



Proposed guidelines for a family life and sex education program in Bozeman schools
by Ann Marie Mayer Seibel

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

This study was undertaken in response to the recommendations made by the Bozeman School Advisory Committee regarding development of a family life and sex education program for this community. In addition, an evaluation of teacher readiness for their participation in such a project was made.

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PROPOSED GUIDELINES FOR A FAMILY LIFE AND SEX EDUCATION
PROGRAM IN BOZEMAN SCHOOLS

by

ANN MARIE MAYER SEIBEL

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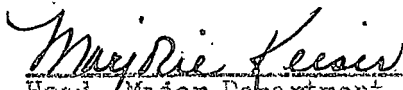
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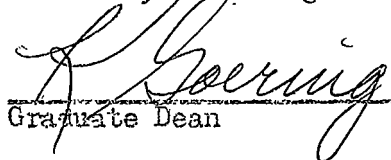
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ABSTRACT

This study was undertaken in response to the recommendations made by the Bozeman School Advisory Committee regarding development of a family life and sex education program for this community. In addition, an evaluation of teacher readiness for their participation in such a project was made.

To determine teacher attitudes toward family life and sex education a questionnaire was distributed to 204 certified personnel in the Bozeman, Montana, schools. Of these 80.9% were returned.

Based upon extensive literature research and the questionnaire results, criteria most applicable to this community were selected. These led to formulation of a set of comprehensive guidelines in family life and sex education for Bozeman.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

When parents, youths or educators talk about "Sex Education Programs," what do they mean? For some the safe movie and lecture may constitute sex education. For others, simply a one time program such as information on menstruation for girls may seem adequate. Still others provide resource persons occasionally so that children may ask some questions. While these activities pertain to sex teaching, in truth they constitute a piece-meal and ineffective approach to this sensitive and vital subject. What is needed is some means of providing information in order that children can distinguish truths from untruths, and gain the knowledge and preparation that will help them accept the responsibility of their own choices, in terms of their sexuality.

Need for the Study

In Bozeman, Montana, a School Advisory Committee was appointed by the Trustees of School District #7 to study the need for a family life and sex education program. This ad hoc committee, appointed to function during the school year 1967-68, consisted of eighteen members representing various elements of the community's social structure. The group was charged with the responsibility of determining the community attitude toward family life and sex education and the curricular requirements for such instruction. A committee report of the findings was submitted to the Board of Trustees at its February, 1968, meeting.

The significant results of the survey, conducted by the Advisory Committee, included the following:

- a. The parents who were surveyed requested--almost demanded--that a program of family life and sex education be developed for their schools.
- b. The students indicated overwhelmingly that family life and sex education should be offered in the schools.
- c. A majority of the respondents felt that the program should be taught by qualified instructors.
- d. The Bozeman Ministerial Association expressed its full support in the undertaking of such a program.¹

These findings clearly indicated that there is an existing need in this community, that family life and sex education is desired and would be supported by members of the community.

Several of the more important recommendations made by the Advisory Committee are below. A summary of the Committee results may be seen in Appendix A.

- a. A program of family life and sex education should be developed and initiated at the earliest possible date.
- b. The program should be coordinated from kindergarten through grade twelve.
- c. Family life and sex education should be taught by carefully selected, competent personnel.

¹"Findings and Recommendations on FAMILY LIFE AND SEX EDUCATION," Citizens' Committee Report to School Board, Bozeman, Montana, 1967-68.

- d. A carefully planned, correlated program should be provided at the adult level.

Purpose for the Study

It is evident that the community of Bozeman is amenable to a sex education program. Although some effort has been made by the school administration to augment the current limited family life and sex education to fit the community needs, as recommended by the Advisory Committee, a comprehensive program has not yet been designed. This study was undertaken to tailor a program for the Bozeman schools. In addition, an evaluation of teacher readiness for family life and sex education was obtained.

