

SEX EDUCATION IN THE VOCATIONAL
HOMEMAKING SCHOOLS
OF OKLAHOMA

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By

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INTRODUCTION

The experiences of teaching and of counseling highschool and college girls, has stimulated the writing of this thesis. Observation and conference with many girls suggested that some were unprepared to solve intelligently problems relating to sex and reproduction.

Study was made of sex education subject matter and programs and a questionnaire prepared to survey the sex education program existing in the vocational homemaking departments of the public schools of Oklahoma.

The tabulation of the inquiry has revealed interesting facts concerning the sex education programs now in some schools in Oklahoma and also factors which are preventing other schools from offering a program.

This inquiry has inspired a few suggestions for a sex education program which may prove helpful to any teacher interested in this subject.

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A POINT OF VIEW ON SEX EDUCATION

The conflict through which we have just passed has left its mark on all nations, societies, communities, families, and individuals, and these days of world wide reconstruction and reconversion are bringing all individuals face to face with new unsolved problems.

Many of the unsolved problems can be traced to the fact that the recent war brought the people throughout the world closer together. We can no longer live as an isolated nation. Interdependence forces us to live cooperatively if we are going to live at all, and to attack persistent social problems more intelligently.

Among the needs which stand out boldly is that for a pattern of human relations which will fit a democratic, interdependent society; and among the institutions of society which influence the individual and all of his human relationships, the family holds the place of unmatched significance.

In this industrialized world many responsibilities formerly assumed by the family have been removed from the home. The close, compact, self-sustaining family is fast becoming only a memory. In many instances the home appears to be merely the house in which the family eats and sleeps. In recent years many adolescent boys and girls have been thrown back upon their own judgments in a world marked by turmoil and confusion. Many boys and girls are struggling to find security today, without such knowledge, experience, or adult guidance as might help them to solve their problems intelligently. In general family life is becoming less stable and the divorce rate is increasing rapidly. Little wonder that juvenile delinquency is increasing.

Helping the individual to become a more effective member of his home and family group is one of the generally accepted objectives of education. The family is the first and frequently the most important influence in the life of all of us. Therefore it is important that the school help parents and young people to understand the significance of family membership. The early experience of the individual tends to establish a pattern for all his human relationships and the personal social relationships of the adult may depend to a large extent upon the nature of his early concepts. This assumption seems especially significant in any study of problems originating in sex or related to social adjustment directly involving specific consideration of sex.

The role which sex plays in human behavior is many-sided and we have no choice as to whether or not sex shall powerfully influence our lives and those of our children. The processes of sex are fundamental to life and the social factors related to sex are of the greatest importance to the welfare of the individual.

We have reason to believe, that the family as such, historically finds its origin in sex. There is evidence that in many instances the primitive man assumed responsibility for protecting and supporting his family, and that the primitive woman stayed by the goods, prepared food and clothing, and nursed the children. This habit, sanctioned by custom, later by laws, proved to be the most satisfying basis on which to propagate the race and stabilize society. Today the family is one of our most significant social institutions. So it seems that better sex education might be a factor in giving greater stability to the modern home and in developing men and women capable of solving intelligently and together many of the current and baffling problems which

mark our times.

Sex education does not consist alone of information which the mother or the teacher gives to the child or which he picks up from his playmates. Nor does it focus attention only upon the biological and physiological facts of reproduction. Nor is it purely the concepts about sex conveyed by the movie, magazine, radio, and other media of communication. Sex education is the comprehensive, progressive, and continuous process of helping the individual to develop his capacities to solve any life problems which result from the natural relations of the sexes, and to bring about socially desirable practices and wholesome attitudes at all developmental levels.

A few years ago the frank discussion of sex problems was taboo and children were taught that much that had to do with reproduction was vulgar and degrading. The sex act was thought to be evil and shameful, and the less known and said about it the better for young people. To satisfy the questions which every normal child asks, such myths as the stork or the doctor with his satchel became popular ways of explaining how a baby sister or brother came to the family. Some parents tried to make their sons and daughters "good" by frightening them with the horrors of venereal disease and the stigma of unwanted pregnancies. Many children were given severe warnings against even thinking about sex matters.

Some children never received any sex education from their parents, but gathered what information they had from other sources. Much of it was verbalized through obscene or atrocious words. Seldom was the information reliable. For many children vulgarity made the strongest impression in their first lessons concerning the "facts of life";

although, few of the more intelligent parents tried to transmit sex knowledge to their children by suggesting the parallel between human and plant reproduction.

The effect of this taboo has left many people with needless fears and misgivings. Imagination was often substituted for sober facts, and many people saw sex as an attractive mysterious jeopardy or hazard. As sex became less and less discussed in polite society it became a more and more fascinating topic for confidential and unconventional situations.

Today there are new trends in sex education. The intelligent public is becoming aware of the fact that correct knowledge and wholesome attitudes toward sex are essential for the individual who wills to meet and solve his sex problems intelligently. We have also come to a point in our social organization where sex and sex behavior is discussed quite openly in the newspapers, books, movies, and conversation.

As these new trends in sex education have developed so have new problems, and many social and cultural developments tend to increase the number of boys and girls who grow up poorly prepared to meet sex problems. The seriousness of the problem is reflected in the following statement.

In 1943 there were 82,586 illegitimate births in the United States (exclusive of California, Colorado, Connecticut, Maryland, Massachusetts, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New Mexico, New York, and Wyoming). In 1942 the number was the highest with 83,459. In Oklahoma in 1943 there were 1,265. Of this number, 565 were white with 700 non-white.¹ Figures from 46 states show that about half the number of illegitimate children have been born to child mothers between 15 and 19 years of age, many between 10 and 14.²

¹ U. S. Dept. of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Vital Statistics of the U. S. Part II, 1943, pp. 12-13.

² Buck, Ellsworth B., "The Necessity for Sex Education", American Mercury, May, 1939

Startling as these figures are, the findings from a recent survey by Glenn V. Ramsey are just as much so. In this study 291 boys of families with an average income were interviewed to determine their level of sexual experience. Ramsey concludes that:

By 14 years of age two-thirds of the boys had engaged in erotic play with girls, nine out of ten had masturbated, more than one-third had had homosexual experiences. By 18 years of age one-fifth had had virtually no experience, one-fifth had had sexual intercourse, some hundreds of times, and one in five had visited a prostitute.³

These facts are appalling in themselves. First hand interviews with some college girls in regard to their information about and attitudes toward sex have proved also to be revealing. College students seem to lack knowledge of facts and feel insecure in meeting problems which originate in social contacts with the opposite sex.

