

APPRAISAL : SYNTHESIS

Title : Health and Family life Education. Curriculum Guide/ Infusion guide Grade 4.

Type of document: Curriculum

Year of publication: 2003 / 2005

Author/publisher: MOE Guyana, UNICEF

Number of pages: 126

Date of appraisal: January 2009

Abstract

Life Skills, Health & Family Life and Citizenship Education, Curriculum Guide for Grade 4, Draft is a guide edited by the Ministry of Education of Guyana in collaboration with UNICEF in 2003. It is a draft document, developed to support the teaching and learning of this critical area of the curriculum. This document can serve as a focal point for departmental and regional sub-committee meetings, where methodologies and strategies for both teaching and assessing are deliberated on. The Ministry of Education has reviewed curriculum materials to develop a Life Skills, Health and Family Life and Citizenship curriculum using the five themes of Education, Family, Health, Human Rights and Human Sexuality. It has a direct focus on an integrated approach to curriculum delivery, in which the teacher is not unduly restricted by the subject content. The list of references should provide teachers with the relevant background for curriculum.

Health and Family Life Education, Infusion Guide, Grade 4, Draft for limited use (to accompany Curriculum Guide) is a document edited by the Ministry of Education of Guyana in collaboration with UNICEF in 2005. It has been developed to assist teachers as they start the process of delivering life skills based Health and Family Life Education (HFLE) by infusion. The guide contains 3 Units: (i) Growing Up, (ii) Friendship, and (iii) The Environment. Each unit is divided into 5 topics developed in relation to the Units subject: (i) Education, (ii) Family, (iii) Health, (iv) Human Rights, and (v) Human Sexuality.

Note

This document is part of a set of manuals designed to provide teachers with an integrated and consistent approach for the application and the development of Life Skills, Health and Family Life Education, Guidance and Citizenship into the curriculum, using the five themes of: Education, Family, Health, Human Right and Human Sexuality. This Infusion Guide (to accompany curriculum guide) has to be used jointly with Life Skills, Health & Family Life and Citizenship Education, Curriculum Guide, Grade 4, Draft.

Strengths

1) This curriculum was reviewed by the Ministry of Education in collaboration with the Ministry of Health, joint HRE programme and UNICEF to develop a Life Skills, health and Family Life and Citizenship curriculum using five themes: Education, Family, Health, Human Rights and Human Sexuality. The aim of this life skill, Health & Family Life Education, Guidance and Citizenship curriculum is to provide teachers with an integrated and consistent approach to the application of values education.

2) The documents can provide an interesting starting point to develop strategies and methods to develop complete curriculum. Each unit provides learning objectives, teaching methods, materials and evaluation which are very helpful for teachers and lessons preparation. Indeed, each theme presents relevant learning objectives tabs (life skills: able to..., knowledge: awareness that..., understanding: understand that..., attitude: demonstrate...) which enumerate goals briefly.

3) The materials promote the creation of a safe environment to deliver life skills education and promote active participation by both students and teachers. These guides have a direct focus on an integrated approach to curriculum delivery, in which the teacher is not unduly restricted by the subject content.

4) The documents focus on the personal development of the learners as a person. They promote self esteem and responsibility because they will enable learners to demonstrate interpersonal skills and communicate effectively with peers and others. One of the learning objective shows that high self-esteem gives one a sense of security, identity, self concept, belonging, purpose, pride, personal competence and confidence. Responsibility is an important part of growing up. The documents help learners to improve self management skills, so that they are ready to react in situations of vulnerability.

5) The manuals refer to sexual and reproductive health and to health in general. The documents show the importance to be physically healthy and adopt a lifestyle which promotes physical health and fitness. One of the lessons helps learners to identify the benefits of being healthy and fit. The documents also develop emotional health in order to emphasize the ability to cope with one's emotions. Another interesting point is the promotion of spiritual health. The documents help learner to think critically about what makes human beings different from other living things.

6) The content of the materials addresses the following key themes: discrimination and civic responsibility. The documents explain that differences among people include age, height, weight, gender, religious beliefs, ethnicity, likes and dislikes, strengths and weaknesses, ability and disability. Promotion of respect and tolerance are important points in the documents. The materials also fight against sexual abuse promoting more effective communication about this topic and the development of interpersonal skills to prevent that act.

Weaknesses / aspects to be improved

1) HIV & AIDS education is not integrated into the official curriculum. These manuals refer to sexual and reproductive health.

