

A STUDY OF CONCEPTS IN SEX EDUCATION AND MATURITY LEVELS  
OF STUDENTS GRADES KINDERGARTEN THROUGH TWELVE

by

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B. S., Kansas State Teachers College, 1960

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A MASTER'S REPORT

submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree

MASTER OF SCIENCE

Department of Physical Education

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY  
Manhattan, Kansas

1968

Approved by:

  
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#### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The author is especially indebted to Mr. Raymond A. Wauthier, Assistant Professor of Physical Education, for his valuable guidance, professional advice, and his time and effort in the constructing of this report. Appreciation is also expressed to Professor T. M. Evans of the Physical Education Department of Kansas State University for his suggestions and criticisms of the manuscript. Appreciation is also expressed to Mr. G. W. Long, Assistant Professor in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Kansas State University, for his suggestions and advice on this report. Special thanks should also go to my wife Twila for her encouragement and assistance in the preparation of this report.

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## INTRODUCTION

"Silence is criminal. We must teach these facts and teach them right, so that knowledge may lead to purity and righteousness. But with the new awakening and discussion of sex matters, the pendulum has swung from silence to publicity that is almost nauseating."<sup>1</sup> So said E. K. Mohr, superintendent of the purity department of the International Sunday School Association. The remarkable thing is that he said it in 1914. The pendulum continued to swing beyond anything Mr. Mohr or his purity department could have foreseen. What was then a pioneering stand for frankness has become virtually commonplace, and what was then upsetting delicate souls or stomachs is now casually discussed in the classroom.

Curtis Avery, professor of education at the University of Oregon said: "Sex education apparently no longer must be sold; it has been bought."<sup>2</sup> Mostly it is the parents themselves who have realized the need for sex education. Because of their own sexual problems or guilt feelings parents do not make good sex teachers. There is also the problem of parents not being able to communicate with their children and the fact that parents can hardly imagine their children as anything but innocent. It seems too that a parent-child discussion of sex becomes too emotionally charged, thus placing more of a needless stress

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<sup>1</sup>Time Essay, "On Teaching Children About Sex," Time, Vol. 89, No. 23 (June 9, 1967), p. 36.

<sup>2</sup>ibid.

on the parent-child relationship.

Men of the medical profession lack the time, and possibly the training, to counsel on sex and family problems. A study of Dr. Harold Lisf of Tulane University's Medical School indicates considerable ignorance on the part of medical students and interns about sex. "I find that physicians are often more inhibited about sex than others of the same social orders."<sup>3</sup>

The church does, and rightly so, play a role in sex education. The church helps to provide a foundation for moral behavior, which is extremely necessary. However, the church seemingly does not provide the open discussion and answers to the questions that today's youth are seeking.

There seems little doubt that one of the major sources of sex information has been and will continue to be the peer group. Peer groups have a distinct advantage as a source of sex information in that they can do what very few schools or other institutions can even begin to do, that is, relate sexual learning to sexual experience.

What society has done is turn to the schools to provide sex education for its youth. "Experts estimate that two years from now, 70% of the nation's schools will have broad, thorough sex-education programs."<sup>4</sup> A reasonably well prepared and well balanced teacher can

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<sup>3</sup> Leonard Gross, "Sex Education Comes of Age," Look (March 8, 1966), p. 22.

<sup>4</sup> Time Essay, "On Teaching Children About Sex," Time, Vol. 89, No. 23 (June 9, 1967), p. 36.

usually explain things in an atmosphere that would be conducive to wholesome learning. Thus, it becomes the job of the school, along with advice and approval of the church, physicians, parents, and the community to relate factual and accurate sexual learning. The peer group then, will inevitably play its role in relating this sexual learning to sexual experience.

#### PURPOSE OF THE PROBLEM

To determine some developmental stages and level of maturity of students kindergarten through twelve, and from this, try to determine what concepts they are prepared to comprehend in regard to sex and family living at the various grade levels.

The "when" question has a simple yet impossible answer. The ideal time for sex education would be when life, either through patterned process or sheer accident, compels the boy or girl to ask the question. The school should be able to do what the peer group can do, that is to talk about something when there is a need to talk about it. If the information comes too soon, the content is either meaningless or anxiety-provoking. When it comes too late, it can be of only limited significance. One of the real marks of the failure of many currently operating programs of sex education is that students more often than not report that they didn't learn anything they didn't already know and, moreover, that it was less than what they already knew.

## METHODS AND MATERIALS

Information and materials for this study were obtained in various ways. In response to letters, materials were received from school systems that have instituted a sex education program. A wealth of material was received from the Sex Information and Education Council of The United States, as well as, from the Kansas State Department of Health. Information was obtained from a committee of teachers in the Unified District #383, which is currently studying a program of sex education to initiate into the Manhattan schools. Psychology and developmental books, as well as periodicals, were gleaned from the libraries of Kansas State University.

## DEFINITION OF TERMS

Sex education--The definition being used is by Dr. Mary S. Calderone. "Sex education is NOT telling children how babies are born. It is not reproduction, and it is not coitus, although both are part of it. Sex is what it is to be a man or a woman."<sup>5</sup> "It is an emotional and mental development continuing from the moment of birth until the end of life, through which the individual develops his sexuality as part of his total personality."<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>Leonard Gross, "Sex Education Comes of Age," Look (March 8, 1966), p. 21.

<sup>6</sup>"Today's Children and Sex," Changing Times (June, 1966), p. 8.

## GENERAL OBJECTIVES OF FAMILY LIFE AND SEX EDUCATION

1. To understand the meaning and significance of marriage, parenthood, and family life, so they can help strengthen the family as the basic social unit of democratic life.
2. To make affection, sex, and love constructive rather than destructive forces in modern life.
3. To develop feelings of self-identity and self-worth, respect for others, and moral responsibility as an integral part of their personality and character development, so they can perceive their roles as marriage partners, as parents, and as mature adults in our society. (Especially needed by fatherless and motherless boys and girls.)
4. To understand and appreciate the sexual side of human nature, so that their own psychosexual development may occur as normally and healthfully as possible, without feelings of indecency, embarrassment or undue guilt.
5. To learn that human sexual behavior is not merely a personal and private matter but has important social, moral, and religious implications.
6. To realize that the Golden Rule also applies in sexual matters, based upon the ethical principle that: no one has a right to harm another by using him or her exploitatively as a sexual object.
7. To learn about the dangers of illicit sexual behavior; and that boys and girls do not have to engage in heavy petting or premarital sexual intercourse to make friends, be popular, get dates, or to prove their love and affection to each other.
8. To emphasize the case for premarital chastity as the sexual standard approved by our society because chastity provides a positive goal for teen-agers, linking human sexual behavior with love, marriage, parenthood, and family life and because of the individual, family, and community problems associated with premarital or extramarital sexual relations.
9. To open channels of communication between children and their parents, teachers and counselors, and religious leaders concerning the meaning, significance, and potential values of sex and mating in human life, so that students will find it easier to seek information from reliable sources rather than rely on "hearsay," "gutter talk," or misconceptions; and so they will be able to discuss with



openness and without embarrassment the problems of growing up sexually, while realizing that this is only one aspect of becoming a mature man or woman.

