructively help young people meet the problems of life which have their center in family relationships and the emotional, physical, psychological, cultural, and sociological sexual instincts.

FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS: The study and enrichment of the nature, functions, and significance of human and family interactions dealing with the concepts and principles related to various family living conditions; the establishment and maintenance of relationships; and the preparation for marriage and family life.

INSTRUCTOR: A person who is a certificate employee of a school district, and who teaches the subject of family life and sex education.

OPINION: A judgment or impression based on what seems to be true, valid, or probable to one's own mind.

PUBLIC SCHOOL: A school organized under a school district of a state, supported by tax revenues, administered by public officials, and open to all (Good, 1973, p. 460).

RESPONDENT: Any recipient of a questionnaire who actually replies to the questionnaire (Good, 1973, p. 496).

SEXUAL INSTINCT: The native or hereditary factors of individuals which influences individual sexual behavior.

TOPIC AREA: A specific section of family life and sex education.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The specific purpose of this section was to present an overview of literature concerning family life and sex education. The literature selected for review will provide background information in these areas: (1) historical overview of family life education, (2) historical overview of sex education, (3) family life and sex education grow together, (4) family life and sex education programs in Montana, (5) Montanans' attitudes toward family life and sex education, (6) previous research concerning attitudes toward family life and sex education, (7) parents' attitudes, and (8) students' attitudes.

Historical Overview of Family Life Education

Although it sounds very modern and in tune with the 1970's, family life education actually began long before the strains of the 1960's and 1970's took their toll on traditional family life in America and forced educators to answer demands from parents and students for "a more relevant" education.

In the mid-1920's, societal changes lessened the self-sufficiency of the family unit and created a need to strengthen family life. In the field of home economics, new relationships were established with the social sciences, and increasing emphasis was placed on finding better ways of solving the psychological problems of families

(Jefferson, 1971, p. 506). Many authors and educators were starting to give recognition to the problem of family life education as one worthy of school attention. The following quotation from a book published in 1913 clearly demonstrates this point: "Preparation for family life and parenthood should undoubtedly be one of the chief concerns of the schools" (Burks and Burks, 1913, p. 109).

Professor Ernest R. Groves, answering student requests, developed the first family life course at Boston University in 1922. Recognition of family life education as a worthwhile inclusion in the curriculum came with the adoption of the term, "Education for Home and Family Life," by the 1930 White House Conference on Child Health and Protection.

It was during this 1930's era of diverse and almost overwhelming stress on the American family, that the idea was introduced for the public schools and the community to cooperate in teaching skills for everyday living. In 1932, Edward Keyes, president of the American Social Hygiene Association, recognizing that the strengths of individuals and families were being put to their hardest tests, wrote in the Journal of Social Hygiene, "If any phase of the present financial depression can be called a blessing, it is this: that people have come to a greater realization of their need for each other" (Wagner, 1976, p. 29). In the same article, Dr. Keyes reported that planning committees on family relations were being established in several

communities across the country.

Organizations like the Federal Home Economics Education Service (now part of the United States Office of Education's Bureau of Occupational and Adult Education), the Young Women's Christian Association, the American Home Economics Association, and the Social Hygiene Association had assumed positions of national leadership in developing educational programs to help individuals and families through the decade of crises and turmoil. In 1939, after several years of research and planning, the Federal Home Economics Education Service launched pilot projects to discover how public schools might work together with the community at large to offer comprehensive programs in family life education (*Ibid*, p. 30). One of the earliest successful high school family life programs was established by Mrs. Elizabeth Force at Toms River High School, New Jersey in 1941.

At the American Home Economics Association's annual meeting in 1947, the family relations section made the following statement in its report:

Perhaps the greatest advance in family life education has been in the development of methods for surveying family and community needs and for determining family status in a community or general pattern. Family life education is being recognized more and more as a vital part of the regular school curriculum. High school students are demanding assistance in personal, social, and marital adjustments. (Baldwin, 1949, pp. 84-85)

Another important role for the family relations section was in helping to plan and execute the National Conference on Family Life held in

Washington D. C. in 1948.

During the 1950's and 1960's, rapid changes in the patterns of life within the family, the confusion resulting from shifts of roles and functions, and other significant societal changes affecting family life challenged home economics to provide more comprehensive programs of family life education for both sexes, all ages, all social classes, and all ethnic groups.

At the start of the 60's, family life programs in school systems became an integrated complex of experiences. In California, a study in 1954 reported that three out of four of the 286 responding schools were giving either a semester course or units of study on marriage and the family (Landis, 1957, p. 247). Data gathered from a survey of Indiana high schools in 1959 indicate there were only 108 courses but 973 units within other courses (Dager and Harper, 1959, p. 386). A survey of Minnesota high schools found 23 semester courses in 1959 and 93 units whereas in 1965 there were 20 and 117 respectively (Baker, 1969, p. 229). In Washington, a survey of the state in 1969, identified 104 semester courses and 301 units (*Ibid*).

In the early 1950's, the Special Project on Family Life Education held 15 working conferences under the title, "Strengthening the Family Relationships: Aspects of Home Economics at the Secondary Level" (Baldwin, 1959). Representatives from 158 colleges in 29 states attended the conferences.

Jefferson (1971) found that several research projects attempted to evaluate educational programs at that time. A variety of evaluation devices were constructed to determine the effectiveness of family life courses and teaching techniques in changing attitudes of students and to determine the relative value of the courses to unmarried and married students. Studies were also conducted to determine the effectiveness of preprofessional preparation of family life teachers and to measure teacher competencies.

Thus, family life has influenced the development of home economics throughout the years and has become the central focus for the profession. Throughout the lifetimes of individuals', family life is a continuing process; geared to the immediate needs of individuals and sensitive to the social and cultural changes that influence those needs.

Historical Overview of Sex Education

The lack of precise information as to how much sex education existed or now exists in the United States has frustrated efforts to pinpoint trends or to describe broad historical changes. Contradictory assertions mark the field: "The sex education boom came at about the time of World War I" (Kerchoff, 1964, p. 883). "Unquestionably, there was little sex education in the schools in the 1920's, 1930's, and even the 1940's" (Kirkendall and Libby, 1969, p. 8).

The concept of sex education is certainly not new. At the beginning of the twentieth century the number of issues, the depth of

discussion in sex education topics, and the roles of particular persons in the education process were quite clearly defined. According to Kirkendall and Calderwood (1971), three beliefs exerted a powerful influence on content and procedures:

First, it was thought that sex education should consist almost exclusively of a vague explanation of how babies are born - that is, should be limited to consideration of reproductive processes. Second, it was assumed that open acknowledgement of an interest in sexuality was likely to unleash powerful and threatening biological forces in youth; references to sex in any form were dangerous; and the chief concern of educators was suppression of interest. Third, it was held that if parents adequately met their responsibilities, all necessary sex education would be given in the home, and other persons or organizations should not intrude; schools and churches had a role in sex education only when parents failed to adequately fulfill their responsibilities. (p. 197)

In 1905, the American Society of Sanitary and Moral Prophylaxis was established by Dr. Prince Albert Morrow. At that time, the main concern of early sex educators was the pathological aspects of sex, namely the prevention of venereal disease.

Community leaders had either no role or a very minor one in sex education. Occasionally, some school might invite a doctor or a minister to give a lecture, show a film, or talk with an individual child. The fact that ministers and physicians were commonly used indicates the attitudes which school authorities felt should be stressed in sex education (Harper and Harper, 1961).

The threat which sex education was thought to pose and the problems which were believed to accompany it, is reflected in quotations

from typical early books. As these quotations indicated, any verbalization about sex was thought to imperil the child and threaten the tranquility and stability of the family. For example, Margaret W. Morley (1906) wrote in "The Renewal of Life: How and When to Tell the Story to the Young" that: "many a life has been lamed and saddened because of the first terrible and ineradicable impressions it received on this all important subject" (p. 25).

An awareness of the desirability of sex education, a reaffirmation of the whole-child concept, can be traced back at least as far as the second White House Conference on Children and Youth in 1919. The realization of this component of the educational structure has been agonizingly slow. It has been only within the past several years that sex education has begun to gain widespread public appearance and support. Kirkendall and Libby (1969) believe:

... the frank and open treatment which sex has been receiving in the mass media and an increasing awareness on the part of parents, teachers, and professional people of the need for sex education, especially for youth, has contributed to its development. (p. 11)

They also believe that "publicity about 'the sexual revolution' and 'declining moral standards' brought some parents to favor sex education" (*Ibid*, p. 12).

There is little question that the nation became the battleground for a sizeable sex education controversy in 1968 and 1969. Public school systems were faced with an intensive effort on the part of Far

Right extremist groups to discredit family life and sex education programs. The blatant misinformation and scare tactics used by the opposers caught teachers and supporters of sex education programs unprepared.

Even before right-wing organizations decided to attack sex education, it had been apparent that one of the major barriers to the development of public high school sex education was a presumed lack of parental support and understanding of the purposes, content, and methodology of sex instruction. There had been a lack of communication between parents, teachers, administrators, and students as to the purposes of sex education, and the philosophical approach to be taken toward the "teaching" or discussing of sexual knowledge, attitudes, standards and behavior, as well as toward sources of references to be used in the classroom (Libby, 1970, p. 234).

However, this "furor" had served a vital service to the advancement of family life and sex education as school authorities, teachers, parents, and students were forced to take a long and thoughtful look at their program. Thus, a strengthening and improvement of programs resulted. It also clarified the idea that parents, teachers, school authorities, and students must carefully plan and cooperate on the initiation and continuation of family life and sex education programs.

Family Life and Sex Education Grow Together

When the 1960's began on an expansive note, the sixth White House Conference on Children and Youth recommended that, "the school curriculum include education for family living, including sex education," and "family life courses, including preparation for marriage and parenthood, be instituted as an integral and major part of public education from elementary school through high school" (Somerville, 1971, p. 215). Thus, it became apparent that one could not honestly teach about family and interpersonal relationships without including the sexual aspects of interrelationships. Educators realized that students needed more than biological facts to come to terms with their sexuality.

If family life education is to be defined as the study of the behavior of human beings as family members, then it becomes clear that the social aspects of human sexuality are a part of family life education. Consequently, separating sex education from family life education would seem to be a specious arrangement.

In 1965, an organization was established to assist the teaching of family life, including sex education: SIECUS (Sex Information and Education Council of the United States). Somerville (1967) states:

SIECUS was established in 1965 to help bring about, *within* the framework of family life education, constructive dialogue between youth and adults on the pros and cons of the various sexual patterns that can be identified in American life. (p. 375)

The urgency of the need to clarify the relationship between family life education and sex education became manifest in a panel discussion at the 1966 meeting of the National Council on Family Relations, held at Minneapolis in October. While this relationship is an old issue, nationwide attention has risen from increased community demand for curriculum expansion, declarations, and resolutions of governmental authorities and professional association, franker programs offered in the mass media, and the establishment of new agencies, commissions, and committees (*Ibid*, p. 374).

It is difficult to predict just how and where family life education, including sex education will eventually develop. However, with the positive indication of nationwide interest in family life and sex education and the theoretical support in this area, there will undoubtedly be notable support efforts to expand and enrich community and school programs in family life and sex education.

Family Life and Sex Education Programs in Montana

Little (1970) conducted a study of the educational needs in Montana as perceived by community leaders, parents, elementary educators, secondary educators, and students. This report revealed that 24.3 percent, 23.4 percent, 18.6 percent, 10.7 percent, and 26.7 percent respectively stated that family life and sex education was available in their schools. It was interesting to note that secondary educators were the group reporting the least amount of this instruction.

In a 1971 study conducted by Creel, only 30.2 percent of Montana's superintendents, school board chairmen, and trustees indicated that family life and sex education instruction is provided in their school although most of the respondents favored this program.

Montanans' Attitudes Toward Family Life and Sex Education

In the 1970 study conducted by Little, the majority of parents, community leaders, elementary educators, secondary educators, and students (88.9%, 90.8%, 89.3%, 90.0%, and 95.7% respectively) believed that units or courses in family life and sex education should be included in the curriculum of Montana schools. Creel (1971) noted that the majority or 68.4% of superintendents, schoolboard chairmen and trustees in Montana were in favor of a program of family life and sex education being taught in the public school. Approximately 33.8 percent of the school administrators and policy makers indicated that parents should be one group to initiate such a course.

Previous Research

To summarize the findings of previous research concerning opinions and attitudes toward family life and sex education, most related studies appear to indicate that the majority of respondents approve the inclusion of family life and sex education in the curriculum (Eggert, 1954; Nation's Schools, 1960; Rosentiel & Smith, 1963; Erskine, 1966; Johnson & Schutts, 1966; McIntire, 1969; Ryan, 1969; Libby, 1970;

Little, 1970; Weinstock, 1970; Creel, 1971; Ready, 1973; Conley & Haff, 1974; Angrist, Mickelsen, & Penna, 1976). An item of interest is noted in a 1969 study conducted by McIntire & Eaton: "Eighty-eight percent of a parents' group support the idea of schools offering family life and sex education courses. But when the same group is asked how they see other parents (Do you think "most other parents feel sex education should be taught in the schools?" only 57 percent agree" (p. 667). Even though the overwhelming majority of parents approved the teaching of family life and sex education, the fear that information will lead to experimentation seems to provide much of the basis for parental confusion and anxiety over the question of family life and sex education.

Research data indicate that certain variables result in a more favorable attitude toward the inclusion of family life and sex education in the public schools. One important variable is religion; Catholics are generally least favorable to family life and sex education, especially if classes are mixed. Jewish, Protestant, and those without a religious affiliation are most favorable (Reeve, 1963; Libby, 1970).

Frequency of church attendance is another variable affecting attitudes and opinions. Kinsy (1948, 1953), Scholfield (1965), Packard (1968), Reiss (1960, 1967), and Libby (1970) indicated the importance of frequency of church attendance. Communities with high

church attendance have less liberal attitudes toward family life and sex education in the public schools.

Education and knowledge is positively associated with an acceptance of family life and sex education, while skilled labor occupations relate to less favorable attitudes, (Bowers, 1962; Reeve, 1963; Libby, 1970). Libby (1970) found that the higher social class populations held more liberal attitudes toward sex education.

Age of children is found to be a correlate of attitudes toward family life and sex education, according to the research of Reiss (1967), who indicated that parents of teenage youth "are relatively low on permissiveness compared to parents of younger children" (p. 141). Libby (1970) noted in his study that parents with pre-pubescent children have higher liberalism scores than parents with post-pubescent offspring.

Baker and Darcy (1970) found that family life and sex educators are mainly female (70.6%) and the majority of these are teachers of home economics, health and physical education programs.

Libby (1970) reveals that most parents are not concerned about teacher qualifications unless the teacher is to teach sexual values with which the parent does not agree. They do, he found, prefer a teacher with many years of teaching experience. On the issue of marital status, McIntire's (1969), Libby's (1970), and Creel's (1971) studies indicated that just under 50 percent of parents want a married

teacher. Conley (1974) noted in his study that both parents and students feel that this is not important. The study also indicates that parents do not consider the age of the instructor to be as important as do the students as students favor the age group 25-35 years, which received just over 50 percent of the responses. Both parents and students in the Conley (1974) study felt that the most important personality characteristic of the instructor is the ability to talk freely and maturely without embarrassment.

Erskine (1966) reported that lower age groups have more positive attitudes toward family life and sex education, while research by a Nation's Schools (1960) survey revealed that the upper high school grades are more in favor for teaching family life and sex education. Conley, (1974) however, concluded that parents are most favorable to family life and sex education at all grade levels and in most cases are more in favor than the ninth and twelfth grade students. Parents and twelfth grade students have more in common in their responses than do parents and ninth grade students.

Ninth and twelfth grade students placed more emphasis on topics being introduced at the seventh and eighth grade levels (Conley, 1974). For almost all topics, both parents and students are in favor of family life and sex education being taught to co-educational classes.

McIntire's (1969) and Libby's (1970) studies reveal the same results from their respondents. However, ninth grade students in the Conley

study are more in favor of selected topics being reserved for girls only, or for some topics to be handled separately rather than co-educationally.

There is repeated evidence that the primary source of sexual information and knowledge is among one's peers (Ramsey, 1943; Lee, 1952; Elias & Gebhard, 1969; Schwartz, 1969). In addition, such studies reported that most sexual information was acquired during pre-adolescence (Ramsey, 1943; Elias & Gebhard, 1969) and was generally incorrect (Elias & Gebhard, 1969; Schwartz, 1969).

In a 1974 study conducted by Libby, Acock, and Payne, parents were asked to rank important sources for their own family life and sex education during their teenage years. The results reveal that the majority of fathers (51.2%) indicate peers as their primary source while only 1.6 percent list the high schools as a source of information. Mothers (39.7%) indicate their own mothers as their primary source of family life and sex education with the high school receiving only 3.3 percent.

The findings of previous and present research can be utilized in a variety of ways by public schools to implement or update family life and sex education programs. The school can play a major role in the total growth and development of the young. Schools must work cooperatively with parents, whose attention has never been more dramatically focused on the school, to assist in meeting the developmental tasks of

young people. Fulton (1970) states that:

Man now has the opportunity, as a result of better understanding of the social and behavioral sciences, the life sciences, and indeed theology, to recognize man's sexuality as a positive live force rather than a despised evil; to aid other human beings toward the responsible use of their sexuality and toward assimilation of sex into their life pattern as a creative force. (p. 267)

Parents' Attitudes

Throughout the country, there are a number of family life and sex education programs in the public school system, each at different stages of development. Since the challenges of the 50's and 60's by the supporters of the John Birch Society and others, these programs have been the target of much concern among parents.

The United States Office of Education has issued a policy on family life and sex education stating that:

... each community and educational institution must determine the role it should play in the area of family life education and sex education; only the community and its agencies and institutions can know what is desirable, what is possible, and what is wise for them in this realm. (Conley, 1974, p. 429)

Inevitably, family life and sex education starts at birth; thus, it is closely associated with the home and parental influence. Parents' reactions to curriculum planning is greatly needed and has become more accepted by educators. Specifically, a family life and sex education program should be influenced by the parents. Kilander (1970) supports this idea, stating: "family life education in the schools is furthered by the establishment of cooperation with the parents" (p. 14).

Many parents have a strong and sincere interest in socializing adolescents in such a way that they acquire what the parent regards as "correct" moral values, and many parents are interested in gaining professional help to accomplish this task. Libby (1970) states that:

Even though the overwhelming majority of parents approve of high school family life and sex education, most view the teacher as helping them perform their tasks of imparting essential sexual information and controlling sexual behavior by discouraging premarital sexual experimentation. (p. 256)

In many communities, parental support exists for the development of a program in family life and sex education in the public schools (McIntire, 1969; Libby, 1979; Libby *et al.*, 1974; Conley, 1974).

In the past, virtually every national survey revealed that the majority of parents favor family life and sex education in the schools, yet there is clearly still some sentiment in this country against its inclusion in school curricula. Gordon (1977) noted that at that time, only six states; Hawaii, Kentucky, Maryland, Michigan, Missouri, and North Dakota and the District of Columbia; require sex education in their schools (p. 4). However, 60 percent of the school districts exclude information on birth control (*Ibid*, p. 5).

Regardless of their desires and/or fears, it is apparent that parents are being offered opportunities in the area of family life and sex education that have not been available in the past in that churches, schools, and other social institutions are developing programs.

This is especially relevant since public high schools are financed by taxpaying parents who may wish to control that which they support. Without an awareness of parental attitudes, a negative parental reaction to a proposed family life and sex education program could result in a poorly developed program or no program at all.

Therefore, it is important insofar as possible for educators and school authorities to be able to predict parental cooperation or opposition on the basis of the known composition of their communities. Such an awareness is especially crucial in communities where there are parental pressure groups. It would be expected that a greater understanding of parental attitudes would lead to improved communication and increased trust between parents and school officials involved with family life and sex education programs.

Students' Attitudes

Angrist (1976) expressed two key goals for high schools to teach family life and sex education:

The first goal is cognitive development - to increase knowledge about dating, courtship, marriage, family, and parenthood, and to facilitate skills at interpreting and analyzing scientific evidence about family life. The second goal is affective development - to assist adolescents in shaping their own beliefs and preferences so that they can make thoughtful life style choices. (p. 107)

One study by Thornburg (1974) indicated that the peak age for the first information about sex occurs during preadolescence; "Upon entering preadolescence, emotional development usually still stems from

basic parental influences, although at the end of the period peer influence may dominate" (p. 37). The study also reveals that:

"Preadolescents are rather knowledgeable about sex" (*Ibid*). Somerville (1971) notes that: "... by seventh grade they ask for family and sex information and wonder why adults withhold books and movies on sex from them" (p. 217). Gordon (1977) reveals that "studies made during the past 35 years indicate that between 75 percent and 90 percent of all young people say they've learned most of what they know about sex from their friends" (p. 4).

Students' needs and interests are vital when considering any educational subject. Conley (1974), in a national survey where students were asked what they wanted to be taught, results indicated favorable responses toward the areas of growth and development, sex education, and family life. Educators must consider the situation at hand and be sensitive to the needs and desires of the students.