Hypotheses

- a. The attitude of the Bozeman, Montana, teachers toward family life and sex education will be favorable.
- b. Bozeman teachers will indicate inadequate preparation for family life and sex education teaching.
- c. Teachers in Bozeman will be willing to prepare themselves to teach in family life and sex education.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

No culture exists that does not provide some means for its members to learn their rightful roles in society. Katherine Whiteside Taylor² has written:

In studies of primitive tribes, both historical and present day, we find the training of the adolescent too important to be left to the individual parent. The child's readiness for adult independence and responsibility is symbolized by public rites. These impress upon the tribes, the parent, and the individual himself that the final weaning has taken place. . . He is a member of adult society, with rights and privileges of his own . . . He is not left to sink or swim. . .

In Roman days the boy of fourteen. . . received the Toga Virilis and was acknowledged as a citizen. . . . In our own colonial culture boys of fourteen left the parental roof to live as apprentices to craftsmen. . . . At age sixteen or eighteen our own grandparents were already married. . .

Unfortunately, today's complex and rapidly changing culture does not make such pat. provisions for its youth. The rapid social change, coupled with greater moral flexibility, has brought about the "identity crises confronting the adolescent"³ in his world. It is obvious that educators and other adults must strive to give children and adolescents a far deeper level of self awareness.

²Katherine Whiteside Taylor, Do Adolescents Need Parents? (New York and London: D. Appleton-Century Company, 1938), pp. 10-11.

³Wallace C. Fulton, "Educating the Teenager in Human Relations," Community Services and Health Education, The Equitable Life Assurance Society, New York, New York, p. 1.

Need for Sexuality Education

Vitally important in children's development is their acceptance of sexuality and the roles with which they identify. All children from the moment of birth are sexual beings. Usually the first concern of parents is shown by the question, "Is it a boy or a girl?" A girl will naturally be placed in a pink bassinette and a boy will go into a blue one. Gifts for the new-born will further show the distinction between the sexes. Boys receive tailored little suits, blue or white but never pink. The suits will have obvious fly fronts. Gifts for girls are of the fluffy pink variety but never blue. They are obviously designed to emphasize sweet girlishness. As the child grows, boys learn through experience that "big boys don't cry" and girls learn that tears and emotional outbursts may actually enhance their femininity. Thus, sex education has begun and in the words of Dr. Mary Calderone it will "deal with one's total sexuality--maleness or femaleness, what makes you a man or a woman, the way you act, think, dress, and marry. For sex is not something we do, but something we are. . . ."4

Children's Attitudes

Children are natural imitators. From infancy to adulthood their attitudes are formed and adults need to be aware that their feelings,

⁴Paul Friggens, "Shameful Neglect of Sex Education," The PTA Magazine, 69, No. 9, May, 1967, 4-7.

actions, and attitudes, will be mirrored by the young. Education in sexuality is given constantly as teachers and parents respond (or do not respond) to queries, "Where did I come from?" "Where did the kittens come from?" or the clincher that so often brings on tight-lipped silence from adults, "How did I get in there and how did I get out?". Children the world over play house ("you be the mother and I'll be the father"). Or they may play "doctor" ("let me look at your 'stomik'"). Games such as these will stimulate questions about sex, and the answers adults give at this time contribute greatly to a child's positive or negative attitude toward his sexuality.

Schools as Sexuality Educators

While the concession is made that sex education is essential, many of today's educators and other adults are basically hypocritical in their feelings toward sex. On the one hand, they are bound by the accepted conventions of the past. On the other, they are trying to make an adjustment to the conflicting moral climate of the present. The need exists, therefore, to reevaluate thinking in this area. Regrettably, this topic is still considered taboo and the dilemma of dealing with it is too often resolved by simply ignoring or postponing it. As stated by Donald H. Blocher:⁵

Many of the developmental problems in the sexual area that occur in our society result from a kind of unspoken adult conspiracy to view children, adolescents, and young adults as asexual beings

⁵Donald H. Blocher, Developmental Counseling, (New York: The Ronald Press Company), 1966, p. 101.

until the society finds it convenient to recognize their sexuality.

In elementary grades children already have well established attitudes and have formed many of their own ideas about sexuality. While some have a wholesome, healthy outlook toward family, peers, and the opposite sex, others are emotionally crippled. Opportunities abound for teachers to provide guidance to children which will help to change their attitudes toward sexuality. An approach to sex education based on factual information and acceptance of sex as an inseparable part of living becomes their responsibility.