For example, one girl who is 23 years of age knew nothing about the reproductive systems of men and women and very little about their normal functioning. She said, "my mother never told me anything, and I never had any high school courses on the subject." She was sincerely concerned, and asked the following questions.

1. Can you tell when the ovum matures?
2. Doesn't the ovum mature at the onset of menstruation?
3. Does the baby's head come first in normal child birth?
4. Why doesn't the blood run to its head if it develops head down in the uterus?
5. What does this advertisement mean "Feminine Hygiene"? What is it all about?
6. How can a contraceptive keep you from becoming pregnant?
7. Is there a safe contraceptive?

³ Ramsey, Glenn V., "Boy and Sex", Time Magazine, September 23, 1943, pp. 75-76.

Likewise the questions asked by members of a marriage class composed of junior and senior high school girls, prove revealing. A sample of the questions asked by those girls is offered below.

1. Are tampons recommended for single women? Are they suitable for any woman?
2. Does swimming stop menstruation?
3. Between what ages is it best to have children?
4. What are the things you can do to keep from having children?
5. How long does it take to tell whether you are pregnant?
6. Is it all right to have sexual intercourse while pregnant?
7. What does the average husband expect from his wife in sexual life?
8. Is it necessary to use precautions against pregnancy on the wedding night?
9. Do they give you an anesthetic until the end of the birth of the child?

At the close of the unit the girls who asked the previous questions declared themselves as follows:

1. A girl should know what the right kind of books say, and colleges should have educated persons to teach such things so the student will get the right impressions and attitudes.
2. It clears up a lot of misrepresented ideas on sex and gives a person more wholesome ideas.
3. I think that junior and senior boys should have a course such as this.

In short these students and many ^{many students} more are supporting the current demand for sex education because they are coming to see the universal need for it. All intelligent parents are properly concerned with the ineffectual practices of the past, and the kind of improved procedure which may prove helpful to their children. They want their children to develop normally and have a chance for living a successful personal and family life.

The schools have been reproached for sending out boys and girls with poor attitudes toward sex and poorly informed with respect to sex facts. Educators are beginning to see the need for sex education,

beyond that which the average child receives today; and in some states the Boards of Education have recognized that sex education has come to stay. Parents, educators, religious instructors, doctors, and adolescents alike are asking for it. In fact it appears that the youth of America may be challenged to nurture more positive social values through the intelligent program of sex education now imminent. To build such a program the schools must give consideration to all pertinent educational measures promoted by other social institutions. The home, the church, and many other agencies are responsible in part for helping individuals of all ages, especially those in childhood and youth, prepare to meet the life problems which result from the natural relations of the sexes.

For a long time there has been discussion as to where responsibility for sex education lies: whether the home, the church, the school, or other agencies. Probably an interrelated program in teaching sex education shared by all these institutions would be the ideal situation since each institution obviously has natural advantages and disadvantages for promoting this phase of education. Undoubtedly the good home is the first and best place for certain levels of education. The natural curiosity of early childhood can be satisfied by the parent through a continuous informal program in sex education carried on day by day as the opportunity occurs. Many basic facts concerning sex reproduction, can be taught and desirable attitudes can be built up in the same natural way in which all knowledge comes to children. An early understanding of sex tends to develop wholesome attitudes in the growing child and to help him to live happily and intelligently. Parents must learn to take the responsibility for this early guidance.

On the other hand many parents feel inadequately prepared to lead the child's understanding of sex beyond a very elemental level. Changing conditions and the constant expansion of knowledge also tend to make it necessary for outside agencies to supplement the parents program of sex education.

The church can make unique contribution in helping people to understand the significance of sex education in intelligent living. However through the church both spiritual and moral guidance can be given more readily than can much scientific information regarding sex and sex problems.

To recognize that the schools should accept greater responsibility in this connection is no reproach to the homes or the churches. In line with the trend of our industrialized society to take certain tasks out of the home, the time now seems to have arrived when the school must accept responsibility to supplement the concepts of sex acquired through the influences of the home and the church. In doing so the school may align itself more closely with the many influences touching the lives of young people in this country, and designed to help them make possible for themselves a happy family life. Sex education is not brought into the schools to reduce in any way home responsibility but rather to enlarge and to enrich the experiences of the child.

It is impossible to restrict sex education to a particular stage of development in the life of any individual. For this reason many educators feel that the high school is too late an educational level on which to bring this subject into the curriculum and are urging a program throughout the elementary grades. This would mean a better foundation in factual knowledge and more wholesome attitudes for the child before he enters the stage of adolescence.

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The period of adolescence is critical for the individual as the sex impulses bring about physiological strains and discomforts. Sympathetic and intelligent teaching and guidance through this level of growth seems essential as an aid to adequate adjustment on the part of all boys and girls. Strangely enough many adolescents turn to their teachers for counseling on problems they would hesitate to take to their parents. Therefore, if the schools fail them at this important stage in their life, they do not have the essential and correct information they need for wholesome attitudes and physical well being. For some, this is their last chance to get guidance from professionally competent educators.

All the schools may not as yet be properly prepared to place sex education into their curriculum, but the outlook is favorable. Today dependable information about knowledge of sex can be obtained from books prepared by reliable authorities. Teachers can prepare themselves in our colleges to teach sex education and to make possible experiences designed to promote wholesome attitudes toward sex. Furthermore all sex education can be correlated throughout the school program. There seems to be no reason why sex education in the future cannot be presented to all school children at all ages, to help them live more effectively, constructively, and intelligently in this democratic society.

The above point of view concerning sex education led the writer to undertake a study of the amount and kind of sex education being taught in the vocational homemaking public schools of Oklahoma. Besides revealing the present status of sex education in certain Public Schools in Oklahoma, the study was undertaken to discover what certain home economists believe to be the relative need of teachers for presenting

courses including units of sex education.