Evidence of this need for knowledge about family life and sex education was reported by Burchinal from Iowa State University when she interviewed 117 girls in high school, asking them for their source of knowledge about matters on sex. She reported percentages as follows: "42 percent from mother, 32.5 percent from girl friends, 5.1 percent from sisters, 0 percent from fathers and teachers, 8.5 percent from adults, and .9 percent from others" (p. 332).

Thus, a vital need for family life and sex education programs dictates that students and parents be included in the process of formulating goals and needs so that comprehensive programs in family life and sex education can be planned and implemented by the public schools.

CHAPTER III

PROCEDURES

The purpose of this study was to determine the attitudes and opinions of parents and students concerning selected aspects of teaching family life and sex education at Simms High School, Simms School District 6 & F, Simms, Montana, during the 1979-80 school year.

Description of Population

For the purpose of this study, the attitudes and opinions of ninth and twelfth grade students and their parents were sought. The population used in the study was ninth grade students, age 14-16, and twelfth grade students, age 17-19, enrolled at Simms High School in Simms, Montana. Only students who were not yet married were included in the population. The investigator administered the instrument to students during two scheduled class meetings. Parents of the enrolled students comprised the third group of the population.

Family life and sex education with all its implications presented some unique problems to the investigator since this topic was controversial in nature. One problem was the selection of a school and community where the questionnaire could be administered. Simms School District 6 & F was selected due to the investigator's familiarity with

the administration, the community, and past educational experience in the school district.

Due to the manageable number of students enrolled at Simms High School, the entire population of ninth and twelfth grade students was used. There were 70 ninth grade students and 60 twelfth grade students enrolled at Simms High School during the 1979-80 school year. Parental permission was required for students to participate in the study due to the controversial nature of some of the topic areas included in the questionnaire. Forty ninth grade students and forty-one twelfth grade students participated in the study. The questionnaire was administered during separate class meetings, which minimized disruption of the instructional day. The parent group yielded a population size of 135 parents. Of the questionnaires mailed to the parents, 105 were returned.

Ninth grade students were selected as a source since this is the beginning level at Simms High School. These students were more likely to be aware of their past, present, and future needs, interests, and problems regarding family life and sex education since this is their first opportunity to enroll in a secondary school program. "Ninth grade students tend to be physically and socially more like senior high school students than junior high students in grades seven and eight" (Chamberlain, 1976, p. 301). "The ninth grade student reflects physical, mental, and social characteristics appreciably more advanced than middle school transescents" (Eichorn, 1966, p. 103).

Twelfth grade students were selected as participants since these students were more aware of needs, interests, and concerns that were encountered in the area of family life and sex education during their school developmental phase. The investigator also believed that ninth and twelfth grade students have received the necessary exposure to family life and sex education topics to assess their attitudes and opinions toward the subject area.

The responses from the ninth and twelfth grade students will be most vital in the future planning of family life and sex education programs. The influence of parents' attitudes and opinions in supporting and planning family life and sex education programs will be an important aspect to any public school system.

Survey Instrument

A survey questionnaire was the method to collect the desired information. The investigator believed that the participants would be more willing to express their personal feelings and attitudes on a printed questionnaire than in a personal interview. The written questionnaire helped maintain the respondents' anonymity within their group during the administration of the instrument.

Questionnaires were color coded according to the grade level. The instrument administered to the parents was also color coded which enabled the investigator to identify the returns. The cover letter

(Appendix D) to the parents and the opening statement to the students explained the purpose of the study as well as assuring the confidentiality that was to be exercised and maintained in the handling of the data.

The student survey questionnaire provided a time efficient means of collecting data and was administered to each population group in separate class meetings. Reliability was increased as each student received the same set of questions and had the same length of time to complete the instrument.

A modified version of questionnaire items from instruments developed by Bowers (1962), Lathrop (1965), Creel (1971), and Conley (1974) used in prior research studies which examined attitudes and opinions toward the critical areas of family life and sex education was adapted.

Part One of the instrument was designed to collect demographic information about the respondent. Specific topic areas that might be included in family life and sex education were listed in Part Two. Respondents were asked to indicate the grade level category, if any, at which each topic should first appear, and the classroom structure for each topic area. A direction page was included in this section.

Part Three of the instrument consisted of questions pertaining to the acceptable characteristics of the instructor, in addition to the status in the curriculum of a family life and sex education course.

Part Four was designed to provide an area for the respondents' reactions to the questionnaire and to add any additional individual comments.

A pilot study involving six respondents from each of the selected grade levels was conducted in the Home Economics classes at Simms High School. The pilot questionnaire was administered to test the mechanical aspects of the questionnaire, such as the clarity of directions, the ease of answering, and to eliminate or add topic areas. Students who were granted permission by their parents participated in the pre-test. Parents of the participating students also pre-tested the questionnaire.

The test-retest method was used to determine reliability of the instrument and was found to be valuable in regard to the stated aspects. A three week interval was allowed between the two administrations to minimize the effect of memory in creating an artificially high reliability coefficient. Minor modifications were made with the mechanical aspects; some topic areas were revised as a result of the opinions expressed by the respondents; and a list of definitions of selected topic areas was included in the questionnaire administering sessions.

Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients were computed (see Table 1) between the two sets of scores. To be considered significant at the .05 level of significance, an r of .7545 with five degrees of freedom is necessary. Thus, the overall reliability of the

instrument items and format were sufficient for this study in determining parent and student attitudes toward the teaching of family life and sex education and met the statistical criterion for reliability.

TABLE 1. TEST-RETEST RELIABILITY COEFFICIENTS^a

	Background Information	Topic Areas	Instructor Qualifications	Overall
9th Grade Students	.84	.65	.74	.76
12th Grade Students	.86	.67	.76	.78
Parents	.88	.68	.75	.79

^a.05 = .7545 (with five degrees of freedom)

Procurement of Data

A telephone call and personal interview was conducted with the principal of Simms High School in order to obtain permission to conduct the study. The investigator explained the purpose, scope, and mechanics of the study, the importance of student and parent participation, the class level of students asked to participate, and how the results were to be used.

In January, 1980, a permission letter (Appendix A) explaining the purpose of the study and requesting permission for the inclusion of their ninth and/or twelfth grade child was sent home with each student. The permission letters were returned to the Simms High School office by the students. Students who were granted permission by their parents

participated in the study. Only those parents whose names were listed on the permission letters were included as the third group of the population and received the questionnaire to complete. Of the letters sent to 70 ninth grade students, 40 were returned signed by the parents for a 57 percent return. Of the letters sent to 60 twelfth grade students, 41 were returned signed by the parents for a 67 percent return (see Table 2).

The questionnaire (Appendix B) was administered in January, 1980, by the investigator during separate class meetings to the ninth and twelfth grade students who had received parental permission. The investigator stated opening remarks concerning the purpose and objectives of the survey instrument. The investigator gave standardized directions to the students before they answered the questionnaire to help insure the validity and reliability of the responses. A list of definitions (Appendix C) was available to those students upon request. The investigator returned to Simms High School one day later and administered the questionnaire to the three ninth and twelfth grade students who were absent the day the questionnaire was originally administered in order to obtain 100 percent participation.

Questionnaires were mailed to parents of the participating students. In order to encourage a greater return, a self-addressed, stamped envelope, along with a cover letter (Appendix D) explaining the purpose of the study was enclosed with copies of the questionnaire (Appendix E).

To increase reliability of responses, standardized directions were included with the instruments. Of the questionnaires sent to the 135 parents, 105 were returned completed after a follow-up, for a 78 per-cent return (see Table 2).

An identifying number was marked on each questionnaire so a follow-up notice could be sent to all non-responding parents within a week following the return deadline. Confidentiality was maintained as the identifying number was used only for follow-up purposes. The follow-up letter (Appendix F) stated the significance of the study and the need for obtaining a reply from each person who received a questionnaire. A self-addressed, stamped envelope and a duplicate questionnaire was included in the follow-up notice in case the first questionnaire was no longer available.

The following table illustrates the total responses received from the three groups studied:

TABLE 2. TOTAL RESPONSES OF PARENTS AND STUDENTS

Population	Agreed to Participate	Number Responding	Percent Responding
9th Grade Students	40	40	100%
12th Grade Students	41	41	100%
Parents	135	105	78%
Total	206	186	90%

Method of Analysis

The data were analyzed in an attempt to report the opinions of students and parents relative to the inclusion of specific topic areas in the instruction of family life and sex education. The data were coded for transfer to electronic data processing facilities at Montana State University.

The questionnaires were tabulated by percentage for the majority of variables. Demographic factors were analyzed in terms of percentage of responses to determine background characteristics of the respondents.

The total sum of responses to various questions which would determine the nature of the relationship between student attitudes and parent attitudes toward the teaching of family life and sex education in the Simms Public School System employed the chi-square method of statistical analysis at the .05 level of significance. The selected aspects regarding student attitudes and parent attitudes toward the teaching of family life and sex education were tested against various demographic factors. The chi-square test for independence was also utilized to test the nature of the relationship that existed between parent and student attitudes and opinions concerning selected aspects of family life and sex education.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The purpose of this chapter is to present data from a questionnaire study concerning parent and student attitudes toward the teaching of family life and sex education. The study was conducted in conjunction with Simms School District 6 & F in Simms, Montana. The information received may have implications for those interested in the teaching of family life and sex education.

Characteristics of Population

The students who were granted permission by their parents were eligible to participate in the study. Affirmative replies were received from parents for 40 ninth grade students and 41 twelfth grade students to complete the survey instruments (see Table 2). The questionnaires were administered to 39 ninth grade students and 39 twelfth grade students during separate class meetings. Questionnaires were administered one day later to one ninth grade student and two twelfth grade students who were absent when the survey instruments were originally administered. The results presented are based on a 100 percent response from the students responding to the questionnaire. Data from one of the respondents was not used in the analysis of data because the student was married. The data from a total of 80 student

questionnaires were utilized for the analysis of data (see Table 3).

The name and mailing address of the participating parents was secured from the permission letters. Questionnaires were mailed to 135 parents. A second survey instrument and follow-up letter encouraging participation was sent to parents who had not returned the original survey instrument by the requested date. Of the questionnaires sent to the 135 parents, responses were received from 105 parents for a 78 percent return. The data from the 105 parent questionnaires were utilized for the analysis of data (see Table 3).

TABLE 3. TOTAL RESPONSES UTILIZED FOR THE ANALYSIS OF DATA

Population	Number Responding	Number Utilized
9th Grade Students	40	40
12th Grade Students	41	40*
Parents	105	105
Total	186	185

* Data was omitted for the married student

Characteristics of Parents

Background factors chosen for the questionnaire study were age, sex, marital status, education, occupation, number and ages of children in the family, religion, and frequency of church attendance. Table 4 provides a description of the parent population based upon 105 responses

to the questionnaire.

Age

The population concentrated in the middle age group, with 49 percent (51) of the respondents in the 40-49 age group. The 30-39 age group accounted for 29 percent (30), followed by the 50-59 age group, 18 percent (19). Only five of the respondents (5%) were over 60 years of age.

Sex

More females than males participated in the study; 56 percent (59) of the respondents were females and 44 percent (46) were males.

Marital Status

The majority of the respondents were currently married (94%), five percent were divorced or separated, and one respondent was widowed.

Educational Level

The table reveals over half of the respondents (61%) were high school graduates. Fourteen percent of the respondents were college graduates, closely followed by those individuals with two years of college (12%).

TABLE 4. CHARACTERISTICS OF PARENT POPULATION

Characteristic	N ^a	%	Characteristic	N	%			
Age			Number of Children					
30-39	30	29%	One	3	3%			
40-49	51	49%	Two	10	9%			
50-59	19	18%	Three	40	38%			
Over 60	5	5%	Four	18	17%			
Sex			Five	12	11%			
			Six or more	22	21%			
			Ages of Children					
			Male	46	44%	Preschool	18	17%
			Female	59	56%	Elementary	37	35%
Marital Status			Junior high/high school	105	100%			
			Married	99	94%	Above high school level	34	32%
			Divorced/Separated	5	5%			
			Widowed	1	1%			
Educational Level			Religion					
Junior High School	5	5%	Protestant	59	56%			
High School	64	61%	Catholic	26	25%			
2 years of college	12	11%	No Affiliation	6	6%			
College graduate	15	14%	Other (LDS)	14	13%			
Vocational/Technical	15	5%	Church Attendance					
Other	4	4%						
Occupation						Once a week	29	28%
Sales Worker	3	3%				Once or twice a month	21	20%
Housewife	42	40%	Once or twice a year	32	30%			
Clerical	4	4%	Never	23	22%			
Laborer	9	9%						
Farmer/Rancher	29	28%						
Teacher	5	5%						
Business	16	15%						
Other	19	18%						

^aN = 105

Occupation

The largest occupational group represented was the housewife group (40%) with the farmer/rancher group (28%) comprising the second largest group. Eighteen percent of the respondents were grouped in the "other" category which included mechanic, building contractor, cook, carpenter, mail carrier, salesman, truck driver, air traffic controller, mechanical engineer, school bus driver, and interior decorator. The business group followed closely with 15 percent while laborer, teacher, clerical, and sales worker groups comprises 9 percent, 5 percent, 4 percent, and 3 percent respectively of the remaining population.

Number of Children

Family size, with regard to the number of children in the family, ranged from one to six or more. In general, families were fairly large which one might have expected in a rural area since children in the past have been necessary for farm production (Herdina, 1976, p. 29). The majority of respondents (38%) had families with three children. Twenty-two (21%) parents had six or more children while 17 percent (18) had four children and 11 percent had five children. Ten parents (9%) reported a family size of two and three parents (3%) had one child.

Ages of Children

The 105 parents who responded to the questionnaire had children in the junior high/high school age group (100%). The elementary grade

level accounted for 35 percent (37) followed closely by "above the high school level" with 32 percent (34). Only 18 parents (17%) reported having children of preschool age.

Religion

Protestant was the religion of the majority of parents (56%) with 25 percent being Catholic. The Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (LDS) religion accounted for 13 percent. The smallest percentage (6%) reported no religious affiliation.

Church Attendance

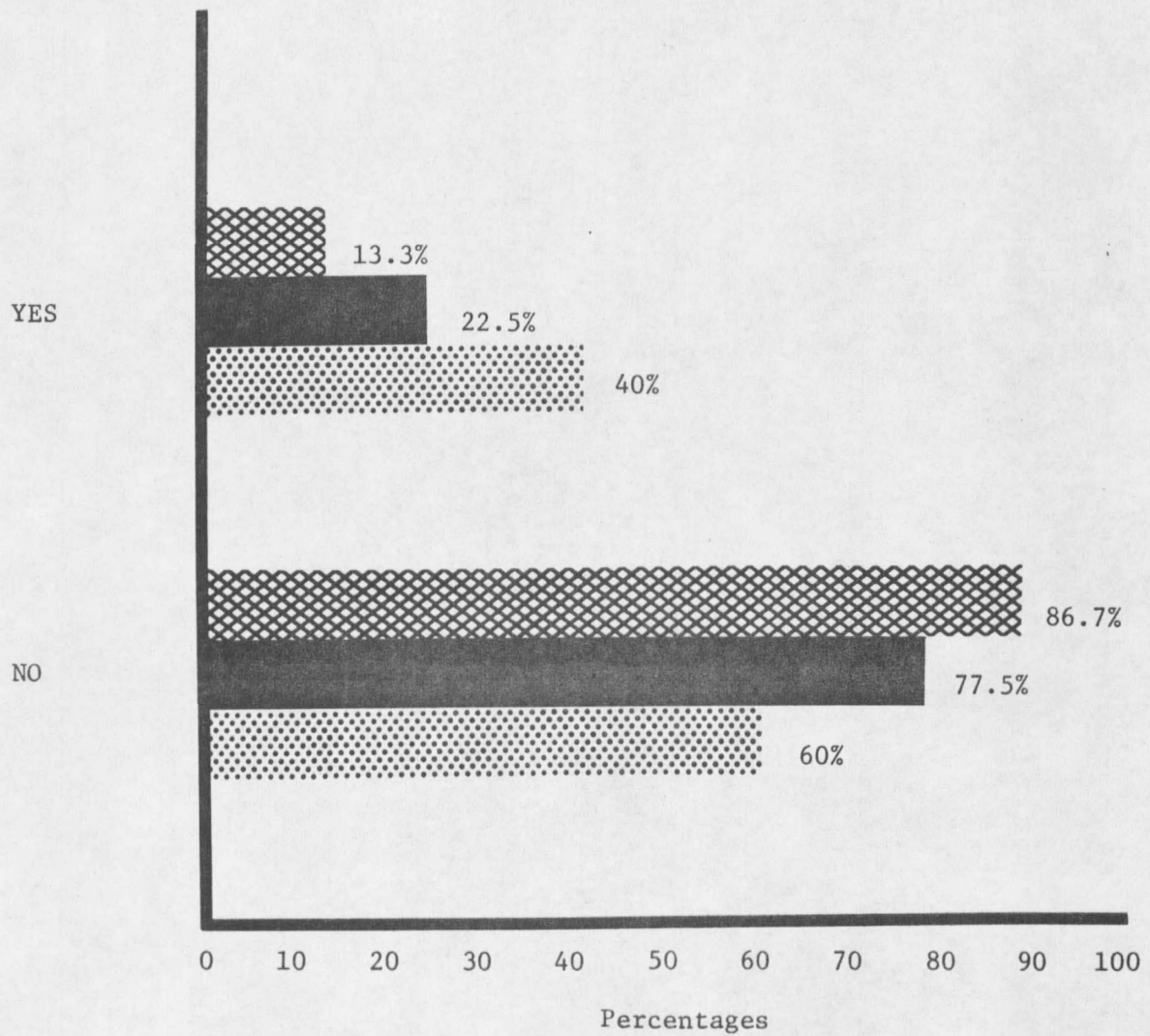
The largest percentage of parents attended church once or twice a year (30%), closely followed by 28 percent of the population (29) who attended church once a week. The smallest percentage attended church once or twice a month (20%) while 22 percent never attend church.

Background in a Family Life and Sex Education Course

Figure 1 illustrates the parents' responses to the questionnaire item, "Have you ever had a formal course in family life and sex education?". The majority of parents had no previous instruction in this area as 86.7 percent of the parents answered "no" to this item while 13.3 percent stated that they have had a previous course in family life and sex education. Ten of the fourteen parents who reported having had a previous course in family life and sex education stated that they had

FIGURE 1

HAVE YOU EVER HAD A FORMAL COURSE IN FAMILY LIFE AND SEX EDUCATION?



Parents (N = 105)



9th Grade Students (N = 40)



12th Grade Students (N = 40)

received this type of course when they were in college. Other parents had received a family life and sex education course while in the army; with their child in a class offered by their local high school; and through a movie.

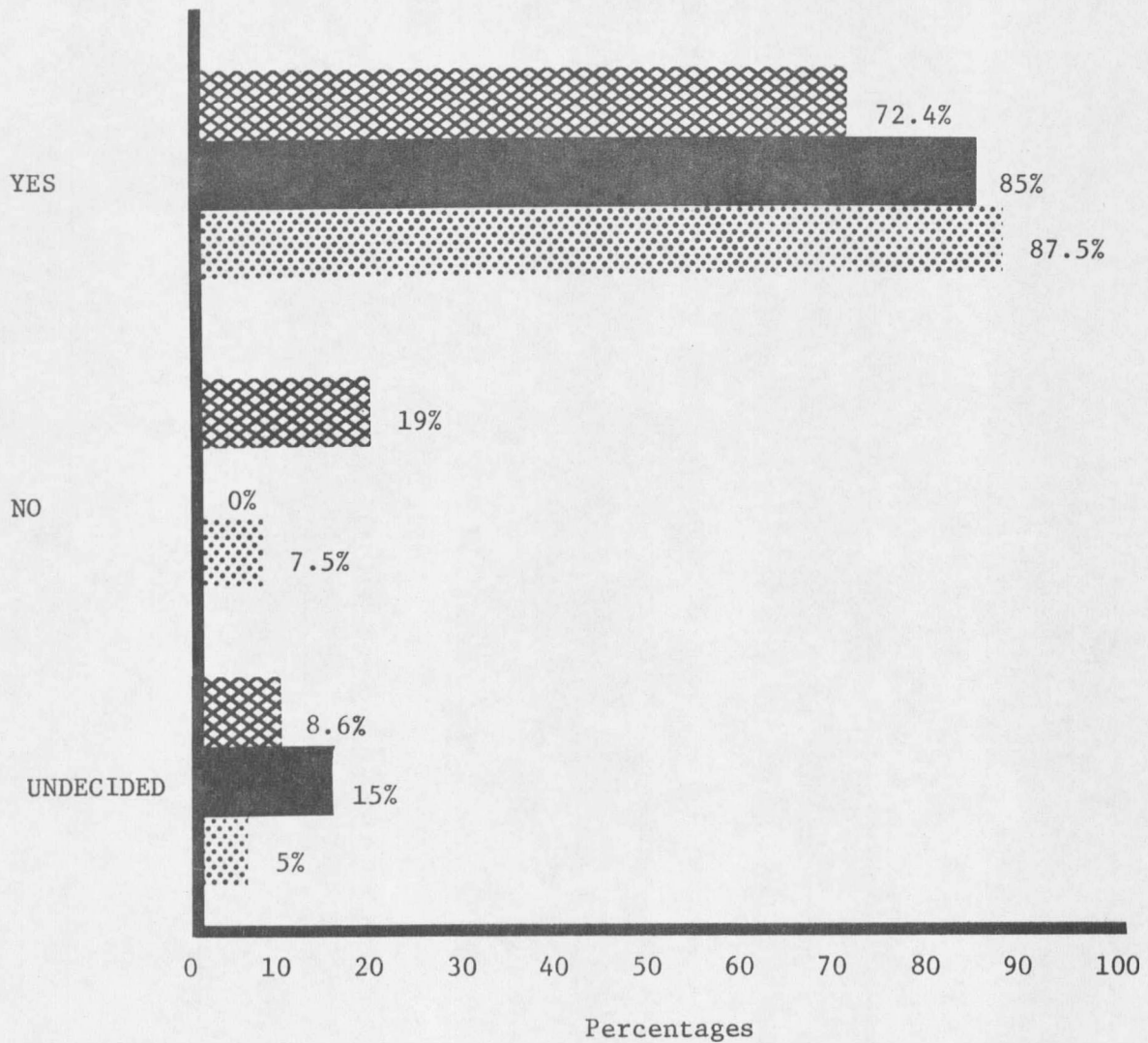
*The Relationship of Parents' Attitudes Toward
a Family Life and Sex Education Course*

It is generally agreed that one's background characteristics, to some extent, will be reflected in one's opinions and attitudes. This section will determine the nature of the relationship between parent attitudes towards the teaching of family life and sex education in the public schools and: (1) age range, (2) occupation, (3) educational level, (4) sex, (5) marital status, (6) number of children in the family, (7) ages of the children in the family, (8) religious affiliation, (9) frequency of church attendance, and (10) previous background in a family life and sex education course.