10. To understand that boy-girl and man-woman relationships of the right kind can add to their enjoyment and give meaning to their lives and that those of the wrong kind can result in a distorted attitude toward sex, love, and affection that may lead to undesirable consequences for the individuals involved and for society.
11. To understand the basic anatomy and physiology of the male and female reproductive systems and human reproduction; and the relationship of human mating to mutual love and affection expressed in marriage, parenthood, and family life.
12. To develop a healthy, wholesome attitude toward sex in human beings, including respect for their own bodies as an integral part of their personality, with knowledge of and respect for all body parts and their normal functions in human mating, reproduction, and family life.
13. To appreciate the significance of the sexual differences in boys and girls and the male and female sexual roles in our society, as related to wholesome boy-girl relationships and marriage, parenthood, and family life.
14. To develop a functional graded vocabulary, acquire a knowledge of key facts and basic concepts, develop wholesome attitudes and practices, and acquire skill in the critical analysis of basic problems and issues in sex education; and for students to bring information to their parents which the adults themselves may need and want.
15. To understand how to deal with personal sexual problems such as menstruation, nocturnal emissions, masturbation, petting, and personal hygiene.
16. To learn about the legal and ethical aspects of abortion, contraceptives, venereal disease control, marriage, divorce, broken homes and family disintegration, illegitimate children, pornography and obscenity, and sexual behavior.
17. To understand the key facts and basic concepts of human genetics as related to parenthood and family life; and where and how to secure "genetic counseling" if and when needed.
18. To learn the key facts and basic concepts about venereal disease; and the role of teen-agers and young adults in the prevention and control of these important communicable diseases.

19. To understand human pregnancy and the birth process; the need for good medical and public health care of mother and child before, during, and after birth; the care and rearing of small children; and the personal and social significance of the family in modern times.
20. To learn about the potential dangers of the world population explosion, and the need for an intelligent consideration of the basic issues of population growth as related to human health and welfare.
21. To consider critically the pros and cons of teen-agers going steady versus going "steadily" as related to sexual behavior and as a preparation for mate selection and marriage.
22. To understand more fully and deeply the significance, in our society and other societies, of boy-girl relationships, dating, courtship, and engagement as related to marriage, parenthood and family life.
23. To realize that there are important major differences, as well as some similarities, between sex and sexual behavior in animals as compared with man.
24. To understand the differences between love and infatuation and immature versus mature romantic love; to identify and appreciate the traits of a prospective husband or wife, which are most apt to make for a wholesome, healthy, and happy marriage.
25. To learn how to develop and maintain as their own positive standards of behavior based upon the progressive acceptance of moral responsibility for their own sexual behavior as it affects others as well as themselves.
26. To see clearly that progressive acceptance of responsibility for making wise decisions and moral choices in sexual matters requires an understanding of relevant facts, standards and values, alternatives and their consequences, as related to long-range as well as to immediate desires and goals.
27. To eliminate fears and anxieties relative to individual sexual development and adjustments.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>Ray Page, Superintendent, "Policy Statement on Family Life and Sex Education," Issued by The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, State of Illinois (March, 1967), pp. 19-22. (The author made some revisions and additions to these general objectives.)

Some secondary schools which have a sex education program have shown a decrease in pregnancies among high school girls. However, some authorities said that this was not the main purpose of teaching sex. They said that society should not expect sex education to solve moral problems that are really a part of society. The main purpose was to help the student understand himself so he would have a happier and better adjusted life.

If these objectives were met in a schools sex education curriculum, it would help to promote the development of comprehensive and wholesome attitudes about family life and sex.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### PRIMARY GRADES

Kindergarten and grade one.

#### Aims.

1. Know sex differences between girls and boys.
2. Give direction toward male or female role in adult life.
3. Learn correct names for body parts and terms concerned with elimination.
4. Understand that human baby develops inside body of mother.
5. Understand baby gets milk from mother's breast by nursing.
6. Appreciate that there are good body feelings.
7. Learn to recognize signs of love and devotion within family.
8. Develop idea of continuity of living things.
9. Understand egg cell is basic to new life.

10. Learn that some animals hatch from eggs and others develop inside body of mother until birth.
11. Appreciate wonder of human body.
12. Develop sense of responsibility for own body.
13. Appreciate efforts of mother and father for family members.
14. Recognize influence of emotions on body health.
15. Every person desires privacy at some time.

There must be a general readiness by the teacher to answer all questions pertaining to growth and development, reproduction and family living, in accurate terms and at the level at which a child is able to understand.

In kindergarten and grade one, as well as the other grade levels, the teacher will find that the children possess various degrees of information pertaining to sex and reproduction. Some children will have older brothers or sisters who have supplied them with a certain amount of sex information. Too, there will be a wide range of socio-economic levels in the class, along with a variance in the amount of information that has been presented by the parents.

Children of this age have a natural curiosity about their bodies, and the difference in the two sexes. "We should teach basic external genital anatomy in conjunction with the time of self-exploration, before concepts of obscenity and false modesty have been allowed to develop."<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>James P. Semmens, "What the Schools Can and Should Teach in a Program of Family Life Education," Ob Gyn, Vol. 28, No. 5 (November, 1966), p. 724.

For instance, after explaining proper terminology such as liquid waste is called urine and the solid waste is called a bowel movement, the teacher might take the kindergarten class into the boys and girls bathrooms and explain that there are urinals in the boys bathroom, and boys can stand in front of them to urinate. Since girls have a special opening between their legs that the urine passes out of their body, they must sit down on the toilet seat.

The concept that a baby develops inside the mother's body, and the concept that the father plays a role in reproduction can be shown by having a family of hamsters, kittens, or mice. Care must be exercised in such projects, however, because sometimes these animals will eat their young. Obviously, care should be taken to prevent this from happening, and if it would happen, have some ready explanations.

Interest in the sex organs is said to develop at the fourth or fifth year. "The child obtains great pleasure, it is claimed, by playing with and exposing the sex organs."<sup>9</sup> Geddes said:

Exhibitionism in pre-school children is very common; such children are preoccupied with the differences in their own sex organs and those of persons of the opposite sex. . . . When preadolescent boys were involved, genital exhibit occurred in ninety-nine percent.<sup>10</sup>

The teacher can aid growth toward culturally appropriate sex

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<sup>9</sup> Norman L. Munn, The Evolution and Growth of Human Behavior (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1955), p. 467.