The questionnaire (Exhibit B, C, D, pages 13, 14, 15) as finally sent to the homemaking teachers, dealt with subject matter, classes, time, and methods used in teaching sex education; as well as the possible preparatory needs of the teachers.

Before the questionnaire was prepared much of the available current literature on this phase of education was studied. Interviews were held with teachers who had in recent years correlated sex education in their homemaking curriculum. College girls were contacted and asked for information regarding the extent to which their highschools had accepted sex education as a necessary part of the curriculum, and to what degree that training had been helpful in the solution of problems encountered in college living. A limited number of girls whose highschools had not included sex education as part of their training were asked where they received their sex education and whether or not they considered what they had learned sufficient.

In addition the homemaking marriage class composed of junior and senior highschool girls referred to above, was visited frequently during an entire semester. Further observations were made in a marriage class composed of a mixed group of college students and special consideration was given to a college class in Family Health concerning course, content, and teaching methods. Letters of inquiry were also sent to nationally known authorities in the field of sex education.

The questionnaire is divided into two sections. Section I is designed to discover what subject matter the vocational homemaking teachers included in their sex education programs and Section II, to suggest the kind of help needed by those who do not offer this phase of education.

The parts of the questionnaire which deal with subject matter attempt to uncover information regarding the extent to which sex education is being included in certain vocational homemaking classes in the public schools of Oklahoma, the extent to which sex education is promoted as a continuous process rather than a sudden revelation of facts, and whether or not the boys in the schools are receiving as much information as the girls.

Where no sex education is offered the inquiry attempts to discover why teachers do not include any sex education in their homemaking programs; and whether or not lack of available illustrative material and lack of knowledge on the part of the teachers are factors in the decision to omit any organized study of sex problems.

In order that all teachers contacted might understand the purpose of this survey, the letter included with all copies of the questionnaire suggested that an intelligent attitude toward sex education seems basic to a happy home life and that information concerning the sort of sex education included in the vocational homemaking programs in the public schools of Oklahoma might suggest how this phase of education may be made more valuable.

The letter is offered as exhibit A, page 12.

EXHIBIT A

OKLAHOMA AGRICULTURAL AND MECHANICAL COLLEGE
Home Economics Education
Stillwater

May 20, 1946

Dear Friends:

Believing that an intelligent attitude toward sex is basic to a happy home life, I am anxious to know what sex education is included in the Homemaking Programs of the public schools in Oklahoma.

I will appreciate your help in securing the information requested.

This inquiry is divided into two sections: you need only answer one section. If you offer a unit in sex education, please answer the questions in SECTION I. If you do not offer sex education, please answer the questions in SECTION II.

Very truly yours,

Ethel Shillings
Graduate Student

EXHIBIT B
Questionnaire to Teachers - Sex Education
SECTION I

If you offer sex education, please answer the following questions:

A. WHAT SUBJECT MATTER IS INCLUDED?

1. Topics closely related to sex education.

a. Personal

1. Personal health _____
2. Masculine or feminine role in society _____
3. Boy-girl relationship _____
4. Importance of sex in daily living _____
5. Emotional stability and self control _____
6. Companionship with opposite sex, and same sex _____
7. Choice of friends _____
8. Traits boys like in girls _____
9. Traits girls like in boys _____

b. Family

1. Origin -- sex and care of the young _____
2. Personality and sex _____
3. The role of the sexes _____
4. Attitudes toward sex _____
5. Sex in parent-child relationship _____
6. Recreation versus sex for the adolescent and adult _____
7. Explaining sex to children _____

c. Social

1. Convention and sex _____
2. Morality and sex _____
3. Social hygiene (venereal diseases) _____
4. Prostitution _____
5. Problem of illegitimacy _____
6. Sex crimes _____
7. Alcohol and sex _____

d. Teen Age

1. Dating etiquette (asking for dates, accepting, and refusing) _____
2. Types of dates (group or single) _____
3. Appropriate hours for boys and girls to stay out at night _____
4. Probable dangers of petting _____

e. Marriage

1. Selecting a mate _____
2. Customs of engagement and marriage _____
3. Laws _____
4. Adjustments to marriage _____
5. Divorce _____
6. Love versus infatuation _____
7. Promiscuity _____
8. Current fallacies about need for premarital sex experiences _____

2. Specific Sex Education

a. Sex Biology

1. Biological changes during adolescence _____
2. Reproductive system of male and female _____
3. Endocrine glands _____
4. Menstrual cycle _____
5. Menstrual hygiene _____
6. Pregnancy _____

EXHIBIT C

B. CHECK THE UNITS IN WHICH YOU TEACH SEX EDUCATION. IN WHAT ORDER IS THE UNIT PRESENTED AND HOW MUCH TIME IS GIVEN TO IT?

Name of Unit	Grade presented	Time Spent
1. Personal grooming _____	_____	_____
2. Dating _____	_____	_____
3. Boy-girl relationship _____	_____	_____
4. Family relationship _____	_____	_____
5. Marriage _____	_____	_____
6. Infant care _____	_____	_____
7. Child care _____	_____	_____
8. Relations and health _____	_____	_____
9. Others (Name) _____	_____	_____

C. WHAT METHODS ARE USED IN TEACHING SEX EDUCATION?

1. Lecture by teachers _____
2. Outside speakers _____
3. Discussion _____
4. Do you make use of a question box? _____
5. Films, slides and/or special charts _____
6. Reading _____
7. Reports, written or oral _____
8. Field trips and special demonstrations _____
9. Group work _____
10. Others (Name) _____

D. STUDENTS WHEN DISCUSSING SEX EDUCATION GENERALLY SHOW:

1. an eagerness to learn _____
2. an objective and intelligent attitude _____
3. A general indifference _____
4. A decided embarrassment or timidity _____
5. a vulgar amusement _____
6. an abnormal curiosity _____

E. IS THERE ANY CLASS IN WHICH THE BOYS OF THE SCHOOL RECEIVE ANY SEX EDUCATION?

1. Agriculture _____
2. Physical Education _____
3. Science _____
4. Home Economics _____
5. Others (Name) _____

F. ANY COMMENTS YOU CARE TO MAKE WILL BE APPRECIATED.

EXHIBIT D

SECTION II

If you do not offer sex education, please answer the following questions.

