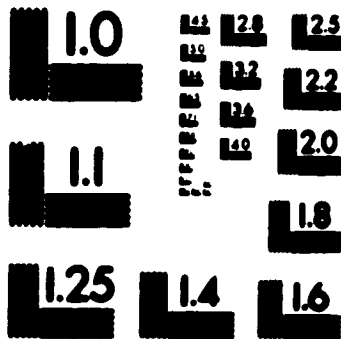


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**Bruckton's Journey:  
Sexuality Education, Community Development  
and Research**

**By  
Eugene Krupa ©**

**Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION**

**Edmonton, Alberta  
Spring 1994**



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ISBN 0-612-11264-0

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**DEGREE:** Doctor of Philosophy

**YEAR:** 1994

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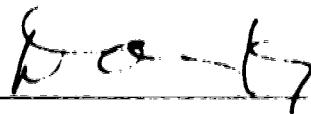
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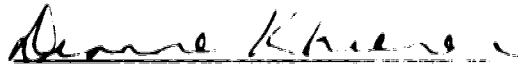
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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, for acceptance, a dissertation entitled "*Bruckton's Journey: Sexuality Education, Community Development and Research*" submitted by Eugene Krupa in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.



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***This work is dedicated to my children,***

***Joel, JoyAnne, and Timothy,***

***my wife,***

***Mary,***

***and our parents,***

***Anne and Joseph, Helen and Russell.***

## Abstract

Participatory behavior in relation to teen sexuality and relationships is complicated by many personal, psychological, and social factors. There is considerable merit in acting on a community level, involving stakeholders meaningfully in a developmental process, and assisting them to increase their capacity to address their own problems. *Bruckton's Journey* is about one community's ventures in sexuality education (SE), community development (CD), and action research. The researcher worked with community members and professionals, studying the improvement in SE and capacity for self-sustaining development while contributing to it, over a period of three years. Attention was given to developing a system of "peer instruction" and support for teens and parents, program evaluation and monitoring, professional development for teachers, and a stakeholders' network. These and other forces and factors in development are described and evaluated.

Due to the efforts of everyone involved, the number and quality of SE instructors and programs had greatly increased. Formal and informal instructors conveyed clearer, more accurate messages with respect to concepts of healthy relationships, contraceptives, postponing sexual intimacy, peer support, responsible decision making, etc.. Programs became more learner-centered, and reinforced key elements (self-esteem, critical thinking, family communication, etc.). There were more knowledgeable and helpful parents, professionals and peers. Sources of support and information for parents, and their confidence and acceptance of programs, increased.

Over the three years, leaders increased in number and effectiveness. They became more knowledgeable in SE, sensitive to personal and organizational agendas and assumptions, collaborative in their relationships with one another, willing to resolve conflict, able to identify and involve stakeholders, etc. The community's organizational capacities developed in the areas of planning, coordinating action, monitoring, integrating services to address "at-risk" issues, securing financial support, and influencing regional policy and action.

Considerations for SE policy and practice are presented, strategies for CD are evaluated, and topics for further research and development are recommended. Research strategies (living documents, journaling, critical friends, etc.) are discussed and evaluated in detail. Many suggestions are offered for others who would pursue action / participatory / empowerment / community development research.

## Acknowledgements

I am very grateful to the many people who helped to make this study possible, enjoyable and worthwhile. If I have neglected to include anyone in the acknowledgements below, please draw this to my attention so that I may express my appreciation personally.

First of all, I wish to express my appreciation for those I worked with in Bruckton -- the parents, pastors, teachers, and representatives of the organizations and agencies -- for going beyond your required duties and taking extra time to discuss and review and create with me. It is because of your time, your attention to detail, and your openness and honesty, that we had some success. Thank you Sheryl, Shelly, Cindy, Gordon, Donna, Brian, Evan, Ken, Shirley, Diana, Jim, Linda, Gerry, Tom, Jim, Rick, Peggy, Joan, Debbie, Sherry, Mickey, Doreen, Kathy, Joy, Cathy, Leanne, Liz, Kathy, and Lisa.

Some adults and teens who deserve special recognition are those who have given so much of their time and energy as volunteers to teach their peers and support them in their efforts toward healthier relationships and lifestyles. Thank you Phyllis, Dave, Mary, Donna, Jac, Dan, Melissa, Chris, Rachel, Brenda, Terry, and Clayton.

My gratitude is extended to those in the academic community who provided very valuable counsel and assistance. I very much appreciated the encouragement and advice given by my advisors and examiners: Al MacKay, Bill Maynes, Dianne Kieren, Terry Carson, Gordon McIntosh, Ken Ward, and K. Leithwood. Other important advisors included Dhara Gill, Frank Peters, Maryanne Doherty-Porier, Gina Vivone-Vernon, Beth Young, Erwin Miklos, Linda LaRocque, Morag Pansegrau, Chais Prokop, Margaret Stewart, and Susan Panyluk. I am also grateful for the financial assistance provided by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada and the Province of Alberta.

My "critical friends" -- Daryl, Wendy, Sheryl, Gordon, Gerry -- gave freely of their time in listening, reacting, critiquing, editing and encouraging. The counsel and assistance of other friends including Wayne Krupa, Dave Mussell, Ken McLeod, Kevin Merta, Darryl Tetz, and Dave Annand was also greatly appreciated. Thank you.

My family members deserve special recognition. Thank you, mothers -- Anne Krupa and Helen Scott -- for the tremendous support you have provided. Thank you Joel, JoyAnne, and Timothy for inspiring me, for helping me to keep this work in perspective, for being patient with your busy dad, and for the constant reminder of hope in the future.

Thank you, Mary, for your support, for picking up the slack, for adjusting and sacrificing various events and activities so I could finish this study.

For all of the help extended by those above and those whom I might have missed, I am deeply grateful.

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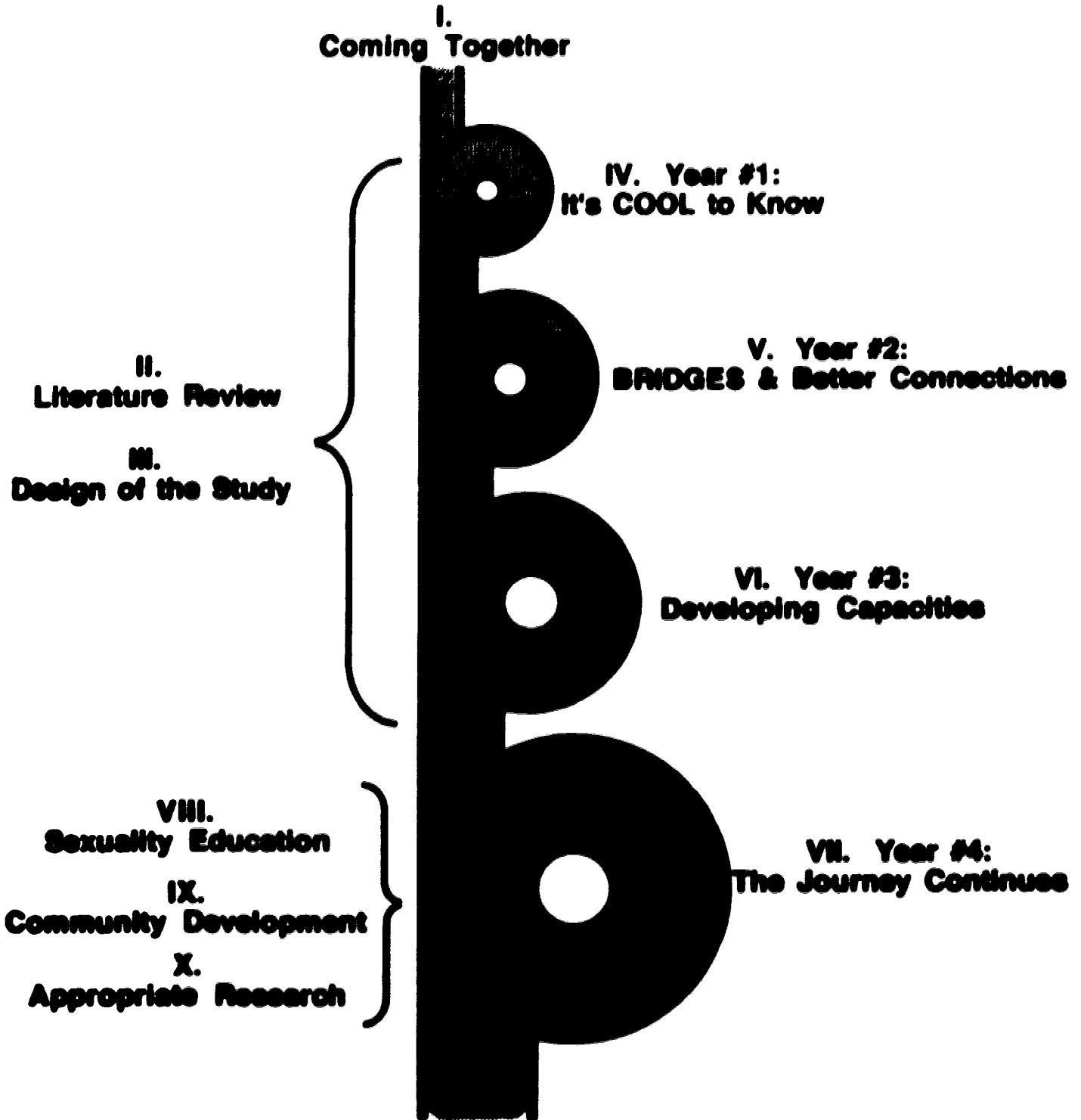
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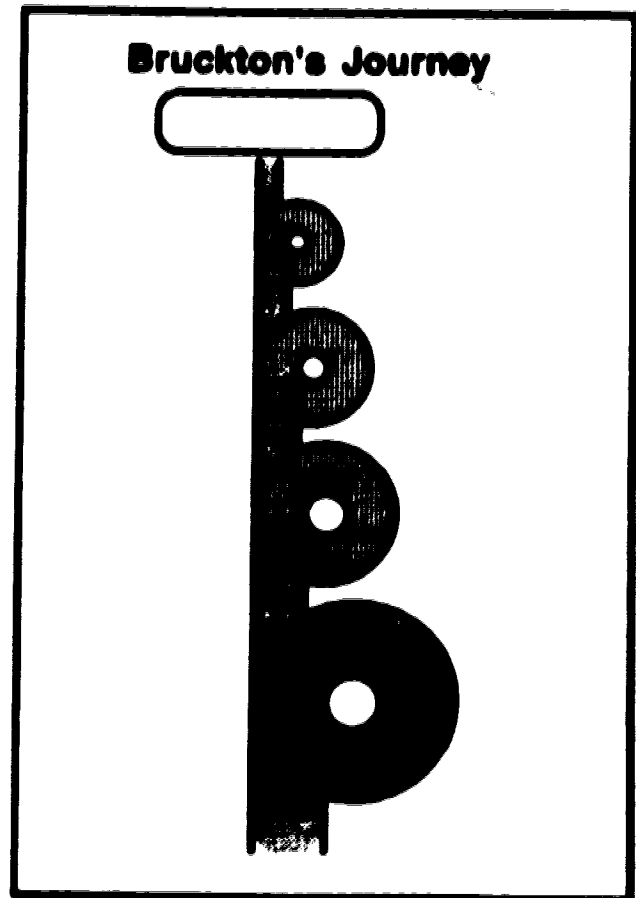
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# Bruckton's Journey



## *Coming Together*



### *Bruckton's Journey: An Overview*

Over the past decade, concern about issues relating to sexuality has increased dramatically. In Bruckton, as throughout North America, parents, educators, health professionals, and members of the general public have expressed deep concern about teen pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases, exploitative relationships, and sexual abuse. Learning to avoid possible negative outcomes of sexual expression is essential, but there is also a concern that individuals have the opportunity to grow in their understanding of sexuality so that they might know themselves better and develop satisfying and healthy relationships with others. In response to these concerns numerous programs have been designed and implemented in schools and in communities.

Learning and behavior in relation to sexuality and relationships are complicated by many physical, psychological and social factors. These factors challenge those who would attempt to address sexuality issues from an educational perspective, and make it important to consider going beyond the classroom and single-thrust programs to act in a collaborative



manner on a community level. To achieve self-sustaining community action requires that the various individuals and groups with a stake in sexuality education become meaningfully involved in a developmental process, and increase their capacity to address their own problems.

*Bruckton's Journey* is a story of one community's ventures in sexuality education, community development, and research. The community is made up of those people who live within the geographic area defined by the school boundaries and/or those who are associated with Bruckton's schools, social agencies and organizations. I worked with community organizations, leaders, professionals, teens, and parents over a three-year period as a "facilitator," both studying and contributing to improvement in sexuality education and community capacities for self-sustaining development. Although I acted as both a researcher and a contributor, I was most commonly referred to as a "facilitator." We have worked together in a mutualistic way to improve our understandings, practices and situations with regard to sexuality education, while discovering and building the community's capacities for fostering development in this and other areas in the future.

The references to a "journey" and the images and metaphors associated with travel, which readers will find woven throughout this text, are not coincidental or added to enhance the narrative flow. These images and metaphors were an integral part of the language which developed among us over time and helped to shape our perspectives on our interactions and our processes.

This overview provides an introduction to the study and this record of it. It begins with descriptions of the purpose of the study and the significance that it might have, and continues with a reader's guide to the various chapters and the topics discussed within each.

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## **The Purpose of the Study**

I intended to study the development of sexuality education and community capacities in Bruckton while contributing to the development process. The specific questions I planned to address were:

1. What were the historical, cultural, and organizational contexts in which development occurred?
2. What forces, factors, and processes influenced development?

3. Who are the stakeholders in sexuality education in Bruckton, and what are their interests? What changes occurred in the way in which stakeholders were involved and what effects did these changes have on approaches to sexuality education in the community?
4. What changes occurred in sexuality education approaches (programs, curricula and their rationales, processes, roles of those involved, instructional techniques, intergroup communication and organization, etc.)?
5. What changes occurred in the community, particularly in the capacity of its people to foster development in the future?
6. What challenges and opportunities emerged because the project involved both studying and contributing to the improvement of understandings, practices and situations?

I gathered, analyzed, and presented data to assist the people of Bruckton in their journey toward improving understandings, practices and situations relating to sexuality education and community dynamics. We endeavored to bridge the gap between theory and practice, applying the knowledge gained and seeking further insight. Further details about the rationale behind this approach are discussed in Chapters II and III.

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## The Significance of the Study

I believe this work has significance for the people of Bruckton, others working with similar research / development questions or situations, and those in the academic community. At the local level, the study has directly contributed to the improvement of practices, understandings, and situations associated with education about sexuality, relationships, health, and issues affected teens "at risk." According to participants in Bruckton, the efforts associated with the study have been instrumental in increasing the community's capacity to foster its own future development, while contributing positively to the growth and well-being of individuals.

On a broader scale, *Bruckton's Journey* adds to our understanding of how a community's approaches to sexuality education and other complex social issues might evolve over time. Major forces, factors, and processes -- both planned and unplanned -- are identified and may assist health and education policy-makers and community agencies as they examine the roles of schools and community agencies, plan inter-agency collaborative action, and design approaches.

In the academic dimension, this project appears to be unique in that it examines the development of sexuality education using concepts associated with the process of community development and methodology of action research. Integrating concepts from the related but separate fields of community development, community education, organizational development, and planned change in education may be a contribution. Finally, my comments on the experience of studying educational systems while directly contributing to their improvement may be useful to others who undertake similar research.

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## **A Guide to *Bruckton's Journey***

I felt it was important to make the information accessible to those who participated in the study, to practitioners in the field, and to the formal academic community. The following guide may help readers gain a sense of the flow of the project and enable them to more easily locate sections of particular interest.

One might think of this dissertation as having three sections. The first section (Chapters I, II and III) should assist readers to contextualize this research and development project. Chapter I, *Coming Together*, includes a brief overview of teen sexuality education issues and information on the community of Bruckton, historical and organizational factors, outside influences, and highlights of the path by which I became involved with the people and sexuality education in Bruckton in the fall of 1989.

The story of development is then suspended in order to address some of the academic considerations in Chapters II and III. In Chapter II, I have noted the connections between the study and the academic literature associated with sexuality education and community development that I encountered while devising appropriate research strategies.

Chapter III, *The Design of the Study*, includes a description of the principles and framework for analysis which guided the project, as well as methods that were used to enhance trustworthiness and address ethical issues. Readers who are less interested in the academic aspects of the study discussed in Chapters II and III might wish to continue their reading with Chapter IV.

In the second section of this book, Chapters IV to VII, I describe the efforts which we made as we sought to improve our practices, understandings, and situations. Each of the four chapters covers a period of about one year. Steps in the evolution of the major sexuality education and community development initiatives are described along with the

significant forces, factors, and processes. Factors influencing the researcher / facilitator are also noted in each chapter. Monthly chronologies of the activities and developments occurring in four categories -- school, community, facilitator, and external -- are included in the Appendix (1.3, 4.2, 5.4, 6.2, 7.2).

Chapter IV, *It's COOL to Know*, continues with the story from where it left off at the end of Chapter I. During our first year of working together, several leaders and organizations came together to initiate a program for teens and their parents called "It's COOL to Know Your Way in a Relationship" (COOL). The evaluation process occurring in conjunction with it was my Master's degree research (Krupa, 1990). It was designed to be responsive to the concerns of stakeholders and illuminate issues for their examination. Stakeholder representatives were involved at major decision points: setting research questions, generating and refining the survey instruments, identifying implications of the findings, and generating recommendations. As a result, the program design and delivery were improved, a sense of purpose and direction for development of sexuality education in the community emerged, and the community and I were prepared for further work together in the coming years.

Chapter V, *BRIDGES and Better Connections*, is a summary of the major developments which occurred during the second year of our work together. Upon completion of the program evaluation, the school and agency representatives invited me to continue to study and contribute to the development of school and community programs. Through preliminary interviews with stakeholder representatives in the fall of 1990, we identified key questions and possible sites for interaction and formulated tentative plans. Soon after, I began to work with the teachers, parents, teens, agencies and organizations to coordinate and improve approaches to sexuality education, and to develop leadership and organizational capacities within the community. Among other initiatives, we devoted attention to helping stakeholders connect with one another, assisting teachers in their professional development, and developing a team of adult and teen leaders or "peer instructors." This was also when we began to use the image of a "bridge" in our communication. It symbolized our intention to improve connections between stakeholders (*BRIDGES Network*), between theory and practice, between parents and teens, and between home and school. The pseudonym *Bruckton* was derived from the German word *brücke*, meaning bridge.

In Chapter VI, *Developing Capacities*, I describe the third year of my association with Bruckton. This was a time of adaptation, consolidation and deepening of the initiatives, programs and structures. We struggled to resolve issues associated with community education and collaborative relationships among stakeholders. During this

year, I gradually removed myself from the role of facilitator, and others assumed greater leadership roles and control of the ongoing processes.

Chapter VII, *The Journey Continues*, is about the dynamics occurring in the months after I officially completed my work in Bruckton. The capacities for self-sustaining development became evident through important community action to address teen issues in a broader context, particularly with relation to self-esteem, school continuation, and "at risk" behaviors. Also included in this chapter is a depiction of how approaches to sexuality education have changed in Bruckton, from the perspectives of teens and parents.

The third and final section, Chapters VIII, IX, and X, is a discussion of concepts relating to the three central themes in this study: sexuality education, community development, and appropriate research. Chapter VIII, *Sexuality Education*, begins with a summary of changes in the capacity for instruction and suggestions for further research and development in Bruckton. Considerations for policy and practice emerging from the study are discussed and suggestions for further research in the field of sexuality education are presented.

Community development dynamics are the focus in Chapter IX. I discuss the growth in capacities for self-sustaining development as they relate to leadership and organizations, as well as the major strategies used to further the development process. Within this discussion, I offer suggestions for those who might consider using such strategies in other settings. The chapter concludes with a description of several possibilities for further research and development.

Chapter X, *Appropriate Research*, contains a summary of my reflections on the general approach and specific strategies employed in the study. Those considering similar kinds of projects might find the discussion of strategies for overcoming research challenges to be useful.

### **Regarding the Graphic Organizer**

My intent was to create a visual aid that might help readers understand where they were in the written work and how that related to the whole study. Elements of this graphic accompany each chapter's title. The graphic is also presented in Chapter III to help the reader contextualize community and research events.