<sup>10</sup> Donald Porter Geddes, An Analysis of the Kinsey Reports on Sexual Behavior in the Human Male and Female (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1954), p. 167.

roles by stressing pride in one's sex. In today's world, this is more difficult than in years past, because women are competing with men in various professions. Thompson said:

Nevertheless, the cultural demand is still important and ever present. The "feminine" man and the "masculine" woman are often ridiculed and rejected by their peers. Sissy and tomboy remain as derogatory labels in the child's world. . . . By the sixth year almost 30 per cent of the children were still making genital errors in responding to pictures of nude adults and children. Girls made fewer errors in discriminating between the sexes than boys, probably reflecting their greater social awareness.<sup>11</sup>

The results of this study showed that there is a need to stress awareness of differences in the male and female, and to stress an appropriate sex role.

#### Second and Third Grade.

##### Aims.

1. Learn that the gestation period varies with different animals.
2. Understand that the egg cell does not develop into a baby by itself--role of father.
3. Learn that some animals are born live through a special opening in the mother's body.
4. Recognize that growing up brings responsibility.
5. Appreciate importance of mutual love and consideration in family.
6. Understand composition of family does not necessarily determine happiness of family.
7. Understand that each person's unique heredity is determined at the moment of fertilization.

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<sup>11</sup>George G. Thompson, Child Psychology (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1962), p. 475.

8. Observe influence of heredity in your family.
9. Know that growing up means more than just getting bigger.
10. Develop increasing sense of responsibility to self and family.
11. Understand relationship between a healthy body and mind.
12. Study life cycles of various animals, including humans.

At the second and third grade levels, there would be an expanding of the information given in the first two years of school plus new information with stress on the family. At this age group, there is the development of a dislike for the opposite sex. "There is at first an undifferentiated social relationship with the opposite sex until about the age of eight years, then a rising preference for children of the same sex, until puberty, when hetero-sexual feelings begin gradually to develop."<sup>12</sup>

Since the home environment is still the main influence at this age, much emphasis is placed on the family. This includes the role that the family members play in providing love and happiness for each other. The children should understand that they bring happiness to their parents by doing well in school, bringing school work home to show them, sharing and playing nice with others, and in general doing what their parents expect of them.

Emphasis would be placed on respecting the individual's own body as well as the bodies of others. The fact that children grow at

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<sup>12</sup>Louis P. Thorpe, Ph.D., Child Psychology and Development (New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1946), p. 592.

different rates should help the small children in the class understand that they shouldn't feel bad because they are small. Thorpe said:

Society has adopted certain attitudes toward physical characteristics in both the male and the female that place a definite handicap on children who cannot measure up to them. The homely girl, the fat boy, the "skinny" youth, and the "runt" all feel the stigma of inferiority, and are thus likely to acquire social attitudes suggestive of their resentment.<sup>13</sup>

There would be a continuance of the teaching of good health habits, this includes the relationship of proper rest and diet to the overall feeling of the body, alertness, ability to achieve, and information how food and nutrition, sleep, exercise and being loved influence growth. There would also be a discussion of how feelings effect thinking and thinking effects feelings, and of so-called "upset stomach" or "headaches" as a result of feelings.

#### INTERMEDIATE GRADES

##### Fourth Grade.

##### Aims.

1. Learn that certain glands control body growth and development.
2. Recognize importance of protecting vital body parts from injury, such as during sports.
3. Appreciate miracle of reproduction and maternal care among various forms of animal life.
4. Appreciate superiority of brain of man over instinct reaction of animals.

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 669.



5. Learn meaning of responsible behavior in peer and family groups.
6. Study circulatory and digestive systems and realize their functional potential is influenced by habits being developed.

By the time children are in the fourth grade they should have a simple understanding of the reproductive system in relation to other body systems, and be ready to go into a deeper study of various glands and how they affect body growth and development. Meyer, talking about genital organs, said: "Little growth occurs during the first nine years and then it accelerates until maturity."<sup>14</sup>

"When children reach the age of eight or ten they as a rule develop a more definite sense of group unity. This is the age at which children tend to lose interest in play around the home or with one or two companions."<sup>15</sup> Since this is a time that great importance is placed on the peer group, responsible behavior would be talked about. This includes respect for the "self" as well as others, and respect for other people's property. Discussion would also include the choosing of friends and relationships with the people who are outside of the "gang" or "clique." Hiltner said:

From common observation, we know that this is the stage above all others where boys play with boys and girls with girls, when gangs and clubs and exclusive attachments to one or two members

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<sup>14</sup>William J. Meyer, Developmental Psychology (New York: The Center for Applied Research in Education, Inc., 1964), p. 18.

<sup>15</sup>Louis P. Thorpe, Ph.D., Child Psychology and Development (New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1946), p. 588.

of the same sex are common. Sexual activity at this age, therefore, is likely to be homosexual in nature unless it is masturbation.<sup>16</sup>

There would be continuation of discussion of rates of growth for boys and girls, and differences of growth patterns between children.

An introduction to heredity, and discussion of multiple births, and how this phenomena occurs would be appropriate at this time.

Using plastic models of the "visible man and woman," students would disassemble the models and study the reproductive system in more detail. Semmens said:

The essence of love is incorporated, introducing a second facet in the sexuality of the human. These are the beginnings of discussions about personal and interpersonal relationships. It is important to teach how one individual relates to another since man is only able to reproduce his own kind when he is accepted in a very personal way by another individual of the opposite sex who mutually shares his respect and purpose.<sup>17</sup>

At every grade level there is continuing emphasis on the appropriate scientific terms for all parts of the body, and encouragement of incidental discussion and specific questions.

Fifth and Sixth Grades.

Aims.

1. Learn role of sex glands at puberty and body and emotional changes they bring.

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<sup>16</sup> Seward Hiltner, Sex Ethics and the Kinsey Reports (New York: Association Press, 1953), p. 129.

<sup>17</sup> James P. Semmens, "What the Schools Can and Should Teach in a Program of Family Life Education," Ob Gyn, Vol. 28, No. 5 (November, 1966), p. 724.

2. Understand menstruation occurs as a natural part of a girl's growing up.
3. Understand seminal emissions occur as a natural part of a boy's growing up.
4. Learn that although nature readies our bodies for reproduction at puberty, several years more are needed to prepare for marriage and responsibility of parenthood.
5. Discuss importance of wholesome life attitudes and values as manifested in responsible behavior.
6. Discuss acceptable and unacceptable ways of showing emotions.