- A. Does the superintendent disapprove? Yes _____ No _____
- B. Does the community disapprove? Yes _____ No _____
- C. Do you think the subject should be included in a school program?
Yes _____ No _____
- D. Do you think the home economics teacher should accept responsibility
for teaching sex education? Yes (All _____ No _____
(Part _____
- E. If you believe the home economics teacher should teach sex education
do you feel that:
1. You have adequate knowledge of the subject matter? Yes _____ No _____
2. You have adequate teaching material to present the subject?
Yes _____ No _____
- F. Where did you receive your sex education?
1. Home _____
 2. Friends _____
 3. High school course _____
 4. College courses _____
 5. Nurse's training _____
 6. Others (Name) _____
- G. Any Comments you care to make will be appreciated.

SITUATIONS IN OKLAHOMA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The Oklahoma public schools having vocational homemaking departments were divided into four districts during the school year 1945 and 1946. At the district meetings in May and June, 1946 the questionnaire was distributed to the Vocational Homemaking teachers in attendance. Table I shows the number of questionnaires returned as well as the actual number of vocational homemaking teachers in each district.

TABLE I

Comparison of Questionnaires Returned with Total Number of Teachers

District	Questionnaires returned	Teachers
Northeast District	19	34
Northwest District	24	37
Southeast District	19	50
Southwest District	33	60
Negro Schools	15	16
Total	110	197

At the Northeast District meeting, which the writer had an opportunity to attend, valuable information was obtained from the teachers present. The teachers expressed not only an appreciation for but a desire to answer the questionnaire. They displayed much freedom in responding to the questions and reflected real concern about the problem of teaching sex education. They seemed glad to know that someone was conducting a survey which might bring out the need in this area of education and emphasize possible ways in which teachers may better prepare themselves to help their students become intelligent in matters involving sex.

In all, 110 vocational homemaking teachers answered the questionnaire previously referred to. It was designed to throw light upon the status of sex education in the public schools of Oklahoma, and consists of two parts. Section I was answered only by the teachers in schools already offering a sex education program and shows what subject matter is being emphasized, in what classes the program functions, the time devoted to the program as such, how it is presented, and the general reaction of the students. Section II is intended to show why sex education is not given consideration in schools where no program for sex education exists at present.

Out of the 110 questionnaires returned, 95 were answered by white vocational homemaking teachers. Of these 76 answered Section I, as did six of the 15 negro teachers contacted. So it appears that 82 of the 110 schools represented in this study are already offering some sex education and that in this group the ratio of the schools for white children offering sex education to that of the schools for colored children offering sex education is approximately two to one. Of the 28 teachers who answered Section II 19 represented schools for white children and nine for colored.

Part A of Section I is itself sub-divided into parts one and two. The latter deals with the biology of sex while the former deals with topics closely related to sex education. These topics are grouped into phases of sex education dealing with the personal and social aspects of living, and with the unique problems of adolescence, marriage and the family.

This organization grew out of consideration for the traits generally associated with democratic personality — the accepted end product of all education. Hence the following characterization of democratic personality

has been accepted against which to appraise the efforts to promote education as reflected in the returns from this and other parts of the inquiry.

1. The ability and zeal to use the methods of reflective thinking in meeting the problems of living.
2. The ability and zeal to act cooperatively in solving problems of common concern.
3. The cultivation of the attitude of social sensitivity.
4. The ability to become increasingly self-directive.
5. A sensitivity to aesthetic values.
6. A zeal to live creatively.
7. An attachment to a way of association in which those who associate hold dear respect for the full personal development of each participant.¹

In other words the above criteria suggests that the individual who would be democratic must learn to think reliably and to become self directive, as well as to recognize some good in all things, and to become a dynamic force in making all things better. Since no individual lives in a world to himself, he must further learn to solve cooperatively all problems which involve others, and in doing so he becomes sensitive to the need of society, and participates in determining what standards the group will live by. Thus the criteria quoted above is reduced in the sex education programs here analyzed.

In the matter of personal and social adjustment to sex problems, health is a matter of utmost importance. Health both physical and mental is essential to the happiness of all individuals and the health status of parents is frequently reflected in that of their children.

¹ Progressive Education Association, Progressive Education: It's Philosophy and Challenge, p. 8.

Before the individual can hope to think reliably in solving problems involving him in sex, he must experience and understand the meaning of buoyant health and appreciate the social hazards to health which sex life carries. He must develop functioning concepts of the masculine and the feminine roles in society, of the traits boys and girls like in each other, and of the value latent in conventions and moral customs as they relate to social hygiene.

Before the individual can hope to become self directive in the matter of sex he must acquire progressively within himself attitudes which build emotional stability and self control.

This matter of emotional stability and self control frequently hinges upon the adolescent's choice of friends and the quality of companionship which he strives to maintain in the members of his own group, whether of his own or opposite sex. The wrong choice of friends may in the last analysis account for much of the current use of alcohol and sex crimes. So the program which encourages the study of boy-girl relationships may be assumed to challenge the adolescent to become more self directive.

Any experience which clarifies for the individual the masculine or the feminine roles in society helps him to discover his own place in the social world and to develop himself to the fullest possible extent.

Since the family is usually found to be the first and most important influence in the life of the individual, sex education should begin in the home where the opportunity arises naturally. The child's personality is greatly influenced by the attitude of the mother and the father toward sex, and by the role of the sexes as assumed by the mother and father in the family. The family pattern frequently becomes so much a part of the

individual as to be carried by him into the family he establishes for himself as an adult. Parents seem obligated to give their children sufficient knowledge to let them be intelligent and have a feeling of stability in solving problems related to sex. The child's early interest in sex should be encouraged in the home where facts can be presented in a natural way and normal curiosity satisfied.

In the light of this assumption the program of sex education in the school may well help the student clarify his ideas concerning the origin of the family and the part sex normally plays in family life. Furthermore as the student becomes increasingly self directive he may need help in discovering that many unwholesome places of recreation capitalize upon normal interest related to sex. This same interest might be capitalized upon by the family itself in such a way as to create a more wholesome recreational environment.