Data gathered from the 105 parents indicate that the majority of respondents favor the teaching of family life and sex education in the public schools (see Figure 2) as 72.4 percent of the parents answered "yes" to the questionnaire item, "Do you think Family Life and Sex Education should be taught in the public schools?". Nineteen percent of the parents were opposed while 8.6 percent were undecided regarding the inclusion of a family life and sex education course in the public schools. Their responses to this question are similar to those from a

FIGURE 2

DO YOU THINK THAT FAMILY LIFE AND SEX EDUCATION SHOULD BE TAUGHT IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS?



Parents (N = 105)



9th Grade Students (N = 40)



12th Grade Students (N = 40)

study conducted in Tennessee in 1962 based upon the question, "Do you think that sex education should be taught in the schools?". More than 85 percent of the junior high and senior high students, their parents and teachers indicated approval for the inclusion of sex education in the schools (Bowers, 1962).

The opinions of parents toward favoring, opposing, or being uncertain regarding the inclusion of family life and sex education were compared by age, sex, marital status, educational level, occupation, number and ages of children in the family, religion, frequency of church attendance, and previous instruction in a family life and sex education course. These selected characteristics were tested by the chi-square test for independence at the .05 level of significance (see Table 5). There was a statistically significant relationship between the sex of the parents and their opinions toward the teaching of a family life and sex education course (Appendix G). Females (83.1%) favored the teaching of family life and sex education more than the male respondents (58.7%). This supports the conclusion of Harter and Parrish (1968) that most mothers feel the school should take some responsibility in providing sex education. In contrast, Dappan's study (1969) of parents' attitudes revealed males being more positive toward sex education than females.

A significant relationship was not found between the remaining demographic variables and the parents' attitude toward family life and

sex education being taught in the public schools. In contrast, research conducted by Kinsy (1953), Bowers (1962), Reeve (1963), Scholfield (1965), Reiss (1967), Packard (1968), and Libby (1970) indicated these variables correlate with attitudes toward family life and sex education.

TABLE 5. RELATIONSHIP OF PARENT ATTITUDES TOWARD FAMILY LIFE AND SEX EDUCATION WITH SELECTED DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS^a

Characteristics	Degrees of Freedom	Level of Significance	Chi-Square Value
Age	6	12.592	5.524
Occupation	14	23.685	19.783
Educational Level	10	18.31	10.73844
Sex	2	5.991	8.46645*
Marital Status	6	12.592	6.60056
Number of Children	10	18.31	12.72591
Age of Children	6	12.592	5.6433
Religious Affiliation	6	12.592	11.60871
Frequency of Church Attendance	6	12.592	4.59264
Background in a Family Life and Sex Education Course	2	5.991	.95395

* Critical value of chi-square at the .05 level of significance

^aN = 105

Characteristics of students

Background factors chosen for the questionnaire study were age/grade level, sex, status in the family, religion, and frequency of church attendance. Table 6 provides a description of the ninth grade and twelfth grade population.

Age/Grade Level

The 14-16 age group accounted for 100% (40) of the ninth grade population. The entire twelfth grade population (100%) were in the 17-19 age group.

Sex

The largest proportion of ninth grade students in the study, 31 (78%) were female while only 23 percent (9) were male. This was typical of the twelfth grade population who participated; 58 percent (23) were female and 43 percent (17) were male students.

Family Status

Data gathered concerning the students' status in the family reveal the majority of the students were the middle child as 63 percent (25) of the ninth grade students and 50 percent (20) of the twelfth grade students reported this response. The oldest child category accounted for 22 percent for both student groups with only 10 (25%) of the twelfth grade students and 5 (13%) of the ninth grade students reporting to be

TABLE 6. CHARACTERISTICS OF STUDENTS

Characteristic	9th Grader ^a		12th Grader ^b		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Sex						
Male	9	23%	17	43%	26	33%
Female	31	78%	23	58%	54	67%
Age						
14-16	40	100%	0	0%	40	100%
17-19	0	0%	40	100%	40	100%
Status in the Family						
Oldest Child	9	23%	9	23%	18	23%
Youngest Child	5	13%	10	25%	15	19%
Middle Child	25	63%	20	50%	45	56%
Only Child	--	--	--	--	--	--
Other	1	3%	1	3%	2	3%
Religious Affiliation						
Protestant	20	50%	22	55%	42	53%
Catholic	10	25%	8	20%	18	23%
No Affiliation	2	5%	3	8%	5	6%
Other (LDS)	8	20%	7	18%	15	19%
Frequency of Church Attendance						
Once a week	22	55%	6	15%	28	35%
Once or twice a month	5	12%	12	30%	17	21%
Once or twice a year	9	23%	14	35%	23	29%
Never	4	10%	8	20%	12	15%

^aN = 40^bN = 40

the youngest child in the family. None of the students reported being an only child.

Religion

Protestant was the religion of the majority of ninth grade students (50%) and twelfth grade students (55%). This was followed by 25 percent of the ninth grade students and 20 percent of the twelfth students who reported to be Catholic. The Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (LDS) religion accounted for 20 percent (ninth grade) and 18 percent (twelfth grade). The smallest percentages reported by ninth grade students (5%) and twelfth grade students (8%) indicated no religious affiliation.

Frequency of Church Attendance

The largest percentage of ninth grade students (55%) attend church once a week. Twelfth grade students generally attend once or twice a year (35%), closely followed by those seniors who attend once or twice a month (30%) and those individuals who never attend church (20%). Of the ninth grade students, 23 percent (9) attend once or twice a year. The smallest percentage (10%) of ninth grade students never attend church while the smallest percentage of twelfth grade students (15%) attend once a week.

Background in a Family Life and Sex Education Course

Figure 1 illustrates the students responses to the questionnaire item, "Have you ever had a formal course in family life and sex education?". The majority of respondents had no previous instruction in this area as 77.5 percent of the ninth grade students and 60 percent of the twelfth grade students answered "no" to this item. More twelfth grade students (40%) indicated having had a previous course in family life and sex education than the ninth grade group (22.5%). Ninth grade students stated that they had received family life and sex education information in the fifth and sixth grades during a special sex education unit; in grades five and six during their regular class; in Home Economics classes in grades five through nine; and in a seventh grade Science class. The sixteen twelfth grade students who reported having had a previous course in family life and sex education generally received this type of instruction in a Home Economics class during grades seven through twelve. Four students reported to have received this information in a tenth grade Biology course while other students had a special sex education unit in grades six through ten.

*The Relationship of Students' Attitudes Toward
a Family Life and Sex Education Course*

The relationship between student attitudes toward the teaching of family life and sex education and: (1) age range, (2) grade level, (3) sex, (4) status in the family, (5) religious affiliation, (6) frequency

of church attendance, and (7) background in a family life and sex education course was another objective in this study.

Data gathered from the 80 students indicate that the majority of respondents favor the teaching of family life and sex education in the public schools (see Figure 2). Twelfth grade students (87.5%) were most favorable to this course being taught. Research by a Nation's Schools (1960) survey revealed similar findings; upper high school grades were more in favor of teaching family life and sex education. Ninth grade students followed closely with 85 percent who answered "yes" to the questionnaire item, "Do you think Family Life and Sex Education should be taught in the public schools?" It is interesting to note that there were no ninth grade students who were opposed although 15 percent were undecided. Erskine's study (1966) revealed similar findings as he learned that lower age groups have more positive attitudes toward family life and sex education. Five percent of the twelfth grade students were undecided while 7.5 percent were opposed. These figures clearly show that the majority of participants thought a need existed for family life and sex education in the public school.

The opinions of the students toward favoring, opposing or being uncertain as to the inclusion of family life and sex education were evaluated by age, sex, family status, religion, frequency of church attendance, and previous instruction in family life and sex education. These selected characteristics were tested by the chi-square test for

independence at the .05 level of significance (see Table 7).

The chi-square values indicated a significant relationship at the .05 level of significance between the sex of the ninth grade students and their attitude regarding the teaching of family life and sex education (Appendix G). Females (93.5%) were more favorable toward the teaching of family life and sex education than were males (55.6%). This finding is consistent with a previous study conducted by Bowers (1962) in which sex and age were factors that were found to influence students' opinions.

A significant relationship between the religious affiliation of the ninth grade students regarding their attitude toward family life and sex education was also found (Appendix G). Protestants were more favorable toward the teaching of family life and sex education while Catholics and the respondents who had no religious affiliation were least favorable. Reeve's (1963) and Libby's (1970) studies revealed similar findings concerning the variable of religion affecting attitudes and opinions toward the inclusion of family life and sex education in the public schools.

No significant relationship between the demographic factors of age, family status, frequency of church attendance, and previous instruction in family life and sex education regarding twelfth grade student attitudes was found. There were no significant relationships between the selected characteristics of twelfth grade students and their opinion

TABLE 7. RELATIONSHIP OF NINTH GRADE STUDENT ATTITUDES TOWARD FAMILY LIFE AND SEX EDUCATION WITH SELECTED DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS^a

Characteristics	Degrees of Freedom	Level of Significance	Chi-Square Value
Age Range	2	5.991	4.01449
Grade Level	2	5.991	4.01449
Sex	1	3.841	5.19783*
Status in the Family	3	7.815	6.04793
Religious Affiliation	3	7.815	13.13725*
Frequency of Church Attendance	3	7.815	1.47752
Background in a Family Life and Sex Education Course	1	3.841	.02530

* Critical value of chi-square at the .05 level of significance

^aN = 40

regarding a family life and sex education course being taught in the public schools (see Table 8). In contrast, research conducted by Kinsy (1953), Bowers (1962), Reeve (1963), Sholfield (1965), Reiss (1967), Packard (1968), and Libby (1970) indicated these variables correlate with attitudes toward family life and sex education.

Topic Areas in a Family Life and Sex Education Course

Specific topic areas of family life and sex education that should be included in the course content as perceived by parents and students were investigated and identified. Table 9 illustrates the percentage of responses by parents and students regarding topic areas to be included in a family life and sex education course. Only those respondents who answered "yes" or "undecided" to the questionnaire item, "Do you think family life and sex education should be taught in the public schools?" are reported.

One aspect examined was the "should not be available" category, where respondents did not feel that the topic was suitable for inclusion in the school curriculum at any level. Many authors who speak of the need for overwhelming parental support for any aspect of a family life and sex education program use the 80 percent figure as a minimum (Conley, 1974, p. 433). Only the topic areas of dating, marriage, personality, emotional control, role of parents, and management of finances received the indicated figure needed for parental support. It

TABLE 8. RELATIONSHIP OF TWELFTH GRADE STUDENT ATTITUDES TOWARD FAMILY LIFE AND SEX EDUCATION WITH SELECTED DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS^a

Characteristics	Degrees of Freedom	Level of Significance	Chi-Square Value
Age Range	2	5.991	4.01449
Grade Level	2	5.991	4.01449
Sex	2	5.991	.85251
Status in the Family	6	12.592	1.84021
Religious Affiliation	6	12.592	4.12337
Frequency of Church Attendance	6	12.592	3.53285
Background in a Family Life and Sex Education Course	2	5.991	3.80952

* Critical value of chi-square at the .05 level of significance

^a N = 40

TABLE 9. PERCENTAGE OF RESPONSES FOR TOPIC AREAS

Topics	Respon- dents ^a	Should not be Available	K-3	4-6	7-8	9-10	11-12	Only Males	Only Fe- males	Co- ed.	Sepa- rately
Friendship	(P)	21	37	25	14	3	1	1	--	73	6
	(9th)	--	23	48	25	5	--	--	--	95	5
	(12th)	8	33	45	13	3	--	--	--	93	--
Dating	(P)	19	--	8	49	24	1	--	1	68	12
	(9th)	13	--	--	48	35	5	--	--	73	15
	(12th)	3	--	10	53	28	10	--	--	85	5
Petting	(P)	31	--	2	51	17	5	--	--	29	47
	(9th)	25	--	5	23	38	10	--	--	25	50
	(12th)	43	--	5	33	25	13	--	--	55	20
Out-of-Wedlock Pregnancy	(P)	31	--	1	30	41	4	--	1	34	40
	(9th)	18	--	--	20	48	15	--	23	25	35
	(12th)	23	--	5	23	38	20	--	15	60	10
Marriage	(P)	19	--	19	13	45	22	--	--	60	21
	(9th)	13	--	--	13	38	38	--	--	75	13
	(12th)	18	--	5	8	20	55	--	--	80	8
Personality	(P)	19	12	25	31	11	2	--	--	70	11
	(9th)	10	8	38	33	13	10	--	3	80	8
	(12th)	13	5	23	55	5	3	--	--	80	7
Emotional Control	(P)	19	8	21	30	19	4	--	--	59	23
	(9th)	10	3	25	33	28	3	--	3	60	28
	(12th)	8	3	25	43	18	5	--	--	78	15

TABLE 9. (Continued)

Topics	Respon- dents ^a	Should not be Available	K-3	4-6	7-8	9-10	11-12	Only Males	Only Fe- males	Co- ed.	Sepa- rately
Heredity	(P)	23	8	18	30	16	8	--	--	71	8
	(9th)	10	5	30	43	10	3	--	3	83	5
	(12th)	13	3	20	38	28	3	--	--	85	5
Sex Differences	(P)	21	11	31	23	11	4	--	--	33	47
	(9th)	3	20	33	33	1	3	--	3	38	56
	(12th)	13	3	35	35	15	3	--	--	58	33
Puberty	(P)	21	--	29	40	9	3	--	1	24	55
	(9th)	5	--	20	65	10	10	3	3	25	65
	(12th)	13	--	18	50	15	8	3	3	45	40
Menstruation	(P)	21	--	33	39	6	2	--	13	11	55
	(9th)	5	3	15	65	10	3	--	58	10	28
	(12th)	18	--	15	50	20	3	--	25	33	30
Reproductive Organs	(P)	25	1	19	41	13	4	--	1	15	62
	(9th)	--	--	15	65	18	3	--	--	35	65
	(12th)	13	--	8	53	30	--	--	--	60	30
Role of Parents	(P)	19	14	12	22	21	11	--	2	64	15
	(9th)	8	--	15	28	30	20	--	--	75	18
	(12th)	13	3	8	20	38	23	--	--	88	3
Mate Selection	(P)	21	1	2	11	42	24	--	--	67	13
	(9th)	10	--	3	18	55	15	--	--	65	25
	(12th)	18	--	8	28	25	28	--	3	83	3

TABLE 9. (Continued)

Topics	Respon- dents ^a	Should not be Available	K-3	4-6	7-8	9-10	11-12	Only Males	Only Fe- males	Co- ed.	Sepa- rately
Aging	(P)	33	3	2	12	19	38	--	2	62	11
	(9th)	18	5	18	20	23	18	--	--	75	8
	(12th)	8	15	8	20	28	23	3	3	85	3
Love	(P)	21	6	9	15	31	16	--	2	62	16
	(9th)	5	5	10	25	45	10	--	--	83	13
	(12th)	18	--	10	33	28	18	--	--	85	3
Birth Control Methods	(P)	40	--	1	19	39	11	--	1	18	51
	(9th)	18	--	8	15	55	13	--	28	23	33
	(12th)	23	--	8	15	50	13	--	5	53	28
Premarital Sex	(P)	41	--	1	17	41	11	--	--	19	51
	(9th)	20	--	5	15	43	18	--	3	43	35
	(12th)	48	--	3	18	43	10	--	--	55	18
Family Planning	(P)	31	1	--	11	27	36	--	--	56	19
	(9th)	3	3	5	10	33	48	--	--	93	5
	(12th)	13	--	8	10	35	38	--	--	88	3
Morality of Sex	(P)	27	--	3	34	29	11	--	--	41	36
	(9th)	28	--	3	20	38	13	--	--	40	33
	(12th)	18	--	5	18	50	15	--	--	70	18
Engagement	(P)	21	--	--	13	29	39	--	--	70	11
	(9th)	8	--	--	13	43	38	--	--	83	10
	(12th)	18	--	8	8	35	38	--	--	80	8

TABLE 9. (Continued)

Topics	Respon- dents ^a	Should not be Available	K-3	4-6	7-8	9-10	11-12	Only Males	Only Fe- males	Co- ed.	Sepa- rately
Management of Finances	(P)	19	4	5	11	31	32	--	--	74	8
	(9th)	3	3	--	15	38	43	3	--	90	5
	(12th)	13	3	5	10	43	30	--	--	90	--
Menopause	(P)	33	--	1	13	22	38	--	9	30	36
	(9th)	18	--	--	35	23	28	--	38	18	28
	(12th)	18	--	8	30	38	18	--	13	65	15
Extramarital Relations	(P)	47	1	--	13	16	37	--	--	37	30
	(9th)	30	--	--	13	23	35	--	--	55	15
	(12th)	58	--	8	8	28	25	--	--	58	10
Divorce	(P)	31	--	3	11	16	45	--	--	65	11
	(9th)	13	--	8	23	20	38	--	--	83	5
	(12th)	18	--	8	10	25	45	--	--	88	--
Marriage Counseling	(P)	27	--	--	10	19	49	--	--	69	9
	(9th)	8	--	--	15	25	53	--	--	83	10
	(12th)	23	--	8	8	25	45	--	--	85	--
Family Structure	(P)	21	2	4	18	22	34	--	--	73	8
	(9th)	3	3	3	33	33	28	--	--	85	13
	(12th)	13	--	10	18	38	25	--	--	85	5
Conception	(P)	27	--	3	30	25	21	--	--	28	50
	(9th)	5	--	3	28	48	18	--	10	40	45
	(12th)	18	--	5	35	25	23	--	--	63	25

TABLE 9. (Continued)

Topics	Respon- dents ^a	Should not be Available	K-3	4-6	7-8	9-10	11-12	Only Males	Only Fe- males	Co- ed.	Sepa- rately
Pregnancy	(P)	21	--	5	30	23	23	--	2	33	44
	(9th)	8	--	3	33	40	18	--	18	33	43
	(12th)	8	--	8	30	38	18	--	13	65	15
Birth Process	(P)	21	--	6	28	23	24	--	3	31	47
	(9th)	13	--	13	25	33	18	--	20	35	33
	(12th)	8	--	8	28	28	30	--	18	63	13
Fetal Development	(P)	21	--	6	26	26	23	--	1	36	44
	(9th)	10	--	10	28	35	20	--	15	48	28
	(12th)	8	--	8	35	28	23	--	13	75	5
Mental Health	(P)	25	--	3	29	25	22	--	--	63	15
	(9th)	20	--	8	50	23	3	--	--	70	10
	(12th)	18	--	10	30	40	8	--	--	88	13
Overpopulation	(P)	42	--	4	21	28	17	--	--	61	9
	(9th)	15	--	18	45	25	--	--	--	85	--
	(12th)	18	--	10	45	30	3	--	--	88	--
Abortion	(P)	53	--	2	16	27	19	--	2	37	25
	(9th)	23	--	--	23	40	18	--	25	25	28
	(12th)	13	--	5	28	45	13	--	20	58	13
Venereal Disease	(P)	27	--	2	32	34	10	--	1	33	43
	(9th)	23	--	--	33	40	8	--	--	28	50
	(12th)	18	--	8	33	45	3	--	--	68	20

TABLE 9. (Continued)

Topics	Respon- dents ^a	Should not be Available	K-3	4-6	7-8	9-10	11-12	Only Males	Only Fe- males	Co- ed.	Sepa- rately
Alternate	(P)	49	--	1	15	25	25	--	1	48	17
Life Styles	(9th)	10	--	5	40	33	15	--	--	75	15
	(12th)	18	--	5	38	35	10	--	--	85	3
Prostitution	(P)	65	--	1	12	26	19	--	6	26	27
	(9th)	50	--	--	28	18	8	--	10	18	23
	(12th)	38	--	5	28	30	15	--	10	58	10
Homosexuality	(P)	51	--	1	13	24	27	1	--	32	31
	(9th)	40	--	--	25	30	8	8	--	25	28
	(12th)	58	--	8	25	18	18	--	--	53	15

^aN = 85 Parents

N = 40 9th Grade Students

N = 37 12th Grade Students

is interesting to note that the topics of prostitution (56%), abortion (53%), homosexuality (51%), alternate life styles (49%), extramarital relations (47%), overpopulation (42%), premarital sex (41%), and birth control methods (40%), were high in the "should not be available" category. These findings are similar to a previous study conducted by Conley (1974). In his study regarding parent attitudes toward family life and sex education, he concluded that the topics of extramarital relations, abortion, and birth control methods received minimal support from the responding parents.