Because of the various maturity levels, it was decided to combine the fifth and sixth grades because this is a time when the teacher is going to have to use discretion in deciding what specific information the whole class is capable of comprehending. These will be, however, some of the concepts that children would have covered by the time they have completed the sixth grade.

There would be continued a study to a greater depth the organs and glands of the body, and how growth and maturity are affected by them. Growth patterns would be discussed. The following would be an example:

Although general growth patterns are the same for everyone, each individual follows the pattern at his own rate. At some time in their lives, girls are taller than boys, but boys catch up later and usually become taller than girls. Although some children do not grow as rapidly as others, this is not an indication of any abnormality. As a person grows and develops from a child into an adult, his changing body requires additional kinds of care in order to keep functioning at its best.

There would be continuation of the study of heredity with

specific analysis of genes and chromosomes, highlighting interest in individual development.

The endocrine glands would be discussed with information that hormones are responsible for the changes in appearance that occur as boys develop into men and girls develop into women. Hormones influence not only a person's growth and physical development but also the way he feels and behaves. "At this grade level, reference is made to the sexual glandular changes which are allied with changes affecting skin, body contour, voice, and hair growth."<sup>18</sup>

The menstrual cycle and the story of menstruation should be introduced to girls at their interest level. There seems to be some disagreement on how much information about menstruation should be presented to the boys. Many schools, now having sex education programs, separate the boys and girls when the menstrual cycle is discussed. However, it seems to be desirable to have the boys sit in on at least part of the information about menstruation. Semmens said:

It must be appreciated that a certain degree of male awareness in this area is equally important. For the boy, introduction to the subject avoids the references to female personal hygiene but covers the changes taking place among his maturing female acquaintances. This orientation is offered to help him understand the emotional and physical problems of the prepubertal female. At this time it is implied that the male will undergo similar changes with the maturation of his gonads. Boys are told that their testicles will produce certain body secretions and discharges similar to those of menstruation but lacking the cyclic timing of menses.<sup>19</sup>

"Appearance of pubic hair, enlargement of the breasts and increase

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p. 725.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

in body size occur, on the average, 8.4 months before the first menstrual period."<sup>20</sup> Menstruation should be understood by the girls because many have started their growth spurt. Gesell, Ilg, and Ames referring to ten year old girls, said the following:

The majority of girls are on the brink of starting their more rapid height growth within this year, and some light, downy pubic hair appears in a number of girls, but very few have begun to menstruate before eleven years. . . . Partly because of their more rapid sexual (and social) development, girls are much more sex-aware than boys—though less outspoken about it. Girls are less prone to tell "dirty jokes," with sex and elimination connotations.<sup>21</sup>

Gesell, Ilg, and Ames said the following about sixth grade girls:

The great majority of girls have started their period of faster height growth and nearly a third have reached the most rapid phase of this cycle. Already the average girl has achieved about 90 per cent of her adult stature and close to 50 per cent of what she will weigh at age twenty-one. . . . Only a small percentage of girls start to menstruate in the eleventh year.<sup>22</sup>

Gesell, Ilg, and Ames said this about ten year old boys:

Many boys already know of intercourse, and a large number learn of it during Year Ten. They are interested in the father's role, and recognize the possibility that they too will become fathers some day. . . . These are often the boys who are picking up the slang words, the short words referring to sex and elimination. They are quick to hear them spoken by the older boys and to see them written on the bathroom walls at school. The boys who use these words often do so without knowing their meaning, however,

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<sup>20</sup> Donald Porter Geddes, An Analysis of the Kinsey Reports on Sexual Behavior in the Human Male and Female (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1954), p. 167.

<sup>21</sup> Arnold Gesell, Frances L. Ilg, and Louise Bates Ames, Youth the Years from Ten to Sixteen (New York, Evanston, and London: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1956), p. 45.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., pp. 75-76.

and may be quite shocked when they are informed what they are saying.<sup>23</sup>

"Masturbation is a phenomenon known to many boys and experimented with, casually or more purposefully, by perhaps, half."<sup>24</sup> Masturbation, although it is much more prevalent in the teens would be dealt with at this age level since half of the boys are engaged in its practice. Probably the greatest thing that would be accomplished is doing away with the many myths and fallacies that are attached to masturbating. Informing the students that it is normal and healthy to be curious about the body and its workings, but at the same time not treating it so casually that they think it is something that they are supposed to do.

The fifth and sixth grades would be a good time to make use of the many excellent films that are available on body growth, adolescence, and reproduction.

#### JUNIOR HIGH

##### Seventh Grade.

##### Aims.

1. Learn about bacteria and diseases, accidents and how to care for injuries.
2. Learn about adolescent conditions such as acne, obesity, etc.
3. Discuss problems associated with alcohol, drugs, and smoking.
4. Discussion of their own appearance and good grooming.

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid., p. 46.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., p. 78.

5. Discussion of personality problems and boy-girl relationships, dating and its responsibilities.
6. Responsibilities of being grown up.

When students enter the junior high a problem is present as far as presenting sex information. No longer are the children in a self contained classroom, so it is important that all teachers be familiar with the importance of growth and development, sex education and sex information for students. Courses in English, math, science, biology and other areas, may be structured to enhance and increase this learning, but, in addition, a sequential course should be developed in health education in order to be sure of a class where specific material may be scheduled.

There needs to be more attention given to menstruation in the seventh grade, and a willingness on the teachers' part to answer questions pertaining to menstruation. Most girls, by the end of this year are likely to experience menstruation and will have questions that they hadn't thought of before. "Observational data summarized by Shuttleworth show that the average age at which menstruation occurs in the white population of the United States is around 13 years."<sup>25</sup> Gesell, Ilg, and Ames said:

A stronger interest is now centered in menstruation. A few girls are still having real difficulty in becoming emotionally ready for this new biological event, which they see as a threat and disruption in their lives. . . . They need to be taught about the disposal of the napkins and checked in case they forget. And they need to understand why fastidious care is important, even to

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<sup>25</sup>Norman L. Mann, The Evolution and Growth of Human Behavior (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1955), p. 485.

the use of deodorants, so they won't bring their condition to the attention of their classmates.<sup>26</sup>

In the area concerning heredity, the problem of congenital malformations and how they occur, would be introduced. Pupils who are familiar with such problems in their own and other families, can begin to get a more adequate concept of this entity. Through this scientific approach, attitudes of understanding and compassion can be established. Development of the prejudices often shown to the handicapped child or to the family who has such a child may be avoided.

In the area of development, appearance, and possible personal problems, Gesell, Ilg, and Ames made the following statements which will give the reader some insight to boys of this age.