In the matter of teen age adjustment to sex problems, dating is one of utmost importance. Adolescent boys and girls seek every suggestion, all information, every bit of guidance that bears on their mutual relationship, and want to know what others think of them if they do this or that.

Before the adolescent can hope to think reliably in solving problems involving him in sex, he must understand and appreciate correct dating etiquette and let it become a patterned part of his actions. He must appreciate the personal and social jeopardy in dating which petting and late hours carry.

Any experiences which the school may provide to challenge youth to become analytical concerning dating problems may well help the student to become increasingly self directive. He may need help in working out and accepting agreeable dating hours with his parents and in accepting his responsibility in solving intelligently new social situations as they occur.

The period from the beginning of adolescence to maturity represents a time in the life of the individual when he needs help in preparing himself to solve intelligently the problem of the selection of a mate. In adolescence one becomes conscious of a desire for mating and sexual experience. All the variety of relationships by which boys and girls come to know each other tends to narrow their interests down to one member of the opposite sex, this in turn may lead to the engagement of these two, and to a period of more intimate study. When marriage occurs, this process of getting acquainted goes on. Sex factors in marriage take on added significance, play a large part in marital adjustments during the first few years; and problems of self-control and personal rights and privileges enter the situation in sex conduct as in other relationship.

Marriage laws and ceremonies have grown up to protect family rights. If people attempt to evade responsibility by entering into relations and privileges of the marriage state without marriage they lose standing in the community, and frequently become sexually promiscuous.

When marriage proves a failure one or the other of the partners is likely to seek a permanent legal solution through divorce. Divorce laws are important and often not understood.

In the light of this assumption the program of sex education in the schools may help the individual prepare for marriage, give him an opportunity to learn why the state and the church are so much concerned with marriage, help him to appreciate the dangers which so called temporary alliances carry, and to recognize that sex factors enter inevitably into the problem of maintaining physical, intellectual, and spiritual well-being. Relations which are lasting have their strength rooted deeply in the last two, and indulgence in sexual vice tends to destroy them.

The inquiry shows that interest in personal problems relating to sex and the problems of the teen age rank the highest in subject matter areas, since three-fourths of these teachers include such subject matter in their programs. Study of the problems arising in family life and marriage ranks next in importance with one-half of the teachers including subject matter related to these problems. The study of social problems related to sex appears to be less popular since this subject matter ranks the lowest and only one-fourth of the teachers are including it in their program.

Sub-division two of question A deals with specific sex education. For an individual to develop a democratic personality, learn to think reliably and become self directive he must have an understanding of the reproductive organs and understand sex as a biological function. He should furthermore understand the influence of the endocrine glands upon sex behavior. To solve problems related to sex cooperatively, to become sensitive to the social needs bearing upon sex and to participate in determining group standards which involve one in sex he must have a foundation of accurate biological knowledge.

The inquiry shows that one-half of the teachers include sex biology as part of the subject matter presented in their programs. Table II, page 23, shows the number of teachers reporting on the areas of subject matter in their programs.

TABLE II

Relative Emphasis on Subject Matter in Sex Education

Subject Matter	Number of Programs
Personal	
Personal health	77
Masculine or feminine role in society	53
Boy-girl relationship	77
Importance of sex in daily living	24
Emotional stability and self control	56
Companionship with opposite sex, and same sex	71
Choice of friends	77
Traits boys like in girls	75
Traits girls like in boys	75
Family	
Origin -- sex and care of the young	55
Personality and sex	50
The role of the sexes	33
Attitudes toward sex	54
Sex in parent-child relationship	29
Recreation versus sex for the adolescent and adult	24
Explaining sex to children	48
Social	
Convention and sex	22
Morality and sex	47
Social hygiene (venereal diseases)	67
Prostitution	22
Problem of illegitimacy	27
Sex crimes	18
Alcohol and sex	27
Teen Age	
Dating etiquette (asking for dates, accepting, and refusing)	76
Types of dates (group or single)	63
Appropriate hours for girls and boys to stay out at night	70
Probable dangers of petting	66
Marriage	
Selecting a mate	66
Customs of engagement and marriage	59
Laws	37
Adjustments to marriage	53
Divorce	49
Love	
Love versus infatuation	46
Promiscuity	31
Current fallacies about need for premarital sex experiences	30
Sex Biology	
Biological changes during adolescence	64
Reproductive system of male and female	52
Endocrine glands	31
Menstrual cycle	65
Menstrual hygiene	65
Pregnancy	61

Part B of Section I shows the grades, names of the classes, and the time devoted to each unit in which sex education is presented. To help the adolescent to learn to think reliably and become increasingly self directive, sex education on an appropriate scale should be offered at different age levels. It is important for the adolescent to receive wholesome information when he is facing new problems related to sex, so he can solve these problems intelligently. Of equal importance is the fact that a program of sex education should be presented so as to coordinate pertinent material in the various courses of the curriculum.

The inquiry shows that five teachers include sex education in units not listed on the questionnaire. These units were Home Hygiene, Home and Family, Etiquette, Prenatal Care, and Home Nursing. The results show that these units listed on the questionnaire are offered in six grades, the seventh through the twelfth. Very little sex education is presented in the seventh grade, and much is presented in the ninth and tenth. In the seventh, eighth, and ninth grades units in personal grooming are offered by more teachers than are any of the other units. Personal grooming also rates as being the unit taught by the most teachers. In the tenth grade child care is the most popular unit; in the eleventh grade infant care; and in the twelfth grade, marriage.

Table III, page 26, shows in detail the names of the units offered and the number of teachers who present sex education in these units from the seventh grade through the twelfth.

Sex education like general education must be continuous and progressive as boys and girls are confronted day by day with new problems

relating to sex. Wise timing is an important element in the teaching of sex education. The results from the questionnaire shows that some teachers spend less than a week on some of the units, while a few teach some units for nine weeks. One week stands out as being the most popular length of time to spend on the units, with two weeks ranking next.

Table IV, page 26, shows the length of time used in presenting sex education in various units.