Student responses to "should not be available" were lower, with prostitution, 50% for ninth grade students and 38% for twelfth grade students and homosexuality, 40% and 58% respectively leading. This was followed by twelfth grade students stating that premarital sex (48%) and petting (43%) should not be available. All other responses stated by students were below 30 percent. Conley's study revealed a similar response from ninth and twelfth grade students who responded; as the topic area, extramarital relations received minimum support.

The most frequently mentioned topics to be included were, in descending order, friendship, dating, management of finances, emotional control, sex differences, family structure, pregnancy, reproductive organs, puberty, and fetal development. There are many noticeable similarities and differences between parent and student responses. The reader is directed to Table 9 for the percentage of responses

rather than have each topic discussed here.

Grade Level Categories for each Topic Area

The grade level category at which each specific topic area of family life and sex education should first appear in the public schools as perceived by parents and students was determined. The grade level categories which were examined were: (1) kindergarten through third grade (K-3), fourth grade through sixth grade (4-6), (3) seventh grade and eighth grade (7-8), (4) ninth grade and tenth grade (9-10), and eleventh grade and twelfth grade (11-12).

Determining where each topic area should first be introduced into the curriculum is one of the most controversial of the many aspects of family life and sex education. The survey instrument listed thirty-eight topics that might be included in such a unit and respondents were asked to indicate the grade level, if any, at which the topics should first appear (see Table 9).

There was a consensus between parents and students regarding the introduction of the topics, dating, emotional control, heredity, puberty, menstruation, and reproductive organs at the 7-8 grade levels. Respondents generally agreed that the topics of out-of-wedlock pregnancy, birth control methods, premarital sex, abortion, and venereal disease should first appear at grades 9-10 while the topics of family planning, divorce, and marriage counseling should be introduced during

grades 11-12.

Ninth and twelfth grade students preferred friendship to first appear in grades 4-6 while parents indicated a preference for grades K-3. Students also agreed that the topics, overpopulation and alternate life styles should be taught in grades 7-8 while parents preferred grades 9-10 for the topics. Students indicated grades 9-10 were the appropriate grade levels for the topics, role of parents, aging, morality of sex, family structure and pregnancy.

There were fewer topics that parents and twelfth grade students agreed on regarding the grade level at which to introduce the topics into the course. There was a consensus with the topics of petting, personality, and conception introduced at grades 7-8; the topic of prostitution entering the course during grades 9-10; and the topic of engagement included at grades 11-12.

Parents and ninth grade students indicated agreement with regard to the topics of mate selection and love being introduced at grades 9-10. They preferred management of finances and extramarital relations entering the course during grades 11-12.

The responses of parents and students for the individual topics fell into many different grade level categories, with very few topics achieving a majority (50% or more) for any one grade level. In most cases, two or three grade level categories had from 15 percent to 35 percent of the responses each. While the exact grade levels at which

to teach specific topic areas varied among respondents, it can generally be reported that parents and students favored a higher percentage of topics introduced at the seventh and eighth grade levels. Conley's study (1974) revealed that parents generally favored a higher percentage of topic areas at the elementary levels, but students preferred more topics introduced at the junior high level than parents preferred at senior high level.

Classroom Structure for each Topic Area

The classroom structure for each specific topic area as perceived by parents and students was determined. The classroom structures which were examined were: (1) only male students, (2) only female students, (3) co-educational, and (4) separately to males and females.

Determining the classroom structure for each topic area is often another area of contention. Parents and students were asked to indicate their response regarding this aspect (see Table 9). On the majority of topics, parents and students had similar opinions, and in most cases, favored co-educational classes where males and females are together. Greater differences of opinion occurred on the topics of out-of-wedlock pregnancy, petting, puberty, menstruation, birth control methods, menopause, sex differences, reproductive organs, premarital sex, and morality of sex. These findings are similar to a previous study conducted by Conley (1974).

Parents and ninth grade students preferred the topics of petting, out-of-wedlock pregnancy, sex differences, puberty, reproductive organs, birth control, conception, pregnancy, venereal disease, and prostitution to be taught to students separately, while twelfth grade students indicated a preference of co-educational type classes for these topics. Parents and twelfth grade students agreed that the topics of abortion and homosexuality should be taught in a co-educational setting while ninth grade students wanted these topics to be taught to males and females separately.

Parents indicated a preference for a separate classroom structure for the topic areas of premarital sex, birth process and fetal development; however, students preferred these topics to be taught in a co-educational setting.

There was a difference of opinion regarding the topics of menstruation and menopause. Parents agreed that the topics should be taught separately, ninth grade students preferred the topics to be taught to females only, while twelfth grade students indicated a preference for a co-educational class.

*Qualifications and Characteristics of a Family
Life and Sex Education Instructor*

The qualifications and characteristics of an acceptable family life and sex education instructor as perceived by parents and students was determined. Selected qualifications and characteristics were: (1)

sex, (2) marital status, (3) age, (4) years of teaching experience, and (5) selected personality characteristics.

Parents and students were asked to indicate characteristics of an instructor of family life and sex education that they deemed desirable. Table 10 provides a description of a family life and sex education instructor based upon responses to the questionnaire items that dealt with sex, marital status, age, and years of teaching experience.

Sex

The sex of the instructor did not seem to be an issue of great divergence, as parents (67%), ninth grade students (90%), and twelfth grade students (83%) selected "no preference if the teacher is qualified." The idea of a male teacher for boys and a female teacher for girls was the response indicated in the "other" category by 11 percent of the parents and 5 percent of the twelfth grade students. Of the total population, 4 (4%) parents, 4 (10%) ninth grade students, and 2 (5%) twelfth grade students preferred a female instructor. There were no responses for a male family life and sex education instructor. These findings are consistent to a previous study conducted by Bowers (1962) in which parents, teachers, and students indicated no preference regarding the sex of the instructor of a sex education program.

TABLE 10. QUALIFICATIONS OF AN INSTRUCTOR

Category	Parents ^a		9th Graders ^b		12th Graders ^c		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Sex								
Male	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Female	4	4%	4	10%	2	5%	10	1%
No Preference	70	67%	36	90%	33	83%	139	86%
Other	11	11%	--	--	2	5%	13	1%
Marital Status								
Single	--	--	1	3%	2	5%	3	1%
Married	26	25%	10	25%	9	23%	45	28%
No Preference	59	56%	29	73%	26	65%	114	70%
Age								
Under 24	--	--	3	8%	1	3%	4	1%
25-35	19	18%	21	53%	18	45%	58	36%
36-45	11	11%	--	--	1	3%	12	1%
46-55	3	3%	--	--	--	--	3	1%
Over 56	1	1%	--	--	--	--	1	1%
No Preference	51	49%	16	40%	17	43%	84	52%
Teaching Experience								
None	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
1 year	1	1%	2	5%	6	15%	9	1%
2-3 years	16	15%	10	25%	7	18%	33	20%
4-5 years	11	11%	8	20%	2	5%	21	13%
Over 6 years	9	9%	--	--	1	3%	10	1%
No Preference	48	46%	20	50%	21	53%	89	56%

^aN = 85 Parents^bN = 40 9th Grade Students^cN = 37 12th Grade Students

Marital Status

Regarding the issue of marital status, parents (56%), ninth grade students (73%), and twelfth grade students (65%) indicated no preference if the teacher is qualified. The smallest percentage reported to prefer a single instructor. Twenty-five percent of the parents and ninth grade students and 23 percent of the twelfth grade students preferred the family life and sex education instructor to be married. Conley (1974) and Bowers (1962) revealed similar findings. McIntire's (1969), Libby's (1970), and Creel's (1971) studies indicate that just under 50 percent of the respondents prefer a married teacher.

Age

Generally, parents (49%) did not consider the age of the instructor to be as important as did the ninth grade (40%) or twelfth grade (43%) students. Students favored the age group 25-35 years with ninth grade students accounting for 53 percent and twelfth grade students reporting 45 percent. Conley (1974) notes in his study that parents do not consider the age of the instructor to be as important as do the students as students favored the age group 25-35 years, which received just over 50 percent of the responses.

Teaching Experience

The table reveals that over half the respondents (56%) indicated "no preference if the teacher is qualified" regarding the number of

years of teaching experience a family life and sex education instructor should possess. Fifty percent of the ninth grade students, 53 percent of the twelfth grade students, and 46 percent of the parents indicated no preference. This preference was followed by 2-3 years of teaching experience as indicated by 16 parents (15%), 10 ninth grade students (25%), and seven twelfth grade students (18%). Libby's study (1970) revealed that parents prefer a teacher with many years of teaching experience.

Personality Characteristics

Six personality characteristics of a good family life and sex education instructor were listed for the respondents' evaluation (see Table 11). Recognizing that respondents were to rank in order of preference each characteristic, the most popular one was, "the ability to talk freely and maturely without embarrassment," with 28 percent of the parents, 30 percent of the ninth grade students, and 33 percent of the twelfth grade students indicating this choice. Both parents and students in the Conley study (1974) also stated that the most important personality characteristic of the instructor was, "the ability to talk freely and maturely without embarrassment".

There was little consistency between parents and students as to the importance of the remaining five characteristics but despite differences in frequency of selection, the remaining five appear to be,

TABLE 11. RANKING OF CHARACTERISTICS OF A FAMILY LIFE AND SEX EDUCATION INSTRUCTOR

Characteristic	Respon- dents ^a	Ranking Order											
		#1		#2		#3		#4		#5		#6	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Ability to talk freely and maturely without embarrass- ment	(P)	29	28%	22	22%	13	13%	10	10%	4	4%	7	7%
	(9th)	12	30%	9	23%	8	20%	5	13%	5	13%	1	3%
	(12th)	13	33%	6	15%	14	35%	3	8%	2	5%	2	5%
Familiar with changing family life and sex education attitudes & practices today	(P)	2	2%	6	6%	9	9%	13	13%	26	25%	29	28%
	(9th)	4	10%	11	28%	5	13%	5	13%	9	23%	6	15%
	(12th)	4	10%	6	15%	4	10%	9	23%	11	28%	3	8%
Good understanding of oneself and one's own attitudes	(P)	10	10%	8	8%	21	21%	11	11%	18	18%	17	16%
	(9th)	6	15%	3	8%	3	8%	10	25%	6	15%	12	30%
	(12th)	4	10%	6	15%	9	23%	3	8%	5	13%	10	24%
Highly knowledgeable in the areas composing family life and sex education	(P)	21	20%	14	14%	18	18%	13	13%	12	12%	7	7%
	(9th)	8	20%	5	13%	10	25%	5	13%	7	18%	5	13%
	(12th)	6	15%	3	8%	3	8%	8	20%	10	25%	7	18%
Interest in family life and sex education	(P)	5	5%	7	7%	12	12%	25	24%	21	21%	15	14%
	(9th)	5	13%	3	8%	6	15%	8	20%	7	18%	11	28%
	(12th)	5	13%	2	5%	3	8%	10	25%	6	15%	11	28%
Sensitive to students' reactions & feelings	(P)	18	18%	28	27%	12	11%	13	12%	4	4%	10	10%
	(9th)	5	13%	11	28%	8	20%	6	15%	7	18%	3	8%
	(12th)	5	13%	14	35%	4	10%	7	18%	3	8%	4	10%

^aN = 85 Parents

N = 40 9th Grade Students

N = 37 12th Grade Students

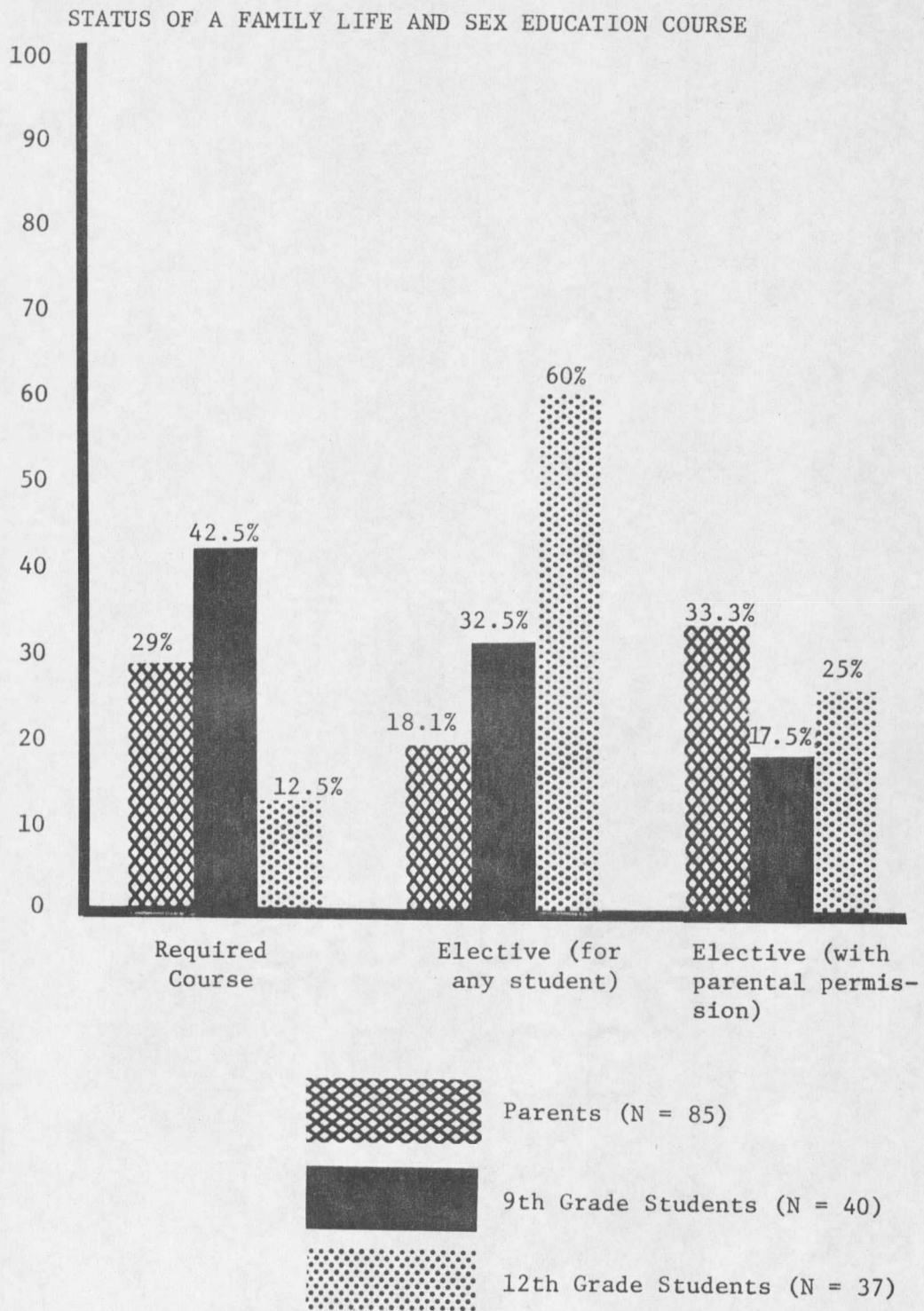
in descending order, sensitive to students' reactions and feelings (27% for parents, 28% for ninth grade students, and 35% for twelfth grade students), highly knowledgeable in the areas composing family life and sex education (18%, 25%, and 8% respectively), interest in family life and sex education (24%, 20%, and 25% respectively), familiar with changing family life and sex education attitudes and practices today (25%, 23%, and 28% respectively), and good understanding of oneself and one's own attitudes (16%, 30%, and 24% respectively).

Status of a Family Life and Sex Education Course

The status in the curriculum of a co-educational family life and sex education class in the public schools as perceived by parents and students was determined. The status in the curriculum selections were: (1) a required course of study, (2) an elective course of study for any student, (3) an elective course of study, but only for students with their parents' permission, and (4) not available as a course of study.

Figure 3 indicates the participants' responses regarding the status of a family life and sex education course. Parents (33%) felt that the course should be taught as an elective course of study, but only for students with their parents' permission. Ninth grade students (43%) felt this course should be a required course and 60 percent of the twelfth grade students indicated the status of a family life and

FIGURE 3



sex education course should be an elective course of study for any student. This finding correlates with Erskine's study (1966) which also revealed that lower age groups have more positive attitudes toward the teaching of family life and sex education, while research by a Nation's Schools (1960) survey revealed that the upper high school grades are more in favor of teaching family life and sex education. Conley (1974) concluded that parents are most favorable to family life and sex education at all grade levels and in most cases are more in favor than the ninth and twelfth grade students.

*The Relationship between Parent and Student Attitudes
Concerning Selected Aspects of Teaching
Family Life and Sex Education*

This section will report the nature of the relationship that exists between parent and student attitudes and opinions concerning selected aspects of family life and sex education. The selected aspects were: (1) specific topic areas that should be included in the course content, (2) grade level categories at which each specific topic area should first appear, (3) classroom structure for each specific topic area, (4) qualifications and characteristics of an acceptable family life and sex education instructor, and (5) status in the curriculum of a family life and sex education course. These aspects were examined with the chi-square test for independence at the .05 level of significance.

The Inclusion of Topic Areas

The nature of the relationship that exists between parent and student attitudes and opinions concerning specific topic areas that should be included in a family life and sex education course content was determined. A chi-square analysis at the .05 level was computed between parents and ninth grade students, parents and twelfth grade students, and ninth grade students to twelfth grade students regarding the inclusion or elimination of specific topic areas (see Table 12).

The majority of respondents, both parents and students, indicated that a family life and sex education course should be taught in the public schools (see Figure 2). However, the aspect of including or omitting specific topic areas varied among the respondents. Significant relationships (see Table 12) were revealed between parent and ninth grade student attitudes regarding the topics of dating, petting, out-of-wedlock pregnancy, marriage, personality, emotional control, heredity, role of parents, mate selection, morality of sex, engagement, extramarital relations, pregnancy, birth process, fetal development, mental health, venereal disease, prostitution, homosexuality, and aging. There was a minimum number of significant relationships between parent and twelfth grade student opinions (see Table 12). The three topic areas that revealed significant differences were petting, marriage, and abortion. The topic areas of emotional control, morality of sex, birth process, fetal development, mental health, abortion,

TABLE 12. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PARENT AND STUDENT ATTITUDES REGARDING THE INCLUSION OF SPECIFIC TOPIC AREAS

Topic Areas	Chi-Square Values		
	Parents & 9th Grade Students ^a	Parents & 12th Grade Students ^b	9th & 12th Grade Students ^c
Friendship	.3836	.3836	.0000
Dating	13.59*	2.643	2.883
Petting	10.97*	4.930*	.6723
Out-of-wedlock pregnancy	4.930	.1587	1.829
Marriage	13.59*	5.323*	1.409
Personality	10.80*	2.643	1.920
Emotional control	10.80*	.0000	4.211*
Heredity	4.78*	.5065	1.920
Sex differences	.5100	.5100	.0000
Puberty	2.342	.5100	.3462
Menstruation	2.342	2.342	.0000
Reproductive organs	1.167	.1377	1.013
Role of parents	8.041*	2.643	1.053
Mate selection	7.122*	2.342	.7207
Love	2.342	2.342	.0000
Birth control methods	1.314	.2941	1.829
Premarital sex	2.307	2.307	.0000
Family planning	.6513	.6513	.0000
Morality of sex	17.53*	.1035	7.440*
Engagement	4.629*	2.342	.2133
Management of finances	2.643	2.643	.0000
Extramarital relations	4.720*	2.330	.2508
Divorce	1.902	.2835	1.409
Marriage counseling	.8586	.8586	.0000
Family structure	.5100	.5100	.0000
Conception	.1035	.1035	.0000
Pregnancy	4.629*	.3836	3.117
Birth process	9.737*	.3836	5.333*
Fetal development	7.122*	.3836	4.211*
Mental health	12.14*	.3995	4.114*
Overpopulation	.3398	1.372	2.222
Abortion	.5486	5.454*	7.314*
Venereal disease	12.40*	.1035	5.165*
Alternate life styles	.6684	2.792	.7207
Prostitution	10.10*	1.090	11.17*
Homosexuality	9.431*	1.483	2.051
Menopause	3.897	.1382	3.130

TABLE 12. (Continued)

Topic Areas	Chi-Square Values		
	Parents & 9th Grade Students ^a	Parents & 12th Grade Students ^b	9th & 12th Grade Students ^c
Aging	5.552*	2.802	8.889*

*Critical value of chi-square at .05 level at 1 degree of freedom equals 3.841

^aN = 125

^bN = 122

^cN = 77

venereal disease, prostitution, and aging indicated a significant relationship between ninth grade student attitudes and twelfth grade student attitudes as determined by a chi-square analysis (see Table 12).