While acting as an organizer, the graphic was intended to have interpretive value and convey some important ideas about Bruckton's journey. The metaphor of journeying was applied to this intent and the general idea of a road resulted. The separate but related paths of the facilitator and the fields of sexuality education (SE) and community

development (CD) came together with the community's path as we initiated the project (I). Review of the literature (II), improvement of design (III), and return to the fields of SE (VIII) and CD (IX) occurred throughout the study, albeit in varying intensities. In a similar way, the design of the study influenced and was responsive to the forces of development.

The journey was one toward improvement so the road has a direction. The loops represent four approximately-annual cycles of action and reflection and coordinate with the story told in Chapters IV, V, VI, and VII. Each of these cycles resulted in improvements in understanding, practices, and situations. Therefore, it seemed appropriate to show the road coming to a higher level. The road broadens to indicate a widening of the field of focus: from reducing pregnancy and sexually transmitted disease, to healthier and less exploitative relationships, to a comprehensive approach to issues affecting teens in the community. The broadening also symbolizes a gradual increase in local capacity for addressing issues and fostering self-sustaining development. The discussions of Chapters VIII, IX, and X emerge from the journey to reconnect with research literature and to help inform those continuing in Bruckton.

As a final note of explanation, varying type styles were used to indicate contributions by others. Comments from those involved with the work in Bruckton are in italics; the single spaced segments are quotations from academic literature.

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## ***The Issues, the Facilitator, and the Community***

Several important factors in sexuality education, the community of Bruckton, and my own background created the context in which this study began. In this chapter, I have described only those factors which appeared to contribute significantly to that initial environment, the potential capacity to respond to needs, and possible sources of dysfunction. Information on developments in Bruckton and on a provincial level was gathered through interviews with stakeholders. The primary source for the section on my own path was my research journal.

## Teen Sexuality Education Issues

Public concern about sexuality issues has increased dramatically in the past decade. Numerous educational programs have been designed and implemented in an attempt to reduce the incidence of negative experiences (unwanted pregnancy, exploitative relationships, sexual abuse, and sexually transmitted diseases) and to help individuals develop positive, healthy outlooks on sexuality. Most often, such programs have been directed at teens and conducted in schools. A review of evaluation research (Kirby, 1989) indicated that single-thrust programs may not be sufficient to address these concerns. Authors have concluded that in order to accommodate the complexity of these issues, stakeholders in a community should work together to develop a comprehensive, collaborative approach to sexuality education (Ajzenstat & Gentles, 1988; Alberta Education, 1986; King et al., 1988; Kirby, 1989; Scales, 1982; Stout & Rivara, 1989).

At the same time, it must be recognized that learning and behavior in relation to sexuality are complicated by many personal and social factors. A substantial amount of learning occurs outside of a specific program and the connection between knowledge and behavior is typically weak (Hyde, 1986; Kirby, 1989; Krupa, 1990; Olson, 1989; Scales, 1983). Personal factors which appear to influence behavior include personal self-esteem, psychological development, motivation, and perception of personal control (Cohen & Friedman, 1975; Kirby, 1989; Olson, 1989; Strause & Farbes, 1985; Zelnik & Kantner, 1980). The influence of family and peers also appears to be strong (Cohen & Friedman, 1975; Miller, McCoy, Olson & Wallace, 1985; Rosenstock, 1981). Media influences may be important but research findings have been inconclusive (Greeson & Williams, 1986; Leming, 1987; Strause & Farbes, 1985).

Meanwhile, concerns about sexuality issues and the programs they have stimulated have awakened the interest of parents, community organizations, and religious groups. These groups generally want to have their interests recognized and frequently desire to contribute to and influence educational processes (Gilboy, 1989; Kirby, 1989; Krupa, 1990; Scales, 1982). It appears that, in order to accommodate the diversity among stakeholders and the complexity of learning, sexuality education should be viewed from a broader "community" perspective.

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## The Facilitator's Path

Several forces and factors in my own life were instrumental in my decisions to undertake this study and to proceed as I have. In order to describe my path accurately I will begin with my early life, but include only those factors which affected my perspective significantly with regard to this research. The significance of some of the points will become apparent in later chapters.

From an early age, I recall having a strong sense of family and community stability, and a desire to contribute and to make a difference. I was raised by devoted parents in a fairly traditional family situation, in a small town a few kilometres from Bruckton. My parents, brother, and others in the community modelled positive relationship skills for me, helping me to build my capacity and sensitivity in this area. Among other things, my mother was a teacher, an active church volunteer, and a cub scout leader. She took a break from her career until I was ten years old, devoting much of her time to the growth and development of her children. My father was busy with several jobs, but took time to spend with his family and taught us important life skills. During my teen years, he became progressively more interested in teen issues and community action. As an example, he initiated a drop-in sports program to provide teens with something positive to do in the evenings.

I entered my high school years with a loosely held set of what is known today as traditional values in the area of relationships, family and sexuality. Like many others in late adolescence and early adulthood, I tested those values -- holding them tightly at times, and loosely or not at all at other times. As I proceeded through university study in the field of agriculture, I focused attention on learning about adult education, developing youth and adult leadership, and community development. It was during this time that I first encountered the work of Kurt Lewin, pioneer of community development and action research.

Upon completion of my university degree in agriculture, I worked for three years in extension programs with farmers and their children, and in developing youth and adult leadership. Through this work I gained experience with less formal educational approaches with teens and parents. I also learned something about the realities of bringing about change. I was challenged and frustrated by the difficulty I encountered in bringing about improvement among people, but came to appreciate the messiness and complexity associated with change in individuals, and with building leadership and organizations.

Meanwhile, I was becoming progressively more interested in, and committed to, my Christian faith and my future wife, Mary. I returned to university to train as a teacher.



majoring in secondary science and social studies. After graduation most of my work was with upper elementary and junior high students in a rural school. Through events that occurred during this time, I became keenly aware of the tremendous significance of the issues surrounding teen sexuality and family communication. My wife and I became involved with various volunteer groups that sought to improve sexuality education (SE) or that supported those facing difficult decisions as a result of an unwanted pregnancy. The groups we worked with held quite strongly to traditional values (which, in itself, is not a problem) but they also tended to offer somewhat simplistic solutions to the complex sexuality-related problems of teens. I was eager to design and deliver a program that would save teens from the tragedies of unwanted pregnancy, exploitative relationships, sexually transmitted diseases, and abortion. What I found, however, was that many factors lay beyond my influence, and that I soon came to the limits of my knowledge and insight. Still, I felt a great deal of hope for improving educational approaches.

During my years of teaching I had several opportunities to gain experience in developing curricula and creating student materials. This work was related to science and agriculture, but led me into closer contact with those working with sexuality education. My understandings of SE issues grew through my association with these individuals. My perspective was broadened and I was challenged to test and balance my beliefs and opinions. I began to understand and appreciate the merit of listening to those with diverse views, and began to see how incorporating the best that each player had to offer might be a key to resolving complex and problematic issues such as were present in sexuality education.

I entered graduate studies with the hope of continuing to learn and contribute to the field of sexuality education in that environment. I chose to work in the Department of Educational Administration because the administrative elements appeared to have so much to do with change in approaches and because of a special interest in program evaluation. As I began my Master's program there, I learned of some interesting developments in Bruckton. (A personal resume is included as Appendix 1.1.)

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## **The Community of Bruckton**

Bruckton was, and continues to be, a small "urban fringe" community located within commuting distance of a city in Alberta. What follows is a description of the community as I encountered it in the fall of 1989.

## **General Demographics**

The school attendance area roughly defined the geographic boundaries of the community. It included a town with about 1500 residents and the surrounding agricultural and rural residential area with another 2500 people. Although some adults worked on farms, the majority were employed either in the city or in industrial work in neighboring towns. In contrast, those working as professionals in the community generally resided outside of it. Several of the residents and professionals described this situation:

*It seems that very few of those who live here, work here. And those who work here -- as teachers, or in some other profession -- don't usually live here.*

The town was once a commercial center for the area's farmers but, because of the decrease in the farm population and the forces of centralization, few major services remain in the town today. In spite of this situation, those who live and work in Bruckton agreed generally that it was a special place because of the way in which people worked together. They felt the community was progressive and innovative in nature. Although the services and programs in support of children and families were limited, those that were in place were considered to be of good quality. Both main-line and evangelical Christian churches serve the community. Volunteerism in Bruckton appeared to be an established part of the culture for many of the residents, and was evident in sport and leisure activities, school activities, youth groups, religious groups, and service organizations.

According to the professionals working in Bruckton, the population demographics and frequency of various social problems were comparable to those of similar sized rural communities in western Canada. Some differences, however, were consistently noted by professionals. Local families accommodated a large and growing number of foster children and the number of young, single adults is very small. Males ages 20-25 are extremely rare.

*(The young adults) tend to leave when they finish high school because there isn't much for them to do here. There also aren't very many places for these young people to live. Some return as young married couples, often with small children.*

The local Family and Community Support Services (FCSS) Agency was seen as having the potential to address some of the social problem issues in Bruckton. Just prior to my arrival, a new director took charge of the agency, bringing the skills and the vision for using community development strategies.

## **Schools**

Nearly all of Bruckton's school age students were accommodated in three schools.

**The K - 4 School.** In 1989, this was a designated "community school" with a population of about 300 students. It too, was seen as a positive force for development in Bruckton. Efforts had been made by the students, parents, and staff in the school to approach the ideals associated with community schools (Appendix 1.2). Many I spoke with credited it with helping to create and sustain a sense of community in Bruckton. Its committees provided the format in which much of the inter-agency and cooperative activity took place. The school's principal and coordinator were particularly well respected individuals, and played key roles in communicating with Bruckton's residents and professionals. In regard to SE, very little formal programming occurred, aside from use of the CARE kit on prevention of sexual abuse.

As a final note, I had had a positive connection with this school eight years earlier. I completed a portion of my teaching practicum there (it was a K - 9 school at that time) just as plans to become a designated community school were being finalized.

**The Grades 5 - 9 School.** This school of 300 students opened ten years ago but is still referred to as "the new school" by some of the residents. It has less of a formal linkage with agencies and organizations in the community, and is more strongly focused on the academic aspects of education. The Health Curriculum for Grades 5 - 9 prescribes formal instruction in SE (Theme 5) but several factors (discussed later in this chapter) limit the potential of this program. There had been a rapid turnover of teacher instructors in health and sexuality education. Most of those teaching in this area were either new teachers or experienced teachers who had not taught the program before. A student "peer support" team had been started, although teachers and students questioned the effectiveness of their contributions in areas such as sexuality education.

The agency responsible for sexual health was the regional Health Unit. Its representative was instructing in the school and was quite popular among the students.

**The High School.** About 150 students travel by bus to a regional high school which also serves students from six junior high schools. Sexuality is one of the themes presented in the Career and Life Management" program (CALM). There is also a high school peer support group which occasionally deals with issues relating to sexuality.

Both professionals and residents were generally proud of their progressive spirit but, after times of sincere reflection on their situations, most stated that they were still dealing with some important areas in superficial and uncoordinated ways. Sexuality education, especially for teens, was one such area.

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## **Bruckton's Programs in a Provincial Context**

**During the 1960's, 70's, and early 80's, members of the health profession (mainly public health nurses) implemented locally developed sexuality education programs in Bruckton as in other schools in the province. These typically emphasized information on physical maturation and were delivered to Grades 5 or 6 students. A broader and more formal structure for sexuality education was provided as an optional component within the Elementary Health curriculum in 1984. The "Theme 5" SE component was extended to Junior High through the "Health and Personal Life Skills" curriculum in 1987, and to Senior High through the "Career and Life Management" (CALM) curriculum in 1988. The "optional" provision worked in three ways:**

**First, school boards could decide whether to offer the units. Second, schools could decide whether the units were suitable for their community. Third, if the units were taught, parents could state that they did not want their children to participate. (Cherry et al., 1992, p. 3)**

**Reactions to the curricula from teachers and parents in Bruckton, as elsewhere throughout the province, ranged from very negative to positive. In the spring of 1988, the school jurisdiction responded by bringing several health teachers together to create a transitional set of lessons plans for teachers to use. The designers hoped that these plans would enable teachers to instruct with moderate success until more adequate professional development could be provided. This package was recognized as a good "first step," but it had several conceptual problems and did not account for the teachers' lack of comfort with the subject and the preparation they required. One summed up the frustration in saying, "You can't just put a recipe in front of someone and tell him/her to teach kids about sex."**

**A variety of tensions and conflicts emerged in the first few years of the program. The diversity of interests and perspectives among the many individuals and groups concerned was becoming increasingly apparent, as were the strongly held values that framed their positions. Some perceived the formal school program as a growing threat to the role of parents as the primary sexuality educators. Others considered portions of the curriculum, particularly those associated with contraception and options for sexual orientation and expression, to be in violation of moral standards. In general, the professionals hoped that parents would take their responsibilities for their child's sexuality education seriously, and communicate about sexuality in meaningful ways. Yet, in many families and for a variety of reasons, it seemed as though that was very unlikely to occur. Several voiced their frustration in this position.**

*We feel frustrated by the number of parents who simply didn't care, or didn't care enough to take time to communicate with their children and develop relationships with them. Those from religious groups are especially difficult to deal with.*

Many common concerns were expressed by teachers and health unit staff, and in the research literature at the time. They shared a sense of frustration that school programs were having, at best, a limited effect on the sexual behavior of teens and on the very important factor of family communication. Teachers perceived that local and provincial policy developments were placing more responsibilities on teachers to design and deliver their own programs, yet they felt ill-prepared and uncomfortable, and found it difficult to access professional development opportunities. Aside from those of the health unit, the resources available and access to them were considered to be poor. The turnover rate of Health/SE teachers was very high. Some of the students and parents had problematic attitudes as well. One educator summarized this situation as follows:

*Health was the kind of course that one was quite happy to get rid of because it was just an add-on, unimportant thing in the kids' minds. They didn't care about it, we couldn't get them to work at it, or take it seriously. Many parents either didn't care about it, or got so rattled they didn't bother to listen. So who needs the hassle?*

The media and government, meanwhile, were giving increasing attention to sexuality-related issues. Of particular concern were those issues relating to teen pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases such as AIDS. In April, 1988, as part of the response to the discussion paper, "In Trouble: A Way Out" (Bonham et al., 1987) the Minister of Community and Occupational Health provided funds to regional health units to help address these issues. The health units, in turn, appointed sexual health coordinators to assist community and school efforts to improve sexuality education. The individual who worked with Bruckton instructed classes, consulted with teachers, and counselled "high risk" individuals.

Although most schools including Bruckton offered the sexuality units, they remained optional until May, 1989. At that time, the Minister of Education required every school in the province to offer "Theme 5" in Grades 4-9 and in High School because of a perceived need to respond to the high rate of teen pregnancy and the increased threat of sexually transmitted diseases (STD).

**A number of individuals, agencies, and organizations have recommended that this policy be revised in light of the findings and recommendations of various provincial and national studies. After consulting widely with Albertans on this issue, the Minister of Education has decided to ensure universal access to human sexuality education for all students in Alberta schools operated by boards. (Alberta Education, May 8, 1989 News Release)**

School boards were permitted to offer alternatives to the provincially developed program, and parents could choose to have their children exempt from instruction.

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## Coming Together

In the spring of 1989, through various community channels and surveys, people in Bruckton began to recognize the limitations of the school programs. Professionals and parents suggested that, "At about the same time, our parents, teens, community folk, and professionals all identified a need to improve [approaches to] sexuality education in our community.

A parent, the FCSS coordinator, and the Health Unit's sexual health coordinator began to investigate possibilities for more effective and relevant SE programs. They felt this might include emphasizing teen-parent communication, providing opportunities to learn outside of the school environment, and efforts to involve other interests groups in the community. They sought a program that would emphasize help to develop the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and support system teens would require to make healthy sexual decisions and stick by them. The major decision that emerged from their research and discussions was that the community, under the leadership of the local Family and Community Support Services Agency, offer a sexuality education program for parents and teens outside of the school context.

The program they eventually selected was entitled *It's COOL to Know Your Way in a Relationship*. This weekend workshop was facilitated by a team of individuals from outside the community. This program, formulated by the Alberta West Central Health Unit (Panytyk, 1986), incorporated much of the philosophy, approaches, and activities used or developed by Howard (1985) for the *PSI* (Postponing Sexual Involvement) program in Atlanta. *COOL's* "Statement of Purpose" was described in print as follows:

**This series is designed to assist youth, 13 to 16 years of age, gain factual information and identify and resist pressure and influence to become sexually involved before they are ready and/or able to cope with the consequences. The focus is on developing healthy interpersonal relationships. (COOL Teen Manual, p. 6)**

The goals, according to the same manual, were:

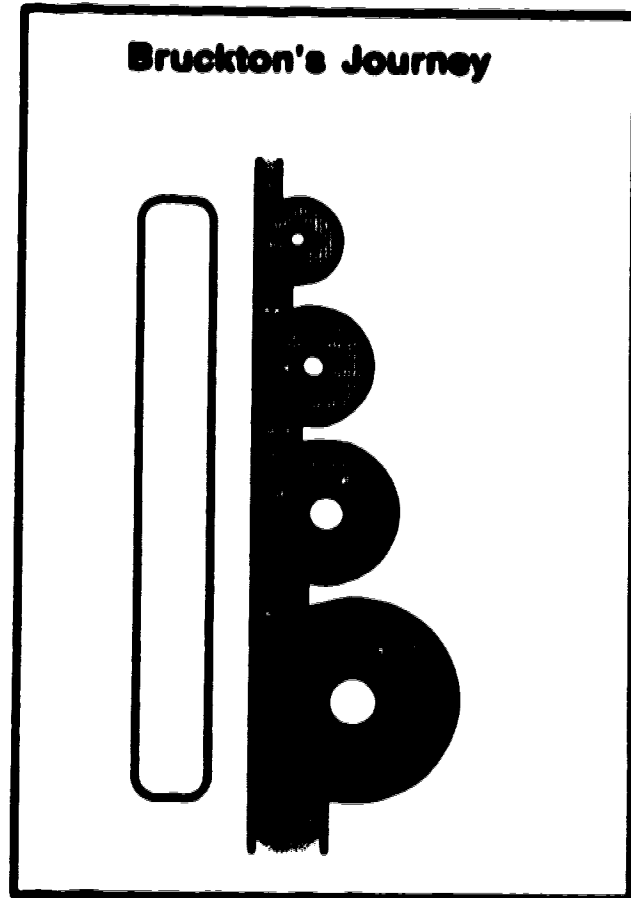
- 1. To encourage an awareness about healthy relationships and how they develop**
- 2. To promote comfort with individual physical, emotional and social development**
- 3. To provide information and encourage discussion about the impact of early sexual involvement**
- 4. To enhance positive parent/teen communication**

5. To explore individual rights within interpersonal relationships
6. To learn assertiveness skills that can encourage confidence in dealing with pressure situations
7. To promote an understanding of the many influences (including parents, peers, and media) which affect decision making. (COOL Teen Manual. p. 6)

As I began my Master's program, I learned about this initiative through a newspaper article on the program. I was impressed by several features: the program was designed to involve parents as well as teens, emphasize family communication, encourage postponing sexual intercourse, and provide opportunities for participants to develop some of the skills and attitudes necessary to make postponing sexual intercourse a viable option.

I contacted the agency professionals to get more information and was impressed by what I heard. Our journey together had begun. (Appendix 1.3 is a summary of developments relating to the facilitator, the schools, the community, and external events.)

*A Review of  
Related Literature*



This review of research and professional literature includes discussion of the major issues associated with sexuality education and community development as they relate to this study. It is not an exhaustive review but should provide readers with a sense of the range of literature, issues, and controversies. Where it was considered useful, I have included statements to outline the significance of the issue or the connection with the study.

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**Sexuality Education**

Although there is a large body of professional and research literature relating to sexuality education, readers should be aware that most of it has been emerged from research and practice conducted in the United States or in contexts which differ in significant ways from the community in Bruckton. Where possible, I have integrated



recent Albertan and Canadian studies, but these should also be viewed critically because of their generalized nature. Readers will also find that I have attempted to recognize the range of literature to which the various interest groups ascribed. As a final note, each of the issues and findings discussed below were given serious consideration as we proceeded with the study in Bruckton.

### Healthy Adolescent Sexuality and Healthy Relationships

An ongoing challenge in Bruckton was to articulate the meanings of healthy sexuality and healthy relationships in order to come to a greater sense of common purpose. At an even more fundamental level, terms such as "sex" and "sexuality" have often been used ambiguously or have remained undefined in written and in verbal presentations. When considering educational approaches in Bruckton in the 1990's, sexuality is the most useful term. Definitions similar to that created by the Sex Information and Education Council of the U.S., or SIECUS (Carrera & Calderone, 1981) represented the broad view of sexuality which most leaders in Bruckton were moving toward by the end of Year #2.