Wild tales and distortions about sex are apt to circulate in any setting where children and youth congregate. The responsible adult will counter every fragment of misinformation with accurate and honest information, thereby giving children and youths the knowledge to aid them in fitting their sex roles. Sexuality education is an ongoing process from birth. It does not, then, arise at any given time in a child's life but is developed throughout his educational life.

Sex Education Programs in the U. S.

Common Elements

There are approximately 1000 programs of family life and sex education in public and private schools in the United States. The programs investigated for this study varied considerably in their structure. They contained certain elements, however, that were common to all.

Objectives and Goals.--The desirable objectives and goals on which family life and sex education is based are broad and encompass all facets

of a child's development. Family life and sex education is recognized as extending far beyond that narrow subject matter "The facts of life." It is planned to: (1) provide for the individual an adequate knowledge of his own physical, mental, and emotional maturation processes as related to sex; (2) build an understanding of the need for moral values that are essential to provide rational bases for making decisions;⁶ and (3) integrate sex into a balanced and purposeful pattern of living.⁷

Scope of Programs.--Most of the planned programs provide for reproductive education for their students. This includes complete information on physiology, anatomy, and terminology in relation to sex and sex relationships. The social aspect of sex education emphasizes sex as a function of the whole personality. "Learning experiences are provided to develop the potentials of individuals in their present and future family roles. The central concept is that of relationships through which personality develops, about which individuals make decisions to which they are committed, and in which they develop self-esteem."⁸ Satisfactory personal adjustments, wholesome attitudes toward sexuality, the building of a value system by which to live; these are all within the scope of a comprehensive family life and sex education program.

⁶Lester A. Kirkendall, "Sex Education," SIECUS Study Guide No. 1, 1967, pp. 10-11.

⁷"Planning and Teaching Family Life Education," Minnesota Department of Health, February, 1967, p. 3.

⁸"Family Life Education Programs: Principles, Plans, Procedures," The Family Life Coordinator, July, 1968, pp. 211-214.

Planning the Program.--In the initial planning stage a need for family life and sex education must be established. This is most often accomplished by involving different segments of the community. These include the PTA, Citizens' Advisory Boards, the Board of Trustees, groups of interested parents, medical associations and religious groups. In one case, a concerned school nurse saw a pressing need for this type of instruction. Public discussions and qualified speakers also help to point up the need for a program in the community.

Education for Parents.--Most programs provide some means for parents to become actively involved. In some areas, adult education courses were offered along with discussion groups and movies. The opportunity to preview materials used in the classrooms is open to parents, and they are encouraged to share their questions with the teachers. In all cases, information carried home by the children supplied enough knowledge to keep the parents informed about what is going on in the school.

Education for Teachers.--At the present time it is generally recognized that teachers are inadequately prepared to teach family life and sex education. It is suggested that the lack in preparedness can be overcome through in-service courses, workshops, and institutes held by teacher institutions. The Sex Information and Education Council of the U. S. (SIECUS) reported that thirty different colleges and universities in eighteen states intended to offer workshops and institutes during the summer of 1968.

Administrators of school systems with established sex education programs acknowledge that a continuing need for in-service programs exists.

"The Anaheim, California, school system has offered in-service training to its teachers since its program began. Other districts, such as those at Hinsdale and Downers Grove, Illinois, are including in-service education in the plans that they are developing."⁹ This trend is reinforced by the position statement from Minnesota which states, "In-service education of teachers must parallel any curriculum development in this area."¹⁰

Location of Programs

No one specific geographical area can lay claim to the leadership in family life and sex education. From California to Maine, from Iowa to Florida, come reports of progress in sex education. In some instances, the programs have been in effect for many years while in others they are in the implementation stage. The Toms River, New Jersey, high school has had a course in instruction on attitudes toward and standards for sex in secondary school courses in family living since 1938. In Hayward, California, the high schools have offered a program in the social studies curriculum throughout the four years, since 1946.¹¹ In response to requests for guidance in developing sex education programs, a meeting, sponsored by the National Association of Independent Schools, was held in Princeton, New

⁹Lester A. Kirkendall and Helen M. Fox, "Starting a Sex Education Program," Children, U. S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, XIV, (1967), 136-140.