There is a wider range of differences in rate of physical growth among 12-year-old boys than among 10- or 11-year olds. . . . An increased growth of both penis and scrotum is noticeable in many. . . . The blossom of the puberal fat period may come into full flower only at twelve. . . . Boys are becoming more interested in sex than they were. . . . Twelve is relatively less interested in the sex activity of grown-ups and more absorbed in his own sex interests. He has usually learned about (though not experienced) ejaculation. . . . Masturbation is usually a part of Twelve's knowledge or experience, if not of his vocabulary, and is engaged in with frequency by many. . . . Sex is really interesting to Twelve, and he tends less to think of it as dirty than he did earlier. He wants information and he wants to be set straight. . . . Twelve-year-old boys often have bull sessions to discuss matters rather freely, at least as far as the pooled knowledge of the group will permit.<sup>27</sup>

By students being aware of, and being able to discuss some of

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<sup>26</sup> Arnold Gesell, Frances L. Ilg, and Louise Bates Ames, Youth the Years from Ten to Sixteen (New York, Evanston, and London: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1956), p. 113.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., pp. 114-115.



the above statements, it could possibly save some frustration on their part. For instance, many boys who experience puberal fat might endure it better if he had the understanding that this was a natural phenomenon, and was only temporary. Too, one can imagine the amount of misinformation that would be passed along in a discussion of sex by twelve year olds.

#### Eighth Grade.

##### Aims.

1. Discuss reproduction system and fertilization of the egg in more detail.
2. Teach full-term development of fetus, birth and delivery.
3. Elaboration on male and female roles in society, as parents, as workers and as citizens.
4. Boy-girl relations and proper social behavior.

Some students may have the idea by this time that sex relations only take place between a man and a woman when they want to have a baby, or they may associate menstruation with "heat" in animals, and think that a woman can become pregnant only during menstruation. Thus, there needs to be detailed teaching about the total reproduction system and fertilization, too there needs to be an association of marital love and sexual intercourse.

Probably at every grade level adults would be shocked at the amount of sex information (fact or fantasy) that the children are aware of. Hill related the following:

Two years ago some of our eighth graders told a teacher they were disturbed by the numbers of boys in the eighth grade who

were using Saran Wrap as a contraceptive. The school doctor told me that this has become a national problem. There is even a medical term for some of the irritations which occur this way.<sup>28</sup>

This is probably not the best age to teach about contraceptives (as will be brought out later in this paper), however, any questions that might arise in this area should be answered openly and honestly.

There possibly will have to be more information presented to girls dealing with menstruation, however, not as much as in previous grades. "Most girls have menstruated before their fourteenth birthday, and the average 13-year-old has achieved 95 per cent of her mature height. The secondary sex characteristics of breasts and body hair are developing steadily but slowly."<sup>29</sup>

There are many definite changes taking place in the thirteen-year old boy. "For the middle group of boys this is a period of rapid growth of genitalia. Pubic hair and axillary hair appear in about two-thirds. Boys are more concerned with their height at this time, whereas girls are less concerned, since the discrepancy in the heights of the two sexes is less marked."<sup>30</sup> It is very possible that girls in the sixth and seventh grades feel quite uneasy being around boys their own age because they were usually taller, and very self-conscious about it.

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<sup>28</sup>Virginia Hill, Sex Education and the Schools (New York, Evanston, and London: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1967), p. 105.

<sup>29</sup>Arnold Gesell, Frances L. Ilg, and Louise Bates Ames, Youth the Years from Ten to Sixteen (New York, Evanston, and London: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1956), p. 148.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid.

Munn related the following pertaining to the onset of adolescence in boys.

Kinsey regards the time of the first ejaculation as the most significant single event marking the onset of adolescence in boys. The most extensive data available at present are those based upon memory as reported by Kinsey. According to data from the whole sample of over three thousand cases, the average age is a little under 14.<sup>31</sup>

It seems eminent that an understanding of the boy's body, needs to be discussed again at this grade level. Especially the natural development that is going on that the boy may be embarrassed about, such as seminal emissions, and possibly the need to shave.

It seems that some dating takes place in our society at the eighth grade level, thus some time would be spent discussing such things as dating and related problems, social behavior, etiquette, and boy-girl relations in general.

Ninth Grade.

Aims.

1. Continuance of discussion of reproduction.
2. Discussion of a person's sexuality (sexual feelings and emotions).
3. Discussion of values, societies acceptance and rejection, reputations.
4. More discussion of dating and boy-girl relations.
5. Importance of the family and getting along within the family.

Reproduction at this grade level could consist in part, of the

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<sup>31</sup>Norman L. Munn, The Evolution and Growth of Human Behavior (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1955), p. 486.

showing of movies and film strips that were viewed in earlier grades. Possibly films that were presented as far back as the sixth grade. It is likely that these would be viewed in a different light than earlier, and both sexes would respond with many questions that didn't occur in the previous grades.

An extremely important area to introduce at this grade level (it is probably one of the most difficult areas to discuss) is what some refer to as a person's sexuality. In other words, the inner feelings that a boy or girl has when they hold hands with their girlfriend or boyfriend. Possibly they feel like their stomach does a flip when a certain boy or girl walks past or even looks at them. The important thing is to try to have them realize that these feelings are natural, and that a girl, for instance, should not feel guilty or get a complex if she feels warm all over the first time a boy kisses her. Gesell, Ilg, and Ames said:

Girls may now feel an actual physical involvement in their response to boys. A 14-year-old girl may report feeling as though she were "falling apart" or "turning inside out" in the strength of her feeling. These feelings may be confusing to Fourteen, who has trouble grasping the nature and origin of these emerging but unpatterned sensations.<sup>32</sup>

Gesell, Ilg, and Ames made these statements about fourteen year old boys.

At fourteen the size increase in most boys is quite marked. This is the period of most rapid height growth for the greatest

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<sup>32</sup>Arnold Gesell, Frances L. Ilg, and Louise Bates Ames, Youth the Years from Ten to Sixteen (New York, Evanston, and London: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1956), p. 184.

number of boys. . . . The adolescent fat period is a thing of the past for most of the boys who showed this at all. . . . The genital developments already visible at thirteen are quite advanced in many Fourteens. By the end of the fourteenth year, a large majority of boys will have experienced ejaculation, in one situation or another. By far the most common source of this first ejaculation is masturbation, a phenomenon that most boys have known about and a majority have experimented with since age eleven. . . . Nocturnal emissions may begin to occur in the period just before fourteen, though many boys do not experience these until late adolescence. Boys respond quite differently to the experience. Fortunately, nowadays more boys are informed about their possible occurrence, and are less likely to be disturbed by them, but even so some feel ashamed and hide their pajamas, while others take it naturally as a part of life.<sup>33</sup>

Boys seem to be much more inquisitive about individual sex development, the physiology and functioning of the sex parts, and intercourse than they were at earlier ages. "Such topics as birth control, venereal disease, prostitution, and homosexuality are also raised."<sup>34</sup> Questions should definitely be answered in these areas, but detailed information should probably come at a later grade.