Sexuality refers to the totality of being a person. It includes all of those aspects of the human being that relate specifically to being boy or girl, woman or man, and is an entity subject to life-long dynamic change. Sexuality reflects our human character, not solely our genital nature. As a function of the total personality it is concerned with the biological, psychological, sociological, spiritual, and cultural variables of life which, by their effects on personality development and interpersonal relations, can in turn affect social structure (p. 315).

Definitions of "healthy" sexuality vary considerably, depending on the values of the definer. Chilman (1990) provided a definition of healthy adolescent sexuality which allowed for such variation and acknowledged the elements of esteem, respect, communication, acceptance, and decision making.

Adolescent sexual health is based on esteem and respect for the self and other people of both sexes. It embraces the view that both males and females are essentially equal, though not necessarily the same. Sexually healthy adolescents take pleasure and pride in their own developing bodies. As they mature, they have an increasing ability to communicate honestly and openly with persons of both sexes with whom they have a close relationship. They accept their own sexual desires as natural, but to be acted upon with limited freedom within the constraints of reality considerations, including their own values and goals and those of "significant others" (p. 124).

Much discussion in Bruckton revolved around interpretations of "reality considerations" and "values and goals." For most, the definition of healthy adolescent sexuality included avoiding pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases. For many, a satisfactory definition also included valuing postponing sexual intercourse until in a stable, committed, long-term relationship (which requires further definition).

A major step in moving toward a common interpretation was achieved with the synthesis and acceptance of a statement of "Common Values and Beliefs" regarding sexuality and relationships during Year #2 (see Chapter V). In Bruckton the initial focus on healthy sexuality (as avoiding physical consequences of intercourse) grew to include an emphasis on the positive aspects of sexuality and on establishing healthy, non-exploitive relationships.

### Consequences and Costs

Many authors acknowledge the negative consequences of sexual intercourse among young teens. Most easily quantified and most often discussed are the physical consequences, primarily pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases (STD). Interpretation of the costs of teen child bearing suggested by some authors (e.g., Burt, 1986; Brindis & Jeremy, 1988; Gilboy, 1989; King et al., 1989) indicated an annual cost to Canadians in the order of \$2,000-\$8,000 per mother per year, with greatly increased chances of that individual's income remaining below the national minimum standard for many years.

The cost to society of STD resulting from sexual intercourse among young teens is also likely extremely high. Popham (1993) described the magnitude of the devastation of HIV/AIDS in the U. S. as follows:

If the current HIV epidemic could, by some unimaginable miracle, be totally halted tomorrow, more Americans would still end up dying from AIDS than were killed in Vietnam, Korea, World War II, World War I, and the Civil War combined. In those five conflicts 560,000 military personnel lost their lives. Yet, even by conservative estimates, all but a small percentage of the more than one million currently HIV-infected Americans will die because of AIDS within the next decade. Of course, most of these people don't even know they are infected (p. 559).

Because of the latency period of the disease, most are thought to have contracted the virus in their late teens or early adult lives.

It remains extremely difficult to estimate the human and monetary cost of STD because of the confusion and uncertainty surrounding the number of cases, the long-term implications, and the treatment of sexually transmitted diseases. Readers should be cautious when making extrapolations and examine the assumptions made by authors when estimating costs. As an example, Genus (1991) discussed the alarming frequency of HPV, a virus implicated in cervical cancer but not currently reportable. Another example of variation can be found in discussions of the number of cases of HIV/AIDS. The epidemiological characteristics of the disease in Canada appear to be different than in the U.S. (possibly due to factors such as the extent of intravenous drug use and poverty) and has resulted in variations in the estimates of the numbers of cases ranging from 10,000 to 100,000 (based on U.S. figures divided by 10) (Mintz, 1991). The characteristics of the

disease have been different, again, in third world countries where factors such as malnutrition, poor medical care, unregulated use of antibiotics and reused hypodermic needles affect the spread even more dramatically. Numbers of cases are further confused because they are reported cumulatively, rather than in annual numbers as with other communicable diseases. Mintz (1991) discussed controversies, myths, and assumptions associated with the epidemiology of HIV/AIDS.

Regardless of the exact human and monetary costs, concern over the spread of HIV/AIDS has been, and will likely continue to be a major reason for sexuality education in Bruckton, as elsewhere in North America.

It is even more difficult to attach costs to the psychological consequences -- guilt, depression, difficulties and exploitation in future relationships, etc. -- which may be associated with early intercourse. Similarly, the psychological trauma often associated with abortion and adoption is also important to acknowledge though difficult to quantify.

### **Sexuality: Learning and Behavior**

The cost of sexual misadventure is certainly high, but successfully avoiding the consequences appears to be a complex matter which is rooted partly, but not exclusively, in the process of learning about one's sexuality. This process includes growing in knowledge, developing necessary skills and attitudes, gaining experience in making wise decisions and, hopefully, experiencing the benefits of healthy behaviors. Authors tend to agree that learning about one's sexuality is highly individual and varied, occurs in both formal and informal settings, and for most individuals happens over the lifespan. Although this was acknowledged in the study, much of the efforts focused on the needs of young teens, particularly those associated with building healthy, non-exploitative relationships, and preventing unwanted pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases.

Although there was a sense of hope and a strong desire to meet these objectives, the route by which they might be achieved was not clear as this study began. Evaluation studies of sexuality education programs, such as those summarized by Kirby (1989) found, with few exceptions, that the educational approaches being used over the past several decades were ineffective in preventing negative consequences. Following a review of evaluation studies of hundreds of sexuality education programs, Kirby (1989) came to the same conclusion as most other recent authors, and stated that "sexuality education [in schools in the U.S.] has increased knowledge but has had no measurable impact upon the use of birth control, pregnancy rates or birth rates" (p. 603). His five major findings were:

- **Instruction increased knowledge in almost all programs studied.**
- **Some programs had a short term impact on attitudes. Most studies did not measure long term impacts. Where they were measured, they had greatly diminished or disappeared altogether.**
- **When specific values were not clear goals of the program, there was very little evidence that sex education had any impact on student values.**
- **Programs did not have a consistent effect on use of birth control. At best, they had a small effect.**
- **The majority of programs did not hasten or delay sexual activity.**

Furthermore, Kirby (1989) felt that it was unrealistic to expect a school curriculum (or any single-thrust program) to affect behavior to a significant degree. He suggested that the program design assumptions need to be examined closely. According to Kirby, one of the most problematic of these is the assumption of a direct link between the acquisition of knowledge and a change in sexual decision-making and behavior among adolescents. His meta analysis of 135 studies on the use of birth control revealed that knowledge was only slightly related to actual behavior (p. 601). In a recent Albertan study, the same lack of connection was noted. "For grade 9 classes, HIV/AIDS instruction led to a higher level of knowledge and more tolerant attitudes, but there was no statistical relationship to intentions about future behavior" (Doherty-Poirier & Munro, 1991. p. 3.).

### **Psychological Development Factors**

**Franz (1989) offered several reasons for this poor connection between knowledge and behavior change in teens.**

**Adolescents in our society tend to be concrete rather than abstract thinkers, to have poor decision making abilities, to have a poorly developed sense of cause and effect, to be egocentric, to have poor self-identity development, and to have a sense of mind/body dichotomy. Most courses are inadequate because they ignore the teenagers' cognitive status. (p. 479)**

**These psychological development factors appear to be intertwined with some very practical problems associated with applying the acquired knowledge, skills and attitudes in spontaneously arising situations. Kirby (1989) suggested that teens do not typically have sex very often, do not expect it, and do not plan for it.**

**Many get swept away by their emotions, do not use their "decision making skills" and do not use birth control. This is reflected in the fact that the most common reason teenagers give for not using birth control when having sex is that they did not expect to have sex" (p. 601).**

Zelnik and Kantner (1980) also investigated psychological development factors and concluded that many teens do not exercise caution because they sincerely believe they cannot, or will not, become pregnant, or be otherwise negatively affected.

As this study proceeded, several teachers in Bruckton expressed similar hypotheses. We began to consider instructional approaches which might help teens address these issues (e.g., making thought and discussion of abstract concepts more concrete, creating a personal constitution of principles, making the future more concrete).

### **Influence from the Media**

Media influences are considered to be important, but research findings have been inconclusive (Strause & Farbes, 1985; Greeson & Williams, 1986; Leming, 1987). Studies typically show that teenagers watching television witness thousands of scenes of suggested sexual intercourse, comment, and innuendo in a single year of viewing (see Brindis and Jeremy, 1988). Strause and Farbes (1985) reported that "informal sources of information, such as television and music, may be counteracting the beneficial effects of sex education, providing young people with a view of sex that is not based on responsibility or premeditated choice" (p. 256). However, cause/effect conclusions in this area, as in most others related to sexuality, are extremely difficult to draw.

### **Parents as Sexuality Educators**

Factors beyond the influence of school programs, such as those associated with parents and home environments, also deserve careful consideration. Several studies have found that both parents and teens preferred that parents acts as primary sexuality educators (Alexander & Jorgensen, 1983; Bennett, 1984; Bennett & Dickinson, 1980; MacLeod, 1990; Shapiro, 1980). Most of the studies that underlined the preferred status of parents in SE also found that many parents were not performing this role. King et al. (1988) in the *Canada, Youth and AIDS* survey confirmed that parents were preferred as a source of information on relationships and birth control, but other sources (e.g., medical personnel) were preferred for information about sexually transmitted diseases. The Albertan study by Doherty-Poirier and Munro (1991) found that preference for information varied among family, school, and health professionals as follows:

**The largest percentages (45-64%) of students in both Grades 9 and 11 preferred to get information on human sexuality, HIV/AIDS, and STD from the school. The second preferred source of information on sexuality was the family and the second preferred source of information on HIV/AIDS and STD was health professionals (doctor / nurse / clinic). (p. 2)**

It is important to note that these studies focused on the direct information that is exchanged, but much indirect communication of attitudes and values also occurs. In a review of literature pertaining to parents, Strause and Farbes (1985) concluded that parents had a major influence on sexual behavior.

When parents intervene directly in their children's sexuality education they can exert a very powerful influence. The most important variable in determining whether or not a female delays first intercourse or uses contraception is for parents, especially the mother, to talk to the daughter . . . . The home is the most important source of sexual learning and the classroom can never be any more than a supplementary or remedial source. (p. 259)

Possibilities for enhancing the role of parents in the sexuality education of their children are important to consider from a learning perspective, but also from a legal and a moral/ethical perspective. The opening statement of the Alberta School Act (Alberta Government, 1988) reinforced this, stating ". . . parents have a right and a responsibility to make decisions respecting the education of their children . . ." More recently, the guiding principles recommended by the Minister's Committee on Sexuality Education in Alberta (Cherry et al., 1992) acknowledged "the right of parents to make decisions about the type of education their children will receive" (p. 10).

Many authors have emphasized the moral / ethical right and responsibility of parents in sexuality education and suggested that schools may be able to assist them to reach their potential. Pegis, Gentles and de Veber (1986) recommended that schools act to help parents.

Schools could play a positive role in helping parents overcome their timidity by providing them with the accurate and reliable information that they need in order to broach the subject with their children. Such a policy would have a significant impact on pregnancy, abortion and sexually transmitted diseases. (p. 35)

Scales (1982) strongly encouraged professionals to involve parents in planning sexuality education programs. "Even if only a few parents actually participate, all will appreciate being asked" (p. 32-33). He suggested several steps to help make this effective: using small community committees, conducting a community survey, making certain that abstinence is discussed in all sex education courses, providing sufficient staff and teacher training, adopting written policies that support the staff, and involving parents as deeply as possible.

While parents may have moral and ethical rights in decisions about sexuality education, others such as Kirkendall (1975) view rights about sex education -- access to full and accurate information -- as a basic human right which all children should enjoy. "Free access to full and accurate information on all aspects of sexuality is a basic right for everyone, children as well as adults." Beyond this, Kirkendall recognized the need to

support parents in their challenging role as those with the greatest opportunity and the primary responsibility to have a positive impact on their children. He stated,

All this requires a continuing education of the parents . . . parents too need "free access" to the support, help, and understanding of leaders in community groups who have a broad and current knowledge of sexuality. Effective help for parents is crucial.

The factors described above were given serious consideration in this study in Bruckton, as were each of the factors and issues discussed in this section on sexuality education. Among professionals in the community, enthusiasm over an expanded role for family support agencies with regard to parents was generally high, but enthusiasm for an expanded role for schools varied from low to high. As we continued with the study, it became apparent that having support available to parents was less of a problem than parents finding time to time to spend with their teens

Other factors considered in the design of programs and approaches are summarized below.

### **Other Correlated Factors**

Various correlational studies have shaped programs elsewhere and were considered as approaches were being developed in Bruckton. Miller, McCoy, Olson and Wallace (1985) isolated three parent-related factors which correlated with teen sexual involvement: marital status, moderation in discipline at home, and level of parental interest and involvement in areas of importance to teens. They found the following:

- Teens living with both parents have the least permissive attitudes. Those living with a parent who has remarried also have less permissive attitudes.
- Those teens reporting a moderate amount of strictness and rules are least likely to be involved in a sexual relationship. Those who describe their parents as "extremely strict" were slightly more likely to be sexually involved. Those whose parents were "not strict at all" were nearly twice as likely as the moderate group to be sexually involved.
- Teens who report parents as very interested in their personal achievements, including school, sports, music, dance, etc., were twice as likely to report abstinence as those who reported that their parents did not take much interest in their achievements and activities.

Miller, McCoy, Olson and Wallace (1985) also noted strong correlations with virginity which were not as directly linked with parent-teen relationships and interactions:

- Virginity was most closely correlated with the individual's belief that premarital intercourse is usually wrong.

- Adolescents who did not begin dating (as a solo couple) until age 16 or later generally reported abstinence.
- Those teens who look to the future by planning post high-school education are much more likely to report abstinence than those who have no plans.

In a Canadian study by Varnhagen, Svenson, and Godin (1989), a questionnaire survey of 119 Grade 11 students, a somewhat different set of correlates were found. The four factors, in rank order, which they found to be predictive of whether males were or were not sexually active were: concern for STD, age, religious or moral belief, and self esteem. For females, five factors were considered important predictors: religious or moral belief, engaging in other risky behaviors, knowledge about STD and pregnancy and prevention, concern for STD, and self esteem.

Attention to affecting attitudes is often suggested in program design recommendations. However, a study by Zabin, Hirsch, Smith & Hardy (1984) found large discrepancies between adolescent sexual attitudes and sexual behavior. Thornton and Camburn (1987) concluded that the question of whether causality is from attitudes to behavior or vice versa remains unresolved.

Correlations between values and intended behaviors were reported in the evaluation of the "Values and Choices" program, conducted in seven US cities (Donahue, 1987). The single greatest correlation with the intention to engage in intercourse, somewhat greater even than peer pressure, was whether the student felt that "It is against my values for me to have sex while I am a teenager." Search Institute, the organization sponsoring the program, took this as strong evidence in favor of a values approach to SE. "What this study seems to imply is that, in persuading teenagers to delay involvement in sexual intercourse, the best chance of succeeding is with a course that affirms the importance of basic values." The values which are emphasized in "Values and Choices" are equality, honesty, promise-keeping, respect, responsibility, self-control, and social justice (Williams, 1989, p. 9). Alberta Education's (1986) list of "desirable learner characteristics" includes these values as well.

A study of rural high school students in Alberta and their knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors relating to STD (Svenson et al., in press) found behaviors lagged far behind knowledge. Sexual decision-making appeared to be most strongly influenced by the peer group. Other strong influences included the willingness of the partner, the behavior of friends, family relationships, and concern for STD. Rural teens were comparable to urban teens in knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors.

Finally, in the report of a recent study involving 500 12-18 year olds in Alberta, MacMillan and Jantzie (1993) indicated a strong connection between intended behavior and



concern for STD, stating that "teens place uncompromising importance on the prevention of STDs and AIDS" (p. 1).

### **Non-Sexual Reasons for Sexual Activity**

In addition to knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values relating to sexuality, adolescents often have non-sexual purposes for sexual behavior. It is frequently suggested that adolescents may be in search of intimacy rather than sexual expression. Cohen and Friedman (1975) suggested that engaging in intercourse can be a means of acquiring approval or gaining status and acceptance in the peer group. Some adolescents may feel hostility toward their parents and engage in sexual activity as a way of expressing independence. Because parents feel they must enforce rules concerning sex, engaging in sexual activity can become an especially effective way to rebel. Girls who find conditions at home to be intolerable may wish to escape from that situation by becoming pregnant.

These reasons also relate to the concept which individuals develop of themselves as a result of their personalities and interactions with their environments. An individual's self-esteem, sense of self-efficacy (personal empowerment), construction of future "possible selves," and sense of locus of control are considered to be strong factors influencing motivation (Bandura, 1986; Kirby, 1989; Markus and Ruvolo, 1989; Olson, 1989; Scales, 1983).

### **Suggestions for Program Development**

Knowledge alone cannot be expected to alter adolescent behavior. Education programs that are combined with other approaches, such as assertiveness and decision-making training, and role modeling may have greater potential. They may help reinforce family values, responsible behavior, and self-control with regard to sexual activity. Age-appropriate programs that provide young children with training to deal with potentially abusive encounters may help reduce anxieties and fears about personal sexual development and improve their ability to avoid exploitation.

In recognition of the complexity associated with learning about sexuality, several authors have produced lists of recommendations and guidelines for planning sexuality education programs. In the U. S., the National Research Council (1987) identified three strategies they saw as being of greatest importance:

- enhance life options of disadvantaged teens (through life planning, school performance, employment opportunities, etc.),
- encourage the delay of initiation of sexual activity (through SE programs, assertiveness and decision-making training, role models, media, etc.),

- encourage contraceptive use for those who are sexually active, and encourage a return to less risky behavior (i.e., postponing) where possible.

Besharov and Gardiner (1993) supported this recommendation.

The following is a condensed version of a list of considerations developed by Scales (1983):

- Recognize that sexuality is more than sex.
- Sexual learning is a lifelong process.
- Knowledge and information about sexuality and family planning are essential.
- Formal programs of sexuality education can be important, but values and behavior may also be influenced through informal efforts, particularly those of peers and parents.
- It is important to become aware of and examine one's own values about sexuality.
- In a pluralistic, democratic society, it is likely that there will be a wide range of values and beliefs about sexuality.
- It is wrong to force someone into an unwanted sexual experience, to knowingly spread disease, or to bring an unwanted child into the world.
- Parenthood requires many responsibilities that adolescents are usually unable to assume and capabilities they usually do not have.
- Each decision has an effect or consequence. Sexual decisions should support the dignity, equality, and worth of each individual. They should take into account medical, psychological and social ramifications of sexual activity. Given these ramifications, young teenagers are usually not ready for sexual intercourse.
- Adequate self-esteem is a key to making healthy, ethical, and effective sexual and fertility-related decisions.
- Parents are the primary sexuality educators of their children, but not the sole educators, nor always the best transmitters of information. Social institutions such as schools, churches, and family planning centers should supplement, not supplant, them in this role. Parents, as well as other people in the community, should be involved in planning sexuality education programs.
- Participation in sexuality education should be voluntary. It is best if children, of their own free will, discuss issues of sexuality with their parents and other valued adults.
- Education staff should be highly trained, participate in regular continuing education programs, and abide by the highest standards of professional ethics.

Kirby (1989) offered other recommendations. He felt that programs should help adolescents personalize information and attempt to increase feelings of vulnerability to consequences. They should develop assertiveness skills in saying "no" to all sex or unprotected sex, and seek to increase motivation either to avoid sex or to use birth control. The perceptions of peer-group norms regarding having sex and using condoms should be addressed and certain values, such as delaying sexual activity and respect for the best interests of others, should be emphasized. Peers can and should lead a variety of classroom and school activities, and school programs should be incorporated into a community-wide educational program which reinforces the same ideas and values.

Professionals in the City of Edmonton (Edmonton Committee on Teenage Sexuality, 1991) released a report during Year #2 which echoed many of the concerns expressed in Brackton. The Edmonton committee identified several needs for program developers to address.

- adopt an intersectoral approach and better linkages including health, social services, education, and advanced education
- convey accurate and specific information to dispel myths around sexuality, STD, pregnancy, risk and efficacy of contraceptives and prophylactics
- address all issues relating to teens, not just focus narrowly on sexuality
- update elementary health program
- reach high risk before drop out
- be age appropriate and appealing, concrete and skill building
- come from a variety of sources as everyone has their bias
- train professionals
- provide follow-up counselling services.