¹⁰Department of Education, State of Minnesota, St. Paul, 1967.

¹¹Kirkendall and Fox, "Starting a Sex Education Program," pp. 136-140.

Jersey, in 1966. As a result of the convention, a large number of Catholic dioceses instituted pilot programs for their schools.¹²

Sources for Assistance in Planning Programs

Local

Schools interested in initiating sex education programs may utilize the services of their State Boards of Health. The staff members, familiar with the needs peculiar to each community within the State, are usually able to furnish valuable suggestions and support. Guides giving general directions in starting a program, extensive bibliographies, and lists of desirable films and filmstrips are some of the materials made available.

National

On a national scale, the Sex Information and Education Council of the U. S. (SIECUS) gives major assistance to those planning programs. The rapid growth of this organization is a testimony to the readiness of the public's acceptance for family life and sex education for their schools. Chartered in 1964, this organization has achieved astonishing success in fulfilling its purpose.

¹²Virginia Hilu, Sex Education and the Schools, (New York, Evanston and London: Harper and Row, 1968), pp. ix-xi.

The 1967-68 Service Highlights report the services of their staff.

These include:¹³

1. Community services of planning, consultations, speeches, public program organization, and university seminars.
2. Educational services on the national, regional, state, and local level. The staff visited thirty-nine states to advise on teacher preparation.
3. Distribution of materials in the form of kits that include newsletters, study guides, reprints, and audio-visual aids. References to resource agencies and materials that may be found elsewhere are made available on request.

A series of pamphlets has been published by The American Medical Association and the National Education Association especially:

To help parents and those other adults who may have responsibility and concern in assisting children to form sound ideas and attitudes about family living, including sex education.¹⁴

The series of five pamphlets includes information for parents of the very young child and progresses to information for the sixteen to twenty year old. One of the series is written to aid teachers and parents who may need a deeper understanding of sex education.

A booklet produced by The Instructor¹⁵ magazine entitled, "Sex--Who

¹³"SIECUS Annual Report," Sex Information and Education Council of the U. S., Inc., New York, New York, (1967-68), p. 10.

¹⁴Marion O. Lerrigo, Helen Southard, and Milton J. E. Senn, "Sex Education Series," American Medical Association, 1962, pp. 1-70.

¹⁵"Sex Education," The Instructor, LXXVII, No. 1, August/September, 1967, 132-134.

"Will Tell Your Child?" would be an excellent choice for parents of children through grades six. This illustrated booklet contains pertinent information on the reproductive processes and has some suggestions for handling the more common questions children may ask concerning sexuality. For the schools, the booklet may be purchased in quantity at minimal cost and could be used for distribution to parents at the first scheduled group meeting.

Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish groups have materials available. "Sex morality teaching kits" are prepared for discussion leaders by the Young Women's Christian Association. Not to be overlooked as sound sources for assistance in planning are curricula from other communities, books, film and other resources related to the family life and sex education field.

Criteria for Family Life and Sex Education

A list of points to consider when evaluating family life and sex education programs and materials is published in The Family Coordinator.¹⁶

They are:

1. Is the program based on a broad and well-rounded definition of family life education?
2. Does it emphasize active participation of the students in the family life education class?
3. Do the students play a part in determining the course content?
4. Is there a focus on discussion, rather than on lectures alone?
5. Are audio-visual materials used, as well as publications?
6. Are underlying concepts clearly identified? Is the subject matter addressed to the concepts?

¹⁶"Family Life Education Programs: Principles, Plans, Procedures," The Family Coordinator, 17, No. 4, July, 1968, 211-214.