Part C of section I shows the methods used in teaching sex education. Since the function of the teacher is to guide the pupil into situations where experience will teach him that which he needs to learn. Much thought should be given to ways of presenting the material. The inquiry disclosed that most teachers use the discussion method in presenting sex education. The reading method ranks second, and the lecture method ranks third in popularity. Many of the teachers made use of the question box, a good means of collecting questions which girls sometimes hesitate to ask during class.

Table V, page 29, shows the number of teachers using various methods.

TABLE III

Grade Emphasis Upon Various Units

Name of Unit	Relative Emphasis by Grades					
	7th	8th	9th	10th	11th	12th
	:Grade	Grade	Grade	Grade	Grade	Grade
Personal grooming	11	25	58	38	26	23
Dating	1	10	36	43	29	26
Boy-girl relationship	2	13	47	41	31	33
Family relationship	3	12	43	45	31	29
Marriage	0	0	8	13	38	43
Infant care	0	1	7	26	41	42
Child Care	5	11	12	47	21	15
Relations and health	2	12	43	33	21	25

TABLE IV

Weeks Spent on Various Units

Unit	Relative Time in Weeks						
	Less than 1 wk	1 wk	2 weeks	3 weeks	4 weeks	6 weeks	9 weeks
	than 1 wk	week	weeks	weeks	weeks	weeks	weeks
Personal grooming	1	10	18	10	8	14	0
Dating	11	24	12	5	1	4	0
Boy-girl relationship	12	25	6	5	2	4	1
Family relationship	5	16	8	6	5	12	0
Marriage	9	13	7	9	3	6	0
Infant care	5	6	12	8	4	13	1
Child care	4	5	5	9	10	16	1
Relations and health	5	17	5	9	3	7	0

Part D of Section I provides an estimate of the reactions of the students when discussing sex education. It must be remembered that these reactions could depend on several things: the manner in which the teacher presents the material, attitudes developed by the adolescent at home, attitudes developed from talking with other playmates, and earlier knowledge of sex. The results shows that the majority of the teachers think the students reflect an eagerness to learn. The second largest number of teachers say that the students reflect an objective and intelligent attitude.

Table VI, page 29, shows the teachers' estimate of reactions during the discussing of sex.

Part E of Section I asks in what classes in the school boys are receiving some sex education and finds its origin in the belief that it is of equal importance that boys as well as girls receive sex education. The results show that physical education ranks the highest as the course in which boys receive some sex information and that science and agriculture ranks the lowest. It should be remembered however that many schools do not offer agriculture in their curriculum, while most schools do offer science and physical education. It is interesting to note that eleven of the homemaking teachers who answered the questionnaire offer sex education to boys in homemaking classes for boys.

Table VII, page,29, shows the courses in which sex education is offered to the boys in the schools.

Part F of Section I invited comments from the teachers and their expressions reflect various points of view on sex education. For example:

Sex education in the school has a place as important as any other subject.

Would like to see a standard course of sex education worked out on grade levels for Homemaking classes.

Sex education is taught in all units to which it is related in my homemaking department. I should like to see a good unit outlined for sex education for all high school pupils.

Sex education is needed very much in our school. The public is becoming more broad minded to the teaching of the subject.

Time doesn't permit as much time as I would like to spend on the subject.

All high school students need this information badly.

More time in the high school should be devoted to sex education.

Some adolescent girls don't receive enough information at home concerning biological changes of the adolescence and the school should supplement the home in this.

Section II of the questionnaire was designed to present first, reasons why sex education is not offered in some of the vocational homemaking public schools of Oklahoma; and second, what factors keep the teachers from presenting this material. The factors suggested were the local climate of opinion on sex education, hesitancy on the part of the teacher to present the subject. Since the teachers answering this section do not teach sex education, they were asked to indicate if they thought it should be included in the program and if in their opinion, it is part of the homemaking teacher's responsibility to present part of the material.

TABLE V

Methods Used in Sex Education

Methods	No. of Teachers
Lecture by teachers	63
Outside speakers	34
Discussion	72
Do you make use of a question box?	61
Films, slides and/or special charts	52
Reading	68
Reports, written or oral	45
Field trips and special demonstrations	17
Group work	30

TABLE VI

Students Reactions to Sex Education

Reactions	No of Teachers Reporting
An eagerness to learn	76
An objective and intelligent attitude	61
A general indifference	3
A decided embarrassment or timidity	15
A vulgar amusement	2
An abnormal curiosity	5

TABLE VII

Boys Classes Offering Sex Education

Classes	No. of Teachers Reporting
Agriculture	9
Physical Education	24
Science	20
Home Economics	11
Others	3

Table VIII, page 31, shows reasons given by some teachers for not offering sex education in their programs. The returns show that only one superintendent and four communities are branded as disapproving, while 11 teachers stated that they are inadequately prepared to present the material. Twenty-two teachers say they lack the primary illustrative material to present effectively certain phases of sex education.

Comments made by the teachers giving their point of view on the subject follow:

I think the parents should shoulder the greater part of the responsibility, but so few are well informed.

I have been in this community just this school term. I plan to offer sex education in my plan of teaching next school term.

Although the community disapproves, I feel that the high school students need this information badly.

I think it should be taught in every high school in the senior year.

I would like to see a standard course on sex education for all homemaking classes.

In Part F of Section II, the teachers were asked to indicate where they received their training, as this might have some bearing upon the teachers knowledge and attitude toward sex education. Most of the teachers received their knowledge in college courses, while the home ranked next being only two points behind. It is interesting to note that five of the teachers received sex education in high school courses.

TABLE VIII

Reasons for Absence of Sex Education

Reasons	No. of Teachers Answering	
	Yes	No
Does the superintendent disapprove	1	20
Does the community disapprove	4	18
Do you think the subject should be included in a school program	25	0
Do you think the home economics teacher should accept part of the responsibility for teaching sex education	27	0
Do you feel that you have adequate knowledge to present the subject	13	11
Do you feel that you have adequate teaching material to present the subject?	3	22

TABLE X

Sources of Teacher's Sex Education

Sources	No. of Teachers
Home	20
Friends	10
High School course	5
College Course	22
Nurse's training	3
Others	1

Careful consideration of the above data, suggests the significance of the following facts and supports the following conclusions.

Out of the 197 vocational homemaking schools located in all parts of Oklahoma, 110 are represented in this study. Fifteen of the sixteen schools, offering vocational homemaking education for negroes, are represented in this study and approximately one in every two of the schools offering the same for white students.