"Fourteens are trying to find their own way, to clarify for themselves how they feel, and to decide what paths are best for them."<sup>35</sup> Certainly the schools, along with other institutions, have to present adequate information to the students so they will have information that will assist them in determining their own values. Most will agree today that it is almost impossible to cram moral values down the throats of teenagers, who will simply not accept it. Thus, it is one's duty to present information which would influence the minds of this age group, and hope that it would result in establishing proper values. A case in

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid., pp. 184-185.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., p. 185.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

point is the idea that a girl must be sexually free with herself to be popular. To illustrate this, the following was an interview with a high school boy.

She's a pretty big wheel. It's been backfiring on her lately. She's losing out fast. A lot of kids don't like her. See, she's supposed to be a real nice girl. Well, I had her out about six months ago...And she proved to be not a very nice girl at all. See, she went with this kid, ---; when he was a senior, she was a freshman—he graduated. And she'd been stepping out on him with different guys. So I took her out, and she didn't turn out to be so nice at all. She's pretty free with herself.

And so I guess the next day, she thought, "Well, here I went ahead and did that with him, and everything, and I shouldn't have done that, because I'm a big wheel." So she wouldn't speak to me the next day. So this kid came up to me, and she must have said something to him, because he said, "Say, I see you were out with---." And I said, "That's right," and he said, "Well, how'd you do with her?" And I said, "Well, I did pretty good," I says, "I'm not going to say." So he runs right to her and tells her just what I said. She thought that I just wouldn't tell anybody. And the only thing I said was that I did all right with her, I didn't imply that I did anything to her, or anything like that.

And so she came back and she got real mad at me. But I didn't say nothing to her, and I said, "Well, I didn't say one thing about you. They asked me about that, I said I was out with her, and I did all right, I had a good time. And you can take that any way you want." And so I told her, "If you can find anybody that wants to go back on that..." Oh, she got mad. So she was mad about that for a while. Boy, I'm telling you, she sure surprised me; I thought she would be a girl that was really on the ball, and that was really something. And when I got her out, I was so disappointed, because it was just—very simple.

And I came home that night, and I went in to wash my face and brush my teeth, and you know that makeup they wear, that pancake makeup? I had that makeup in the corner of my mouth, and everything. That did it with me—I've never had any interest in her ever since then. But like I said, she is slowly fading out of the picture, because they are really starting to catch up with her.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> James S. Coleman, The Adolescent Society (New York: The Free Press, 1961), pp. 121-122.

Coleman's comments about this interview were:

When this girl's reputation was put in jeopardy by her freedom with this boy, she did everything she could to maintain it: first, not speaking to him the next day, in an attempt to re-establish over him the power she had before being too free the night before; and then reacting angrily when this was made public. His reaction was one of lessened interest, because the fruits that he had seen as inaccessible were too easily obtained.

This is an example of the double standard at work in clear-cut terms. The boy is the pursuer, the girl is the pursued. If she fails to withhold anything he seeks, the cause for pursuit is gone. Thus, it becomes crucial for her status personally and for the maintenance of the system itself for her to be selective and dispense favors with extreme care. If not, the culture is threatened by her philanthropy, and punishes her by "ruining her reputation" and taking away her status.<sup>37</sup>

The idea of dating a wide variety of personalities would be introduced in the ninth grade. Since dating is a process of mate selection: "From the broadest, most telic perspective it is clearly a device for mate selection,"<sup>38</sup> the more people dated, the better idea one will have of the type of personality that one would eventually like to marry.

#### SENIOR HIGH

Tenth Grade.

Aims.

1. Continuance of dating and boy-girl relations.
2. Teaching of mental and emotional health and the understanding of the individual.

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid., p. 122.

<sup>38</sup> Elizabeth Douvan and Joseph Adelson, The Adolescent Experience (New York, London, Sydney: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1966), p. 203.

3. Understanding the power of the sex drive.
4. Continuance of stress on values.

Some basic psychology would be taught at the tenth grade level. This not only will help the student understand himself, but will make it easier for him to understand the actions and reactions of others with whom he comes in contact. It would be well too, to include respect of those who have authority over them. "Allied with the struggle for emancipation from adult control is the strong hold which the peer group comes to have over most adolescents."<sup>39</sup> Group behavior should be discussed, as well as things that are important in choosing friends.

There is little change going on in the bodies of fifteen year olds, most are physically mature. "Fifteen brings no new or dramatic changes to the physique of most girls, for most of the physical maturity characteristics have already appeared."<sup>40</sup> "By fifteen the average boy has achieved about 95 per cent of his adult height."<sup>41</sup>

In the area of dating; going steady, engagement, and sex manners and morals would be discussed. Students should understand that societies and cultures vary widely in what they expect and demand of people, but in no society has sex conduct ever been regarded as a strictly

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<sup>39</sup> Norman L. Minn, The Evolution and Growth of Human Behavior (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1955), p. 492.

<sup>40</sup> Arnold Gesell, Frances L. Ilg, and Louise Bates Ames, Youth the Years from Ten to Sixteen (New York, Evanston, and London: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1956), p. 223.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., p. 224.



private affair. In every society studied sex conduct is regulated as part of the total social system and absolute promiscuity has never been encouraged or supported by the moral codes. In America we live in a culture that approves of the companionship of sexes, socially and intellectually, but restricts sexual intimacies to married couples. The area of morals is a very touchy one, however it is felt that informing students of what society expects as acceptable sexual behavior is not teaching morals. It is simply giving them ammunition which will set their own moral values and standards. Surely there are some young people in our society who do not know, for instance, sexual relations before marriage or incest is considered to be wrong by our society.

Students must have an understanding of their sex drive by the "middle teens." At this age they will be formulating value decisions that will be regulating them for the rest of their lives. "Sexual activities are at their highest peak during the 'teen' years."<sup>42</sup> This statement was backed by Gesell, Ilg, and Ames: "Masturbation apparently tends to increase somewhat in frequency at age fifteen."<sup>43</sup> This is all the more reason that information must be given to the students so they can formulate their own standards.

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<sup>42</sup>William J. Meyer, Developmental Psychology (New York: The Center for Applied Research in Education, Inc., 1964), p. 19.