7. Is the information which is presented adequate, accurate, and current?
8. Is it relevant to the life situations of the audience? Will it stimulate various subgroups to adapt and use it?
9. Do the material and program encourage and adapt to acceptances of differences? To the recognition and resolution of conflict?
10. Are differing family values and family patterns presented and respected? Is the development of increasingly meaningful values promoted?
11. Are problems treated as those of individuals rather than those of social classes?
12. Does the course have as a goal the continuing development of teachers as well as of students? Does it provide for enlarging the experiences of the participants?
13. Is the presentation of family roles realistic to today's world?
14. Is the ability to communicate enhanced by allowing participation of the group in all stages from planning to followup?
15. Is continuing communication among participants across age and social barriers promoted?
16. Are teachers, parents, and students encouraged to share ideas and feelings?
17. Does the format of the material increase its usefulness?
18. Are creativity and problem solving encouraged? Can students experiment with various combinations of processes, situations, and uses of material things?
19. Are provisions made for the evolution of family life concepts, in providing for anticipated or real change? Can the material be used to continue to uncover new needs?
20. Is the development of different levels of generalization encouraged, i.e., from description to cause and effect?
21. Are the participants helped to become aware of how the family relates to the community and its resources?
22. Is there built-in provision for assessing the response to materials, procedures, teaching, and student achievement?

These general criteria may be considered as excellent guidelines for formulating or evaluating family life and sex education programs.

CHAPTER III

FAMILY LIFE AND SEX EDUCATION CURRICULUM FOR BOZEMAN

Using the recommendations of the Bozeman School Advisory Committee, guidelines for a family life and sex education program have been developed to fit the need in this community. The proposed guidelines were based upon the premise that community members, including parents and youths, are responsive to such a program for their schools.

Curriculum Guide

This curriculum guide is not intended to offer methodology nor detailed discussion of subject matter. It should be considered as a framework upon which a more comprehensive program may be developed. Final planning and decisions about curriculum must rest with the local school personnel.

In formulating the proposed guide, several outstanding family life and sex education programs and guides were carefully reviewed. Selected portions that have been reliably applied elsewhere, combined with concepts derived from thesis research, were used where adaptation to the Bozeman community could be made.

Definition

Family life and sex education may be viewed in several ways. In the narrowest context it is seen as teaching the facts of life and in its broadest context may include all facets--emotional, spiritual, social, and

physical--of an individual's development. As expressed by Joseph S.

Darden:¹⁷

. . .it includes more than anatomical and reproductive information and emphasizes attitude development and guidance related to associations between the sexes. It implies that man's sexuality is integrated into his total life development as a health entity and a source of creative energy.

For the purpose of this study sex education is defined in its broadest context; for establishing wholesome attitudes and feelings toward human sexuality for effective family living.

Objectives

The objectives for this curriculum guide have been formulated to describe expected behavior as students progress toward the attainment of certain developmental tasks. It should:

1. provide an adequate knowledge of the maturational processes, physical and emotional, as related to sex.
2. help build correct and scientific terminology to describe human anatomy.
3. provide a foundation for building wholesome attitudes toward human sexuality.
4. give insight to the development of, and need for, moral control and moral rules.
5. help students in acceptance of a socially approved male or female role.
6. give students insight concerning their relationships with parents, peers, and other adults.

¹⁷"Growth Patterns and Sex Education," The Journal of School Health, XXXVII, No. 5A., May, 1967, 1.

Community Involvement with the School Program

For family life and sex education to meet with maximum success in the Bozeman community, cooperation must exist between the home, church, and the school. Each has a special function to perform in giving guidance to children and youth; ideally, this guidance would be a blending of the three agencies.

Parent Involvement

"When a subject is as new and unfamiliar as family life with all its various avenues of learning and yet so very 'close to home' in all its many phases, parents must share. All must learn together, each in his separate way."¹⁸ It is essential, then, that the Bozeman parents be as involved in their children's development in sex education as in any other area of their learning. Initially, to gain interest and cooperation, letters should be sent to parents informing them of the introduction of such a program. This would include the aims, objectives, and scope of the program along with an overview of the course content.