The teachers as a whole expressed a desire to answer the questionnaire and reflected real concern about the problem of teaching sex education. They seemed glad to know that someone was conducting a survey and asked for suggestions concerning ways and means to strengthen this phase of education.

While 80% of the white vocational homemaking teachers offered sex education in their programs last year, only 40% of the negro teachers did. Yet the need for a program of sex education may be greater in the negro schools if one may judge the relative need from the higher percentage of illegitimacy occurring among the negroes.²

For the adolescent boy and girl to develop a democratic personality, the school should provide experiences designed to help him acquire the characteristically democratic traits. In analysis of the subject matter presented in the programs of sex education, some of the schools are placing very little emphasis on some phases of sex education. The results show that the problems listed as those of a personal nature or experienced during the teen age are emphasized more generally than are problems which originate in family life, marriage, and lack of knowledge of sex biology. Practically no emphasis appear to be placed upon social problems relating to sex.

² Bureau of the Census, op. cit.

For the individual to become intelligently self directive in matters of sex, he must have sufficient knowledge of all phases of subject matter relating to sex to let him form intelligent judgements. Yet subject matter closely related to sex education was emphasized more than specific sex education. This in itself might seem to say that they are "too young to know the truth". While obvious needs of the adolescent may center in those areas involving attitudes, emotions, and appreciations, without factual knowledge he cannot think reliably or become intelligently self directive. The same applies to social problems relating to sex. These are emphasized only by one fourth of the teachers. An individual cannot solve problems involving others cooperatively or become sensitive to the needs of society if he meets with no experiences in this area which challenge him to discover the cause and cure of certain social ills.

A close study of the grades and the units in which sex education is offered reveals a pattern of action. Sex education appears to be presented in the schools represented from the seventh grade through the twelfth. The average age for seventh grade girls is twelve and this is also the age when biological changes in the adolescent girl frequently occur. While personal health - the unit most emphasized in the seventh grade - is important sex education might well be taught here as a phase of personal health about which seventh grade girls need to be informed for adjustments to the physical maturing generally experienced at this age.

In the twelfth grade, marriage appears to be the most popular unit. This seems well placed since the average age of senior girls is eighteen, which too is the age when women may marry legally in the state of Oklahoma. So preparation for marriage and planning for family life should not be postponed beyond that level. Recognition of the fact that preparation for

marriage is of the utmost importance for all makes the fact depressing that all girls do not receive this course in high school. The reasons may be several. Not all girls take homemaking during their senior year. Some girls drop out of school before they reach their senior year. Moreover in 37% of the schools represented the course is not offered.

More courses which deal with phases of sex education are offered in the ninth and tenth grades than in any other, and the least emphasis appears in the seventh grade. This fact is discouraging also since girls need sex education in early adolescence to offset needless worries and fears which may arise at this time from lack of knowledge.

Some teachers spend less than a week on some of the units, while a few teach some units for nine weeks. One week stands out as being the most popular length of time to spend on the units dealing with sex education and two weeks ranks next in usage. If sex education is only emphasized during one week in a semester, the students may fail to be enlightened on this subject conceivably because of insufficient time to grasp the problem. There is the possibility that the student who enrolls in homemaking education only for one year in high school, may not receive any further sex education during his high school years. Obviously such preparation for adult life is inadequate.

In methods or techniques used in presenting sex education, discussion ranks first with reading second and lecture third. The question box was used by several teachers. Discussion is valuable when the teacher wishes to stimulate and challenge the thinking of the members of the class. This provides a means of giving all students a chance to express their opinion or point of view. The question box is valuable for questions which some girls often hesitate to ask in

a group. Even though the lecture methods ranked third, it still rated high in popularity among the teachers. The lecture is a useful means of presenting information if the lecturer has showmanship, but most teachers are poor speakers and become so involved in such lengthy explanations as they lecture that it becomes deadly and at least a waste of time for the listeners.

The fact that in the opinion of these teachers students reflect more generally an eagerness to learn than they do an objective and intelligent attitude suggests that students are deprived of correct knowledge at the right time and from reliable sources. However eagerness does reflect the fact that a need for the subject is being met even though tardily. The school may provide experiences to help young people prepare to meet the biological changes during adolescence and provide opportunities to allay needless anxieties, and dispel false ideas about sex problems which they may be facing. The school may engender the scientific attitude toward sex by emphasizing the use of scientific terminology and let the adolescent see that sex and reproduction may be discussed in decent language without whispering and snickering.

Of the 110 teachers supplying information for this study, 74% report programs of sex education for girls while only 57% of the teachers report any sex education for the boys. Of the schools offering this subject to the boys, physical education is cited most frequently as the course in which this material is offered to boys. Science ranks next as offering an opportunity to lead into sex discussion. Courses in agriculture are represented as being used the least of any for focusing attention upon sex. Eleven of the teachers offer sex education to boys in homemaking classes.

Boys have just as many problems to face during adolescence as girls, and it is just as important for them to have sex education. If we are to have a balanced democratic society, both sexes will have to be educated and become socially intelligent in sex matters through cooperative effort. Boys develop more slowly during adolescence than girls do, but by the time they have reached senior high school they are physically mature and interested in the opposite sex. The homemaking department could do much to help boys prepare to meet personal and social problems relating to sex, if homemaking education were modified so as to make a more positive appeal to boys and men.

Only one superintendent and four communities are branded in this study as disapproving of sex education in the high schools. Therefore, opposition from these sources does not appear to present difficulties that can not be overcome.

The majority of the teachers offering no sex education state that they think it should become a part of the school curriculum. Therefore if prevailing obstacles could be removed these teachers probably would cooperate full heartily in teaching this subject.

They also express the belief that the homemaking teacher should accept responsibility for doing all that is possible to see that such subject matter is presented in the schools. They further desire to better prepare themselves to help students become intelligent in matters involving sex.