Grade Levels for Each Topic Area

The nature of the relationship that exists between parent and student attitudes and opinions concerning grade level categories at which each specific topic area should first appear in a family life and sex education course was determined. A chi-square analysis at the .05 level of significance was computed between parents and ninth grade students, parents and twelfth grade students, and ninth grade students to twelfth grade students (see Table 13).

While the exact grade levels (K-3, 4-6, 7-8, 9-10, and 11-12) at which to introduce each specific topic area varied among respondents, a chi-square test revealed significant relationships (see Table 13) between parent and ninth grade student attitudes regarding the topics of petting, mental health, menstruation, overpopulation, abortion, and aging. Parent and twelfth grade student attitudes revealed a significant relationship (see Table 13) with the following topic areas: out-of-wedlock pregnancy, marriage, menstruation, mate selection, extramarital relations, overpopulation, abortion, alternate life styles, and aging. Only the topic area of engagement revealed a significant relationship that existed between ninth and twelfth grade students' attitudes (see Table 13).

TABLE 13. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PARENT AND STUDENT ATTITUDES REGARDING THE GRADE LEVEL AT WHICH TO INTRODUCE EACH TOPIC AREA

Topic Areas	Chi-Square Values		
	Parents & 9th Grade Students ^a	Parents & 12th Grade Students ^b	9th & 12th Grade Students ^c
Friendship	7.343	3.767	2.641
Dating	6.330	.5201	6.447
Petting	13.16*	6.702	1.838
Out-of-wedlock pregnancy	6.450	11.13*	2.801
Marriage	3.813	17.30*	5.955
Personality	2.707	6.948	6.300
Emotional control	2.246	2.447	1.742
Heredity	4.968	4.334	4.525
Sex differences	2.051	3.864	5.808
Puberty	4.757	4.171	4.198
Menstruation	9.628	9.855*	2.998
Reproductive organs	2.724	8.666	3.647
Role of parents	7.892	9.172	2.853
Mate selection	2.890	9.536*	7.847
Love	3.805	7.802	4.784
Birth control methods	1.689	4.445	3.081
Premarital sex	2.698	.5518	1.084
Family planning	4.815	7.637	1.590
Morality of sex	2.728	6.546	.6484
Engagement	1.138	8.385	13.13*
Management of finances	2.870	1.078	3.272
Extramarital relations	.9917	11.99*	4.350
Divorce	3.763	2.081	2.418
Marriage counseling	.4954	8.015	4.111
Family structure	3.314	5.617	4.678
Conception	3.642	.8823	3.619
Pregnancy	3.176	2.401	1.072
Birth process	3.090	.2826	1.976
Fetal development	1.976	.4955	.9217
Mental health	11.66*	8.040	5.048
Overpopulation	17.24*	10.60*	2.000
Abortion	18.29*	21.95*	2.424
Venereal disease	1.120	4.768	3.991
Alternate life styles	8.259	10.06*	.4141
Prostitution	7.853	4.504	2.485
Homosexuality	8.285	8.230	4.848
Menopause	7.485	3.563	3.440

TABLE 13. (Continued)

Topic Areas	Chi-Square Values		
	Parents & 9th Grade Students ^a	Parents & 12th Grade Students ^b	9th & 12th Grade Students ^c
Aging	15.88*	11.45*	3.834

*Critical value of chi-square at .05 level at 4 degrees of freedom equals 9.488

^aN = 125

^bN = 122

^cN = 77

These findings were similar to research conducted by Conley (1974) which revealed that the distribution of initial contact was similar for both parents and students except for the topics of love, making friends, personality, role of parents, puberty, petting, and family structure, which parents preferred introduced at an earlier grade level than did the students.

Classroom Structure of Each Topic Area

The nature of the relationship that exists between parent and student attitudes and opinions concerning the classroom structure for each specific topic area of a family life and sex education course was examined. A chi-square analysis at the .05 level was computed between the respondents attitudes regarding the desired classroom composition (only males, only females, co-educational, or separately) for each topic area. Table 14 illustrates the relationship between parents and ninth grade students, parents and twelfth grade students, and between ninth and twelfth grade students.

Parents and ninth grade students revealed significant relationships (see Table 14) for the topics of out-of-wedlock pregnancy, menstruation, birth control methods, premarital sex, conception, pregnancy, birth process, fetal development, abortion, and menopause. Significant relationships were indicated for the topics of petting, out-of-wedlock pregnancy; puberty, menstruation, reproductive organs, birth control methods, premarital sex, family planning, conception, pregnancy, birth

TABLE 14... RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PARENT AND STUDENT ATTITUDES REGARDING THE CLASSROOM STRUCTURE OF EACH TOPIC AREA

Topic Areas	Chi-Square Values		
	Parents & 9th Grade Students ^a	Parents & 12th Grade Students ^b	9th & 12th Grade Students ^c
Friendship	.7015	3.273	1.899
Dating	6.330	2.705	2.383
Petting	.2016	10.90*	9.643
Out-of-wedlock pregnancy	19.49*	23.11*	11.91*
Marriage	3.183	4.504	.5646
Personality	3.070	5.642	4.235
Emotional control	2.246	2.008	3.348
Heredity	3.348	2.502	2.835
Sex differences	2.223	4.983	5.351
Puberty	2.652	8.068*	4.616
Menstruation	24.32*	12.96*	9.823*
Reproductive organs	3.844	24.94*	7.600
Role of parents	.8872	6.497	4.872
Mate selection	1.944	6.480	9.182*
Love	1.924	6.927	2.563
Birth control methods	24.95*	16.30*	11.18*
Premarital sex	9.645*	20.58*	3.836
Family planning	7.016	8.417	.2693
Morality of sex	.3737	7.456	4.550
Engagement	.1234	.4871	.1028
Management of finances	2.796	3.628	2.885
Extramarital relations	4.446	7.338	.4042
Divorce	1.618	5.394	2.059
Marriage counseling	.2336	4.099	3.895
Family structure	.3062	.5195	1.168
Conception	10.04*	12.47*	8.152*
Pregnancy	10.21*	18.15*	9.928*
Birth process	14.46*	25.29*	6.674
Fetal development	13.87*	30.00*	8.779*
Mental health	.7824	7.911*	4.653
Overpopulation	4.577	4.707	.0000
Abortion	17.75*	13.88*	7.261
Venereal disease	1.019	11.42*	11.68*
Alternate life styles	1.807	9.117	3.808
Prostitution	1.571	10.00*	8.478*
Homosexuality	5.248	6.231	8.226*
Menopause	15.91*	9.206	7.875*

TABLE 14. (Continued)

Topic Areas	Chi-Square Values		
	Parents & 9th Grade Students ^a	Parents & 12th Grade Students ^b	9th & 12th Grade Students ^c
Aging	1.463	5.449	3.031

* Critical value of chi-square at .05 level at 3 degrees of freedom equals 7.815

^aN = 125

^bN = 122

^cN = 77

process, fetal development, mental health, abortion, venereal disease, alternate life styles, prostitution, and menopause between parent and twelfth grade student attitudes (see Table 14). The topic areas of petting, out-of-wedlock pregnancy, menstruation, mate selection, birth control methods, conception, pregnancy, fetal development, venereal disease, prostitution, homosexuality, and menopause revealed significant relationships (see Table 14) that existed between ninth and twelfth grade student attitudes.

Conley's study (1974) revealed similar findings as parents and students generally thought alike, and in most cases favored co-educational classes. However, parents felt that topics of menstruation, birth control methods, abortion, and conception would be better taught separately. Teaching the class to "boys only" was rarely mentioned by the respondents. In the case of the following topics, some level of total support was displayed by students for teaching to "girls only": fetal development, menstruation, birth control methods, abortion, and prostitution. Generally, Conley revealed that ninth grade students were more likely to select a topic to be taught to girls only.

Qualifications and Characteristics of an Instructor

This section will determine the nature of the relationship that exists between parent and student attitudes and opinions concerning qualifications and characteristics of an acceptable family life and sex education instructor. The selected qualifications that were examined

were: (1) sex, (2) marital status, (3) age, (4) years of teaching experience, and (5) selected personality characteristics. The selected personality characteristics were: (1) ability to talk freely and maturely without embarrassment, (2) familiar with changing family life and sex education attitudes and practices today, (3) good understanding of oneself and one's own attitudes, (4) highly knowledgeable in the areas composing family life and sex education, (5) interest in family life and sex education, and (6) sensitive to students' reactions and feelings.

A chi-square analysis at the .05 level was computed between parents and ninth grade students, parents and twelfth grade students, and ninth grade students to twelfth grade students regarding the instructors' sex, marital status, age, and years of teaching experience (see Table 15).

A significant relationship between parent and ninth grade student attitudes was found regarding the instructors' sex, marital status, age, and years of teaching experience (see Table 15). There were similar findings between parents and twelfth grade student attitudes regarding the instructors' marital status, age, and years of teaching experience (see Table 15). However, a significant relationship was not found regarding the sex of the instructor, thus, this variable was found to be independent regarding the attitudes between parents and twelfth grade students. A significant relationship between the attitudes of ninth grade students and twelfth grade students was not found.

TABLE 15. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PARENT AND STUDENT ATTITUDES REGARDING THE QUALIFICATIONS OF A FAMILY LIFE AND SEX EDUCATION INSTRUCTOR

Qualifications	Degrees of Freedom	Level of Significance	Chi-Square Values		
			Parents 7 9th Grade Students ^a	Parents & 12th Grade Students ^b	9th & 12th Grade Students ^c
Sex	4	9.488	15.98*	4.525	5.797
Marital Status	3	7.815	11.51*	8.130*	3.550
Age	6	12.592	34.10*	17.26*	5.261
Years of Teaching Experience	6	12.592	17.00*	17.17*	10.15

*Critical value of chi-square at the .05 level of significance

^aN = 125

^bN = 122

^cN = 77

A chi-square analysis at the .05 level was computed between parents and ninth grade students, parents and twelfth grade students, and ninth grade students to twelfth grade students regarding the selected personality characteristics of a family life and sex education instructor (see Table 16).

Respondents were asked to rank in order of importance the six personality characteristics that they felt a family life and sex education instructor should possess. A significant relationship (see Table 16) between parent and twelfth grade student attitudes concerning the personality characteristic, "ability to talk freely and maturely without embarrassment" was found. The chi-square values showed a significant relationship between parent and ninth grade students attitudes as well as parent and twelfth grade student attitudes toward the personality characteristic, "familiar with changing family life and sex education attitudes and practices today" (see Table 16). There was a significant relationship between the personality characteristic, "good understanding of oneself and one's own attitudes" and parent and ninth grade students attitudes plus ninth grade student and twelfth grade student attitudes (see Table 16). The chi-square values showed no significant relationship regarding the personality characteristics of "highly knowledgeable in the areas composing family life and sex education" and "interest in family life and sex education." Therefore, on this basis, parent and students attitudes were found to be

TABLE 16. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PARENT AND STUDENT ATTITUDES REGARDING THE PERSONALITY CHARACTERISTICS OF A FAMILY LIFE AND SEX EDUCATION INSTRUCTOR

Personality Characteristics	Chi-Square Values		
	Parents & 9th Grade Students ^a	Parents & 12th Grade Students ^b	9th & 12th Grade Students ^c
Ability to talk freely and maturely without embarrassment	10.55	15.20*	11.90
Familiar with changing family life and sex education attitudes and practices today	26.37*	17.46*	6.92
Good understanding of oneself and one's own attitudes	18.20*	6.03	15.48*
Highly knowledgeable in the areas composing family life and sex education	10.57	10.72	9.11
Interest in family life and sex education	7.56	8.73	4.49
Sensitive to students' reactions and feelings	17.00*	4.95	6.51

*Critical value of chi-square at .05 level at 6 degrees of freedom equals 12.592

^aN = 125

^bN = 122

^cN = 77

independent regarding those personality characteristics. A significant relationship between parent and ninth grade student attitudes and the personality characteristic, "sensitive to students' reactions and feelings" was also found (see Table 16).

Research conducted by Conley (1974) revealed ninth grade student attitudes significantly different from both parent and twelfth grade student attitudes. Parents and twelfth grade students had similar attitudes toward teacher qualifications and characteristics, while ninth grade students were less definitive in their attitudes. Twelfth grade students diverged from parents and ninth grade students in their degree of support for the teacher to be "familiar with changing family life attitudes and practices today."

Status of a Family Life and Sex Education Course

This section will determine the nature of the relationship that exists between parent and student attitudes and opinions concerning the status in the curriculum of a family life and sex education course. A chi-square analysis at the .05 level was computed between parent and ninth grade students, parent and twelfth grade students, and ninth grade students to twelfth grade students (see Table 17).

The respondents were asked to indicate their opinion regarding the status of a family life and sex education course (required course, elective course for any student, an elective course, but only with

TABLE 17. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PARENT AND STUDENT ATTITUDES REGARDING
THE STATUS OF A FAMILY LIFE AND SEX EDUCATION COURSE

Participants	Chi-Square Value
Parents & 9th Grade Students ^a	26.66*
Parents & 12th Grade Students ^b	9.139
9th Grade & 12th Grade Students ^c	11.35*

*Critical value of chi-square at .05 level of 4 degrees of freedom
equals 9.488

^a_N = 125

^b_N = 122

^c_N = 77

parental permission, or not available as a course of study) in the public schools. A significant relationship between parent and ninth grade student attitudes as well as ninth grade student and twelfth grade student attitudes was found (see Table 17). A significant relationship between parent and twelfth grade student attitudes was not found.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this chapter was to summarize the study conducted, draw conclusions, and make recommendations in light of knowledge gained from the study. The summary, conclusions, and recommendations presented here are based on parents and ninth and twelfth grade students responses to the questionnaire instruments that were developed and utilized to collect data..

Summary

A brief look at the history of family life and sex education in the United States portrayed several trends. For example, the emphasis on factual information gave way to an emphasis on the development of attitudes, understanding, and appreciations, and toward helping the individual to solve his problems associated with family life and sex education. Today, family life and sex education is drawing universal recognition as a legitimate and worthwhile inclusion to the school curriculum.

The purpose of this descriptive study was to determine the attitudes and opinions of parents and students concerning selected aspects of teaching family life and sex education at Simms High School in Simms, Montana. In order to accomplish the major purpose of this

study, specific objectives were formulated. The objectives investigated were:

1. To determine the nature of the relationship between parent attitudes toward the teaching of family life and sex education in the public schools and:
 - A. Age range
 - B. Occupation
 - C. Educational level
 - D. Sex
 - E. Marital status
 - F. Number of children in the family
 - G. Ages of children
 - H. Religious affiliation
 - I. Frequency of church attendance
 - J. Background in a family life and sex education course
2. To determine the nature of the relationship between student attitudes toward the teaching of family life and sex education in the public schools and:
 - A. Age range
 - B. Grade level
 - C. Sex
 - D. Status in the family
 - E. Religious affiliation
 - F. Frequency of church attendance
 - G. Background in a family life and sex education course
3. To identify specific topic areas of family life and sex education that should be included in the course content as perceived by parents and students.
4. To determine the grade level category at which each specific topic area of family life and sex education should first appear in the public schools as perceived by parents and students:
 - A. K-3
 - B. 4-6
 - C. 7-8
 - D. 9-10
 - E. 11-12
 - F. Not at all

5. To determine the classroom structure for each specific topic area of a family life and sex education course as perceived by parents and students:
 - A. Only males
 - B. Only females
 - C. Co-educational
 - D. Separately to males and females
6. To determine qualifications and characteristics of an acceptable family life and sex education instructor as perceived by parents and students:
 - A. Sex
 - B. Marital status
 - C. Age
 - D. Years of teaching experience
 - E. Selected personality characteristics
7. To determine the status in the curriculum of a family life and sex education class in the public schools as perceived by parents and students:
 - A. Required course of study
 - B. Elective course of study for any student
 - C. Elective course of study, but only for students with their parents' permission
 - D. Not available as a course of study
8. To determine the nature of the relationship that exists between parent and student attitudes and opinions concerning selected aspects of family life and sex education in the public schools:
 - A. Specific topic areas that should be included in the course content
 - B. Grade level categories at which each specific topic area should first appear
 - C. Classroom structure for each specific topic area
 - D. Qualifications and characteristics of an acceptable family life and sex education instructor
 - E. Status in the curriculum of a family life and sex education course

The study was limited to Simms School District 6 & F in Cascade County, Simms, Montana. After securing approval from the principal of the school system, permission letters were distributed to the ninth grade students and to the twelfth grade students during the month of January, 1980. The permission letters were to be signed by the students' parents and returned to the Simms High School office by the deadline date. Affirmative replies were received for 40 ninth grade students and for 41 twelfth grade students to participate in the study.

An instrument adapted by the investigator was used for the study. Part I of this instrument was designed to collect demographic information about the respondent. Specific topic areas that might be included in a family life and sex education course were listed in Part II. The grade level category when each topic area should first appear and the classroom structure for each topic area were listed in Part II. Part III was designed to obtain information regarding the characteristics and qualifications of the instructor, in addition to the status in the curriculum of a family life and sex education course. An area for the respondents' reactions to the questionnaire and to add any additional individual comments was provided in Part IV.

The questionnaire, designed to show student attitudes toward the selected aspects of family life and sex education in the public schools, was administered to the ninth grade students and twelfth grade students during separate class meetings. Only those students who had received

written parental permission were allowed to participate in the study. The questionnaires were administered one day later to one ninth grade student and two twelfth grade students who were absent when the survey instrument was originally administered.

Questionnaires designed to measure parent attitudes toward the teaching of family life and sex education, were mailed to each of the 135 parents. A cover letter explaining the purpose of the study and requesting the return of the questionnaire was also sent to the parents. Enclosed with the survey instrument and cover letter was a self-addressed, stamped envelope. A follow-up letter and second questionnaire was sent one week later to those parents who had not returned their survey instrument by the deadline date. Responses were received from 105 (78%) parents.

The survey instrument was tabulated by percentage for the majority of variables. The total sum of responses to variables which would determine the nature of the relationship regarding parent and student attitudes employed the chi-square method of statistical analysis at the .05 level of significance.

Background factors of the 105 participating parents revealed the majority of parents represented the 40-49 age group and were married. More females than males participated in the study; over half the respondents had a high school level of education and were generally

a housewife and/or farmer/rancher. In general, parents had three children in the elementary, junior high school, and high school levels. The Protestant religion represented the average parent who attended church once or twice a year. Although a large percentage (86.7%) of the participants have never had a previous course in family life and sex education, an overwhelming majority (72.4%) indicated that family life and sex education should be taught in the public schools.

The opinions of parents toward favoring, opposing, or being uncertain regarding the inclusion of family life and sex education were evaluated with the demographic variables by the chi-square test for independence at the .05 level of significance. A significant relationship existed between the sex of the parents and their opinion toward the teaching of a family life and sex education course as a chi-square value of 5.19783 was significant at the .05 level of significance. On this basis, the remaining background variables were found to be independent of the opinions and attitudes of favoring, opposing, or uncertainty.

The entire ninth grade population was in the 14-16 age group and the twelfth grade population comprised the 17-19 age group. Over half of the students responding were female and reported to be the middle child in the family. Students were generally Protestant with ninth grade students attending church once a week while twelfth grade students attend once or twice a year. A large majority of students have never

had a previous course in family life and sex education, however, those students who reportedly have had a course in this area were generally twelfth grade students.

Data gathered from the 80 students indicated that a majority (72% or more) favor the teaching of family life and sex education. It is interesting to note that there were no ninth grade students who were opposed to this course. The opinions of students toward favoring, opposing, or being uncertain were tested with the background factors by the chi-square test for independence at the .05 level of significance. The chi-square values indicated a significant relationship between the sex and religious affiliation of the ninth grade students regarding their attitude toward the teaching of family life and sex education in the public schools. Students who were female and/or Protestant, were more favorable toward the teaching of family life and sex education. The demographic factors of twelfth grade students were found to be independent of their attitudes and opinions with favoring, opposing, or being uncertain regarding the teaching of family life and sex education.