Other issues included the following:

- existing programs for parents required too much commitment
- lack of funding to expand programs in community
- limitation on school curriculum time
- concern for fragmentation of approaches (pp. 8-9).

### Learning From Experience With Other "At-Risk" Programs

There are many studies of "at-risk" behaviors and associated preventative programs. Dryfoos (1991) indicated that one out of every four American children ages 10-17 will suffer the negative consequences of "at-risk" or "high-risk" behaviors. He found that these behaviors or conditions -- school failure, drug or alcohol abuse, teen pregnancy, sexually transmitted disease, and various forms of abuse were often inter-related. Derry and Derry (1991) also found strong correlations between "at-risk" behaviors. Other potentially important findings from their studies of substance abuse and smoking prevention were as follows:

- Children tended to follow the example / model of their parents.
- Image and peer pressure were important motivators.
- The media can assist in building positive and negative image associations.
- Low self-esteem, low achievement, and identity problems are important antecedents of at-risk behaviors.
- Stress, skill deficiencies, and situational constraints are also often linked.
- Teens are extremely present oriented. The decisions they make to act in a certain way (and the consequences of those actions) are often not considered carefully.

Duryea (1986) found, as we did in Brackton, that students need adequate time to practice decision-making skills, to analyze choices and arrive at their own decisions if we expect them to use them outside the classroom.

The gap between knowledge and behavior in sexual decision-making is consistent with health-related decision making in general. Greenberg (1988) described this situation and emphasized the need for reinforcement.

Health educators have found it relatively easy to effect changes in health knowledge and skills, somewhat more difficult to effect changes in health attitudes and extremely difficult to get people to change their health-related behaviors . . . When changes in health behaviors have occurred, it is not unusual to find that participants revert to past behaviors shortly after the program's completion . . . Behavioral change resulting from educational programs often reverts to what it was prior to the program when further reinforcement is not provided.(p. 13).

## **Self-Esteem**

By Year #3, however, self-esteem had emerged as an area of major and continuing interest among leaders in Bruckton. Concepts relating to self-esteem are highlighted consistently in literature relating to sexual decision making, developing personal and social responsibility, "at-risk" behaviors and unhealthy lifestyle situations. Reviews of literature, such as that presented by Strause and Farbes (1987) suggested that the relationship between self-esteem and sexual behavior is not a simple, direct mediational relationship.

The meaning of self-esteem varies among individuals and organizations in Bruckton and elsewhere. Definitional components proposed by Branden (1992) had been incorporated into written documents developed in Year #4. Branden's work helped to focus the multiple meanings on the two aspects of self-respect and self-efficacy, expressed in three dimensions as follows:

- confidence in the ability to think about, and to cope with, the challenges of life,
- confidence in the right to be happy, the feeling of being worthy, deserving, entitled to assert needs and to enjoy the fruits of efforts,
- the disposition to experience oneself as competent to cope with the challenges of life and as deserving of happiness.

Developing a healthy sense of self-esteem was, for many professionals in Bruckton, an important part of sexuality education.

## **Contraceptive Controversies**

An obvious means of avoiding the negative consequences of engaging in sexual intercourse is to avoid intercourse. Although nearly all agreed that abstinence from sexual intercourse was the decision of choice for young teens, there were various controversies that are associated with educational approaches which take this view. These were discussed in my earlier documents (Krupa, 1990). Controversies such as those over contraceptive and prophylactic efficacy, often compounded the complexity of dealing with issues that were already complicated by values and ideologies. Resolving them was a challenge for members of the community and is discussed in the chapters which follow.

At the beginning of the study, it appeared as though two main groups had formed among those who had opinions in this area. In over-simple terms, one group refuted the "safe sex with condoms" position, emphasized abstinence as the only possible response to averting sexual tragedy and ascribed to the literature's logic and recommendations such as those presented by Ferland et al. (1988), Genuis (1991), Milliron (1993), and Richard (1990). A second group felt that this was unreasonable and that contraceptives and prophylactics should be recommended as alternatives for teens. This second group generally ascribed to the literature, logic, and recommendations such as those put forward by Bonham et al. (1987). Both reviews lacked comprehensiveness, accounting for only a portion of the literature available.

Opinions varied considerably on the efficacy of contraceptive and prophylactic technology and the "safe-ness" of young teens having sex with condoms. In general, health care professionals tended to consider the efficacy rates to be sufficiently high to warrant recommendation to teens. Some literature, such as that summarized by Richard (1990), Genuis (1991), and Milliron (1993), however, indicated problematic rates of failure. Essential differences appear to arise from selective use of theoretical vs. actual failure rates vs actual failure rates for teens. Acknowledging that contraceptive failure rates were to be calculated on a "per year" basis was also variable. As an example, the theoretical failure rate for condoms when used by adults is often given as 2% per year. Actual or reported failure rates range between 4-35%, with the most widely published rate at 10% per year (Hatcher, 1984). Actual failure rates for teens are difficult to study and estimate but are generally placed between 15-20% per year (Alberta Health, 1993; Grady, Hayward, & Yagi, 1986; Jones, 1992; Trussel, 1992). These figures, along with the need to communicate this abstract concept in a concrete way, led to the idea for an activity using dice to obtain a 16.6% per year probability of "pregnancy."

The figures described above are those which relate to the prevention of pregnancy. Those who found these figures unacceptable often suggested that the ability for condoms to prevent sexually transmitted diseases may be even less acceptable (due to size of virus or bacteria, lack of dependence on fertility cycle, areas remaining uncovered, etc.). Studies have indicated HIV transmission among couples using condoms to be of the order of 10-20% over a period of 18 months (Alberta Health, 1993; Fiall, 1987; Voeller & Potts 1985) as compared to 0% for couples who abstained from intercourse.

Genuis (1990) concluded his overview of the situation with adolescents, STD, and condom usage as follows:

Although it is undeniably true that with any given sexual encounter, a participant is at less risk of contacting some types of infection with the proper use of a condom, it is equally true that, over time, the sustained success at avoiding sexually transmitted

diseases by condom use is doomed to failure for many unsuspecting victims. The strategy of encouraging condom use is not meeting its objectives. Yet despite this lack of success, many continue to not only support the condom as the major warrior against sexually transmitted diseases, but vociferously deny and oppose education which includes the serious shortcomings of condom use for so-called "safe-sex."

He called on decision makers to "critically assess the effectiveness of (condoms as a form of) protection and to implement an alternate plan of prevention to curb the ongoing devastation in the lives of young and old alike."

In summary, condoms can help to reduce the spread of some STD, but there are questions that need to be addressed when advocating their usage. The term "less risky sex" is more appropriate than "safe sex," which might be reserved for the avoidance of extramarital sex or sex with an infected person. The discussions remained limited to a "medical model" of physical consequences and protection, with no attention to the psychological dimension.

### Abstinence-Only vs Combination Programs

The controversy over the efficacy of contraceptives is just one example of basic information which can affect approaches to sexuality education. Controversial questions were uncovered during Year #1 and #2 and outlined in Krupa (1990). In response to the controversies, authors such as Ferland et al. (1988), Richard (1990), and Milliron (1993), advocated strongly an "abstinence-only" approach to sexuality education. Roosa and Christopher (1990), however, disputed the optimistic claims of abstinence-only promoters:

Contrary to rather optimistic reports that have appeared in the popular press (e.g., Richard, 1989, 1990) there is no scientifically credible information to suggest that any of the abstinence-only programs have successfully reduced adolescent pregnancy rates (p. 366).

In their evaluation of adolescent pregnancy prevention programs in the U.S., Roosa and Christopher (1990) found little evidence to indicate that desired changes in attitudes or behavior had occurred in any of the abstinence-only programs. In contrast, they found that combination programs such as "PSI" by Howard and Blamey (1988) "have achieved dramatic decreases in adolescent pregnancy" (p. 366). This finding also supported the decision to continue to work from the "It's COOL to Know Your Way in a Relationship" program, a combination program which was based on PSI.

Roosa and Christopher (1990) also pointed to the need to question the goal and purpose of an approach. Preventing adolescent pregnancy has merit, but the general health and well-being of teens in a broader perspective is also critical to consider. They advise caution in adopting over-simplified solution proposals and prescriptions. Other policy recommendations they made were as follows:

- Do not confuse policy goals and intervention methods.
- Improve quality of evaluations.
- Evaluate behavior, not just attitudes.
- Build programs on a strong research base (e.g., not just self-esteem).
- Focus on high-risk groups.
- Replicate successful programs and test their effectiveness in other settings.

### **Controversies and a Code of Ethics for Educators**

In light of the controversies surrounding sexuality education, and the problematic situations that have occurred in Bruckton and in Alberta communities, politicians, parents, and educators have suggested a need for support for professionals teaching in the area as well as a code of ethical principles on which to center instructional decisions. A general code of ethics for health educators was described by Greenberg (1988). The nine elements of this code, listed in a condensed form below, were discussed and found to be useful in the Bruckton context.

I will . . .

- accurately represent my capability, education, training, and experience and will act within the boundaries of my professional competence.
- maintain my competence at the highest level through continuing study, training, and research.
- report research findings and practice activities honestly and without distortion.
- not discriminate in rendering service.
- value the privacy, dignity, and worth of the individual, and will use skills consistent with these values.
- observe the principle of informed consent with respect to individuals and groups observed.
- support change by choice, not coercion.
- foster an educational environment that nurtures individual growth and development.
- take appropriate action if I become aware of unethical practices. (p. 27)

### **Toward a Community Perspective of Sexuality Education**

When considering the issues above and the need to increase the effectiveness of sexuality education efforts, coordinating on a community level began to appear important to key players in Bruckton as elsewhere. Various authors, including Alberta Education (1986), Gilboy (1989), Kirby (1989), Scales (1982), Stout & Rivara (1989), Thompson (1979) advocated such a coordinated approach. Some related initiatives were uncovered as we began the study:

- Jenkins (1981) described a situation where a coordinator for sexuality programs helped to provide and coordinate parent education, teacher and staff in-service training, team

teaching experiences, student counselling, and a broad range of community related activities.

- Sferrazza (1982) described a New Jersey initiative where community, parent and student representatives were involved in establishing a philosophical base, reviewing existing programs, designing curriculum, and developing parent workshops on SE.
- Monk and Terry (1986) reported on the development of a family life program in a New York school district. They reported that success depended on development of parent trust and close communication between the school and the community.
- The State of Colorado, in a campaign to reduce teen pregnancy rates, encouraged communities to plan and implement programs which are appropriate for their specific situations. According to Gilboy (1989), meetings were held with parents, religious leaders and community agencies to build coalitions, accommodate diverse needs, add credibility, and improve public relations.

Though these reports described the processes and events which took place as attempts were made to involve others in a community, little was said about the specific effects the work had on curriculum or on recipients of the programs. Greenberg (1988) provided a useful discussion of issues of health education in the school, community, and medical care settings. Although a community perspective on sexuality education has been encouraged, this study was seen as a way of learning more about how community connections in regard to sexuality education can develop.

Many authors have also called for the involvement of the adolescent community as peer motivators and instructors (Gardiner, 1988; Howard, 1985; Kirby, 1989; Olson, 1989; Rosenstock, 1981; Scales, 1979). From a study of 600 individuals over three years, Rosenstock (1981) proposed an out-of-school program based on peer and parent intervention. Peer teaching was reported to be very effective in smoking, drug and alcohol abuse prevention campaigns (McAllister, 1980; Young et al., 1988) and was thought to have contributed to the effectiveness of SE programs designed to encourage students to postpone sexual intercourse (Gardiner, 1988; Howard & Blamey, 1988). Peer-led programs have also varied in effectiveness, partly due to training and skill differences. Young et al. (1988) recommended that one take care in selecting and training, and that older peers (high school and college age) may be more effective than school age peers in leading.

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## **Community Development and Community Education**



Concepts associated with "community development" and "community education" appeared to be very useful in advancing approaches in sexuality education, as well as in describing and analyzing these approaches. Both fields have their roots in the work done to improve social and economic conditions in the 1940's and 1950's in North America and in later work done in developing countries. Both terms have been used loosely and ambiguously. They were defined in, literally, hundreds of ways in literature, and with considerable variation within Bruckton. In general, "community development" encompasses a loosely connected group of concepts which are based on the experiences of practitioners addressing various problems in various contexts. Christenson, Fendley, & Robinson (1989) described community development efforts as having educational components, but also have motivational and capacity building components (e.g., organization and leadership development). "Community education" has meaning beyond education for development, and has been associated with community recreation, schools, and colleges, as well as with ideology on the governance and control of education (Minzey & LeTarte, 1979). Literature relating to the refining of these terms in Bruckton is summarized below.

### Community

The central elements in a definition of community are people, place or territory, social interaction, and psychological identification or attachment. Christenson, Fendley, and Robinson (1989) defined a community as "people that live within a geographically bounded area who are involved in social interaction, and have one or more psychological ties with each other and with the place in which they live" (p. 9). Blakely (1989) contended that place is becoming less relevant because it is being replaced by interests, actions, and networks without territorial boundaries. Wilkinson (1986) noted that the blurring of boundaries is less relevant if one defines communities by core characteristics rather than outer limits. Wilkinson also noted that, in spite of diversity of perspectives, community action comes into play at crucial moments when people react to conditions threatening them.

As this case study began, those in Bruckton defined the community in terms of geography and association. We viewed it as the people that lived within the geographic area defined by the school boundaries (i.e., the town and surrounding rural area) and/or those who were closely associated with Bruckton's schools, agencies and organizations.

Authors such as those associated with the Miami Theory Collective (1991) have articulated current philosophical views of "community" which have emerged. This discussion cannot be given justice within the context of this document, yet the notion of a

growing sense of what it means to interact as a "community" is very important to the dynamics studied in Bruckton. As the study progressed, participants found considerable meaning beyond this operational definition. Meanings which evolved locally, particularly among those who acted as representatives of stakeholders, as educators, and as peer instructors, are illustrated in Chapters 5 and 6. A temporary definition of the emerging sense of community among participants could be described as being one that was defined by relationships and the quest for increasingly more meaningful, effective, and satisfying relationships. These came to have more to do with cooperation (and the popular word "collaboration") than with competition, more with mutualism than optimizing individual efforts, more with interdependence than independence, more with hearkening than simply hearing, more with recognizing what others could offer than protecting individual positions, and more with achieving the best possible environment for teens and parents than protecting programs or ambitions of individuals.

### **Community Development**

While "community" implies togetherness, interdependence and interaction, "development" implies improvement, growth, and change. Christenson, Fendley, and Robinson (1989) asserted that "improvement should be measured from the perspective of those affected by the change" (p. 9), whether it is in education, health services, or decision making. Growth can be described in technological or economic terms, but can also be discussed in terms of building leadership and organizational capacities. Development is associated with a belief in planned intervention (applying appropriate resources in a systematic way to help solve problems of individuals and groups). It entails deliberate policies, and arises from a particular societal vision or ideological orientation (moving toward higher levels of citizen involvement and control). Thus, I came to define development in this study as "improvement, growth, and change which results from systematic efforts" with a strong belief that those affected by the change should be considered when defining a fuller, greater, or better state in the community.

Hundreds of definitions for "community development" can be found in research and practitioner literature. They highlight the process, method, program, or social movement, or some combination of these four elements. Some definitions which were considered in this particular situation were as follows:

**A deliberate, democratic, developmental activity; focusing on an existing social and geographic group of people; who participate in the solution of common problems for the common good. (Cawley, 1984, p. 16)**

**An educational approach which would raise levels of local awareness and increase the confidence and ability of community groups to identify and tackle their own problems. (Darby & Morris, 1975, p. 43)**

**A process in which increasingly more members of a given area make and implement socially responsible decisions, the probable consequence of which is an increase in the life chances of some people without a decrease in the life chances of others. (Oberle, Darby, & Stowers, 1975, p. 64)**

**Active involvement in a process to improve some identifiable aspect of community life; normally such action leads to the strengthening of the community's pattern of human and institutional interrelationships. (Ploch, 1976, p. 8)**

**A process of helping community people analyze their problems to exercise as large a measure of autonomy as is possible and feasible, and to promote a greater identification of the individual citizen and the individual organization with the community as a whole. (Warren, 1978, p. 20)**

**A group of people in a locality initiating a social action process (i.e., planned intervention) to change their economic, social, cultural, or environmental situation. (Christenson, Fendley, and Robinson, 1989, p. 14)**

**In the explanation of most definitions, two common elements can be found: the notion that it is a community level process of purposive social change, and the assumption that citizens should participate meaningfully in defining and meeting their own needs. By the end of Year #2, I came to think of community development for the purposes of this study as "the deliberate, collaborative efforts made by the people living or working in Brackton to increase the local capacity to identify, analyze, and address issues and problems associated with sexuality education, but also related needs in the community."**

### **Community Development Practices: Three Approaches**

**As I became more aware of the importance of acting on a community level, as well as within individual programs, I began to consider approaches to community development alongside improved sexuality education approaches. In the literature, as in Brackton, community development practices appeared to vary considerably, depending on the particular practitioner's philosophy of planned intervention. Though several professionals working in Brackton refer to aspects of their work as "community development," each approaches his/her work with different assumptions and roles in mind, reflecting the variation presented in literature on community development. In a review of two decades of literature, Christenson (1989) identified three major approaches to community development:**

- self-help, also know as non-directive or cooperative,**
- technical assistance or the planning approach, and**
- conflict-oriented, or confrontational approaches.**

Christenson (1989) found that, in each community development project, one of the three approaches was dominant. The other two approaches, however, were often employed in portions of the project where they were seen to be appropriate. Although all three have occurred in Bruckton, the "self-help" approach appeared to be the "ideal" to work toward for three reasons (reflected by Littrell & Hobbs, 1989, p. 48). It was based on the premise that people can, will, and should collaborate to solve community problems. The self-help approach also appeared to be practical and had a problem-solving utility. Finally, it would tend to contribute to a stronger sense of community and a foundation for future collaboration.

A decision to adopt a self-help perspective, however, also meant challenges to overcome. "Many practitioners, citizens, and organizations pledge allegiance to a self-help philosophy, but an ideology of democratic self-help appears to be easier to describe than to practice" (p. 55). The implications for practice are discussed in detail by Littrell and Hobbs (1989, pp. 55-67). Some of the difficulties were overcome by applying the other approaches in specific situations described in Chapters V-VII.. Fear, Gamm, and Fisher (1989) described issues associated with the application of the technical approach while Robinson (1989) described the conflict approach in considerable detail.

### **Community Education**

"Community education," like "community development," has many definitions. This term has been used to refer to the educational aspect of community development but has also been used to refer to community recreation, community schools, community colleges, and ideology relating to the governance and control of education. Analysis of preliminary data indicated that most school and agency personnel in Bruckton thought of community education as the special programs which occurred as a result of special committees associated with the community school. A few individuals more closely involved with these committees were familiar with a broader conceptualization which included processes and ideology, and emphasized the fostering of a sense of community.

Staples' (1977) framework, shown below, accented a process component (similar to community development), emphasized self-help and building capacity for self-sufficiency, and defined the school's role as that of being one contributor among many in a community system. This framework influenced the view of community education in Bruckton and, therefore, the way in which community education processes were received in the community.

**Community education is a process in which community people utilize educational, democratic and sound research methods for individual and community betterment. The community education process ideally exhibits the following characteristics:**

1. There is an effective and systematic co-operative relationship (among government sponsored organizations) and commitment to the community education process.
2. Emphasis is placed on facilitating informed and learned citizen involvement in local needs identification, decision-making and problem-solving.
3. Priority is placed on full utilization of existing local human and physical resources as a basis for community action in the common interest.
4. The community school and other community agencies and resources are viewed as integral parts of a total community education system. Educational methods are seen as important tools to be employed in a coordinated manner for community good by any or all community based agencies involved in education, recreation, culture, health, social development, crime prevention, agriculture, consumerism, religion, ecology, economic development and so on.
5. Stress is placed on encouraging community self-help, volunteerism, community initiative and self-renewal through the process of community education.
6. An important aspect is the development of opportunities and training so local lay and professional people can assume community leadership roles.
7. There is an offering of supplementary and alternative educational opportunities for community members, regardless of age, to extend their skills and interest and to bring about community improvements. Education is viewed as a lifelong process. All forms of education are considered potentially useful in this regard, including the use of technology and the mass media.

An important underlying goal in the above considerations is the fostering of a sense of community. It is assumed important that people who live or work in a community know and care about each other. (Staples, 1977)

Minsky and LeTarte (1979) asserted that "those things which are often called community education are usually only portions of it" (p. 13). They define community education philosophically as "the belief that all communities have many problems and that these problems can best be solved through education" (p. 14) and operationally as "applying human and material resources to groups and individuals in an effort to solve individual and community problems" (p. 14). These authors maintained that, although programs and practices are important, emphasis must be placed on process and learning to work together.