Of these teachers who do not teach sex education 78% say they do not have enough illustrative material to present the subject while 39% say they are lacking in adequate factual knowledge to present the subject matter with confidence. Many of the teachers who do not offer sex education

say that they received their information on sex in the home. Therefore their lack of confidence in dealing with such problems suggests that they probably lack the scientific knowledge essential to presenting this subject effectively. This may also account for their inefficiency in choosing adequate teaching material since rather rich materials are available. Five teachers stated that they had some sex education from high school courses.


In general this study shows a creditable level of interest in sex education on the part of vocational homemaking teachers in Oklahoma.

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SUGGESTED PROCEDURES

In spite of progress in education, it fails in some respects to satisfy the interest and curiosity of adolescence and doesn't quite meet their needs for education in matters pertaining to sex. Through this failure many boys and girls may drift haphazardly through adolescence at the mercy of every casual impulse and influence. Because the school is one of the most important institutions for disseminating knowledge, its role in preparing adolescence for life should be made more distinctive and influential. By correlating sex education in the various courses of the curriculum, the school could help youth learn to live more effectively and constructively. The school is in a position to give factual knowledge and create a wholesome attitude and habits which are essential to the individuals adjustment to the sex factor in life.

Programs of sex education in the schools should aim to teach enough  factual sex knowledge to help the individual solve intelligently all problems which directly or indirectly have bearing on sex; to help the individual develop skills and abilities whereby he may achieve and maintain personal hygiene and conduct himself intelligently with respect to all situations involving sex; to build wholesome attitudes and values through which the individual may develop an open-minded, serious, scientific and respectful attitude toward all problems of human life which relate to sex and reproduction; to learn to accept and appreciate his personal responsibility regarding the social, ethical, physical, and eugenic aspects of sex. Furthermore he should have help in discovering how all of these factors affect his life in its relation to other individuals of the present and future generations.

In spite of the opportunities the school has for meeting its responsibilities, many obstacles still remain in the way. As yet, few teachers are equipped to present sex education adequately for lack of background or training. While some teachers feel secure in factual knowledge they lack illustrative material, others feel unable to give guidance in the formation of building attitudes and helping students to meet problems arising from sex. But any teacher who is aware of the needs of the adolescent can equip himself with sufficient knowledge and tools to let him be responsible for his part in teaching sex education.

Because the teaching profession has to do with learning and with the training involved, teachers are in a position to learn anew the important biological, physiological, psychological, and sociological aspects of sex. Courses are offered in most all colleges on sex education. Some colleges offer special courses during the summer, which are provided for the teacher who wishes training during these months. Any teacher interested may write to the colleges for information. Special courses are also offered in some colleges on guidance. Thus the teacher has opportunity to equip herself to teach sex education from the standpoint of scientific knowledge, and to give helpful guidance in this connection.

It may be that not all teachers should attempt to teach sex education since factors other than adequate knowledge are involved. Qualifications other than adequate knowledge are of utmost importance in selecting teachers to handle a program of sex education. One expecting to teach this phase of education might measure his qualifications by those set up by the Education Committee of the New Jersey Social Hygiene Association.

1. A pleasing personality and sound character are important qualifications for the teacher in any field, but for those participating in a sex education program they are absolute essentials. The attitudes and behavior of pupils will be influenced more by those of the teacher than by mere facts that may be presented. ↙
2. A sound emotional attitude toward sex as a normal factor in life, neither minimizing nor exaggerating its importance.
3. A recognition of the need for this type of education and of the teacher's opportunity to assist children and youth constructively in making fine sex adjustments.
4. A knowledge of the physiological, biological, psychological, and sociological aspects of sex, with the ability to interpret that knowledge according to the physical, psychological, and social needs of the pupils. Both elementary and secondary school teachers should understand the place of sex education in the entire life curriculum and be acquainted with suitable methods of integration in their respective fields. ↗
5. A faculty for inspiring confidence and aspiration toward high ideals without seeming sentimental or "preachy".
6. The ability to face reality with a constructive attitude and to maintain a sympathetic understanding of the problems of children and young people; experience in dealing with those problems. ↗
7. Respect for differing ethical, legal, and religious views, and for changing scientific knowledge.¹

Many teachers express a need for better illustrative material.

There are several professional organizations in this country from which inexpensive pamphlets and books may be obtained upon request. These pamphlets and books are prepared by outstanding workers in the field of sex education and social hygiene. Many leads for organized units in sex education may be found in bibliographies prepared by state and national workers. Furthermore preparations for this study disclosed a wealth of current publications prepared by recognized authorities which deal with many and various phases of subject matter appropriate for sex education. Maybe the fault for lack of material lies in distribution

¹ Advisory Committee on Social Hygiene Education of the New Jersey State Department of Public Instruction. "Education for Human Relations and Family Life on the Secondary School Level". The American Social Hygiene Association. (1945)

rather than in a scarcity of printed materials.²

The teaching of sex education would seem to be an appropriate problem for parents and teachers to attack cooperatively. Through such cooperation many parents may be brought to accept a larger share of responsibility in sex education. Parent's attitudes are reflected in those of their children, thus through an understanding between the home and school, the teacher may appreciate and understand the problems of the adolescent.

Since the facts from this inquiry shows that less than one-half of the negro schools offer sex education, it seems fair to assume some means should be provided to help those schools set up a program of sex education. A program of this kind might conceivably help to reduce the high rate of illegitimacy among the negroes which statistics show.³

This inquiry also shows that boys are not receiving as much sex education as girls, in spite of the fact that the need for intelligent conduct in relation to sex is universal.

It is not only the homemaking teacher's responsibility to teach this subject but it is a job for others. Most subjects in the curriculum lend themselves to the introduction of topics dealing with sex, reproduction and other related problems. Any teacher who evades the responsibility sets up an arbitrary separation of sex from subject matter already taught.

Any school attempting a program of sex education must understand that one cannot be established over night nor in one year, but by continuous procedures over a period of time. The schools seem obligated

² See Bibliography.

³ Bureau of the Census, op. cit.

to make better preparation for helping youth in this respect. Only through the cooperation of the teachers, parents and other educational agencies may the school hope to establish sex education as an integral part of the entire educational program.

The results from this inquiry imply that there is further need for research in this field. Oklahoma teachers might be interested to know the extent to which boys are receiving sex education, what is being done by non-vocational homemaking teachers, and the amount and kind of help the colleges are giving to prospective teachers.

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