Parents and students who indicated "yes" or "undecided" to the question, "Should family life and sex education be taught in the public schools?" were to continue and respond to Parts II, III and IV of the survey instrument. Thus, the remaining data is based upon those participants who responded with "yes" or "undecided."

Specific topic areas of family life and sex education that should be included in the course content were examined. From an analysis of data, it can be concluded that the topic areas of prostitution, abortion, homosexuality, alternate life styles, extramarital relations, over-population, premarital sex, and birth control methods received support from parents to be excluded from the course content.

Students were more liberal in their responses. Ninth grade students indicated that only the areas of prostitution and homosexuality should not be available. Twelfth grade students indicated the topic areas of homosexuality, marital sex, and petting should be excluded.

The most frequently mentioned topics to be included were, in descending order, friendship, dating, management of finances, emotional control, sex differences, family structure, pregnancy, reproductive organs, puberty, and fetal development.

The grade level category at which each specific topic area should be introduced was examined. Very few topics received a majority (50% or more) for any one grade level, however, it can generally be reported that parents and students favored a higher percentage of topics introduced at the seventh and eighth grade levels. As a total group there was greater concensus at which to introduce topics. Ninth and twelfth grade students agreed more frequently than parents and twelfth grade students or parents and ninth grade students.

On the majority of topics, parents and students had similar opinions regarding the classroom structure for each topic area. In most cases, respondents favored co-educational classes. Parents and ninth grade students agreed more frequently on topic areas that should be taught separately to males and females while twelfth grade students preferred all topic areas to be co-educational. Ninth grade students indicated a preference for some topic areas to be taught only to females.

The teacher of a family life and sex education program is essential to the success of such a course. Parent and student opinions of what they consider to be a qualified teacher are important to those aspiring to be such a teacher, to those assigned to educate and train such a teacher, and to administrators who will hire such a teacher.

All three respondent groups indicated "no preference if the teacher was qualified" regarding the sex, marital status, and years of teaching experience of a family life and sex education instructor. Students preferred the instructor to be in the 25-35 age group while parents had no preference if the teacher was qualified.

Personality characteristics of a family life and sex education instructor were ranked in order of importance by parents and students. Respondents indicated "the ability to talk freely and maturely without embarrassment" was the most important characteristic. The remaining five characteristics are (in descending order): (#2) sensitive to

students' reactions and feelings, (#3) highly knowledgeable in the areas composing family life and sex education, (#4) interest in family life and sex education, (#5) familiar with changing family life and sex education attitudes and practices today, and (#6) good understanding of oneself and one's own attitudes.

Parents and students indicated their preference regarding the status of a family life and sex education course. Parents preferred the class to be an elective course of study, but only for students with their parents' permission. Twelfth grade students agreed that the class should be an elective course of study, but for any student. Ninth grade students indicated that a family life and sex education course should be a required course of study.

Several significant relationships were found to exist between parent and student attitudes toward the teaching of family life and sex education. These relationships were tested by the chi-square analysis at the .05 level of significance. Some of these findings were:

1. There was a significant relationship between parent and ninth grade student attitudes regarding the inclusion of the topic areas, petting, out-of-wedlock pregnancy, marriage, personality, emotional control, heredity, role of parents, mate selection, morality of sex, engagement, extramarital relations, pregnancy, birth process, fetal development, mental health, venereal disease, prostitution,

homosexuality, and aging.

2. There is a significant relationship between the attitudes of parents and twelfth grade students regarding the inclusion of the topic areas, petting, marriage, and abortion.

3. There is a relationship between the attitudes of ninth grade students and twelfth grade students regarding the inclusion of the topic areas, morality of sex, birth process, fetal development, mental health, abortion, venereal disease, prostitution, and aging.

4. There is a relationship between the attitudes of parents and ninth grade students regarding the grade level at which to introduce the topic areas, petting, menstruation, overpopulation, abortion, and aging.

5. There is a relationship between the attitudes of parents and twelfth grade students regarding the grade level at which to introduce the topic areas, out-of-wedlock pregnancy, marriage, menstruation, mate selection, extramarital relations, overpopulation, abortion, alternate life styles, and aging.

6. There is a relationship between the attitudes of ninth grade students and twelfth grade students regarding the grade level at which to introduce the topic of engagement.

7. There is a relationship between the attitudes of parents and ninth grade students regarding the classroom structure of the topic areas, out-of-wedlock pregnancy, menstruation, birth control methods,

premarital sex, conception, pregnancy, birth process, fetal development, abortion, and menopause.

8. There is a relationship between the attitudes of parents and twelfth grade students regarding the classroom structure of the topic areas, petting, out-of-wedlock pregnancy, puberty, menstruation, reproductive organs, birth control methods, premarital sex, family planning, conception, pregnancy, birth process, fetal development, mental health, abortion, venereal disease, alternate life styles, prostitution, and menopause.

9. There is a relationship between the attitudes of ninth grade students and twelfth grade students regarding the classroom structure of the topic areas, petting, out-of-wedlock pregnancy, menstruation, mate selection, birth control methods, conception, pregnancy, fetal development, venereal disease, prostitution, homosexuality, and menopause.

10. There is a relationship between the attitudes of parents and ninth grade students regarding the qualifications of family life and sex education instructor: sex, marital status, age, and years of teaching experience.

11. There is a relationship between the attitudes of parents and twelfth grade students regarding the qualifications of a family life and sex education instructor: marital status, age, and years of teaching experience.

12. There is a relationship between the attitudes of parents and ninth grade students regarding the personality characteristics of an instructor: "Familiar with changing family life and sex education attitudes and practices today"; "Good understanding of oneself and one's own attitudes"; and "Sensitive to students' reactions and feelings."

13. There is a relationship between the attitudes of parents and twelfth grade students regarding the personality characteristics of an instructor: "Ability to talk freely and maturely without embarrassment"; and "Familiar with changing family life and sex education attitudes and practices today."

14. There is a relationship between the attitudes of ninth grade students and twelfth grade students regarding the personality characteristic "Good understanding of oneself and one's own attitudes."

15. There is a relationship between the attitudes of parents and ninth grade students regarding the status of a family life and sex education course.

16. There is a relationship between the attitudes of ninth grade students and twelfth grade students regarding the status of a family life and sex education course.

The results of the present study can provide the foundation for a curriculum development and revision process in the Simms Public School System that will be conducive to the needs, interests, and concerns of parents, students, teachers, and school authorities. The format of the

research program may also serve as a model for a statewide curriculum study in identifying and processing information regarding the needs and interests of today's youth in the area of family life and sex education.

Where questions exist between parents, teachers, school officials, and students, it is hoped that these findings can illuminate the attitudes and opinions of parents and students regarding the teaching of family life and sex education. Although parental support is important for the success of family life and sex education, the needs and attitudes of students should also be considered. It would seem that greater understanding between parents, students, school officials, and teachers may be facilitated at least partially through the findings of this study.

Conclusions

The following conclusions can be drawn from this study. However, it must be noted that results are only applicable directly to the situation in which the study was conducted. Conclusions which seemed apparent from the results of the study were:

1. The population was limited to people who agreed to participate and it is possible that only a certain type of people were attracted, thus making the population not totally representative.
2. Family life and sex education was recognized by parents and students to be necessary as the majority of respondents favored the teaching of family life and sex education in the public schools.

3. If a program of family life and sex education is to be successful, close cooperation with the home must be a prerequisite as many parents indicated in their responses that the home and school both should be involved.

4. More work must be done through public relations to promote family life and sex education and acquaint the community with what is now being done in the area of family life and sex education. The negative attitude of persons toward family life and sex education programs must be changed if the wide approval necessary for successful family life and sex education programs is to be obtained.

5. Both parents and students minimized the qualifications of age, sex, teaching experience, and marital status of a family life and sex education instructor.

6. Parents and students felt that the most important personality characteristic of the instructor was, "the ability to talk freely and maturely without embarrassment."

7. Ninth grade students were more likely to prefer a topic to be taught to girls only (only females) or for some topics to be taught separately.

8. Parents and students generally placed more emphasis on topics being introduced at the seventh and eighth grade levels.

9. For almost all topics, both parents and students were in favor of family life and sex education being taught to mixed classes.

10. There was a significant relationship between the sex of the parents and their attitude toward favoring, opposing, or being uncertain regarding the inclusion of family life and sex education. This aspect was unique to this study as other studies indicated relationships between marital status, occupation, educational level, number and ages of children, religion, frequency of church attendance, and previous instruction in a family life and sex education course. In this study, those variables were independent of parent attitudes.

11. There was a significant relationship between the sex and religious affiliation of the ninth grade students with their attitude toward favoring, opposing, or being uncertain regarding the inclusion of a family life and sex education course. In contrast, other studies indicated relationships between frequency of church attendance, status in the family, and previous instruction in family life and sex education; those variables were independent in this study.

12. The demographic variables of twelfth grade students were found to be independent with their attitude toward favoring, opposing, or being uncertain regarding the inclusion of a family life and sex education course. In contrast, other studies indicated relationships between background variables and twelfth grade student attitudes.

13. The most frequently mentioned topics to be included in a family life and sex education course were, in descending order, friendship, dating, management of finances, emotional control, sex

differences, family structure, pregnancy, reproductive organs, puberty, and fetal development.

14. Respondents indicated that the topics of homosexuality and prostitution should not be available in a family life and sex education course.

15. Parents responded more favorably toward topics being taught in grades K-3 than did students.

16. Parents and twelfth grade students had much greater agreement in their responses than did either with ninth grade students regarding the issue of specific topic areas that should not be included in a family life and sex education course.

17. Parents and ninth grade students indicated more agreement in their responses than did either with twelfth grade students regarding the issue of the grade level when each topic area should first be introduced into the curriculum.

18. A curriculum for a family life and sex education program for grades K-12 based on the attitudes and opinions of parents and students at Simms School District 6 & F are identifiable. It is possible to identify topic areas, grade level categories, and the classroom structure of each topic area in a family life and sex education course that would meet the needs, interests, and concerns of Simms High School youth.

Recommendations

In light of knowledge and insights into the attitudes and opinions of selected parents and students of Simms High School toward the teaching of family life and sex education in the public school, several areas of concern for future research were discovered.

For Improvement of the Study

If this study was to be repeated, it was recommended that:

1. the survey instrument be refined to include "same sex as students" as a choice in the question regarding the sex preference of a family life and sex education instructor.
2. The survey instrument should be refined for those persons who responded "no" to the question, "Do you think family life and sex education should be taught in the public schools?" by including additional questions such as:
 - a. Why do you oppose to family life and sex education being taught in the public schools?
 - b. State the primary source for a student to acquire information about family life and sex education.
3. The survey instrument should be revised and expanded to include more topic areas such as grooming, masturbation, sexual intercourse, sterility, frigidity, and other topic areas in an effort to determine parent and student attitudes toward the inclusion of these topics in family life and sex education programs.

Use of Results from this Study

1. Results from this study should be available to Simms School District 6 & F so that the reported general attitudes expressed can be considered and assist in giving direction to future curriculum planning and revision toward the teaching of family life and sex education.

2. School administrators, school systems, and the Office of Public Instruction, studying possible family life and sex education programs, should be made aware of the attitudes and opinions of parents and students toward the teaching of family life and sex education expressed by those surveyed.

3. Those persons involved in planning family life and sex education programs should have access to the results of the study.

4. Results of this study should assist in giving direction to future curriculum planning and revision toward the teaching of family life and sex education in Simms School District 6 & F.

5. Educating parents regarding the need of a family life and sex education course should be implemented so parents understand that human society is based upon the family.

Implications for Future Research

Several implications for future research were discovered as a result of this study:

1. Other school districts in Montana should conduct surveys

similar to the one presented here as a study of this type should assist in directing any planning in the future of family life and sex education in the public schools.

2. Research should be conducted to determine what is generally being taught in the home in the area of family life and sex education.

3. A survey should be conducted of established programs of family life and sex education in Montana to determine their problems, implementation strategies, relative effectiveness, and topics included in the course content.

4. The study should be replicated with students of other grade levels.

5. Research should be conducted to compare the attitudes and opinions of married students and single students toward the teaching of family life and sex education.

6. Other demographic variables such as, length of marriage and source of family life and sex education information, should be included to study the relationship of attitudes and opinions toward the teaching of family life and sex education.

7. Follow-up studies should be conducted in relation to attitudes, to note any specific changes, as well as in relation to family life and sex education programs meeting student needs.

8. A survey similar to the study presented should be conducted to determine the attitudes and opinions of Simms School District

teachers, schoolboard members, and school administrators to compile further information for implementing a family life and sex education program.

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APPENDIX A

PERMISSION LETTER

Dear Parent(s),

At the present time, I am conducting a study of parent and student attitudes toward the teaching of family life and sex education. This study is being conducted in conjunction with work I am now completing towards a Master's degree in Home Economics at Montana State University.

With your permission, I would like to administer the questionnaire to your son/daughter at Simms High School. Upon receiving your permission, I will then mail to you, the questionnaire to complete also.

Your help and cooperation in this study would be greatly appreciated. As you know, only with support and backing of our parents, can we hope to give our children the education they deserve. This is your opportunity to provide feedback to the school district concerning your attitudes toward family life and sex education.

Please complete the form below and return this letter with your son/daughter to Simms High School. Thank you for the courtesy of your assistance.

Sincerely,

Kathryn Davison, Ph.D.
Academic Advisor

Pamela LaRocque
Graduate Student

PLEASE CHECK (✓) ONE OF THE SPACES BELOW:

_____ YES, my son/daughter may complete the questionnaire.

_____ NO, I would rather my son/daughter did not complete the questionnaire.

Parents' Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Son/daughters' Name: _____

APPENDIX B

STUDENTS' QUESTIONNAIRE

STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Please complete this questionnaire.
Your cooperation in filling it out completely
and quickly will be greatly appreciated.

PART I. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

DIRECTIONS: This section of information is for summary data only.
It will not be used to identify you.
PLEASE COMPLETE EACH OF THE FOLLOWING ITEMS.

1. Age: Please check (✓) one.

_____ A. Under 14 yrs.
_____ B. 14-16 yrs.
_____ C. 17-19 yrs.
_____ D. Over 19 yrs.

2. Grade Level: Please check (✓) one.

_____ A. Grade 9
_____ B. Grade 10
_____ C. Grade 11
_____ D. Grade 12

3. Marital Status: Please check (✓) one.

_____ A. Single
_____ B. Married
_____ C. Divorced/Separated

4. Sex: Check (✓) one.

_____ A. Male
_____ B. Female

5. Status in your family: Please check (✓) one.

_____ A. Oldest child
_____ B. Youngest child
_____ C. Middle child
_____ D. Only child
_____ E. Other (specify): _____

6. Religious Affiliation: Check (✓) one.

- ☐ A. Protestant
☐ B. Catholic
☐ C. No Affiliation
☐ D. Other (specify): _____

7. Frequency of church attendance: Check (✓) one.

- ☐ A. Once a week
☐ B. Once or twice a month
☐ C. Once or twice a year
☐ D. Never

8. Have you ever had a formal course in Family Life and Sex Education?

- ☐ A. Yes 
☐ B. No

Grade Level: _____ Name of Class: _____
--

9. Do you think that Family Life and Sex Education should be taught in the public schools? Check (✓) one.

- ☐ A. Yes
☐ B. No
☐ C. Undecided

IF YOU HAVE ANSWERED "NO" TO QUESTION #9,

THEN YOU NEED NOT ANSWER FURTHER.

PART II. SPECIFIC TOPIC AREAS

The specific topic areas listed on the following pages
relate to areas that might be included in a
Family Life and Sex Education course.

Please respond to each item using the directions stated below.

Your individual responses will be kept confidential.

DIRECTIONS:

- A. If you think the topic area listed should NOT be available to students, place a check (✓) in Column A and DO NOT ANSWER COLUMN B. Proceed to the next topic item.
- B. If you think the topic area SHOULD be included, check (✓) the grade level and class type categories in Column B using the following criteria:

GRADE LEVEL: Place a check (✓) in one of the boxes in this category to indicate the grade level when the specific topic should FIRST be introduced into the curriculum.

CLASS TYPE: Place a check (✓) in one of the boxes to indicate the classroom structure for each topic area listed.

Use the following descriptions:

ONLY MALES: This means only male students should receive information concerning the topic.

ONLY FEMALES: This means only female students should receive information concerning the topic.

CO-EDUCATIONAL: This means the topic area should be taught to a co-educational class of males and females together.

SEPARATELY TO MALES & FEMALES: This means the topic area should be taught separately to males and females.

Remember, if you check (✓) Column B, DO NOT ANSWER COLUMN A!

- C. To aid you in answering this section, the following definition is given:

"Family life and sex education is a course of study that includes all the educational measures, processes, and principles designed to constructively help young people meet the problems of life which have their center in family relationships and the emotional, physical, psychological, cultural, and sociological sexual instincts."

REMINDER:

- * If you think the topic area should NOT be available to students, place a check (✓) in Column A and DO NOT ANSWER COLUMN B!
- * If you think the topic area SHOULD be included, check (✓) the grade level and class type categories in Column B and DO NOT ANSWER COLUMN A!
- * Remember, Column B will have 2 check (✓) marks!! See the examples below.

[illegible]

REMI NDER:

- * If you think the topic area should NOT be available to students, place a check (✓) in Column A and DO NOT ANSWER COLUMN B!
- * If you think the topic area SHOULD be included, check (✓) the grade level and class type categories in Column B and DO NOT ANSWER COLUMN A!
- * Remember, Column B will have 2 check (✓) marks!! See the example below.

[illegible]

PART III. QUALIFICATIONS OF AN INSTRUCTOR

DIRECTIONS: Please read each statement carefully. There are no right or wrong answers.

1. I feel the teacher of a Family Life and Sex Education course should be:
Check (✓) one.
 - ☐ A. Male
 - ☐ B. Female
 - ☐ C. No preference if the teacher is qualified
 - ☐ D. Other (specify): _____
2. I feel the teacher of a Family Life and Sex Education course should be:
Check (✓) one.
 - ☐ A. Single
 - ☐ B. Married
 - ☐ C. No preference if the teacher is qualified
3. I feel the age of a Family Life and Sex Education instructor should be:
Check (✓) one.

☐ A. Under 24 yrs.	☐ D. 46-55 yrs.
☐ B. 25-35 yrs.	☐ E. Over 56 yrs.
☐ C. 36-45 yrs.	☐ F. No preference if the teacher is qualified
4. I feel a Family Life and Sex Education instructor should have: Check (✓) one.
 - ☐ A. No teaching experience is necessary
 - ☐ B. 1 year of teaching experience
 - ☐ C. 2-3 years of teaching experience
 - ☐ D. 4-5 years of teaching experience
 - ☐ E. Over 6 years of teaching experience
 - ☐ F. No preference if the teacher is qualified
5. Rank in order of importance to you, the 6 personality characteristics that you feel a Family Life and Sex Education instructor should possess.
Place the number 1 in the space of the characteristic considered most important the number 2 in the space considered second most important, and continue to rank each characteristic.

☐ A. Ability to talk freely and maturely without embarrassment.
☐ B. Familiar with changing family life and sex education attitudes and practices today.
☐ C. Good understanding of oneself and one's own attitudes.
☐ D. Highly knowledgeable in the areas composing family life and sex education.
☐ E. Interest in family life and sex education.
☐ F. Sensitive to students' reactions and feelings.

6. A Family Life and Sex Education course should be: Check (✓) one.

- ☐ A. A required course of study
- ☐ B. An elective course of study for any student
- ☐ C. An elective course of study, but only for students with their parents' permission
- ☐ D. Not available as a course of study.

PART IV. INDIVIDUAL COMMENTS

Please feel free to express comments on any aspect of this questionnaire in the space below. List any other areas you feel should be included in the area of family life and sex education.

THANK YOU!

APPENDIX C

DEFINITIONS

DEFINITIONS

ABORTION - The expulsion/removal of an embryo or fetus from the uterus before it is developed sufficiently to live

ALTERNATE LIVE STYLES - Remaining single, communes, group marriages, unmarried persons living together, polygamous marriages, etc.

BIRTH CONTROL METHODS - Techniques/devices to prevent pregnancy; diaphragm, IUD, condom, the "pill", etc.

CONCEPTION - The act of becoming pregnant; fertilization of an egg cell by a sperm cell

EMOTIONAL CONTROL - The emotions or feelings that a person possesses which has the power to direct or guide our actions

EXTRAMARITAL RELATIONS - Engaging in a (sexual) relationship outside the scope of a persons' marriage; eg. adultery

FAMILY PLANNING - The planning of how many children a couple will have plus the planning of the number of years of age difference between each child

FAMILY STRUCTURE - The different types of family life styles; single parent families, couples without children, parents & children, etc.