The most important aspect of community education is not program but process . . . The ultimate goal of community education is to develop a process by which members of a community learn to work together to identify problems and to seek out solutions to these problems. It is through this process that an on-going procedure is established for working together on all community issues . . . Programs are those overt activities which are designed to resolve the issues identified by the process. (p. 15)

Minsky and LeTarte (1979) concluded that "failures in community education efforts are often due to an over-emphasis on programs and lack of attention to the process of community development" (p. 15).

There is considerable overlap in definitions and concepts of community education and community development. In time, we became more consistent with our use of the terms within Brackton. The term "community development" was generally used when

describing the processes and "community education" was used when describing the educational delivery system and its related programs (e.g., school curriculum and instruction, workshops on parent / teen communication).

### **Building Local Capacity**

The two major challenges associated with the community development process, according to Christenson, Fendley, and Robinson (1989), are building local capacity for development and addressing the issues of citizen participation. According to Garkovich (1989), "Local capacity is the basis for the inception, expansion, and operation stages of the community action system. The two key components of local capacity are the number and viability of local organizations and the pool of leadership available" (p. 206). Ryan (1987) suggested three strategies were important to consider when attempting to contribute to building community capacities: expanding the base of citizen involvement, enhancing the leadership pool, and enlarging the information base of local communities. This section examines the concept of capacity building.

Garkovich (1989) emphasized the importance of capacity building in community development work and identified components in terms to abilities.

**Development in the community must be grounded in development of the community through the building of local capacity . . . . Local capacity (is) the ability of residents to articulate needs and to identify actions to address these needs. Local capacity also represents the ability of residents to mobilize and organize local or extra-local resources in the pursuit of communally defined goals. (p. 197)**

According to Garkovich (1989) the "social field" view of community dynamics is that of "a dynamic and emergent configuration of groups and activities addressing a constantly changing variety of interest fields" (p. 199). He recommended analysis in terms of the associations, actors, and actions.

**Associations are organizations or groups based within the community that focus on providing services or resources or coordinating local efforts. Actors are the leaders and members of associations and the other residents of the community who await mobilization. Actions are projects, policies, or other activities that actors perform in order to achieve identifiable community-based goals. (p. 199)**

Warren (1978) suggested looking at five stages when analyzing a community "action system" of associations and actors.

- 1. The initial systemic environment contains both the source of possible dysfunction contributing to the emergence of felt needs or interests and the organizational basis for responding to these needs.**
- 2. The inception of the action system involves the identification of action objectives and the appropriate components of the systemic to respond to these needs.**

3. The expansion of the action system entails mobilizing associations or individuals outside the original associations and/or actors. Of particular concern are the reasons underlying the expansion *[to end of Year #2]*.
4. The operation of the expanded action system involves the specific task-oriented activities designed to achieve the identified objectives.
5. The transformation of the action system reflects the various outcomes stemming from the action . . . In effect, this final phase focuses on the systemic residue of the action *[to end of Year #3]*. (Warren, 1978 as interpreted by Garkovich, 1989, p. 200)

These five stages were noted in the development process in Bruckton.

### Organizational Capacity

Esman and Uphoff (1984) asserted that "development is limited or impeded by the absence or rudimentary nature of (community) associations" (p. 27). The associations or organizations in Bruckton had varying degrees of formal structure and permanency. They included government agencies, schools, community clubs, religious groups, peer support groups, professional groups, inter-agency councils, and a network of stakeholders. Some of these associations were created to meet needs that arose during the course of the study.

As a group, they performed the "critical tasks" described by Esman and Uphoff (1984):

- resource tasks -- mobilizing and managing human and material resources in order to accomplish the development goals,
- service tasks -- relating to delivery and coordination of services,
- inter-organizational tasks -- acting as intermediaries between residents and government to sort out and manage competing priorities, presenting local demands to other organizations and bureaucracies, adjusting government programs to the culture of the community, and buffering residents from intrusions by external agencies.

Associations in Bruckton also acted to perform other tasks such as identifying needs, developing leadership, improving the quality of research activities, etc..

Garkovich (1989) emphasized the importance of organizations stating that "all too often developmental efforts and resources are not directed toward the fostering of local organizations or network building" (p. 201). Esman and Uphoff (1984) described the pressures which have led to this unfortunate reality.

**Establishing local organizations is a more organic than mechanical process . . . It is not predictable, takes time, and does not 'move money' in large amounts . . . Development efforts rarely proceed in leaps and bounds; rather, they move with small steps, carefully constructing a solid foundation of citizen participation that leaves behind a self-starting community when the development project ends. (p. 50)**

**They encouraged a refocusing of development efforts in the direction of organization building in order to sustain development, suggesting that "Moving (resources) into communities is not community development if it results in a dependent chimney. Real**

development efforts empower people by teaching them the skills that allow them to do for themselves" (p. 50). Esman and Uphoff noted that, because of the unpredictability and the time and human energy required, individuals and organizations oriented toward immediate results may find it difficult to see value in organization building.

In this study, needs in organizational development were identified and addressed with three groups: the community "action group" or network of stakeholder representatives, the teachers, and the group of teens and parents acting as formal and informal peer leaders and instructors. Other organizations were also involved in the delivery of sexuality education in the community, and were affected by the study, the effects were less direct. The growth in organizational capacity is described in Chapters IV-VII and summarized in Chapter IX.

### **Leadership Capacity**

Garkovich (1989) advocated a "situational-contingency" approach, stating that "the effectiveness of leadership is a function of its fit with the situation in which it occurs" (p. 203). According to Garkovich (1989), effective leadership is required to facilitate the process of linking organizations through common interests to act collaboratively in defining goals and acting to achieve them. Leaders stimulate others to participate, organize efforts to accomplish tasks, and to sustain efforts over the long term. Leaders act as information brokers, identify resource people and other leaders in the community, manage group dynamics, and provide psychological support necessary to sustain commitment (p. 203).

Leithwood (1992) discussed the need for, and movement toward, "transformational" leadership in schools. He suggested such leaders pursued "three fundamental goals: 1) helping staff members develop and maintain a collaborative professional school culture; 2) fostering teacher development; 3) helping them solve problems together more effectively" (p. 9). Sergiovanni (1992) and Brandt (1992) pointed to personal and cultural qualities and virtues associated with professionalism and collegiality which may substitute for more directive leadership (particularly where schools are viewed as "communities" more than as "organizations"). Such concepts of leadership were found to be consistent with the ideals of community education and development.

The three approaches Garkovich (1989) suggested for enhancing the leadership pool were: promoting the emergence of potential leaders, developing existing leaders, and encouraging innovation. We endeavored to find, promote and nurture leaders, including teens, parents, teachers. Specific changes in capacities are summarized in Chapter IX.

### **Expanding the Base of Citizen Involvement**



Garkovich (1989) recommended "action research" and developing neighborhood associations in order to expand and strengthen the base of citizen involvement. She described its ideal form as "a community-researcher partnership in which the parties jointly determine mutually acceptable decisions concerning what is to be accomplished during the project and how it is to be accomplished" (p. 207). She suggested that action research be used to describe a community, to set goals for the future, and to develop specific action plans (More will be said about action research in later sections.) Neighborhood associations have also served to expand and strengthen the base of citizen involvement.

Neighborhood associations activate individuals who might not otherwise become involved in community affairs since they are not part of business, professional, or political associations ... (They) bring new actors into the community arena, actors who have a vested interest in the intergenerational continuity of a preferred way of life (p. 209).

These concepts were considered as the network of stakeholders in sexuality education was created and nurtured during Years #2 and #3, as well as in relating to informal parent and teen groups in the community.

Ryan (1987) suggested that an expansion of the information base in a community occurs as a result of activities aimed at expanding citizen involvement and enhancing the leadership pool. Garkovich (1989) recommended pursuing partnership arrangements with local businesses and volunteer organizations to gather information and inventory the resources and talents in the community. She emphasized that "communities need to know what works . . . illustrating the who, what, and how of actual development contributes to the knowledge base of a community." She concluded that more case studies showing underlying patterns in community development and assessment of project outcomes were needed (p. 214). In the chapters which follow, I have attempted to include information on the activities and some of their effects in order to address this need.

## **Empowerment**

Banan and Uphoff (1984) asserted that "real development efforts empower people by teaching them the skills that allow them to do for themselves" (p. 50). As the study began, empowerment was a popular term in Brackton as well as in the literatures of community development, community education, sexuality education, and many other fields. Unfortunately, it was rarely defined and the assumption of common understanding of the term was problematic. Problems can also arise because the appropriateness of the "power" metaphor, and its emphasis on subject centeredness, are seldom questioned (Rahnema, 1990). In the passage below, I have attempted to gather comments which may assist in discussing this desirable but elusive quality in Brackton.

Definitions of empowerment available from writers in the field of community psychology show connection to the community development concepts of capacity building and self-esteem presented above. They also have some connection with the concept of citizen involvement, discussed in more detail in the section which follows. Cochran (1986), for example, defined empowerment as a process resulting in change which permitted people to overcome impediments to improvement of their situations.

An interactive process involving mutual respect and critical reflection through which both people and controlling institutions are changed in ways which provide those people with greater influence over individuals and institutions which are, in some way, impeding their efforts to achieve equal status in society for themselves and those they care about. (p. 15)

Rappaport (1987) suggested that empowerment was a pervasive and positive value in western culture. He discussed it in terms of participation, interaction with mediating structures, personal control and concern for self and society.

The concept suggests both individual determination over one's own life and democratic participation in the life of one's community, often through mediating structures such as schools, neighborhoods, churches, and other voluntary organizations. Empowerment conveys both a psychological sense of personal control or influence and a concern with actual social influence, political power, and legal rights. (p. 121)

Beyond the individual psychological construct, empowerment is a meaningful "organizational, political, and sociological construct which can be applied to racial and economic justice, as well as to health care and educational justice" (p. 121).

Aspects of Rappaport's (1987) "ecological theory of empowerment" reinforce the ideals of community education and the concepts in community development, especially those associated with the self-help approach. Implications for research included giving attention to the contexts and valuing the participants, their language, and their participation.

Empowerment is a multi-level construct . . . . The historical and cultural contexts have an important influence on the outcomes of the program/policy . . . . Longitudinal research is necessary . . . . The people of concern are to be treated as collaborators; and at the same time, the researchers may be thought of as participants, legitimately involved with the people they are studying . . . . The choices of our language is seen to be very important as to what it communicates and meta-communicates, not only to other researchers and policy makers but also to the people who we are studying . . . . Conditions of participation will have an impact on the empowerment of members . . . . Locally developed solutions are more empowering than single solutions applied in a general way and applied in the form of pre-packaged interventions. (pp. 139-142)

Hall (1984) also described considerations for research which contributed to community self-help and empowerment. He also emphasized the value of citizen participation and the need to attend to the ethics of change in development projects. Hall (1984) encouraged researchers to give special attention to communication, producing

materials in a format that is easily useable by local people. He also encouraged creativity in the adaptation of research methods to make them appropriate to the local situation (e.g., community self-portraits and people's theatre). Hall (1984) emphasized the importance of allowing sufficient time for democratic processes to operate and felt this had "implications for language, type of person doing the work, costs, and the necessity of integrating the research process into other ongoing activities and actions" (p. 296).

Definitions of "empowerment" varied widely and changed quickly. Indeed, the term has so many meanings that I find its use to be questionable. However, people within the community of Bruckton, as well as educational professionals, continue to use "empowerment" frequently, and a small contribution was made by bringing consistency to the usage. This was done by relating the term more directly to evidence that, on both individual and community levels, people were developing the knowledge, skills, and attitudes -- capacities perhaps -- to responsibly shape their own futures. Within Bruckton, the meaning appeared to shift from "something done to people" to "something the people do for themselves when provided with the opportunity." This shift appeared to coincide with other changes: shifts in the mode of community development from technical assistance to self-help, an increase in the quality of stakeholder involvement, an increase in interest in the importance of listening and in relationships between people, and an increase in being able to see possibilities for development. As a final note, suggestions such as those offered by authors writing on empowerment influenced and reinforced the general principles of research which were being set as the study began.

### **Stakeholder Involvement / Participation**

Stakeholder involvement is seen as essential in community education and community development, as well as in sexuality education. A central question is "How can stakeholders be involved in the most just, meaningful, effective and satisfying way possible?" Involvement is discussed as "participation" within community development and participatory action research literature, as readers will note in the sample of references in this section. It is also closely related to the concepts of collaboration, ownership, engagement, empowerment, and citizen control in other literature. These terms are used liberally and often synonymously in discussions in education in general, as well as in the community of Bruckton. The term "involvement" was finally chosen to represent the concept because it was used most frequently by Bruckton's stakeholder representatives, seemed to convey the desired meaning more clearly and powerfully with them, and could be portrayed in terms of varying degrees or levels.

Community development writers, along with writers in participatory and action research, consistently encourage practitioners to create conditions whereby stakeholders have the opportunity to be involved (participate) at higher levels and in more meaningful ways. Christenson (1989) stated that "participation in community development is always an issue . . . . Community development is grounded in the idea that people should be subjects rather than objects, that people should be proactive rather than reactive" (p. 39). Garkovich (1989) reinforced this in stating "If community development efforts are to be enduring and to produce maximal results, they must engage the people and organizations of a community" (p. 215). She also recognized that, in practice, citizen participation often fell short of the ideal.

While much lip service is given to the importance of citizen participation, it has not always been emphasized in reality. Too often, community development has been done to a community of citizens rather than with them . . . . A critical evaluation of community development efforts over the last two decades would have to conclude that many of these efforts have produced passivity and dependence on external agencies and have failed to empower the citizens of local communities.

Many years earlier, Arnstein (1969) noted the need for achieving high levels of participation as well as the frustration and lack of real change which results in practice when no redistribution of power occurs.

There is a critical difference between going through the empty ritual of participation and having the real power needed to affect the outcome of the process. . . . The fundamental point is that participation without the redistribution of power is an empty and frustrating process for the powerless. It allows the power-holders to claim that all sides were considered, but makes it possible for only some of those sides to benefit. It maintains the status quo. (p. 216)

She observed that "The controversy in this area has been waged largely in terms of exacerbated rhetoric and misleading euphemisms" (p. 216). The framework or "ladder" she proposed depicted participation as occurring at eight possible levels and provided a useful starting point for analysis of stakeholder participation in this study (Appendix 2.1). The lowest levels, "manipulation" and "therapy", are essentially non-participation. Intermediate levels, known in ascending order as "informing, consultation, and placation," are various forms of token involvement. Stakeholders must attain higher levels, those she names "partnership" and "delegated power", to truly say they have degrees of citizen power and control in decision making. "Citizen control", the highest level, is reserved for those situations where citizens govern and control policy without any imposed restrictions.

### **Stakeholder Involvement and Community Education**

The nature of citizen involvement is a major controversy in community education literature as well. In order to promote a more relevant educational program, Minzey and

**LeTarte (1979) advocated an approach where three entities -- the teaching profession, the legally responsible school board, and the community -- shared responsibilities.**

**Each has a very specific role to play and, if carried out appropriately, will result in maximizing the effectiveness of the organization . . . . Professional educators and boards must share the decision-making process and involve lay citizens in the process of formulating policies and procedures. (p. 18)**

**Gittell (1979), however, contended that "The rhetoric far exceeds the action . . . . Political decentralization requires a shift in power from professionals to the community" (pp. 59-60) and this has, generally, not been the case. Tyack (1981) referred to the typical pattern of participation as a strategy of adaptive response or reform by accretion, inclusion and cooptation.**

**School officials have been somewhat responsive to public voices, but have not changed the existing balance of power. To those who believe in government by consensus administered by experts, the cooptation of dissident groups is a natural, indeed admirable, technique of inclusion, while preserving the basic power alignments intact. To those who wish to alter the balance of power in education or to induce basic change, reform by accretion falls short of the goal. (p. 29)**

**Davies (1981) had a similar critique, and pointed to some examples of tokenism in citizen participation and their disheartening results.**

**Much of the current activity labelled citizen participation appears to revolve around an agenda imposed by professionals or government agencies or to be trivial in nature. In many other instances, the participatory activities especially those mandated by local, state, and Federal authorities, appear to be window dressing. They are not expected to have important results and seldom do. Triviality of content and lack of results explain the limited enthusiasm on the part of large numbers of citizens to devote time and resources to the process. (p. 93)**

**Taylor (1988) added to the line of criticism, stating that the claims and assertions of community education advocates of participation seem "curiously naive" considering past efforts to adjust the balance of power in educational governance.**

**Professional resistance is especially likely to arise when the stakes are high -- when reform threatens to alter the existing distribution of power and influence. If and when the powerful make concessions, it is apt to be only those which do not leave their interest unprotected. Indeed these interests will continue to prevail if they are successful in controlling the change process. (p. 42)**

**According to Salisbury (1980), increased citizen participation presents teachers and administrators with the "delicate and demanding task of harnessing and controlling participatory zeal" in order to protect the existing political order. Members of the dominant group -- professional educators -- tend to control the nature, scope, and direction of the participation granted to community members. When they are successful in doing so the power structure remains fundamentally unaltered and lay participation becomes little more than symbolic.**

**Language used to discuss participation in community education has strong emotional appeal and can alter perceptions of the balance of power.**

**Language can obscure the complex dynamics of power -- power which is exercised by professionals and bureaucrats in their quest to control the decision-making agenda and, in so doing, fashion community participation in their own interests . . . It comes as no surprise that (professionals) advocate a 'partnership' and 'advisory' model of participation rather than community control (Taylor, 1988, p. 43).**

**The partnership/advisory model leaves the bureaucratic structure intact. Taylor (1988) predicted that, unless these dynamics are accounted for, community groups would find themselves on the edge of the decision-making process and, essentially, powerless.**

**This harsh reality will set in once the high-sounding rhetoric of 'partnership' and 'joint decision-making' and similar slogans invariably give way to political action. It is at this point that they will find little room for their concerns on the agenda as well as encounter formidable resistance from the alliance that will likely form between their middle-class rivals and like minded school officials. (p. 43)**

**The literature suggests that, historically, professionals and structures have tended to limit citizen participation and control in policy and program development. While these points are well argued, one can also appreciate the perspective of the trained professionals, the responsibility they feel to maintain and improve very complex organizations, and the reluctance they feel to give up control to less qualified and, perhaps, less committed people. Some of these dynamics of stakeholder involvement are described in Chapters IV-VII, along with changes which occurred and outcomes which resulted as non-professional individuals and organizations developed capabilities and received encouragement toward higher levels of participation.**

### **A "Managing Change" Perspective**

**A great deal has been written about managing change in educational situations. Fullan (1989) encapsulated much of this literature in a list of ten suggestions. They were intended for school principals but appeared to apply in the Bruckton situation in general.**

- 1. Avoid "If only . . ." statements. They externalize the blame and immobilize people. They are expressions of dependency and foster a sense of helplessness.**
- 2. Start small, think big. Don't overplan and overmanage. Get into small scale examples quickly. Ownership will be developed during the process rather than in advance.**
- 3. Focus on something concrete and important like curriculum and instruction.**
- 4. Focus on something fundamental like the professional culture of the school.**
- 5. Practice fearlessness and other forms of risk taking. Do so selectively.**

6. Empower others below you. This includes shared control and decision making; adequate additional resources such as time, money, and personnel; reinforce the notion of a team facilitating the change.

7. Build a (collegial) vision relevant to both goals and processes. It cuts through the tendency to blame others; it provides a sense of direction for starting small but thinking big; it provides focus; it checks random fearlessness; it gives content to empowerment and alliance discussions; it gives direction for deciding what not to do. Above all, it permeates the enterprise with values, purpose, and integrity for both the what and the how of improvement.

8. Decide what you are not going to do. One must ensure that essential things get done, not do all of them oneself.

9. Seek and build alliances. Consider five groups: senior administrators, peers, parents, subordinates, and individuals external to the system.

10. Know when to be cautious. Caution is advised when we don't know the situation, when survival is at stake, following periods of risk and expansion, and when we are in a zero trust relationship. (pp. 26-40)

Although these points were offered with school administrators in mind, they provided important guidelines which I considered as I worked in Bruckton.

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## **Toward Appropriate Research**

My general purpose was to study the development of sexuality education and community capacities in Bruckton while contributing to the development process. My search for compatible research and development strategies eventually led me to investigate the literature associated with "action research" and "participatory action research." A sample of this literature appears below.