<sup>43</sup>Arnold Gesell, Frances L. Ilg, and Louise Bates Ames, Youth the Years from Ten to Sixteen (New York, Evanston, and London: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1956), p. 224.

## Eleventh Grade.

### Aims.

1. Discussion of love.
2. Discussion of marriage.
3. Teaching about venereal disease.
4. Discussion of the sexual behavior in the United States.

Some things that would be brought out about love would include, love vs. infatuation, some common misconceptions about love, and the idea that we develop the capacity to love gradually through years of interaction with other people.

Regarding marriage, such things as choosing a marriage partner, what makes a successful marriage, and legal requirements should be discussed. In general students should be influenced to realize the many factors that must be considered prior to marriage. One should be aware of the fact that they alone do not choose a marriage partner. Parents approving of whom a young person dates has a definite influence on selecting their future marriage partner. Also, society with its endogamous and exogamous rules is a determining factor on whom one should or should not marry.

It was found that students (as well as adults) are quite ignorant about venereal disease. Probably due to its mode of transmission it simply is not talked about. Some of the areas that should be discussed in detail include, why the increase in venereal disease, syphilis, gonorrhoea, effect on marriage, and effect on babies. Students should be aware of the new problem areas in the spread of venereal disease,

that is homosexuals and teenagers. Many students are surprised to learn that homosexuals can have venereal disease and pass it on to others in their homosexual activities. "Syphilis and gonorrhea are the most widespread communicable diseases in America today. More than half (56%) of the new infections are incurred by teen-agers and young adults, 1300 a day, nearly one a minute."<sup>44</sup> It was found too, that students are very thankful for information about venereal disease.

Probably the best source for discussion of sexual behavior is still the Kinsey Report. Kinsey has many statistics on such things as premarital intercourse, extramarital intercourse, as well as other areas that the students would find quite informative. This topic area would be a good time to discuss illegitimate births and their yearly increase. Students should be aware of and given a chance to discuss the four sexual codes that operate in our society; the single restrictive standard, the double standard, permissiveness with affection, and the fully permissive code. Again Kinsey would be helpful in providing statistics that show the double standard, the girls will probably be quite surprised to learn that many females in the United States accept the double standard. "For example, Kinsey found that about half of the men in his study, but about three-fourths of the women, were willing to marry non-virgins."<sup>45</sup> "In their study of engaged couples Burgess and Wallin found

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<sup>44</sup>Nathaniel Shafer, M.D., "Venereal Disease" Plaque of Our Atomic Age," Today's Health (September, 1965), p. 92.

<sup>45</sup>William F. Kenkel, The Family in Perspective (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Division of Meredith Publishing Company, 1966), p. 292.

that twice as many men as women felt that a single act of adultery on the part of one's spouse would be basis for divorce."<sup>46</sup>

#### Twelfth Grade.

##### Aims.

1. Continue discussion of marriage.
2. A thorough study of divorce.
3. Discussion of the childbearing function of the family and the function of socialization.
4. Evaluation of the total sex education program.

At the twelfth grade level the students would find it interesting and informative to study the history of marriage. Starting with theories about marriage prior to recorded history, such as the theory of original promiscuity as opposed to the theory of original pair marriage. Then, studying selected societies, such as the ancient Hebrew family and the ancient Roman family, and comparing practices and customs to our own society today. For contrast it would be valuable to study an illiterate society such as the Trobriand Islanders. Students will be quite amazed at the marriage practices and sexual freedom of this society compared to other societies. Next could be a study of our colonial society, the New England society probably being the most interesting, followed by study and discussion of our present day society.

A very controversial subject that needs to be discussed, but isn't in most sex education programs, is that of contraceptives. "At

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid., p. 293.

the age of seventeen, students need to be given accurate, detailed contraceptive knowledge. Sixteen or seventeen may be too late in some schools."<sup>47</sup> The issue of contraceptives being taught in the schools will not be dealt with in this paper, however, it is an area that much thought should be given to by parents, educators, and society.

Divorce would be discussed in its entirety, including causes, effects, legal aspects, problems after the divorce, and remarriage. Most people are not aware of the fact that more divorces occur in the lower socio-economic class than in the upper socio-economic class. "Regardless of the measure of status, the general trend is the lower the socio-economic status, the more divorce."<sup>48</sup> But, when one examines the things that the lower class have going against them, it is easier to understand why the lower class have more marital problems and more divorces. "Mental illness, infant mortality, and conviction of crime are three types of crises more prevalent at lower socio-economic levels than at others."<sup>49</sup> "Chronic illness, industrial accidents, and some types of physical diseases further tend to harass the already overburdened lower classes."<sup>50</sup> "Terman discovered that insufficient income was the most frequently mentioned grievance of both husbands and wives

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<sup>47</sup> Virginia Hill, Sex Education and the Schools (New York, Evanston, and London: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1967), p. 71.

<sup>48</sup> William F. Kenkel, The Family in Perspective (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Division of Meredith Publishing Company, 1966), p. 311.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., p. 315.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

in his sample."<sup>51</sup> Teen-age marriage should be discussed at this time, because many of the hardships which plague the lower class would apply to married "teens." "In addition, Harmsworth and Minnis found that a sample of lawyers considered financial problems as the most frequent real cause of divorce, regardless of the statutory grounds used in the cases."<sup>52</sup>

In the childbearing phase of discussion it is important to use statistics showing the birth rate in the United States, and point out how and why it has changed over the years. Students should also learn about fertility differentials, considering socio-economic status, rural-urban, race, and religious effects on the fertility rate. The lower class tends to have larger families than the upper class. "In general, it was found that occupational and economic status were inversely related to fertility."<sup>53</sup> The world population explosion would also be a good topic for discussion at this time.

Student interest may not be too high in socialization and rearing of children, but discussing extreme cases such as ferals and isolates, will tend to stimulate students to investigate the socialization process further. Probably, one would not want to dwell a great deal on the childrearing function of the family. However, it might be well to point out how childrearing practices have changed over the years in this country, and impress upon the students that it is not too early to give consideration to values that would likely be instilled in their own

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid., p. 314.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., pp. 205-206.

children.

It would be good at the senior level to have students evaluate the overall sex education program. From studying this evaluation, possibly additions or depletions could be made to the sex education curriculum, or perhaps something that was offered in the twelfth grade should be offered in the eleventh grade. The students themselves are probably the best judge of whether or not the sex education program is doing the job that it is supposed to. Hilu said:

The ultimate goal, to whose attainment sex education must make a crucial contribution, is (like that of all sound and comprehensive teaching) the achievement of a better life—more satisfying to individual and society alike. The purpose is not, as some opponents to sex education have charged, to incite—or even to aid and abet—a sexual revolution, but rather to come to a better understanding of biology and morality, of physiology and emotions, of reality and romanticism.<sup>54</sup>

#### SUMMARY

In this report the author examined some developmental stages and levels of maturity of students grades kindergarten through twelve, and tried to determine what concepts of sex education should be taught at the various grade levels.