Suggestions for improvement

→ Children and young people represent the window of opportunity. It is worth doing everything to prevent new infections. Children and young people who go to school are in contact with friends who are not in school, thus information and skills can be exchanged between peers and generations among families and communities. It is important that HIV & AIDS education starts at an early age in primary school and be sustained throughout secondary school because it is easier to adopt new values and behaviours than to change them once they are acquired. If we teach children very early to know and respect their feelings and their body, as well as that of others, they will be more likely to adopt protective behaviours. By receiving quality HIV & AIDS and reproductive health education which are gender-sensitive, young people are more likely to adopt low risk sexual practices.

The material should provide the tools to support the learning to identify myths and misconceptions related to STIs, HIV & AIDS, sexual and reproductive health and rights and to analyse common community practices and beliefs. This will help to challenge beliefs and practices that have a negative impact, and strengthen those that have a positive impact on sexual and reproductive health and the prevention of HIV. A balance should be found between what are crucial skills and knowledge for young people living in a world with HIV and what is acceptable to the community.

School programs addressing sexual health and sexuality do not encourage early sexual initiation nor increase sexual activity. Comprehensive and clear information has been proven crucial to helping learners to adopt protective behaviours.

2) As different life skills were identified, the teachers can choose in which subjects (in the four core subjects: language arts, mathematics, social studies, science) to deliver the skill.

Suggestions for improvement

→ It should be useful to add more details on the integration of life skills education into the four core subjects and to explain how teachers have to proceed to integrate life skills into mathematics for example. There are seven steps an educator can follow to select the most appropriate set of teaching-learning methods given a particular learning objective : 1) consider school grade and age; 2) define objectives/expected learning outcomes; determine available time; 3) select possible teaching-learning methods; 4) select and prepare instruction material or any material necessary for the session; 5) specify activities and assignments necessary to achieve the learning outcomes; 7) define pre- and post-test assessment tools according to the assessment objectives.

3) There is no time allocation defined. The material does not include means to assess learners before the programme but contains ideas of evaluation after completing the programme. If there is no specific allocation of time and no formal assessment of learning outcome, it would become easy to ignore and neglect the subject, especially when curricula are already over crowded.

Suggestions for improvement

→ Teachers have to check if learners can accomplish several tasks or understand new behaviours, skills, knowledge or attitudes. The process should be more elaborated, for example integrating different assessment tools (close-ended questions, analysis, role play or simulations, learner projects). It is very important to give feedback to learners and other teachers about learner's progress in order to be able to improve the efficacy of their work. For the preparation of each lesson or unit and the assessment, teachers should follow this framework: develop learning objective/ outcome, assessment question, criteria (to determine and to know if the learner has acquired a certain level of knowledge, skills or adopted a specific attitude or behaviour) and possible assessment tools.

It would be interesting to develop an outcomes-based curriculum (i.e. to specify outcomes that learners are expected to achieve in specific subjects or areas by the end of a specific stage of schooling).

4) The topic "Me, my emotions and my relationships with others" is not addressed.

Suggestions for improvement

→ Learners should be able to recognize ones and others emotions, feelings and stress and give examples of ways to manage them; to practice effective communication strategies that take into account emotions and feelings (positive and negative); to identify risks/difficulties in their

daily life and determine how these risks may affect one's plan for the future; to search and practice creative ways to avoid and resolve problems using communication & problem solving skills, active listening, observation, negotiation, different ways of refusing or saying "no", assertiveness skills.

5) The content of these materials does not address gender issues.

Suggestions for improvement

→ A learner has to acquire knowledge and understanding on the differences between men and women, what is gender equity and what are the negative impacts of inequities between men and women on communities. A learner should also understand why achieving gender equity is crucial in the response to HIV and AIDS and how to behave in a manner which demonstrates an understanding of the importance of equity.

6) The manuals could be more coherent.

Suggestions for improvement

→ It should be useful to define at the beginning of the manuals the following concepts: "Life skills, Health & family life, and citizenship" and to explain why the authors chose to develop certain skills and knowledge.

Internal consistency

Topics are not always covered in a logical sequence. It is sometimes difficult to follow the progression in the topics and to understand why this logical sequence was chosen.

Transferability issues

The materials do not provide tools to identify and explore cultural issues relating to life skills, they are not related to community environment or to a social and cultural context. Therefore, transferability and adaptation are easy to realize.

The manuals should be more connected and linked to the Guyana context and should offer more references to local community and culture.