FETAL DEVELOPMENT - The stages of development of the unborn young while still in the uterus

HEREDITY - The passing on of mental & physical traits from parents to children

HOMOSEXUALITY - Of or having sexual desire and/or relations for those of the same sex as oneself; being "gay"

MENOPAUSE - The time in women when menstruation ceases; the "change of life"

MENSTRUATION - A woman's normal monthly discharge of blood from the uterus through the vagina; menstrual "period"

MENTAL HEALTH - One's attitude toward himself & his outlook on life;
the condition or state of the mind

MORALITY OF SEX - The principles of right or wrong in a persons'
sexual conduct

OUT-OF-WEDLOCK PREGNANCY - The state of being pregnant & not legally
married

PETTING - Physical contact between two people that stops short of
sexual relations

PREMARITAL SEX - Engaging in sex before marriage

PROSTITUTION - Engaging in sexual relations for pay

PUBERTY - Physical, psychological, & social changes that mark the
transition from childhood to adulthood

VENEREAL DISEASE - An infectious disease that is usually passed on by
sexual relations; as syphilis & gonorrhea

APPENDIX D

COVER LETTER

Dear Parent(s),

The question of instruction in family life and sex education has been of major concern to parents and school personnel. While this instruction cannot propose to be the preventative for premarital pregnancy, divorce, or drug abuse; family life and sex education can aid the student in intelligent decision making while meeting their educational needs.

I am conducting a study of parents' and students' attitudes and opinions toward the teaching of family life and sex education. Your help and cooperation in this study will be greatly appreciated by completing the attached questionnaire. As you know, only with the support of parents, can the schools hope to give students the education they deserve. It will be helpful for school personnel to know what parents and students think and feel concerning family life and sex education, so that those attitudes and opinions may be understood and considered in the planning of educational programs.

To aid in answering the enclosed questionnaire, the following definition of family life and sex education is given:

Family life and sex education is a course of study that includes all the educational measures, processes, and principles designed to constructively help young people meet the problems of life which have their center in family relationships and the emotional, physical, psychological, cultural, and sociological sexual instincts.

Please take a few minutes of your time to complete the questionnaire and return it in the enclosed stamped, self-addressed envelope. The identifying number on each instrument is for coding purposes only; individual responses will be kept confidential. If you received two (2) questionnaires in the packet, I would appreciate each parent completing the instrument.

Thank you for the courtesy of your assistance and cooperation.

Sincerely,

Kathryn Davison, Ph.D.
Academic Advisor

Pamela LaRocque
Graduate Student

APPENDIX E

PARENTS' QUESTIONNAIRE

PARENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Please complete this questionnaire.
Your cooperation in filling it out completely
and quickly will be greatly appreciated.

PART I. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

DIRECTIONS: This section of information is for summary data only.
It will not be used to identify you.
PLEASE COMPLETE EACH OF THE FOLLOWING ITEMS.

1. Age: Please check (✓) one.

_____ A. 20-29 yrs. of age
_____ B. 30-39 yrs. of age
_____ C. 40-49 yrs. of age

_____ D. 50-59 yrs. of age
_____ E. 60 yrs. and above

2. Sex: Please check (✓) one.

_____ A. Male

_____ B. Female

3. Marital status: Please check (✓) one.

_____ A. Single
_____ B. Married

_____ C. Divorced/Separated
_____ D. Widowed

4. Highest educational level completed: Check (✓) one.

_____ A. Elementary (grade 6)
or under
_____ B. Junior High School
_____ C. High School

_____ D. Two years of college
_____ E. College Graduate
_____ F. Vocational/Technical

_____ G. Other (specify): _____

5. Occupation: Check (✓) all that apply.

_____ A. Sales worker
_____ B. Full-time housewife
_____ C. Clerical worker
_____ D. Laborer

_____ E. Farmer/Rancher
_____ F. Teacher
_____ G. Business
_____ H. Other (specify): _____

6. Number of children in your family: Check (✓) one.

_____ A. One
_____ B. Two
_____ C. Three

_____ D. Four
_____ E. Five
_____ F. Six or more

7. Ages of children living in the household: Check (✓) all that apply.

- ☐ A. Preschool
☐ B. Elementary grade level
☐ C. Junior High/High School levels
☐ D. Others (Not in High School), specify: _____

8. Religious affiliation: Check (✓) one.

- ☐ A. Protestant
☐ B. Catholic
☐ C. No Affiliation
☐ D. Other (specify): _____

9. Frequency of church attendance: Check (✓) one.

- ☐ A. Once a week
☐ B. Once or twice a month
☐ C. Once or twice a year
☐ D. Never

10. Have you ever had a formal course in Family Life and Sex Education?
Check (✓) one.

- ☐ A. Yes
☐ B. No

When? _____
Type of Class: _____

11. Do you think Family Life and Sex Education should be taught in the public schools? Check (✓) one.

- ☐ A. Yes
☐ B. No
☐ C. Undecided

IF YOU HAVE ANSWERED "NO" TO QUESTION #11,

THEN YOU NEED NOT ANSWER FURTHER.

PART II. SPECIFIC TOPIC AREAS

The specific topic areas listed on the following pages relate to areas that might be included in a Family Life and Sex Education course.

Please respond to each item using the directions stated below.

Your individual responses will be kept confidential.

DIRECTIONS:

- A. If you think the topic area listed should NOT be available to students, place a check (✓) in Column A and DO NOT ANSWER COLUMN B. Proceed to the next topic item.
- B. If you think the topic area SHOULD be included, check (✓) the grade level and class type categories in Column B using the following criteria:

GRADE LEVEL: Place a check (✓) in one of the boxes in this category to indicate the grade level when the specific topic should FIRST be introduced into the curriculum.

CLASS TYPE: Place a check (✓) in one of the boxes to indicate the classroom structure for each topic area listed.

Use the following descriptions:

ONLY MALES: This means only male students should receive information concerning the topic.

ONLY FEMALES: This means only female students should receive information concerning the topic.

CO-EDUCATIONAL: This means the topic area should be taught to a co-educational class of males and females together.

SEPARATELY TO MALES & FEMALES: This means the topic area should be taught separately to males and females.

Remember, if you check (✓) Column B, DO NOT ANSWER COLUMN A!

- C. To aid you in answering this section, the following definition is given:

"Family life and sex education is a course of study that includes all the educational measures, processes, and principles designed to constructively help young people meet the problems of life which have their center in family relationships and the emotional, physical, psychological, cultural, and sociological sexual instincts."

REMINDER:

- * If you think the topic area should NOT be available to students, place a check (✓) in Column A and DO NOT ANSWER COLUMN B!
- * If you think the topic area SHOULD be included, check (✓) the grade level and class type categories in Column B and DO NOT ANSWER COLUMN A!
- * Remember, Column B will have 2 check (✓) marks!! See the examples below.

[illegible]

REMINDER:

- * If you think the topic area should NOT be available to students, place a check (✓) in Column A and DO NOT ANSWER COLUMN B!
- * If you think the topic area SHOULD be included, check (✓) the grade level and class type categories in Column B and DO NOT ANSWER COLUMN A!
- * Remember, Column B will have 2 check (✓) marks!! See the example below.

[illegible]

PART III. QUALIFICATIONS OF AN INSTRUCTOR.

DIRECTIONS: Please read each statement carefully. There are no right or wrong answers.

1. I feel the teacher of a Family Life and Sex Education course should be:
Check (✓) one.

☐ A. Male
☐ B. Female
☐ C. No preference if the teacher is qualified
☐ D. Other (specify): _____

2. I feel the teacher of a Family Life and Sex Education course should be:
Check (✓) one.

☐ A. Single
☐ B. Married
☐ C. No preference if the teacher is qualified

3. I feel the age of a Family Life and Sex Education instructor should be:
Check (✓) one.

☐ A. Under 24 yrs.
☐ B. 25-35 yrs.
☐ C. 36-45 yrs.
☐ D. 46-55 yrs.
☐ E. Over 56 yrs.
☐ F. No preference if the teacher is qualified

4. I feel a Family Life and Sex Education instructor should have: Check (✓) one.

☐ A. No teaching experience is necessary
☐ B. 1 year of teaching experience
☐ C. 2-3 years of teaching experience
☐ D. 4-5 years of teaching experience
☐ E. Over 6 years of teaching experience
☐ F. No preference if the teacher is qualified

5. Rank in order of importance to you, the 6 personality characteristics that you feel a Family Life and Sex Education instructor should possess.

Place the number 1 in the space of the characteristic considered most important, the number 2 in the space considered second most important, and continue to rank each characteristic.

☐ A. Ability to talk freely and maturely without embarrassment.
☐ B. Familiar with changing family life and sex education attitudes and practices today.
☐ C. Good understanding of oneself and one's own attitudes.
☐ D. Highly knowledgeable in the areas composing family life and sex education.
☐ E. Interest in family life and sex education.
☐ F. Sensitive to students' reactions and feelings.

6. A Family Life and Sex Education course should be: Check (✓) one.

- ☐ A. A required course of study
- ☐ B. An elective course of study for any student
- ☐ C. An elective course of study, but only for students with their parents' permission
- ☐ D. Not available as a course of study.

PART IV. INDIVIDUAL COMMENTS

Please feel free to express comments on any aspect of this questionnaire in the space below. List any other areas you feel should be included in the area of family life and sex education.

THANK YOU!

APPENDIX F

FOLLOW-UP LETTER

Dear Parent(s),

All of us are busier these days than we should be, and we know how the little extras sometimes receive our best intentions. From the questionnaire which reached you -- I hope -- I have had no reply. Perhaps the survey was mislaid or it may have been miscarried in the mail, or any one of a dozen of contingencies could have happened.

In any event, I am including another questionnaire. I am sure you will try to find 20 minutes somewhere in your busy schedule today to complete the survey and return it in the enclosed stamped, self-addressed envelope.

I shall tabulate the data received and use the information to determine the attitudes and opinions of parents and students in the Simms School District toward the teaching of family life and sex education. The results of this study will give the school personnel insight into the attitudes of parents and students toward this important area of education.

Thank you. Your help and cooperation are greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Pamela LaRocque
Graduate Student

Kathryn Davison, Ph.D.
Academic Advisor

APPENDIX G

SOURCE DATA TABLES

TABLE 18. DATA RELATING TO THE SIGNIFICANT BACKGROUND FACTORS OF PARENTS AND STUDENTS REGARDING THEIR OPINION TOWARD THE TEACHING OF FAMILY LIFE AND SEX EDUCATION

Respondents	Favor		Oppose		Uncertain		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Sex:								
Parents								
Male	27	58.7	12	26.1	7	15.2	46	43.8
Female	49	83.1	8	13.6	2	3.4	59	56.2
Total	76	72.4	20	19.1	9	8.5	105	100
9th Grade Students								
Male	5	55.6	--	--	4	44.4	9	22.5
Female	29	93.5	--	--	2	6.5	31	77.5
Total	34	85.0	--	--	6	15.0	40	100
Religious Affiliation:								
9th Grade Students								
Protestant	19	95.0	--	--	1	5.0	20	50.0
Catholic	8	80.0	--	--	2	20.0	10	25.0
No Affiliation	--	--	--	--	2	100	2	5.0
Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints	7	87.5	--	--	1	12.5	8	20.0
Total	34	85.0	--	--	6	15.0	40	100

TABLE 19. DATA RELATING TO THE SIGNIFICANT RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE ATTITUDES OF PARENTS AND STUDENTS REGARDING THE INCLUSION OF TOPIC AREAS.

Respondents	Should be available		Should not be available		Total
	N	%	N	%	N
Dating:					
Parents	85	100	--	--	85
9th Grade Students	35	87.5	5	12.5	40
12th Grade Students	36	97.5	1	2.5	37
Petting:					
Parents	99	94.3	6	5.7	85
9th Grade Students	30	75.0	10	25.0	40
12th Grade Students	30	82.5	7	17.5	37
Out-of-Wedlock Pregnancy:					
Parents	79	94.3	6	5.7	85
9th Grade Students	33	82.5	7	17.5	40
12th Grade Students	34	91.9	3	8.1	37
Marriage:					
Parents	85	100	--	--	85
9th Grade Students	35	87.5	5	12.5	40
12th Grade Students	35	95.0	2	5.0	37
Personality:					
Parents	85	100	--	--	85
9th Grade Students	36	90.0	4	10.0	40
12th Grade Students	36	97.5	1	2.5	37
Emotional Control:					
Parents	85	100	--	--	85
9th Grade Students	36	90.0	4	10.0	40
12th Grade Students	37	100	--	--	37
Heredity:					
Parents	83	98.1	2	1.9	85
9th Grade Students	36	90.0	4	10.0	40
12th Grade Students	36	97.5	1	2.5	37
Role of Parents:					
Parents	85	100	--	--	85
9th Grade Students	37	92.5	3	7.5	40
12th Grade Students	36	97.5	1	2.5	37

TABLE 19. (Continued)

Respondents	Should be available		Should not be available		Total
	N	%	N	%	N
Mate Selection:					
Parents	84	99.0	1	1.0	85
9th Grade Students	36	90.0	4	10.0	40
12th Grade Students	35	95.0	2	5.0	37
Morality of Sex:					
Parents	81	96.2	4	3.8	85
9th Grade Students	29	72.5	11	27.5	40
12th Grade Students	35	95.0	2	5.0	37
Engagement:					
Parents	84	99.0	1	1.0	85
9th Grade Students	37	92.5	3	7.5	40
12th Grade Students	35	95.0	2	5.0	37
Extramartial Relations:					
Parents	80	85.7	15	14.3	85
9th Grade Students	28	70.0	12	30.0	40
12th Grade Students	27		10		37
Pregnancy:					
Parents	84	99.0	1	1.0	85
9th Grade Students	37	92.5	3	7.5	40
12th Grade Students	37	100	--	--	37
Birth Process:					
Parents	84	99.0	1	1.0	85
9th Grade Students	35	87.5	5	12.5	40
12th Grade Students	37	100	--	--	37
Fetal Development:					
Parents	84	99.0	1	1.0	85
9th Grade Students	36	90.0	4	10.0	40
12th Grade Students	37	100	--	--	37
Mental Health:					
Parents	82	97.1	3	2.9	85
9th Grade Students	32	80.0	8	20.0	40
12th Grade Students	35	95.0	2	5.0	37

TABLE 19. (Continued)

Respondents	Should be available		Should not be available		Total
	N	%	N	%	N
Abortion:					
Parents	67	82.8	18	17.2	85
9th Grade Students	31	77.5	9	22.5	40
12th Grade Students	36	97.5	1	2.5	37
Venereal Disease:					
Parents	81	96.2	4	3.8	85
9th Grade Students	31	77.5	9	22.5	40
12th Grade Students	35	95.0	2	5.0	37
Prostitution:					
Parents	61	77.1	24	22.9	85
9th Grade Students	20	50.0	20	50.0	40
12th Grade Students	31	85.0	6	15.0	37
Homosexuality:					
Parents	68	83.8	17	16.2	85
9th Grade Students	24	60.0	16	40.0	40
12th Grade Students	27	72.9	10	27.0	37
Aging:					
Parents	78	93.3	7	6.7	85
9th Grade Students	32	80.0	8	20.0	40
12th Grade Students	37	100	--	--	37

TABLE 20. DATA RELATING TO THE SIGNIFICANT RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN PARENT AND STUDENT ATTITUDES REGARDING THE GRADE LEVEL AT WHICH TO INTRODUCE EACH TOPIC

Respondents	K-3		4-6		7-8		9-10		11-12		Total
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
Petting:											
Parents	--	--	2	2.5	54	68.3	18	22.8	5	6.4	79
9th Grade Students	--	--	2	6.7	9	30.0	15	50.0	4	13.3	30
12th Grade Students	--	--	2	6.7	13	43.3	10	33.3	5	16.7	30
Out-of-Wedlock Pregnancy:											
Parents	--	--	1	1.3	31	39.2	43	54.4	4	5.1	79
9th Grade Students	--	--	--	--	8	24.2	19	57.6	6	18.2	33
12th Grade Students	--	--	2	5.9	9	26.5	15	44.1	8	23.5	34
Marriage:											
Parents	--	--	1	1.1	14	16.5	47	55.3	23	27.1	85
9th Grade Students	--	--	--	--	5	14.3	15	42.8	15	42.8	35
12th Grade Students	--	--	2	5.8	3	8.6	8	22.8	22	62.8	35
Menstruation:											
Parents	--	--	35	41.7	41	48.8	6	7.1	2	2.4	84
9th Grade Students	1	2.6	6	15.8	26	68.4	4	10.6	1	2.6	38
12th Grade Students	--	--	6	17.1	20	57.1	8	22.8	1	3.0	35
Mate Selection:											
Parents	--	--	2	2.3	12	14.3	44	52.4	25	31.0	84
9th Grade Students	--	--	1	2.8	7	19.4	22	61.1	6	16.7	36
12th Grade Students	--	--	3	8.6	11	31.4	10	28.6	11	31.4	35
Engagement:											
Parents	--	--	--	--	13	15.5	30	35.7	41	48.8	84
9th Grade Students	--	--	--	--	5	13.6	17	45.9	15	40.5	37
12th Grade Students	--	--	3	8.6	3	8.6	14	40.0	15	42.8	35

TABLE 20. (Continued)

Respondents	K-3		4-6		7-8		9-10		11-12		Total
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
Extramarital Relations:											
Parents	1	1.4	--	--	13	18.6	17	24.3	39	55.7	70
9th Grade Students	--	--	--	--	5	17.8	9	32.1	14	50.0	28
12th Grade Students	--	--	3	11.1	3	11.1	11	40.7	10	37.1	27
Overpopulation:											
Parents	--	--	4	5.6	22	30.1	29	39.7	18	24.6	73
9th Grade Students	--	--	7	20.0	18	51.4	10	28.6	--	--	35
12th Grade Students	--	--	4	11.4	18	51.4	12	34.3	1	2.9	35
Abortion:											
Parents	--	--	2	2.4	15	19.5	28	32.2	40	45.9	85
9th Grade Students	--	--	--	--	9	28.1	16	50.0	7	21.9	32
12th Grade Students	--	--	2	2.8	11	30.5	18	52.8	5	13.9	36
Alternate Life Styles:											
Parents	--	--	1	1.4	16	23.2	26	37.7	26	37.7	69
9th Grade Students	--	--	2	5.4	16	43.2	13	35.1	6	16.2	37
12th Grade Students	--	--	2	5.8	15	42.8	14	40.0	4	11.4	35
Aging:											
Parents	3	3.8	2	2.6	13	16.7	20	15.6	40	51.3	78
9th Grade Students	2	6.1	7	21.2	8	24.2	9	27.3	7	21.2	33
12th Grade Students	6	16.2	3	8.2	8	21.6	11	29.7	9	24.3	37

TABLE 21. DATA RELATING TO THE SIGNIFICANT RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN PARENT AND STUDENT ATTITUDES TOWARD THE CLASSROOM STRUCTURE OF EACH TOPIC AREA

Respondents	Only Males		Only Females		Co-educational		Separately		Total
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
Petting:									
Parents	--	--	--	--	30	37.9	49	62.1	79
9th Grade Students	--	--	--	--	10	33.3	20	66.7	30
12th Grade Students	--	--	--	--	22	73.3	8	26.7	30
Out-of-Wedlock Pregnancy:									
Parents	--	--	1	1.3	36	45.6	42	53.1	79
9th Grade Students	--	--	9	27.3	10	30.3	14	42.4	33
12th Grade Students	--	--	6	17.6	24	70.6	4	11.8	34
Puberty:									
Parents	--	--	1	1.2	25	29.8	58	69.0	84
9th Grade Students	1	2.6	1	2.6	10	26.3	26	68.4	38
12th Grade Students	1	2.8	1	2.8	18	50.0	16	44.4	36
Menstruation:									
Parents	--	--	14	16.7	12	14.3	58	69.0	84
9th Grade Students	--	--	23	60.5	4	10.5	11	29.0	38
12th Grade Students	--	--	10	28.6	13	37.1	12	34.3	35
Reproductive Organs:									
Parents	--	--	1	1.2	16	19.5	65	79.3	82
9th Grade Students	--	--	--	--	14	35.0	26	65.0	40
12th Grade Students	--	--	--	--	24	66.7	12	33.3	36
Mate Selection:									
Parents	--	--	--	--	70	83.3	14	16.7	84
9th Grade Students	--	--	23	60.5	4	10.5	11	29.0	38
12th Grade Students	--	--	10	28.6	13	37.1	12	34.3	35

TABLE 21. (Continued)