### **Action Research: A Basic Model**

Lewin (1946) was a pioneer in studying community systems in the context of community development work. In general terms, his goals were to derive general laws of community life through observation and reflection while trying to bring about improvement. In doing so, he placed tremendous value on citizen participation, cooperative group work, and building feelings of belongingness among people in a community. Lewin formalized his model of simultaneously studying and contributing to improvement and gave it the name of "action research." He presented his strategy as a spiral with a basic cycle -- identifying a general idea, reconnaissance (fact-finding),

planning, implementation, and evaluation -- leading to further cycles of planning, implementation, evaluation and revision, and so on.

Unfortunately, use of the term "action research" has become problematic. Like the terms "community development" or "community education" or "empowerment" it has taken on many different forms and meanings. Action research has been used to represent a wide variety of models with varying degrees of participant involvement, academic rigor, ethical sensitivity, and epistemological assumptions. Readers wishing to understand more about the major themes and variations may wish to consult Carson & Couture (1988, pp. 1-6), Carr & Kemmis (1988, pp. 27-39), and McCutcheon and Jung (1990, pp. 144-151).

Carson et al. (1990), Elliot (1991) and Kemmis and McTaggart (1988) have attempted to develop Lewin's basic strategy further and apply it to educational situations. Although their models had minor variations in explanation and graphic depiction, they were relatively consistent in regard to six essential activities:

**1. Identifying the concern or theme to address.** This can be done on the individual or group level. It is important that this concern "impinges on one's field of action and is something one would like to change or improve upon" (Elliot, 1991, p. 72). The focus should also be "allowed to shift" (p. 70) as one's understanding of the problem improves and deeper problems comes to light.

**2. "Reconnaissance" of the situation.** Reconnaissance should involve analysis as well as fact-finding and should constantly recur in the spiral of activities, rather than occur only at the beginning" (Elliot, 1991, p. 70). This includes the inventorying process of identifying the stakeholders involved and resources available (people, print, financial, etc.) to pursue the project. It should also include an initial analysis of relevant activities and practices, social relationships, and organizational structures. Kemmis and McTaggart (1988) suggested possible questions regarding this stage of reconnaissance:

- What is already happening in this area?
- What is the underlying rationale for attempting to change?
- What are the opportunities and possibilities, and constraints and impossibilities for improvement?
- What degree of common understanding exists?
- How will we monitor/observe and document actions and progress?
- What ethical issues should be considered?

**3. Creating a plan of action.** Carson et al. (1990) and Elliot (1991) suggested that the statement should contain: the (revised) theme to be addressed, the factors to change in order to improve the situation, who will be involved and how they will be involved, the



initial steps of action to be taken, how the observation and recording of the results will take place, and a statement of ethical considerations.

**4. Enacting the plan and observing how it works.** All authors recommended keeping a journal, monitoring outcomes closely and regularly, and using a variety of ways of collecting data "in order to look at what is going on from various perspectives" and using "techniques which provide evidence of unintended as well as intended effects" (Elliot, 1991, p. 76). Kemmis and McTaggart (1988) recommended that the monitoring techniques be checked periodically to insure that the data will be useful for reflection.

**5. Reflecting and creating a revised plan.** Alterations may need to be made to the themes under investigation, new understandings can be added to those of the reconnaissance stage, and adjustments can be made to the actions and ways of making observations. Kemmis and McTaggart (1988) have developed a comprehensive list of questions to guide reflection and produce a revised action plan.

**6. Continuation through subsequent spirals.** The researcher will likely modify the first plan and try again, investigate a new question, or investigate underlying factors more deeply. Again, the researcher may need to "undertake reconnaissance into the underlying causes of difficulties experienced" (Elliot, 1991, p. 76).

The action research plan described above was, by itself, insufficient to address the purpose of the proposed research. It also focused only on the researcher as the principal agent, rather than on collaborative action with community members and the associated ethics of research and change.

### **Ethical Considerations in Relation to Educational Change**

Carson et al. (1990) and Kemmis and McTaggart (1988) drew attention to the importance of ethics in action research. They discussed ethics of hope, caring, openness, responsibility, negotiation, and goodwill as crucial aspects of such projects. Carson et al. (1990) suggested the following specific questions be considered:

- In whose interest is a change being made?
- Who initiates or controls a particular change process?
- How are participants involved in each phase?
- How can sensitivity, critical reflection, and disclosure be encouraged without placing participants (or their professional rights and responsibilities) at risk?
- How can caring and responsibility grow as change is implemented? (p. 31)

These questions focused attention on the stakeholders in the proposed study and lead to questions about the nature of stakeholder participation in the research side of the research/development project. Hall (1981) suggested that researchers should be involved

in "building an indigenous capacity for collective analysis and action, and the generation of new knowledge by the people concerned" (p. 10). Researchers must begin with an awareness of the ideological implications and hidden messages which particular research methods present (e.g., ownership by participants is valid and valued), and a resolve that the research process should be of some immediate, direct, and positive benefit to a community (Hall, 1984). The assumption is that knowledge is deepened, enriched, and made more socially usable when it is produced collectively and cooperatively. The implication is that the research process should involve the stakeholders in the entire project: from the formulation of the problem and identification of issues, to the discussion of how to seek solutions, then to the analysis and interpretation of the findings and, finally, to the use of the results in action.

Another ethical question relates to the issue of power and the central question "How can research be useful in shifting more power to those who ought to share it?" Hall (1981) suggested tackling this area through analyzing assumptions, producing knowledge which is understandable and useful to stakeholders, and contributing to organizational development. In this study, I attempted to attend to these ethics associated with contributing to change in social and educational systems.

### **Development of School Programs and Personnel.**

Schools were major contributors to sexuality education in Bruckton, and both organizational and instructional needs were identified. This outline by Fullan (1982) also provided a helpful guide to considerations as change was contemplated in the school context:

- A. Characteristics of the change**
  1. Need and relevance of the change
  2. Clarity
  3. Complexity
  4. Quality and practicality of program (materials, etc.)
- B. Characteristics at the school district level**
  5. The history of innovative attempts
  6. The adoption process
  7. Central administrative support and involvement
  8. Staff development (in-service) and participation
  9. Timeline and information system (evaluation)
  10. Board and community characteristics
- C. Characteristics at the school level**

11. The principal
  12. Teacher-teacher relations
  13. Teacher characteristics and orientations
- D. Characteristics external to the system
14. Role of government
  15. External assistance (p. 56)

**These considerations, along with suggestions for professional development offered by Fullan (1982), Pansegrau (1984, 1990) and Elliot (1991), provided the basic framework for my work with teachers and administrators in Years #2 and #3.**

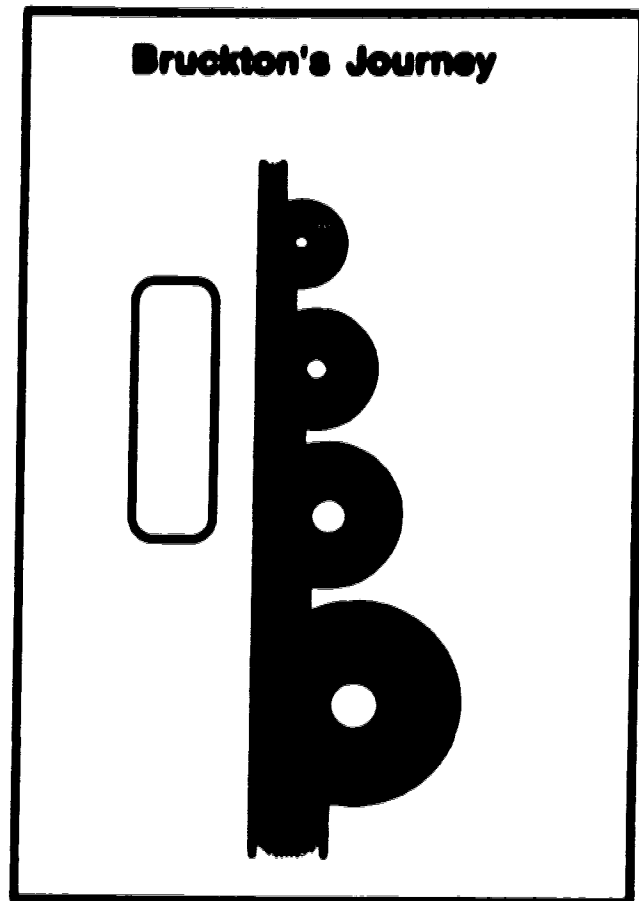
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## Summary

In this chapter I have discussed some of the sexuality education and community development literature which related to the issues we encountered in Bruckton. The survey of the literature, the result of previous research (Krupa, 1990) and the findings from preliminary research activities all appeared to strongly support the need for further learning about the development of educational approaches which would encourage healthier attitudes and behaviors in regard to sexuality and relationships. Although there were some disagreements among those representing various perspectives on sexuality education, they were generally agreed on major areas that should be addressed. Although isolated school programs may not have much effect on behavior, an integrated community effort might have that potential (Ajzenstat & Gentles, 1988; Gilboy, 1989; Howard, 1985; King et al., 1988; Kirby, 1989; Krupa, 1990; Scales, 1983; Stout & Rivara, 1989; Thompson, 1979). Coordination of the many educational contributors is also a central concept in community education (Minzey & LeTarte, 1979; Staples, 1977).

Meanwhile, appropriate research should, among other things, be of direct and immediate benefit to the community. It should also allow both the researcher and the stakeholders to learn about the development dynamics of the community, promote stakeholder participation at the highest level possible, and develop community capacities for self-sustaining development in the future. The principles, ethical concerns, and framework for analysis which emerged for this study are discussed in further detail in the next chapter.

## *The Design of the Study*



**This chapter includes an overview of the important principles behind the design, the framework for data collection and analysis, and the trustworthiness issues associated with this effort in "studying an educational situation with a view to systematically improving the quality of action within it" (Elliot, 1991. p. 69).**

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## **Principles**

**The concepts in the literature relating to community development and participatory/action research were compatible with the needs and desires expressed by stakeholder representatives in the first year of my involvement in Bruckton. We agreed that the planning of research strategies should acknowledge the following principles:**

- **Research and development processes can, and should, reinforce one another.**
- **The ethics associated with change must be carefully and regularly examined.**

- The potential for enhancing the involvement of stakeholders and increasing the community's capacity for self-sustaining development should be a primary factor in the selection and prioritizing of research/development activities.
- Research/development perspectives and practices should be allowed to change over time.

That research and development processes can act to reinforce each other is well known. Much has been learned about social and educational systems while contributing to improving them, and many have found it possible and desirable for a researcher to participate in the development of educational approaches (e.g., Carson, 1990; Elliot, 1991; Garkovich, 1989; Hall, 1984; Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988; Lewin, 1946; Littrell & Hobbs, 1989; Rappaport, 1987). The risk of bias and distortion due to researcher participation is present but a satisfactory standard of trustworthiness of the study can be achieved by employing measures which will lead to the fairest possible interpretations of the data. Measures to increase trustworthiness were suggested in literature and were developed within this study. They were examined and refined at regular intervals during this study and are discussed later in this chapter.

The ethics associated with change and the suitability of activities with regard to those ethics must be carefully considered at regular intervals. The people to be affected by the changes (i.e., those living and working in Bruckton) must ultimately own the changes and have the freedom and the resources to participate in planning at a high level. Specific ethics and questions to attend to when conducting research and development in educational change have been identified (Carson et al., 1990; Hall, 1984; and Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988). Regular checks were planned to encourage attention to these ethics and determine their states.

Writers in community development (Arnstein, 1969; Christenson, 1989; Garkovich, 1989) and community education (Davies, 1981; Ginell, 1979; Salisbury, 1980; Taylor, 1988; Tyack, 1981) have stated strongly that stakeholder participation is a key factor in building community capacity and that the nature of participation and control by stakeholders is an essential issue to address. Attention should be given to forces which appear to limit participation as well as those which appear to encourage it. Stakeholders should participate at the highest level possible in the planning, implementation and evaluation of the project (Christenson, Fendley, & Robinson, 1989; Garkovich, 1989; Hall, 1984; Littrell & Hobbs, 1989). This principle is consistent with the theme of community development as something you do *with* people rather than *to* them. Furthermore, it reflects the concern for the ethics of change, the thrust of community education (Staples, 1977 and Minzey & LeTarte, 1979), and the essence of empowerment (Cochran, 1986; Eaman & Uphoff, 1984; Hall, 1984; Rappaport, 1987). In addition to

stakeholder participation, capacity building in communities generally requires development of organizations and leadership (also suggested by Christenson, 1989; Esman & Uphoff, 1984; Garkovich, 1989; Litrell & Hobbs, 1989; Ryan, 1987 Staples, 1977;).

Development of instructional personnel also came to be considered as part of capacity building because the potential to improve individual programs depended largely on developing the abilities of instructors to improve their own educational understandings, practices and situations (Carson et al., 1990; Elliot, 1991; Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988).

Morris (1991) suggested that quantitative methods alone resulted in significant limitations in sexuality education applications. He maintained that there was a need to attend to questions such as those relating to values and language, and to proceed with compatible epistemological assumptions.

Quantitative methods are rarely appropriate for research in sexuality education. Survey research cannot capture the richness, complexity, and depth of value questions. It pays no attention to levels of meaning nuances in language, or lived values. Experimental research abstracts values, valuing, and sexuality education from their social institutional, and relational contexts. Experimental designs are also undergirded by epistemological assumptions that are difficult to reconcile with research on values. (p. 82)

I intended to reduce limitations to both the research and development dimensions of the study by allowing flexibility in the research design and development strategies. We took an eclectic approach to data collection and analysis, as advocated by Burger, Fisher, and Thorpe (1988). Quantitative and qualitative data were both considered to be useful. Methods for data gathering and analysis were selected to gain insight into general trends, to capture and refine meaning and to deepen understanding of the values, structural forces and relational dynamics.

Finally, it appeared reasonable to expect that, if the research and development were really "working," some of the questions, concerns, problems, and ethical considerations would be resolved and new ones would attract attention. Elliot (1991) asserted that "the general idea should be allowed to shift" (p. 70) as one's understanding of the problem improves and deeper problems come to light. "This is why I have allowed for [a shift] in every cycle of the spiral, rather than fixing the focus for the research at its beginning" (p. 73). We anticipated that significant shifting and refocusing of research / development perspectives and practices might occur on an annual basis, and that events in the community and outside might occasionally necessitate smaller scale adjustments in the focus of action.

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## Framework for Data Collection and Analysis

The framework for data collection and analysis required the application of the principles described above to the purpose and questions guiding the study. My purpose, was to study the development of sexuality education and community capacities in Bruckton while contributing to the development process. The specific questions I planned to address were:

- What was the historical, cultural, and organizational context or environment in which development occurred?
- What forces, factors, and processes influenced development?
- Who are the stakeholders in sexuality education in Bruckton, and what are their interests?
- What changes occurred in the way in which stakeholders were involved and what effects did these changes have on approaches to sexuality education in the community?
- What changes occurred in sexuality education approaches (programs, curricula and their rationales, processes, roles of those involved, instructional techniques)?
- What changes occurred in the community and, specifically, in the capacity of its people to foster development in the future?
- What challenges and opportunities emerged because the project involved both studying, and contributing to, the improvement of understandings, practices and situations?

Although the presentation of the questions and the framework changed over the course of the study, the essential components have remained relatively constant throughout. Data collection and analysis components are discussed below according to the questions listed above. Where possible, I have included references to literature which further illustrate the background and significance of the questions and helps focus data collection.

### What was the historical, cultural, and organizational context or environment in which development occurred?

The importance of examining and describing in as much detail as possible the environment or context in which development occurred has been emphasized by writers from each body of literature reviewed. Historical, cultural, and organizational dimensions are all recognized as having critical influences on development (Carson et al., 1990; Christenson, Fendley, & Robinson, 1989; Elliot, 1991; Garbovich, 1989; Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988; Lewin, 1946; Litrell & Hobbs; Rappaport, 1987). Warren (1978) stated that "the initial systemic environment contains both the source of possible dysfunction contributing to the emergence of felt needs or interests and the organizational



basis for responding to these needs." Garkovich (1989) suggested a description would include an assessment of the two key components of local capacity, "local organizations and the pool of leadership available" (p. 206). For the purposes of this study, I have included instructional features as well.

Elliot (1991) referred to the environmental analysis as "reconnaissance" and suggested identifying the stakeholders, identifying the resources available to pursue the project (people, print, financial, etc.), and describing the relevant activities and practices, social relationships, and organizational structures. Kemmis and McTaggart (1988) recommended identifying the underlying rationale for attempting to change, assessing the opportunities / possibilities for improvement (as well as the constraints / impossibilities), and assessing the degree of common understanding that existed.

Finally, the authors are in agreement that a thorough analysis of the environment should be done at the outset, but that this analysis should be updated with each cycle of developmental activity. This is indeed what was attempted. The results are included as Chapter I and as entries in each of Chapters IV, V, VI, and VII. Although much of the information on the original context of development was gathered during Year #1, data gathered later in the study were helpful in refining the depiction of the community. Documents, notes from observations, and notes or transcriptions of interviews contributed to the pool of data on organizations, leadership, and specific programs, as well as on community capacities and the nature of stakeholder involvement. In regard to this and other data gathering situations, interviews were recorded whenever possible and any uncertainties or interpretations were checked with interviewees and, as required, checked against other sources. Data summaries were discussed with stakeholder representatives as a group.

### What forces, factors, and processes influenced development?

I began collecting data relating to this question in Year #2. At that time I was particularly interested in noting factors associated with planning, anticipated influences, and unanticipated influences. Planning was identified as an essential component in models of community development (Fischer, 1989), community education (Minzey & LeTarte, 1979) and educational change (Elliot, 1991; Fallon, 1989). Warren (1978) referred to planning as the "inception of the action system" and acknowledged processes associated with identifying action objectives as well as components of the environment which would appropriately respond to the needs. Carson et al. (1990) and Elliot (1991) suggested that a statement on planning should include: the theme to be addressed, the factors to address in order to improve the situation, who will be involved and how they will be involved, the

initial steps of action to be taken, how the observation and recording of the results will take place, and a summary of ethical considerations.

Anticipated influences are those that are planned or designed to influence development, or those which planners are aware of but are beyond the scope of planning in that particular period. Several unplanned but anticipated influences were also observed over the course of this study. Influences which appeared to have potential for effecting more local capacity (i.e., through the development of leadership, organizations, and instructors) and stakeholder participation were of particular interest. Warren's (1978) model suggested attention be given to influences on mobilizing organizations and individuals outside the original group, the reasons underlying these influences, and the specific task-oriented activities (e.g., administrative, organizational, political, or cultural). Preliminary findings indicated that attitudes, beliefs and assumptions regarding sexuality and community development appeared to influence outcomes.

Those writing on community education, community development, and educational change recognized that unanticipated or unintended forces, factors, and processes can also be very influential in development. These influences can originate from either inside or outside of the community environment. In the first two years, I noted several events under "unanticipated" influences which I later came to understand better in terms of the politics of change in this situation.

My records in this area included documents, interview notes, observation notes and reflections. During Year #2, I organized my summary notations chronologically under twenty categories, then under seven categories. By the end of Year #2, I collapsed these under four headings, according to the focal point of the activities or developments. The four foci -- the facilitator, the schools, the community, and external -- have been retained and serve as the means of organizing this information in this report. During Year #3, I created summary tables to accompany the narrative description in Chapter I and each of the historical chapters -- IV, V, VI, and VII. These tables (Appendices 1.3, 4.2, 5.4, 6.2, 7.2), represent the complete record of influences that were reported or appeared to be influencing development in Brockton. Those which were generally considered to be major influences were described in greater detail in the narrative portions of this report.

### **Who are the stakeholders in sexuality education in Brockton and what are their interests?**

The dynamics which occurred among stakeholders were of major significance and are discussed under the question which follows. I devoted considerable attention to identifying and involving stakeholders, continually emphasizing this theme over the course

of the study. During Year #1, stakeholders were defined as those who affected the program or were affected by it. As the Ph. D. study began in Year #2, it appeared to me as though there was a need to expand on the earlier concept of stakeholders. We used the seven approaches suggested by Mitroff (1983) to search for more elusive stakeholders:

1. The "imperative" approach identifies those who feel so strongly about a policy that they are prepared to act, but misses the silent people who may have a strong opinion.
2. The "positional" approach identifies those in formal positions in a policy-making structure, but misses those with a capacity for impact who are not formally involved.
3. The "reputational" approach accounts for those who are nominated by knowledgeable or important people. The less important or less empowered are ignored.
4. The "social-participation" approach uncovers those who participate in activities related to the issue. Those who were not present, or those who may not be participating currently but were in the past or would be in the future, are missed.
5. The "opinion-leadership" approach finds those who tend to influence the opinions of others.
6. The "demographic" approach identifies those stakeholders within a certain demographic group. Assuming homogeneity within this group is problematic.
7. The "focal organization" approach uncovers those who have important relationships with an example organization. It is not comprehensive and opinion leaders and other key stakeholders can be missed. (pp. 33-35)

As new stakeholders emerged, representatives were identified and invited to participate. Where they were willing, they were included in the communication network. Regardless of the level of their eventual level of involvement, their concerns and interests were identified in interviews and I made attempts, as did others, to include each identified person or group in the sexuality education development process in Bruckton. Appendix 5.2 is a summary of the stakeholders according to Mitroff's categories.

