

QUEBEC FEDERATION OF PROTESTANT
HOME AND SCHOOL ASSOCIATIONS
REPORT OF SEX EDUCATION COMMITTEE

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The term "sex education" as used in the terms of reference has been interpreted by the committee to mean education in which sexual, biological and physiological facts are only disclosed in the full context of human relations. It must be made clear at the outset therefore, that sex education, in our opinion, cannot consist of less than education in Human Relations in which sexual growth is seen as part of the whole growth of the individual and in which basic sexual facts are discussed in the context of the growing boy and girl in their development into manhood and womanhood.

Such education can usefully complement what is taught in the home without in any way diminishing the value of the home or what is therein taught. Such education would increase the student's self-understanding and contribute to his competence in personal relationships.

Responsibility, the meaning of freedom and discipline, the development of a sense of self-worth, clarification of present ethics and mores, are all aspects which youth needs to consider and discuss, particularly amid the many pressures and tensions more present today.

Such education would provide students with opportunities to explore principles involved, the attitudes and values held by others and help them to learn to recognize and accept that which is valuable and has meaning in their present or future homes.

It is important that parents become aware of the subject content and be given opportunities to go over material presented in parallel with their children.

CURRICULUM CONTENT

As to curriculum, the committee has found difficulty in determining from the programmes carried out elsewhere, which elements are essential and which are peripheral. It recommends that a directorate of human relations at the Department of Education, be immediately instituted with a view to determining a curriculum suitable for Quebec English Protestant Schools.

The following indicates some of the contents the committee would expect in such a curriculum.

The essential requirement is to provide a way for the child or adolescent to learn implications of emotional and physical changes before or at the time they are taking place, in an easy understanding atmosphere free from conflict and tension.

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In the elementary schools, desirable attitudes may be related to improved health practices. In addition to hygiene, areas of practical learning could include the understanding of the reproductive process, personal understand, living with others and adjusting to adolescence. It is important to secure the active interest and co-operation of the other members of the school staff, as well as of the parents.

What should be taught varies with the grade, as does how much time can be devoted to the subject. Some attention should be paid to the subject as early as kindergarten and some regular periods for discussion are required in all grades to the end of the elementary school.

In view of the different rates of development of, and psychological differences between males and females in grades V, VI, and VII separation of the sexes is desirable.

HIGH SCHOOLS

In the high schools, teenagers are searching to learn how to adjust to their physical and emotional changes, how to cope with social pressures, how to establish relationships outside the family, and how to find their place in their own generation. They are searching for a sense of identity, a sense of purpose, and to establish for themselves attainable levels of aspiration. They are seeking terms of reference for the decisions they will have to make and will want to develop their own attitudes towards the moral, religious or traditional view towards the findings of the behavioural sciences and towards the view that holds tomorrow will look after itself.

It is recommended that the group discussion method be used which is one of facilitation the formulation and development of ideas, rather than one of imposing them from outside. It is one requiring sensitivity on the part of the teacher to catch the delicate nuances of the words of the students. Only rarely will there be occasion for a formal lecture and never for examinations, tests or written tasks. As before, a relaxed and informal atmosphere, free from anxiety, is required in which self-consciousness will disappear and an attempt can be made:

1. to analyze together an attitude or group of attitudes,
2. to relate one person to another and to society
4. to encourage strong positive attitudes towards life and
4. to encourage such virtues as honesty, courtesy and loyalty

Mores, ethics and values cannot be avoided in such a course, in fact they are at the heart of the subject. Care must be taken that any teachings in the class be in consonance with those of the families and of the community from which the children come. Those matters which are generally called religious and which are capable of honest differences of opinion -- matters of theology and dogma or matters of faith -- must not be taught with an intent to persuade or convince, but if presentd, must be truthful and

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impartial. It will be practical on occasion to refer the questioner to an appropriate authority such as rabbi, priest or minister.

Aids to discussion such as movies, and talks, could be used to stimulate discussion on, for example, dating, "going steady", the distinction between love and infatuation and the responsibilities of marriage and parenthood. The understanding of emotion and interpersonal relationships should be stressed.

In the earlier grades of high school, where there is still a discrepancy in the rate and stage of development between the sexes, classes should be segregated as to sex, but there is great advantage in at least the last two years of high school in mixed classes to encourage comfort in such discussions in mixed company.

Teacher Qualifications: Although the term teacher is used throughout this report, it must be understood that the process to be used, more than in any other case, is that of developing an understanding which comes from the student alone. The process is not authoritarian, but rather integrative.

The teacher must possess self-confidence and be capable of good rapport with the students, sensitive to their interests. Self-consciousness, uncertainty and reservation, etc., are unacceptable characteristics. The teacher must know the physical, emotional, social and intellectual needs of the group with which he is working. A teacher must be mentally healthy and should have an excellent teaching record.

In the beginning years, while the curriculum is being developed, teachers exhibiting the characteristics required could be introduced to the function of "Human Relations Teacher" through work shops, seminars and other specialized training. Other candidates could be selected from the staff of suitable organizations such as the Mental Hygiene Institute or Family Life Education Council, and Marriage Counselling Service, all of Montreal. A screening service for the selection of teachers is required.

It is recommended that there be instituted Human Relations Departments at teacher training institutions for the training of all teachers, with a view to choosing those who have the characteristics required for specialization. While it is recommended that such education be included in the curriculum as soon as possible, it may be desirable for individual schools to introduce programmes extra-curricularly, on the authority of the local school board or the local home and school association. In such cases extreme care must be exercised in the selection of qualified teachers and in reaching full understanding with both staff and parents as to the content of curriculum.

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