Respondents	Only Males		Only Females		Co- educational		Separately		Total
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
Birth Control Methods:									
Parents	--	--	1	1.4	19	25.7	54	72.9	74
9th Grade Students	--	--	11	33.3	9	27.3	13	39.4	33
12th Grade Students	--	--	2	5.9	21	61.8	11	32.3	34
Premarital Sex:									
Parents	--	--	--	--	20	27.0	54	73.0	74
9th Grade Students	--	--	1	3.2	17	53.1	14	43.7	32
12th Grade Students	--	--	--	--	22	75.9	7	1.3	29
Family Planning:									
Parents	--	--	--	--	59	74.7	20	25.3	79
9th Grade Students	--	--	--	--	37	94.8	2	5.1	39
12th Grade Students	--	--	--	--	35	97.2	1	2.8	36
Conception:									
Parents	--	--	--	--	29	35.8	52	64.2	81
9th Grade Students	--	--	4	10.5	16	42.1	18	47.4	38
12th Grade Students	--	--	--	--	25	71.4	10	28.6	35
Pregnancy:									
Parents	--	--	2	2.4	36	42.8	46	54.8	84
9th Grade Students	--	--	7	19.0	13	35.1	17	45.9	37
12th Grade Students	--	--	5	13.5	26	70.3	6	16.2	37
Birth Process:									
Parents	--	--	2	2.4	33	39.3	49	58.3	84
9th Grade Students	--	--	8	22.9	14	40.0	13	37.1	35
12th Grade Students	--	--	7	18.9	25	67.6	5	13.5	37

TABLE 21. (Continued)

Respondents	Only Males		Only Females		Co- educational		Separately		N
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
Fetal Development:									
Parents	--	--	1	1.2	37	44.0	46	54.8	84
9th Grade Students	--	--	6	16.7	19	52.8	11	30.5	36
12th Grade Students	--	--	5	13.4	30	81.2	2	5.4	37
Mental Health:									
Parents	--	--	--	--	66	80.5	16	19.5	82
9th Grade Students	--	--	--	--	28	87.5	4	12.5	32
12th Grade Students	--	--	--	--	35	100	--	--	35
Abortion:									
Parents	--	--	2	3.0	39	58.2	26	38.8	67
9th Grade Students	--	--	10	32.3	10	32.3	11	35.4	31
12th Grade Students	--	--	8	22.2	23	63.9	5	13.9	36
Venereal Disease:									
Parents	--	--	1	1.2	35	43.3	45	55.5	81
9th Grade Students	--	--	--	--	11	35.5	20	64.5	31
12th Grade Students	--	--	--	--	27	77.1	8	22.9	35
Alternate Life Styles:									
Parents	--	--	--	--	50	72.5	18	27.5	69
9th Grade Students	--	--	--	--	30	83.3	6	16.7	36
12th Grade Students	--	--	--	--	34	97.1	1	2.9	35
Prostitution:									
Parents	--	--	6	9.8	27	44.3	28	45.9	61
9th Grade Students	--	--	4	20.0	7	35.0	9	45.0	20
12th Grade Students	--	--	4	12.9	23	74.2	4	12.9	31

TABLE 21. (Continued)

Respondent	Only Males		Only Females		Co- educational		Separately		Total
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
Homosexuality:									
Parents	1	1.3	--	--	34	43.6	33	42.3	78
9th Grade Students	3	12.5	--	--	10	41.7	11	45.8	24
12th Grade Students	--	--	--	--	21	77.8	6	22.2	27
Menopause:									
Parents	--	--	9	11.6	31	39.1	38	48.1	78
9th Grade Students	--	--	15	45.4	7	21.3	11	33.3	33
12th Grade Students	--	--	9	25.7	19	54.3	7	20.0	35

TABLE 22. DATA RELATING TO THE SIGNIFICANT RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN PARENT AND STUDENT ATTITUDES TOWARD THE QUALIFICATIONS OF A FAMILY LIFE AND SEX EDUCATION INSTRUCTOR

Characteristics	Parents ^a		9th Graders ^b		12th Graders ^c	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Sex:						
Male	--	--	--	--	--	--
Female	4	4.8	4	10.0	2	5.4
No Preference	70	82.3	36	90.0	33	89.2
*Other	11	12.9	--	--	2	5.4
Marital Status:						
Single	--	--	1	2.5	2	5.4
Married	26	30.6	10	25.0	9	24.3
No Preference	59	69.4	29	72.5	26	70.3
Age:						
Under 24 yrs.	--	--	3	7.5	1	2.7
25-35 yrs.	19	22.3	21	52.5	18	48.6
36-45 yrs.	11	12.9	--	--	1	2.7
46-55 yrs.	3	3.5	--	--	--	--
Over 56 yrs.	1	1.3	--	--	--	--
No Preference	51	60.0	16	40.0	17	45.9
Teaching Experience:						
None	--	--	--	--	--	--
1 yr.	1	1.2	2	5.0	6	16.2
2-3 yrs.	16	18.8	10	25.0	7	18.9
4-5 yrs.	11	12.9	8	20.0	2	5.4
Over 6 yrs.	9	10.6	--	--	1	2.8
No Preference	48	56.5	20	50.0	21	56.7

*"Other" refers to a female instructor for girls, and a male instructor for boys

^aN = 85

^bN = 40

^cN = 37

TABLE 23. DATA RELATING TO THE SIGNIFICANT RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN PARENT AND STUDENT ATTITUDES REGARDING THE PERSONALITY CHARACTERISTICS OF A FAMILY LIFE AND SEX EDUCATION INSTRUCTOR

Respondents ^a	Ranked #1		Ranked #2		Ranked #3		Ranked #4		Ranked #5		Ranked #6	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Ability to talk freely and maturely without embarrassment:												
Parents	29	34.1	22	25.9	13	15.3	10	11.8	4	4.7	7	8.2
9th Grade Students	12	40.0	9	22.5	8	20.0	5	12.5	5	12.5	1	2.5
12th Grade Students	13	35.1	6	16.3	14	37.8	--	--	2	5.4	2	5.4
Familiar with changing family life and sex education attitudes and practices today:												
Parents	2	2.4	6	7.0	9	10.6	13	15.3	26	30.6	29	34.1
9th Grade Students	4	10.0	11	27.5	5	12.5	5	12.5	9	22.5	6	15.0
12th Grade Students	4	10.8	6	16.2	4	10.8	9	24.3	11	29.7	3	8.2
Good understanding of one-self and one's own attitudes:												
Parents	10	11.8	8	9.4	21	24.7	11	12.9	18	21.2	17	20.0
9th Grade Students	6	15.0	3	7.5	3	7.5	10	25.0	6	15.0	12	30.0
12th Grade Students	4	10.8	6	16.2	9	24.3	3	8.2	5	13.5	10	27.0
Highly knowledgeable in the areas composing family life and sex education:												
Parents	21	24.7	14	16.5	18	21.2	13	15.3	12	14.1	7	8.2
9th Grade Students	8	20.0	5	12.5	10	25.0	5	12.5	7	17.5	5	12.5
12th Grade Students	6	16.2	3	8.1	3	8.1	8	21.6	10	27.0	7	18.9

TABLE 23. (Continued)

Respondents ^a	Ranked #1		Ranked #2		Ranked #3		Ranked #4		Ranked #5		Ranked #6	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Interest in family life and sex education:												
Parents	5	5.8	7	8.2	12	14.1	25	29.4	21	24.7	15	17.6
9th Grade Students	5	12.5	3	7.5	6	15.0	8	20.0	7	17.5	11	27.5
12th Grade Students	5	13.5	2	5.4	3	8.1	10	27.0	6	16.2	11	29.7
Sensitive to students' reactions and feelings:												
Parents	18	21.2	28	32.9	12	14.1	13	15.3	4	4.7	10	11.8
9th Grade Students	5	12.5	11	27.5	8	20.0	6	15.0	7	17.5	3	7.5
12th Grade Students	5	13.5	14	37.8	4	10.8	7	18.9	3	8.1	4	10.8

^aN = 85 (Parents)

N = 40 (9th Grade Students)

N = 37 (12th Grade Students)

TABLE 24. DATA RELATING TO THE SIGNIFICANT RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN PARENT AND STUDENT ATTITUDES REGARDING THE STATUS OF A FAMILY LIFE AND SEX EDUCATION COURSE

Respondents	<u>Required</u>		<u>Elective</u>		<u>Elective with Permission</u>	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Parents ^a	31	36.5	19	22.3	35	41.1
9th Grade Students ^b	5	15.0	24	60.0	11	27.5
12th Grade Students ^c	17	46.0	13	35.1	7	18.9

^aN = 85

^bN = 40

^cN = 37

APPENDIX H

COMMENTS RECEIVED FROM RESPONDENTS

Ninth Grade Students' Comments

"I think that all students should have to take sex education (high school students, maybe 7-8)."

"This questionnaire did not embarrass me as much as I thought it was going to. It should include masturbation and intercourse."

"I think sex education in schools would be good, because some people don't learn things from home and could get all the wrong meanings about it."

"I think sex education and family planning should be taught to help kids and teenagers to stay out of trouble and understand all of the stuff better."

"I feel the idea of having family planning and sex education is good so you can teach kids what their getting into or what they might have to get out of."

"I think sex education should be available but I think a person should decide what is right and wrong to them. Sex education is a good idea and it can help people who need more information about themselves."

"I think more information is needed on management of finances and the problems of marriage."

"I think it should have family planning and sex education. We need to know about the things that go on today and how to cope with them."

"I feel that kids should have the right to learn what they want to about sex but they shouldn't be forced to learn about it. If someone doesn't help teach them they think that the only way that they can learn is to experiment and that's what gets them in trouble."

"I think that the students should learn about sex education so that maybe there would be fewer teenage pregnancies. With this class they could learn about the responsibilities of sex."

"I think that kids should know the proper meanings of things dealing with family life and sex, not just what we learned as kids at school."

"I think that masturbation and intercourse should be taught in public schools. I think that sex education should be an elective course that any student may take."

"I just think that if a student feels he/she wishes to learn more about family life and sex education that there should be a class to take if they wish to take it. And I don't think the parents should have to give their consent because it should be up to the student who wishes to take it - - - not the parents!"

"I feel this is very important to a family, and many older children. I hope that I helped you by answering these questions and many children should take sex education classes."

"The age of the teacher should be at least 25 (an experienced adult). Students should become aware of the human body around the age of 14-15."

"I feel this should be a required class and that you teach what happens in some classes. I don't think it would hurt anyone. It would be important for them to learn it anyway."

"I feel that it will stop a lot of this stuff of teenagers getting pregnant or whatever will mess them up during their future life."

Twelfth Grade Students' Comments

"I think there are a lot of questions about sex that many students would like to know about, and do not know where to get their answers. I think sex education is a good idea in school!"

"I think it would be a good idea for the kids who are really involved in relationships."

"A family life and sex education course to my knowledge has really never come up in my years of school. And the way the world is now I feel that a course in family life and sex education would be very valuable. The courses I feel that would have the most important advantages for the students are: Family planning, heredity. Subjects like the one I checked I feel should be more understood than they are now. But I disagree with courses such as prostitution, I think that if they do have sex education, they should set it for both the female and male sex. Not just the woman, -- a man has just as much involvement in these topics as a woman. As I get to thinking about prostitution, maybe it would be better to have been in a class about this, instead of picking

it up through TV or maybe even the streets. I think that this was great that you took the time to do. I think you're doing a great job."

"I think it would be a good class for those who would be intending to take it serious."

"I think it's important that a person finds out early and understands the truth of what happens not that they just pick it up on the street and believe anything."

"It is a lot easier for kids who live on farms to learn about the processes that should be discussed in a Family Life or Sex Education class. I think that the sooner kids learn about these things, the less they will want to experiment with them."

"To me I feel that these courses would be very good to the students. It can help if you get into any situations that you will have to make a very important decision. It will also be good to get a lot of things out in the open that you have always wondered about."

"I think this would be a good learning class because of all the things that are going on today. Maybe it would help on some of the unwanted pregnancies and soon!"

"I feel this would be a good course for many of the students or all. I think it should be a required course, because so many students don't know much about the subject and should. A lot of them are making mistakes which I feel could be prevented if this course was required. We all should know about it, even if our parents have talked to us about it. There always seems to be something left out."

"I think it would be a good idea to have sex education and family life taught in the public schools of today. I know my mother never has made a point to talk to any of us (*children*) about the subject, but I've always had someone else I *could* speak with on the subject anyway. But what will it be like for the kids whose parents are maybe too embarrassed to talk about it or don't quite know how to approach their children. I *do* feel it would be a terrific idea."

"I feel that students should learn about themselves and about the opposite sex. I think it is important that you have a male instructor for boys and a female instructor for girls so the students wouldn't be embarrassed about talking about certain things."

"There is a great need for the teaching of both family life and sex education. Often times young people are afraid to ask questions or for

help and end up in a situation where they are confused and frightened. The more the students understand of the topics the less inclined they will be to experiment say with premarital sex or other things they know little of. Also the need for a family education class is apparent. Many people get married right out of high school but have little idea of what it takes to make a marriage and many of the things involved like financing and future goals. These often times are not considered. All the young people know is that they are in love."

"I think that the teaching of sex education is the parent's responsibility, not the schools. Why should the school take that responsibility? I realize some parents would not talk to their children but I still do not think that it should be taught. It might be good to inform the student of sex but let them read a book on their own time, in their own home. I might be old-fashioned, but sex education is something that should be taught in a slow and understanding manner by the parents, not the schools."

"I feel that if the course was taught right that it could help a lot of young people and cut down on unwanted pregnancies."

"It would be good to help parents that have a problem in this area in discussing this with their son or daughter."

"We need this information, especially with what is on TV -- that is full of sex. Well done."

"I feel family life should be required to juniors and seniors. Because that's around the time teenagers start getting serious about a certain person."

"I think this class would help prevent teenage pregnancies. Our parents don't tell us anything so where do we learn it? My friends think I know some things (like how you get VD) when I really don't. But I pretend I do. If these topics were discussed in school, I would know all of it and not feel so dumb."

"This would help us understand what is going on before it was too late. Kids at school put a lot of pressure on everyone to have sex -- or your not 'in'. It confuses me and I don't have anyone to really talk to about it except some close friends. In a class like this -- we could talk about this stuff."

"This questionnaire makes you think about your feelings and how you feel about things such as sex, marriage, and family life. The topics are good and seem to cover everything."

"I think this class is needed!!!"

"I think the class could help teenagers and some of the problems they have today."

Parents' Comments

"No comment, this seemed to cover about all the areas which are pertinent and important to a student, on which affect him or her the most."

"This is an *excellent* questionnaire. I am 100% for this to be a required course in the school system, as one can be sure many students are not receiving the answers at home."

"I feel this is a good questionnaire pertaining to this sensitive issue. Maybe it wouldn't be so sensitive if it's more talked about and brought out of the closet to help students or one student anyway. If this education helped just one student in any way, it would be worth all the time and effort, in my opinion."

"Divorce - If and when a child's parents become divorced the child should learn all about it no matter what his age so that he might understand it better. But - - - if a child comes from a stable home, why plant the thought of divorce in him? It will only serve to frighten him with thoughts that his parents might split. This makes it hard for me to choose an age - but when the class is taught, it should be co-educational."

"The teacher or teachers picked to teach this type of class - should be of high moral character. If these can't be met then the teacher should not teach this class."

"In general, I believe Sex Education should be required as a course in school. There's too many parents that are embarrassed to explain to their kids what's going on or they are ignorant themselves and can't explain it. The questions on pages 4 & 5 are subjects that many adults of the early 1960's and back can't even answer for themselves right now, let alone explain to a young searching and questioning mind."

"I think that all children should be taught sex in school. Because most parents do not have the ability to get the right thing across like a teacher or sex instructor can.

Most of us older people learned the hard way. Had 6 children before they knew what caused it all.

I think that if they are going to have sex when they are in younger years they should know how to prevent getting pregnant. Sex is what life is all about. If we didn't have it we wouldn't have a dam thing, so why not do it right so they can enjoy it?"

"Feel strongly it should be parents permission as it is highly against some families ideals and religion."

"The most important quality a teacher would need should be a Christian outlook and guide. Should abortion, birth control, premarital sex, divorce be included the teacher should have strong Christian and family views and should teach respect for various church views. I would prefer none of the above if taught by a teacher that accepted premarital sex or adultery as acceptable."

"The noted topic areas could be acceptable topics if taught by a Christian oriented teacher who could respect and be sympathetic of various religious beliefs. The touching on these subjects also depends on the degree of depth of the topic involved. I would not accept a teacher who was permissive of premarital sex, adultery or homosexuality."

"After teaching Home Economics, including Family Life and Sex Education, for a number of years, I feel there is a great need for this instruction in the upper four grades and high school. If the majority of our students came from solid Christian homes, as they did when America was young, I believe this instruction would be taken care of in the home. Since this is one of the basic responsibilities not accepted by many parents in recent years, I believe the next generation would profit from a required course in Family Life and Sex Education, if *properly handled*."

"I am glad to note that you are interested in overpopulation, mental diseases, etc. I agree with the comment you better make a life before you start a life. It seems to me that the less intelligent people seem to have the most sex drive and are naturally the ones that are populating the country."

"This should be up to the parents and church. If this is taught in the schools, it will just teach kids extra things to have them experiment with.

Who is to say a teacher is qualified to teach this controversial subject? I would want to be able to personally interview this person myself to check on their references.

Communities are not ready for this. You would meet a lot of friction and concerns from parents. I don't think it would work."

"I feel that the students that would really need such a course would be the ones that the parents would be the biggest objectors -- and yet they fail to teach the children what they should know."

"I think some of the topics should be *required*."

"I feel this subject area is greatly needed in our school system today, because the majority of parents are too embarrassed and self-conscious to discuss with their children. The teenagers learn the information from their friends and through the "whispers" of the streets -- and is this information always correct?"

"A course of this kind would be valuable. An important consideration would be a well-qualified teacher who could talk about sex without being embarrassed or making a joke out of it.

There is a strong need for this among our young people but I feel parents should have the opportunity to review the textbooks, films, and subject matter content, because this responsibility is truly that of the parents. Even a clergyman or doctor could help teach such a course."

"Anything to keep humans off the tax roll -- plus a better life."

"This is needed in the schools today -- more so in the large schools."

"With the rise of teenage pregnancies and VD -- I believe this is needed today and it is the school's responsibility to do this as parents are not doing it, just look at the statistics!"

"I would like to see a good basic course taught. Kids know more about this subject than we do - but are not taught basics. I feel sorry for couples now - where is the wonder of sex -- now every magazine has an article of what you are to get out of it.

I attended an adult class in sex education and was embarrassed part of the time.

I do wish they were taught about the expense - work - who will support the mother and child.

Something has to be done about this - but the more they learn - the less they use the knowledge."

"I feel parents should be the ones to teach their child of sex education and to instill in them a high moral standard."

"I feel the topics are important items, but due to the embarrassment some may cause children or young adults, I think it would be better understood if the classes were not co-educational.

Knowing the definite lack of sex education I had growing up, I think sex education as an elective course would be very good."

"Personally, I would prefer to see *all* sex education given in the homes. However, realizing that many would never receive any information - if left to the home and others would receive misinformation. I can understand the need to have it done in schools. I feel sex education should be presented along with moral guidance so my conflict of feelings over having it taught in school. Whose morals would be present, etc. Also, while I've designated ages for various subjects - actually it should be taught when the subject is brought up. While those topics I've marked Column A are not things I would present in great detail to my children, still they need honest answers when the topic comes up, if it does. I've marked ages according to what I feel can be handled well - and separated male and female when I felt sensitivity and embarrassment would have hindered a mixed group."

"I believe that the responsibility of sex should be stressed, either in the male or female role, rather than the mere "facts of life" presentations."

"Like many other subjects, it can have its advantages and its disadvantages."

"I would of checked co-educational on almost all of the statements but I was afraid that it could embarrass some of the students and then they wouldn't ask questions or even want to participate in the class. So it would depend greatly on the students and how mature their thinking would be."

"I just want to add, I believe most of these subjects should be taught at home, but to many parents do not take the time to do so. And they need the true fact and not just hear say from each other."

"With the way the world is today, why not have this as a required course? If the first part of this questionnaire on page 5 was at 11th grade level, then page 6 could be at 12th grade level. Some young men and women are planning to be married as seniors, and some are already married because of pregnancy."

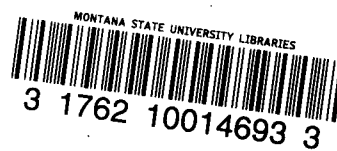
"I feel the students of today need a good family life and sex education course."

"As with any educational program of this sort, the responsibility of good informative material and its presentation is placed on the

teachers. They are the ones who can make the program a non-personal (as far as the students are concerned) and well informed educational benefit. They also can make it degrading and shameful. Although I am more liberal than some, and do believe this information must get to the students while they are in High School, I do not agree that it should be shotgunned at them like an impersonal algebra lesson, nor do I believe a closed door, shades drawn approach is the answer. The teacher should be old enough to have had some realistic life experiences/challenges, and also be a feeling person, so students will know how important this area is."

"If the family is doing its job properly - these subjects need not be handled in school. Unfortunately this is not the case so the subject *must* be presented to everyone. Probably the most important aspect to this matter is the attitude and qualifications of the instructor(s)."

"How the information should be disseminated and at what ages is largely dependent upon the qualifications and personality of the teachers. The ideal is for a great deal of the education to take place within the family itself when the questions arise."



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