### **What changes occurred in the way in which stakeholders were involved and what effects did these changes have on approaches to sexuality education in the community?**

I was interested in noting changes in the way in which stakeholders were involved and how these changes affected approaches to sexuality education in the community. Discussions with those in Bruckton and guiding comments in research literature (summarized by Christenson, Fendley, & Robinson, 1989) indicated that a key to short-term problem solving and long-term capacity building might be found in the improvement of communication and cooperation among stakeholders, and the development of a

community action group of some kind. The organization which developed from our activities (BRIDGES Network) was seen as a means of focusing efforts and providing a catalyst for this. It was envisaged as a means of facilitating the exchange of information (e.g., on objectives, programs, strengths and limitations, etc.), the development of understanding, an increase in the quality of participation, and the development of collaborative relationships among stakeholders. We hoped to develop capabilities in the areas of conflict management, critical analysis, evaluation, and listening. The group was, eventually, to take charge of the overall development project, including coordination, administration, control, and continuity.

Until near the end of Year #2, the development of a system of monitoring and evaluation of sexuality education in Bruckton was seen as a separate challenge in this study. As the stakeholders' network grew, however, it seemed likely that this organization could and should direct monitoring to illuminate issues and gathering information important to its members. My objective was to assist them to devise a monitoring system that was suited to the needs of stakeholders and operable within the constraints they faced. Thus, I came to assist the group in developing questionnaires to provide data on attitudes and behaviors, relationship patterns, sense of personal control and self-esteem, and parent/teen communication. These questionnaires evolved with each use over the three years. Schools and agencies gathered complementary information through their surveys. Some information on teen pregnancy was available but accurate statistics on STD rates among teens are still not available on a community level.

Initial discussions with school personnel and community representatives indicated that improvement in instruction might also result from professional development and networking among teachers, as well as networking between teachers and other stakeholders. The teachers identified needs to increase understanding of the issues associated with sexuality education, to develop effective techniques for communicating abstract concepts, to increase the quality of parent involvement, to improve work with resource people such as peer instructors, and to improve access to resource materials. The high turnover rate of teachers was also of concern. I worked with the teachers individually and in groups, in formal workshops and in informal discussions. I also facilitated their networking on a jurisdictional level, and began a newsletter to assist them in sharing their concerns and information.

Records were kept of all research activities relating to the development of communications among stakeholders and the development of the stakeholders' network organization. A similar record was maintained for research activities with regard to school programs and personnel. Both of these records include documents, observation notes,

records of discussion in meetings, interview notes, and reflections on the process of development. Interviews were recorded where possible and checked with respondents as required. The record of activities relating to the schools also includes questionnaire surveys which were conducted with teachers at the conclusion of our time of working together, as well as the collaborative article produced (and eventually published) with teachers involved with the PD initiative in Year #2.

### **What changes occurred in the community and, specifically, in the capacity of its people to foster development in the future?**

This question focuses on the outcomes in community development terms. These changes in capacity are of particular interest to authors in community development. Warren (1978) referred to the "transformation of the action system" as being of greatest interest. Garkovich (1989) suggested increased capacity of organizations and development of individual leadership were the key components to monitor. Associated with changes in capacity are changes in the nature of stakeholders' involvement (i.e., ownership, sense of empowerment, control). Arnstein's (1969) "ladder" appeared to be a useful tool for descriptions and analysis in this area. Changes in stakeholders' conceptualizations of community development and changes in their roles within the overall process were noted.

The strategies employed and the changes in leadership and organizational capacities are described in Chapters IV-VII, and summarized and evaluated in Chapter IX. A third component, instructional capacity, was added because data relating to this seemed not to fit easily into the leadership or organizational categories. Changes in instructional capacity are summarized in Chapter VIII. Data were gathered through interviews, observations and analysis of documents.

### **What changes occurred in sexuality education approaches?**

I used the word "approaches" because I wanted to take a broad view of changes in sexuality education, including the programs, curricula, rationales, processes, roles of those involved, and instructional strategies. Once again, I kept a complete record of research activities, surveys, documents, observation notes, interview and conversation notes, and reflections. Where appropriate, these findings are included in Chapters IV - VII as part of the developmental story. Changes in SE were summarized as generalized views from the perspective of teens and parents in Brackton and are presented at the end of Chapter VII. In Chapter VIII, the analysis of change in capacity for instruction is presented along with considerations for future policy and practice in Brackton and, as readers judge appropriate, outside of Brackton.

Some variations in the ability to collect data occurred over the course of the study. My intent was to assist those in Bruckton to develop high quality, complementary approaches to sexuality education. In some cases, the initiatives proposed by community agencies, organizations, and religious groups developed considerably while others initiatives remained "on hold" or were abandoned. As far as possible, I endeavored to study each of the initiatives while contributing to them in a prudent and ethical way. This approach was accepted as appropriate but resulted in varying amounts and qualities of data, depending on the longevity of the initiative and the degree to which I was able to secure information and/or become involved. The initiative with peer instructors (COOL), for example, became a major site of involvement for me. I was able to gather considerable data of high quality (through direct observation and participation as well as through interviews and surveys) on the dynamics of the program and the people.

I was much less involved with another well-developed initiative (QUEST) which was sponsored by the community school and a local service club and aimed at enhancing student self-esteem, building skills for good relationships, and preventing drug and alcohol abuse. I had only peripheral involvement with QUEST, and data were gathered through interviews and documents only.

As a third example, religious groups varied widely in their approaches. I had little to do with formal educational programs, and few documents were available for analysis. However, I was involved in the process of clarifying the issues, philosophy, and concepts at the leadership level and have data from interviews and group sessions relating to that.

### **What challenges and opportunities emerged because the project involved simultaneously studying and contributing to the improvement of understandings, practices and situations?**

This question was intended to focus attention on the dynamics of the research itself and provide some starting points for consideration of others who might undertake similar studies. Over the course of four years, I gathered, analyzed, and presented information to assist the people of Bruckton in their journey to improve understandings, practices and situations relating to sexuality education and community dynamics. I endeavored to assist the participants to bridge the gaps between theory and practice, yet contribute in a prudent and ethical manner. It was important to gather data periodically on challenges, particularly those involving ethical and trustworthiness issues.

- What kinds of challenges, problems, or difficulties actually emerged?
- Were these challenges being met appropriately (from my perspective, from the perspectives of those in the community and outsiders)?

- **To what extent was I affecting the outcome of the research / development process?**

In addition to the problems and challenges that might be associated with this kind of work, it also appeared likely that opportunities for increased benefit might arise for those in Bruckton as well as outsiders.

- **What kinds of opportunities and benefits actually arose?**
- **Who were the beneficiaries?**
- **How significant were the opportunities and benefits and did they outweigh the challenges and problems?**

Data were collected through interviews, less formal conversations, and observations. These were captured in records as discussed above and in a reflective journal. In an effort to make explicit for readers those factors influencing me, and possibly the study, I have described what I considered to be important influences in Chapter I, with each of the four historical chapters (IV to VII), and in appendices. The major challenges and opportunities are illustrated in Chapters IV - VII and discussed in Chapter X. Issues of rigor and trustworthiness are discussed further in the next section.

## **Reporting**

My intention was to present the data relating to each of the questions within the narrative description of each year of development, and to summarize and connect findings further in the later chapters on sexuality education, community development, and research issues. The approach seemed appropriate for the situation and consistent with suggestions offered in literature. Elliot (1991), for example, recommended reporting in a "historical format, telling the story as it has unfolded over time" (p. 88). The topics he suggested as especially worthwhile were considered in major reporting:

- **Evolution of the understanding of the problem situation over time.**
- **Action steps taken in the light of one's changing understanding of the situation.**
- **The extent to which proposed actions were implemented, and how one coped with the implementation problems.**
- **The intended and unintended effects of one's actions, and explanations for why they occurred.**
- **The techniques one selected to gather information about the problem situation and its causes, and the actions one undertook and their effects.**
- **The problems one encountered in using certain techniques and how one resolved them.**
- **Any ethical problems which arose in negotiating access to, and release of, information, and how one tried to resolve them.**
- **Any problems which arose in negotiating action steps with others, or in negotiating the time, resources and co-operation one wanted during the course of the action research. (p. 88)**

In addition to numerous verbal reports, I prepared written summaries of the information collected and returned these "living documents" to the stakeholder

representatives for their feedback and analysis. While these reports were designed to facilitate stakeholder involvement in the process and assist them to learn from and contribute to the research, they also served to increase the accuracy and completeness of my accounts, and the fairness of my interpretations of the data. Perhaps the most important of these "living documents" was the one prepared upon completion of my formal involvement in the community (June '92). This document was produced after a round of interviews with stakeholder representatives and synthesized the story of the three previous years. It served to stimulate valuable dialogue among stakeholders, led to a more accurate revised report, and contributed in a major way to the dissertation.

Further details on data collection and analysis are described in the chapters that follow as considered to be necessary and/or appropriate.

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## **Trustworthiness Issues**

The steps which were taken to increase the trustworthiness of this study are outlined in this section. The discussion below is organized according to the criteria proposed by Lincoln and Guba (1985), which focus on credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (pp. 289-331).

### **Trustworthiness Terminology in a Broader Context**

These four perspectives on trustworthiness relate directly to four broader categories which inquirers have historically found to be useful to consider. These categories, the central questions often associated with them, and the parallel terms in quantitative and qualitative research were adapted from Lincoln and Guba (1985) and are depicted below.



| <b>Broad Category</b> | <b>Central Questions</b>  | <b>Term Used in Quantitative Studies</b> | <b>Term Used in Qualitative Studies</b> |
|-----------------------|---|--|---|
| <b>Truth value</b>    | How can one establish confidence in the "truth" of the findings of a particular inquiry for the subjects / respondents with which, and the context in which, the inquiry was carried out?                                     | internal validity                        | credibility                             |
| <b>Applicability</b>  | How can one determine the extent to which the findings of a particular inquiry have applicability in other contexts or with other subjects/respondents?   | external validity                        | transferability                         |
| <b>Consistency</b>    | How can one determine whether the findings of an inquiry would be repeated if the inquiry were replicated with similar subjects/respondents in a similar context?   | reliability                              | dependability                           |
| <b>Neutrality</b>     | How can one establish the degree to which the findings of an inquiry are determined by the subjects/respondents and conditions of the inquiry and not by the biases, motivations, interests, or perspectives of the inquirer? | objectivity                              | confirmability                          |

### **Credibility**

The findings and interpretations expressed had to be credible in the views of the study's participants for reasons of research trustworthiness, but also to be true to the principles on which the entire project was based. Strategies to increase the likelihood that credible findings and interpretations would be produced included prolonged researcher presence at the site, extensive and persistent observations of related activities, and cross-checking or "triangulation" among data sources. Triangulation actually occurred on several levels. Data from questionnaires, interviews, observations, and documents provided different views on the same issues. Other opportunities for triangulation were made possible through comparison of data from different sources, as well as comparison of data from the same source in different time periods. All data collected were retained and, as more data became available, efforts were made to refine interpretations. Peer debriefing provided an external check and helped to avoid some of the pitfalls associated with these strategies.

Representatives of stakeholder groups were given opportunities throughout the study to check findings directly and to judge the credibility of interpretations. These

"member check" opportunities occurred through reviewing personal interview data, data summaries, group presentations, group and individual discussions, syntheses of various "living documents" and, ultimately, the opportunity to examine the draft version of the dissertation. Participants were asked to judge the accuracy and completeness of any of these statements, to look for any potential ethical conflicts or considerations, and to suggest any recommendations for improvement. In general, I was very pleased with the attention given to these and other processes associated with enhancing trustworthiness. Such activities also contributed to developmental goals in the community. The processes associated with enhancing credibility and the other trustworthiness elements are described in more detail later in this chapter, and are evaluated in Chapter X.

### **Transferability**

There are limits to the transferability of the findings because communities vary considerably in historical, cultural, and organizational contexts. They may have different agencies and local organizations, as well as different levels of development of these organizations. In spite of this, I anticipate that the study will be relevant to many communities of similar size, and particularly those near major centers in western Canada. In the final analysis, however, readers must make their own judgements about the extent to which the findings will apply, or be transferable, to other situations. To assist readers in their assessments, I have supplied as much information as practical on the contexts and factors which appeared to influence development. This information is conveyed through the text in Chapters I and IV-VII, and through the chronological charts and other appendices which readers can choose to examine.

Much more could have been included about the community and the research/development process. However, this need was balanced by the need to reduce the text to increase accessibility and readability.

### **Dependability**

This term refers to the extent to which, given the same data, others would reach similar conclusions and indicate that reasonable decisions had been made with regard to interpretation. Over the course of the project, many others were involved in checking for this consistency, as I describe in the section below on "advisory groups and critical friends." Peer review and audit was conducted by individuals outside the project as well as key participants in the community. An integral part of this research/development study was the on-going process of stakeholder representatives reviewing data they provided, data summaries, intermediate steps in analysis and draft documents. They routinely made their

own interpretations of the data and made judgements on the interpretations which I made. Their comments were used to adjust final versions of the documents and dissertation.

### **Confirmability**

Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggested a fourth criterion for trustworthiness, that of "confirmability" of the data. The complete log of my activities and reflections was retained, along with all data from the various sources including all documents that were reviewed and produced. Triangulation between methods provided checks, as did the continuous review of data by participants. The encouragement of interpretation and the generation of implications and recommendations by stakeholder representatives and outside reviewers was part of the design and process. Checks were performed as the data were presented and discussed with the stakeholders, and written statements were revised according to their feedback. Differences were resolved or ranges of opinion were given in final versions of documents.

The community development orientation of the study and the emphasis on building capacities for understanding and directing research from the community, necessitated that stakeholders come to share in the ownership of the data. Therefore, they shared in the responsibility to confirm that written interpretations flowed from these data and the context of the project, rather than from the biases, motivations, interests, or perspectives of the research facilitator. The fact that I contributed to the study, however, remains. In order to illustrate something of the nature of this influence, I have provided as much detail as possible on my own reflections and actions and the background from which these emerged.

### **Advisory Groups and Critical Friends**

A system of internal and external checks was established in order to enhance trustworthiness. On the community level, as mentioned above, I provided oral and written reports to stakeholder representatives at intervals according to the need. A core group, varying from four to eight individuals with diverse interests and values, provided me with feedback and verified the findings from their perspectives as participants in the community. Members of a second group reviewed the issues associated with action research or "studying an educational situation while taking action to improve it. I was also involved with a third group of colleagues in the Ph. D. program who met regularly to discuss research issues.

Although the critique from members of the above groups was helpful, I found that there was a need to interact more frequently and on a deeper level. Several individuals met my need for such interaction and became known to me as my "critical friends." Interaction

with these individuals, each of whom brought a different background and perspective to their analysis, enabled me to identify and address a variety of ethical and methodological issues as they emerged.

Three individuals from Bruckton, representing different perspectives in the community, were involved throughout the period of the study. Each reviewed the findings closely and discussed them from their own perspectives, as only people living inside the community situation could. They balanced my assessment of changes in understandings, practices, and situations, and of the underlying forces and factors affecting change. They also provided extra contextual information which improved the ability to distinguish the effects of various forces in changes that occurred.

Several colleagues with interest and experience in Action Research read and reacted to documents and journal entries, and met with me on several occasions to discuss issues from an action research perspective. One was involved consistently over the latter two years of the study.

A third dimension of review was added by a colleague in the same Ph.D. program. Two other colleagues joined us to create a group of four for several months but interactions with these others were of significantly less depth. The key critical friend provided peer review as I gathered, analyzed, and interpreted data. S/he brought experience and a background in the research literature of educational change and community development. Our interactions helped me gain valuable insight into the interpersonal and organizational dynamics of the groups I was working with. The ideas which emerged led to more appropriate research strategies and greater sensitivity to the diversity of perspectives on sexuality education. The interactions with this critical friend occurred over three years and enabled an examination of the project and its components over time.

A final critical friend brought experience in social and political issues, as well as editorial critique during the period in which I was writing the dissertation. This individual read all of my written work of the last two years. S/he noted areas that were unclear or poorly supported, probed for hidden meanings, and uncovered possible applications of concepts in other situations.

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## Delimitations and Limitations

The study was delimited to one community and the agencies and organizations directly associated with it. I was in direct contact with the community during a four-year time period (September, 1989 to September, 1993) but also made efforts to uncover significant events in the years immediately preceding these. Finally, the focus was on those activities where members of the geographical community played a significant role. However, more information was sought on provincial scale activities as the scope of the study broadened and the significance of these to developments in the community became clearer. Finally, the study was initially delimited to sexuality education but was allowed to expand to acknowledge connections with education regarding relationships, health, and health-related decision making.

The ability of participants to recall past events may have limited the accuracy of description of developments which occurred prior to my involvement. However, this problem was partially overcome through triangulation of various sources of data. We also found that perceptions varied among different people participating in and observing the same events and circumstances. This is reasonable, given the nature of the study, the topics, and the interests and values associated with them. Attempts were made to cross-check between various sources and, where differences persisted, to acknowledge the range of the differences. There were, of course, practical limits to the amounts of cross-checking that could occur, particularly because the study had so many dimensions and was so interdisciplinary.

In some cases, some information surrounding particular events has been withheld from this document for ethical reasons, or so as not to impair CD processes underway.

Because the focus of the study is on the community level, and because of the long term nature of both community development learning and making decisions in the area of sexuality and relationships, there are limits to what can be said about the success of a particular initiative or component in the overall situation. Adaptation and change in approaches have occurred gradually and the effects of the changes unfolded gradually as well. As of the time of writing, individual and community approaches were continuing to change slowly in depth and direction. Some of the innovations continued to be rather fragile and were not "frozen" into a stable state.

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## Time Frame of Major Activities

|  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| <p><b>September, 1989<br/>Year #1</b></p>        | <p><b>Major Research Activities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• initial entry to community</li> <li>• participant observer in community planning process</li> <li>• proposal for responsive evaluation (Master's Degree)</li> <li>• interviews with stakeholders re SE interests and concerns</li> <li>• literature review re sexuality education and evaluation</li> <li>• development of surveys</li> <li>• interviews with teens and parents</li> </ul> | <p><b>Major Events in Bruckton</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• introduction and planning of first community based SE program</li> <li>• initial identification of stakeholders</li> <li>• responsive evaluation process involving stakeholders</li> <li>• initial identification of concerns and interest of stakeholders</li> <li>• oral and written reports to stakeholders</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>September, 1990<br/>Year #2</b></p>        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Master's Thesis complete</li> <li>• reconceptualizing study as Ph.D</li> <li>• preliminary interviews with stakeholders</li> <li>• draft of research proposal</li> <li>• initial review of literature in community development and action research</li> <li>• re-development of proposal</li> <li>• journals</li> <li>• summary documents</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• enlarging definition of stakeholders</li> <li>• re-identified and contacted stakeholders</li> <li>• Development of teen and adult "peer" leaders</li> <li>• development of stakeholders network to formal organization</li> <li>• re-development of monitoring instruments</li> <li>• professional development program with teachers</li> </ul>                  |
| <p><b>September, 1991<br/>Year #3</b></p>        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• refining concepts of action research and community development</li> <li>• journals</li> <li>• candidacy examination</li> <li>• interviews with stakeholders</li> <li>• major work on analysis of data and synthesis of summary documents</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• development of network</li> <li>• professional development with teachers on jurisdiction level</li> <li>• continued development of teen and adult peer instructors</li> <li>• gradual departure from each area of involvement, except for COOL.</li> </ul>   |
| <p><b>September, 1992<br/>Year #4</b></p>        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• continued to gather and check data via documents and interview.</li> <li>• initial draft of dissertation is complete</li> <li>• review of dissertation by key participants in the community begins</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bridges Network dissolves into another community organization</li> <li>• New body forms to address children's issues in Bruckton</li> </ul>  |
| <p><b>September, 1993 to<br/>April, 1994</b></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• reviewing and editing dissertation draft</li> <li>• final oral examination</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• review of dissertation by participants in the community</li> </ul>   |

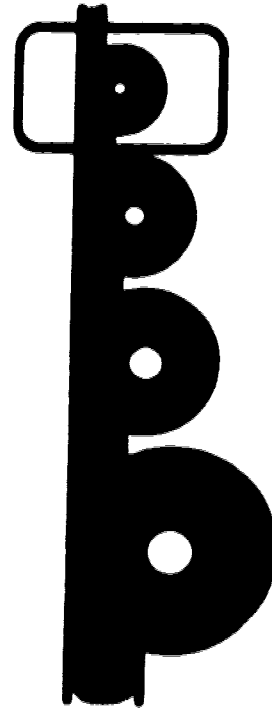
- IV -

**Year #1:**

## ***It's COOL to Know***

*We were looking for something that would bridge the gaps. Something that would draw our teens and parents together, draw the stakeholders together, and bring in new ideas.*

### **Brockton's Journey**



Chapter IV is a continuation of the story of development, picking up from Chapter #1 and covering the period in time from August, 1989 to July, 1990, or Year #1 of the study. It begins with a review of major questions being asked by leaders as the year began, and continues with a description of two interconnected initiatives that were the foci of development energies that year. The first of these initiatives was the process of planning and implementing *It's COOL to Know Your Way in a Relationship (COOL)*, a weekend workshop program for teens and their parents. This was the first outside-of-school SE program in Brockton, and the first major step toward a community-based approach to SE.