Concepts that are considered important to teach and discuss in the primary grades are:

1. Establish proper terminology in reference to the body.
2. Be able to discuss with frankness and lack of embarrassment the

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<sup>54</sup>Virginia Hilu, Sex Education and the Schools (New York, Evanston, and London: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1967), p. xv.

problems that children face, growing up and living in a sex-oriented world.

3. Help each child develop a wholesome attitude toward sex.
4. Children should understand the sex differences of boys and girls.
5. Each child should be a good family member, with loyalty, love, and appreciation of his family.
6. Give correct and understandable answers to his questions on reproduction.

Some concepts that are important at the intermediate grade level are:

1. To continually stress a wholesome attitude toward sex.
2. To develop respect for social customs, and deepen family loyalties.
3. Students should have an understanding of the scientific vocabulary for discussion of reproduction.
4. Preadolescents must understand the changes that are and will be taking place in their bodies.
5. Students should develop a mature attitude toward sex, and respect the miracle of life.
6. Students should understand growth and how it is tied into physiology and inheritance.

Concepts that are important at the junior high level are:

1. The continuance of a wholesome and mature attitude toward sex.
2. Students should have a scientific background and the vocabulary for dignified discussion of sex.
3. There should be an effort made to establish respect for social standards.
4. There should be a discussion of dating and boy-girl relations, and students should understand reasons for proper behavior.
5. Emphasis should be placed on the importance of good family relations.
6. Students should be encouraged to talk frankly and to help them find answers to their questions.



Concepts that are important at the senior high level are:

1. Youth should have the knowledge and appreciation of the place the family holds in our culture, his place in his own family, and his responsibilities to the family he may wish to establish later.
2. To give students the scientific and physiological information for understanding sex and its relation to life and the family, including the knowledge of the power of the sex drive, the tensions that arise, and the need of controlling the sex urge by will power and self-discipline; also, the need for separating sex desire from love.
3. To help students acquire a background of ideals, standards, and attitudes which will be of value to him in choosing a mate and building his own family.

#### CONCLUSION

The author found that there was very little question whether or not sex education should be taught in the schools. It seemed that the school was the logical place to provide most of the sex information, complemented from other areas such as, parents, church, doctors, and the peer group. Unlike many content areas, if the schools do not provide sex education it definitely did not mean that there would be no sex education. Sex was an important part of life among the youth, particularly from adolescence on, and there would continue to be sex education among the youths themselves. Obviously the job then, of the schools was not to take the place of the peer group, but to provide more factual information which would help the students set standards by which they wanted to live. Also, the students would be able to live a happier and better adjusted life.

An attempt was made to establish maturity levels at the various ages of students. This was quite difficult because most authorities in

this area talked about age groups, rather than specific ages. This was understandable, however, because of the various rates of maturity of children. It was difficult to state that a certain thing was going to happen at a particular age.

It was felt that the concepts offered in this report at the various grade levels are educationally sound. This is not saying that if these concepts were placed into a school curriculum as a sex education program, that it would be the ideal. However, if students were taught and understood these concepts they would be better prepared to meet the trials of life.

As yet there are no clear-cut guidelines or established programs of procedures for sound sex education, but some beginnings are being made. Some of these programs that are being established will fail, but, fortunately, there will be a few that will set a pattern for the rest of the nation's schools to follow.

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A STUDY OF CONCEPTS IN SEX EDUCATION AND MATURITY LEVELS  
OF STUDENTS GRADES KINDERGARTEN THROUGH TWELVE

by

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B. S., Kansas State Teachers College, 1960

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AN ABSTRACT OF A MASTER'S REPORT

submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree

MASTER OF SCIENCE

Department of Physical Education

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY  
Manhattan, Kansas

1968

The purpose of this report was to determine some developmental stages and levels of maturity of students kindergarten through twelve, and their preparedness to comprehend sex and family living at the various grade levels.

According to many authorities, society has turned to the schools to provide sex education for its youth. A reasonably well prepared and well balanced teacher can explain sex education in an atmosphere that would be conducive to wholesome learning.

There was general agreement that there should be a general readiness by the teacher to answer all questions that pertained to growth and development, reproduction and family living, in accurate terms and at the level at which a student was able to understand.

There is a consensus on the part of authorities that the following items should be included at the various grade levels.

The more important concepts that would be taught in the primary grades included: learning the difference between the two sexes, knowledge that a baby develops inside the mother's body and the father's role in reproduction, correct names for body parts and terms for elimination, respect of the individual's own body, and assuming a proper role within the individual's own family.

Intermediate students should obtain an understanding of how the reproductive system related to other body systems, and how various glands affected body growth and development. The students should be aware of and understand the changes that take place in their bodies as they approached adolescence.

At every grade level, there should be continuing emphasis on the appropriate scientific terms for all parts of the body, and encouragement of incidental discussion and specific questions.

The menstrual cycle and the story of menstruation should be introduced to girls at their interest level. Menstruation should be understood by sixth grade girls because many have started their growth spurt, and this occurred on the average of 8.4 months before the first menstrual period. It was also desirable to have the boys sit in on part of the information about menstruation.

Masturbation, although it is more prevalent in the teens, would be discussed at this age level because half of the boys are engaged in its practice.

Students in the junior high should have an understanding of adolescent conditions such as acne, obesity, and seminal emissions. These are common conditions for adolescents, hence this information could possibly save some frustration on their part.

An extremely important area to introduce at the junior high level was what some refer to as a person's sexuality. The student should realize that these feelings were natural, and that a girl, for instance, should not feel guilty or get a complex if she felt warm all over the first time a boy kissed her.

Boy-girl relations was another important area to be discussed in the junior high. Information should be presented which would assist them in determining their own values. This would be information which would influence the minds of this age group with the hope that it would

result in establishing proper values.

At the senior high level some basic psychology should be taught to help the student understand himself, as well as others.

Such things as going steady, engagement, sex manners and morals should be discussed.

Regarding marriage, such things as choosing a marriage partner, what makes a successful marriage, legal requirements, and divorce would be included. Also, there should be a study of courtship and marriage customs of other societies, as well as our own, at this level.

Students need to learn about venereal disease. Some of the areas that would be discussed in detail included why there was an increase in venereal disease. Also, syphilis, gonorrhoea and their effect on marriage should be presented at this time.

Students should be aware of and given a chance to discuss the four sexual codes that operate in our society.

Students on the senior high level should evaluate the overall sex education program.