A second step should be to encourage parents to contribute their views and feelings about family life and sex education. To accomplish this, the schools may arrange for parent group meetings, enabling parents to share their questions and/or anxieties about the proposed learning with the teachers who are responsible for it. At this time the opportunity can be

¹⁸Francis Bruce Strain and Chester Lee Eggert, Framework for Family Life Education, (The American Association for Health, Physical Education, and Recreation, 1956), p. 104.

provided for parents to preview the audio-visual materials that are intended for use in the course.

Other approaches which can help remove negative notions about family life and sex education may be necessary before a program can function adequately. Speakers could be engaged to discuss the topic in mixed groups during PTA or other group meetings. Here, the church and other civic groups can give invaluable aid by helping parents become familiar with the positive aspects of sexuality education. The booklets, discussed in the literature review on pages 12 and 13, could be distributed at the first parent meeting, thus helping to orient the parents who are "immobilized by the fear of sex and their own ignorance of how to handle the subject with their children."¹⁹ Because lack of proper terminology is often considered as the cause of breakdown in communication about sexuality, parents, along with their children, should develop an acceptable vocabulary that will be useful in describing body parts. The concise terminology used in the booklets could provide the information that is necessary to enable parent, child, and teacher to talk in clear and unambiguous terms with one another.

Church Involvement

In noting the responsibility of the church for sex education, Alvin W. Quinn writes:²⁰

¹⁹Kirkendall and Fox, pp. 136-140.

²⁰Alvin W. Quinn, "A Program of Sex Education In K-8 Science," The Instructor, August/September, 1966, pp. 31 and 42-43.

The church, although it is outside the school, needs to coordinate sermons and work with youth groups along the lines of increased morality and self control. It's up to the religious leaders to set unalterable standards without a pious oh-isn't-it-awful attitude and without a series of thunderous prohibitions.

In the near unanimous approval to family life and sex education for the schools, the clergy of Bozeman have clearly recognized the value of this crucial learning for children and youth. There is abundant evidence that churches in this community are already engaged in many worthwhile youth activities. Thus, in providing wholesome social opportunities they are making a significant contribution toward building sound ethical principles.

Some churches have undertaken to give parent education to parallel that of the children receiving family life and sex education in their schools. This assists parents in answering their children's questions and is a valuable contribution.

Sequential Program for Bozeman Schools

Family life and sex education should be a sequentially planned learning experience which begins in the kindergarten and progresses through high schools. In this way, Havighurst's principle²¹ that there are certain tasks that all individuals must learn, can be incorporated. These "the developmental tasks of life" are defined in this way:

A developmental task is a task which arises at or about a certain period in the life of an individual, successful achievement of which leads to his happiness and to success with later tasks, while failure leads to unhappiness in the individual, disapproval by the society, and difficulty with later tasks.

²¹Robert J. Havighurst, Developmental Tasks and Education, (New York, London, and Toronto: Longmans, Green and Co., 1957), p. 2.

The developmental tasks of early childhood prior to entering school are:

1. Learning sex differences and sex modesty.
2. Learning to relate emotionally to family members and others.
3. Learning to distinguish right and wrong, and developing a conscience.²²

Elementary Grades Kindergarten Through Four

In kindergarten and the earlier grades, sexuality education should be as natural as possible. It is obvious, therefore, that boys and girls would not be separated for discussions during these years. Primarily, the task of the teacher consists in helping children to learn about themselves as sexual beings, and also to learn something of role identity. This may be achieved quite incidentally through their every day activities within the school setting.

No specific time should be set apart for sex education in the elementary grades. The teachable moment may occur at any time during the school day. These "moments" should bring the children to the realization of several basic concepts in the matter of birth, reproduction, and the human body. Milton I. Levine²³ states these basic concepts:

1. Life comes from life.
2. All babies, animals and humans, come from their mothers.
3. All animals produce babies of the same kind.
4. There must be a father and a mother before a baby can be born.
5. Boys and girls are different physically.
6. Boys remain males and grow up to be men, and girls remain females and grow up to be women.

²²Ibid., pp. 12-13.

²³Milton I. Levine, "Sex Education in the Public Elementary and High School Curriculum," The Journal of School Health, XXXVII, No. 1 (1964), 33.