The second initiative was the evaluation of the *COOL* program, a process which became my Master's thesis research (Krupa, 1990). The "responsive" mode in which it was conducted was adapted from models proposed by Stake (1975) and portrayed by Greene (1988). The process served to illuminate the issues of sexuality education, catalyze in-school and outside-of-school developments in the future, and contributed to the development of leadership capacities in Brockton. The major findings and recommendations are summarized in this chapter, along with an assessment of the impact of the process.

Although the COOL initiatives were most visible, important developments were occurring on other fronts as well. These included the formation of a "peer support team" of students in the Grades 5-9 school, the action of several junior high teachers encouraging students to contribute in a greater way to class discussions, the formation of the "Jesus First" Club that sponsored three video presentations on sexuality and relationships, and the introduction of the QUEST program in the K-4 school. Those readers who are interested in a more complete, chronological summary of Year #1 activities and developments will find this in Appendix 4.2.

While the processes in Bruckton continued, my perspectives on the situation and the design of this study were being influenced by my experiences in related work, in graduate studies, and with the people of Bruckton. Readers who are interested in understanding more about these experiences and interactions (which I consider to be very important) might wish to read the summaries which are included in the Appendix. In this chapter, I would advise that Appendix 4.1 be read after the description of the COOL program and before the section on the program evaluation.

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## Major Questions

By the beginning of Year #1, the FCSS director and the Health Unit's SE coordinator were energetically pursuing options for improving sexuality education (SE) in Bruckton. Two teachers and several parents, one of whom was also a school trustee, were also interested and contacted the FCSS and Health Unit personnel. "We were looking for something that would bridge the gaps. Something that would draw teens and parents together, draw stakeholders together, and bring in new ideas on instruction." As described in Chapter I, they chose to introduce the COOL program and planned to implement it with the knowledge and support of various organizations in the community. The connections with and among other potentially influential leaders and groups, however, were considerably weaker. Several leaders and organizations outside the COOL planning group, including parents associated with religious groups, were growing in awareness of the needs but were not yet connected with a community process of planning for improvement.

As Year #1 began, the major questions being asked by the FCSS director and the Health Unit SE coordinator were as follows:



- How can we bring current information on teen sexuality issues to teens?
- How can we encourage parents to take a more active role in their children's sexuality education?
- How can we involve more stakeholder groups in the improvement of SE in Bruckton?
- How can we overcome the constraints which schools have in presenting information to teens and in working with parents?
- How can we generate more enthusiasm for addressing teen issues in Bruckton?

They noted four specific needs pertaining to sexuality education:

- helping teens see that abstinence or postponing sexual intercourse could be a viable option,
- motivating and informing teens on how to prevent sexually transmitted disease and pregnancy,
- helping teens and parents to communicate with one another about sexuality,
- teaching teens to recognize and develop healthy relationships.

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## Planning and Implementing COOL

In addition to the benefits associated with the content of the program, the FCSS director and Health Unit SE Coordinator saw possibilities for community development through *COOL*.

*The process of bringing COOL into Bruckton, the planning and everything else associated with it, had tremendous potential to act as a catalyst for community development and a force for rallying the stakeholders.*

They planned to bring in a team of trained teen and adult leaders to facilitate the weekend workshop, and to invite teens and parents from Bruckton and two neighboring communities. The Health Unit SE Coordinator and the FCSS director arranged to share the tasks of administering the program and securing the financial and/or moral support of other key individuals and groups in the three communities. The Bruckton FCSS Agency was to be the major financial sponsor. Representatives from the local schools and religious organizations were invited to participate. The pre-workshop planning and promotional activities, the workshop weekend, and the follow-up meeting are discussed briefly below. Readers who want a more detailed description of the *COOL* program may wish to read Appendix 4.2.

## **Pre-workshop Planning and Activities**

Several planning and promotional activities were organized in consultation with the designer / facilitator of the *COOL* program. These included:

- a community information meeting,
- a special meeting with religious leaders,
- promotional events in schools, and
- informing and inviting parents.

**The Community Information Meeting.** This first public event was held in late September. The FCSS director, Health Unit SE coordinator, and program designer / facilitator conceived it as an opportunity for all the stakeholders to gather and be informed about the program. Ten people from the area attended including a pastor, several parents, the assistant principal and the coordinator of the community school. The program's designer / facilitator outlined the origins and philosophy behind *COOL*, as well as some of the activities and the rationale behind them. One of the purposes of the meeting was to enlarge the circle of contributors and involve more people with the preparations for the program. Job descriptions for various supportive roles were presented (e.g., food coordinator, supplies coordinator) and those in the audience were invited to volunteer.

**A meeting with religious leaders.** A separate meeting with religious leaders was arranged to provide them with information on the content and approaches to be used in the workshops. Only three of the eleven religious leaders who served the area were represented. The organizers were disappointed but not surprised by the low attendance. What was assumed to be a lack of interest by religious groups was later raised as an issue to investigate as part of the program evaluation. A combination of factors, including competing previous commitments, confusion over the purpose of the meeting, and mechanical breakdown, were found to have contributed.

**Promoting the program to teens and parents.** The planners recognized that the movement and their efforts would be in vain if teens did not take interest and participate in the workshop in sufficient numbers. The *COOL* workshop was promoted to the Grades 8, 9 and 10 students from Brackton and the neighboring communities. The FCSS director and the Health Unit SE coordinator both had strong connections with some of the students and teachers at the Grades 5-9 school in Brackton. The SE coordinator had taught health classes and was popular among students in each of the three schools.

Nearly half of the six hundred students contacted at schools in the three communities expressed interest in attending *COOL*. Fifty were ultimately selected through a combination of random and purposive selection (to achieve balance in representation by gender and by community).

**Informing and inviting parents.** The teens who were selected received a package of basic information about the program, along with a form on which parents gave their teens consent to participate. Within the next three weeks, the organizers contacted each teen's parents by telephone to relay information on the workshops and invite their participation.

Meanwhile, at the Grades 5-9 school, health programs continued with a very low profile as they had in previous years. The unit on sexuality education was scheduled, as usual, for near the end of the school year. Teacher attitudes toward the *COOL* movement varied from neutral to enthusiastic.

### **The COOL Workshop Weekend: Introducing New Concepts**

The weekend workshop (December, 1989) was attended by forty teens and forty adults. About half of the participants were from Bruckton and half were from the two neighboring communities involved. In this section, I have summarized the concepts of sexuality and relationships that were introduced through the workshop and frequently reported as "new" in Bruckton.

The concepts introduced to both teens and parents were:

- It is possible and important for learning about sexuality to occur in an atmosphere of openness and honesty. This learning could also be enjoyable.
- Teen-parent communication can be based on respect, openness, and honesty. Some signals, strategies, and guidelines are helpful.
- Listening and respecting one another's views is of great importance.
- Images and analogies (e.g., relationship wheel, hands analogy, love triangle, intimacy funnel) can help make abstract concepts more concrete.
- It is important to identify personal limits or stopping points for sexual expression.
- Break up, or the possibility of break up, is often a very difficult situation. Some self-help strategies and support from peers can be invaluable.
- It is important to be assertive and avoid exploitation in relationships. Some simple strategies can be very effective in situations involving either sexual and non-sexual decisions.
- Information on contraceptives was more complete than that which was provided at school or known by many parents.

**The concepts introduced to parents only were as follows:**

- **It is helpful for parents to reflect on their own experiences as teens learning about sexuality, and compare this with the kind of learning situation they would want their teens to have.**
- **Identifying values relating to sexuality, sexual expression, and decision making and practice in articulating these values in a non-threatening atmosphere can help one to understand these values and more clearly communicate about them with teens.**
- **Teens are developing a personal value system. It is possible to verbally reinforce teens as they make positive steps in this process.**
- **Adult listening and communication habits can open or close communication at home.**
- **Aspects of anatomy and physiology associated with arousal and intercourse were presented. Some found opportunities to dispel myths or learn about healthy practices (e.g., testicular self exam).**
- **There was encouragement to normalize and eroticize the use of condoms.**

**The following concepts were introduced to teens only:**

- **The concept of sexuality involves much more than intercourse.**
- **Some language is degrading and disrespectful, particularly to females. Language can also indicate a different standard and expectation in behavior for males and females.**
- **Teens can teach each other about many things: the reasons why teens become sexually involved, whether these were positive or negative reasons, the consequences of intercourse, whether they were positive or negative, and about the advantages of postponing intercourse.**
- **One should recognize and critically evaluate the messages about sexuality that are conveyed in advertising and entertainment media.**
- **Significant learning can be synthesized in a personal and artistic way -- a musical or dramatic "personal moment."**
- **Individuals have rights in relationships and should learn to recognize and deal effectively with peer pressure and exploitation.**
- **Assertive rather than aggressive responses are useful in retaining rights while maintaining communication lines and resolving conflicts.**
- **Some of the "famous lines" which others use to apply pressure can be handled effectively with wit and humor.**
- **Suggestions were given for couples negotiating sexual expression in a relationship.**

- The "fish bowl" activity modelled a way to have respectful communication between the sexes, and to clear up some of the myths and misconceptions surrounding teen relationships.

These concepts were introduced but developed only to a limited extent because of the constraints of time and the number of people involved in the workshop. Nevertheless, they were introduced, and often in an engaging way which modelled small group process and included a moderate level of learner-centered instruction. The workshop environment was characterized by openness and safety. Serious questions could be asked and serious answers were given. As one might expect, the presentation topics and techniques also stirred controversies, particularly among those who were uneasy about teens learning about contraceptives, and those who felt abstinence should be addressed more strongly and seriously. Further analysis of areas of strength and areas of concern occurred through the program evaluation. This information, along with the implications and recommendations generated, is summarized later in this chapter and in considerable detail in the Krupa (1990) Master's thesis.

### The Impact Study: A Follow-up Meeting

The final step in the implementation of COOL was a follow-up meeting held on an evening about two months after the workshop weekend. The purposes were to reinforce the concepts presented in the workshops and to continue to develop better communication between parents and teens. Teens and parents (in separate groups) had a brief opportunity to relate their post-workshop experiences to their peers and, in a limited way help one another solve problems. Then the teens and adults joined together for a "fish bowl" activity wherein the teens could ask any questions they wished of the parents and vice versa. The regional health unit's sexual health coordinators facilitated these discussions.

### Selection and Training of Peer Instructors

Most of the teens who attended the December workshop applied to become teen instructors. In May, the FCSS director and Health Unit SE coordinator interviewed teens from Brickton and a neighboring community. Six were selected and, together with four adult volunteers (I was one of the four), went to observe / participate in a COOL workshop in a neighboring community as part of their initial training. During this time, the leaders of the training session determined that three of the six original teen leaders did not have essential attitudes and skills sufficiently in place to continue working with the team. The FCSS director released these individuals and chose three other teens to continue.

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## The *COOL* Program Evaluation Process

Because this research influenced the environment in the community and the flow of events in the years to come, it seemed useful to present a summary of the process here. The section which follows includes some background to the decision to undertake the program evaluation.

### The Decision to Undertake the Program Evaluation

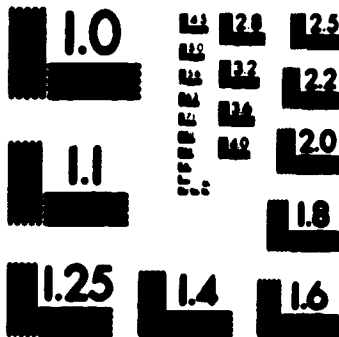
Throughout the fall, I observed and participated in each of the activities associated with organizing for the *COOL* workshop. I attempted to achieve a balance between getting "inside" enough to observe the process closely, but "outside" enough to minimize my bias. I helped with tasks that I thought would have a minimal effect on the process and outcome (e.g., contacting a small number of parents), but would demonstrate support for the process and the people. I was very honest with those in Bruckton about my motivations and degrees of commitment and they welcomed my involvement.

By mid-November, we had decided to coordinate the program evaluation with my Master's research. Evaluations of sexuality education programs -- either process or outcome oriented -- were rare in Alberta and Canada, and it seemed like an excellent opportunity to make a contribution. The *COOL* program had the potential to address problems with SE that had been identified in the community as well as in professional literature. I saw the following reasons for optimism at the time (Krupa, 1989):

1. The primary goal was to enable and encourage teens to choose abstinence from sexual intercourse. It is nearly universally agreed among sexuality educators that this is, by far, the best option for young teens. Abstinence was renamed "postponing" to get around the negative "preachy" association. The program was advertised as "teaching" postponing sexual intercourse and not "preaching" abstinence, and information on contraception would also be included. This teaching would be in the context of learning about healthy relationships.
2. There was an attempt to tailor the approach to the specific needs of the community. From my reading of the change literature, this mutual adaptation was critical. Meetings were held with leaders in an attempt to accommodate their needs, secure their approval, thereby adding credibility and lowering public relations hurdles. A community development approach would be taken and the community would plan to take responsibility for its own sexuality education needs within 3 years. The workshop weekend could thus become a vehicle to a much larger movement in the community.
3. Parents were seen as important sexuality communicators. In addition to securing approval for their children's involvement, there would be a parallel workshop series for parents. There they could learn what was being taught to the teens, as well as how to communicate with, support, and motivate their teens effectively.

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PRECISION<sup>SM</sup> RESOLUTION TARGETS

**4. Peer teaching would be employed.** Although the peers would need to come from outside the community at the beginning, local teens and adults would eventually be trained as facilitators.

**5. No additional demands whatsoever would be placed on teachers.** The program would begin as a weekend workshop for teens and their parents that would act as a supplement and complement to what was being taught in schools already.

**6. Problematic attitudes and false information gathered through media and peer influence could and would be challenged.** The environment in the workshop would be characterized by a very high level of openness and honesty. This could enable teens to break through psychological barriers and test the many myths they had come to believe in. Teens, including males, would be challenged to accept responsibility for their sexuality.

**7. The need for reinforcement after the workshop was considered.** Behavior and attitude change takes time. In March, about three months after the workshop, teens and adults would meet together for an evening to provide some opportunity for "in progress inservicing", peer coaching, mutual adaptation, etc. that contribute to the successful implementation of a behavior. Would everything turn out as expected after the workshop? Or would the people say it was a great workshop, leave feeling satisfied, immediately get busy with the Christmas rush and postpone their commitment? Would they, like professionals, feel embarrassed that they have not tried their new techniques and return to a state much like before?

### **Toward the "Responsive" Evaluation Plan**

As I learned more about *COOL*, sexuality education, evaluation, and the situation in Bruckton, I became attracted to formats that acknowledged broader needs and interests of those in the community. I eventually encountered Stake's (1975) "responsive" model in Worthen and Sanders (1987), and saw how it could meet several needs which the FCSS director and I perceived to be important at the time:

- to attract the interest and involvement of important stakeholders who remained on the periphery (especially parents, teens, and religious leaders),
- to illuminate the issues and concerns which stakeholders considered to be important,
- to facilitate exploration of the controversial and poorly-defined topic area of SE,
- to provide information for the continued development of the program, and
- to strengthen the vision for a community development approach to SE in Bruckton.

At that time, we defined stakeholders as "those who had direct influence over the program or were directly influenced by it." This included the local FCSS Agency, the regional Health Unit, teachers, school administrators, religious groups and, of course, parents and teens.

(Readers who are less interested in methodology may wish to bypass the first portion and continue reading with "Reporting the Findings.")



## **Overview of the Evaluation Process**

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the sexuality education program as it was implemented with forty teens and forty parents from three different communities. Answers to the following general questions were sought:

1. What are the issues, problems, and concerns of interest to the program's stakeholders?
2. How was the program designed and implemented?
3. What were the program's strengths and weaknesses?
4. What recommendations would most likely lead to the improvement of the program?

The evaluation was collaborative in nature to reflect the community development aspect of such a program. Decisions about the future direction of COOL were required, but the study was seen as being more formative than summative: that is, intended to assist stakeholders in identifying possible paths to improvement rather than in making a judgement whether to accept or reject the program.

The themes that emerged from the observation and interview experiences became the major foci of the evaluation. Representatives of the stakeholder groups continued to work with me and with each other at key points in the process: setting the research questions and design, refining questionnaire and interview items, setting standards for judgement, identifying implications, generating recommendations, and determining the format which reporting would take.

Data collection involved observations of the many program components, several questionnaires, interviews with participants, program personnel and administrators, and analysis of documents. The major findings were reported under three categories: Areas of Strength, Areas of Concern, and Equivocal Findings. Recommendations were presented along with "questions for consideration," in a format designed to stimulate deeper thought and discussion. These included items of interest to those responsible for program design and delivery, as well as those providing program administration and support.

The evaluation process was conceptualized as having five stages:

1. Orientation to the Program and Stakeholders
2. Understanding and Responding to Stakeholders
3. Collecting Data
4. Reporting the Findings
5. Generating Implications and Recommendations

### **Stage 1: Orientation to the Program and Stakeholders**

During this stage, I became familiar with the program's scope and activities through observations of each of the program components, discussions with stakeholders, and analysis of documents. Descriptions of activities, instructor's statements, responses of individuals and group interactions were noted. This preliminary work provided an overall sense of the program goals in practice as well as a context in which to place the input from stakeholders. It also led to the identification of other stakeholders and more specific questions relating to the design, implementation, and improvement of the program.

Guidelines for the selection and involvement of stakeholders were adapted from those suggested by Greene (1988). The definition of stakeholders was intentionally broad to encourage diversity. Self-defined stakes were high, and representatives either had sufficient knowledge to contribute in meaningful ways, or were eager to learn quickly. Stakeholders were to participate in the design, the interpretation of findings, identifying implications, and generating recommendations, but not in the collection of data. Finally, stakeholders' views were actively sought and shown to be valued. Representatives were interviewed to determine the concerns, issues, problems and questions that they felt were important to address.

Three groups were involved in the design and delivery of the program. COOL's designer was also the primary facilitator and had a strong interest in making the workshops as effective as possible. The FCSS agency was the principal sponsor and coordinator of the program and could be said to be "the client" in this evaluation. The agency representative had worked with the program since its inception, was responsible for raising much of the other sponsorship for the workshop and received the "beefs and bouquets" voiced by the public. The Health Unit was interested in transmitting information about sexuality, in the hope that it would lead to healthier practices which, in turn, would lead to reductions in sexually transmitted diseases and unwanted pregnancies. The SE coordinator was also heavily involved in planning and implementation.

We identified and contacted representatives of the teens, parents, school and school jurisdiction.. The teen representatives had participated in the program and had shown special willingness to take leadership in this area. Coincidentally, they were also members of the local school Peer Support Team. Parents of teens were the secondary target audience of the program and had great interest in having the best possible program for their children. The primary representative was a parent participant in the COOL program who took great interest in the evaluation. She knew most of the residents and was well respected by them.

The school jurisdiction (regional school administration) was involved because its program had similar objectives and coordination between the schools and the community was valued. The jurisdiction was represented by the curriculum coordinator, the same

person responsible for dealing with various SE lobby groups. The Grades 5-9 school was represented by the Assistant Principal, who was active in school / community relations and the student peer support team.

In summary, the group of stakeholders participating in this study included: the designer and facilitator of the COOL program, the community's Family and Community Support Services Agency, the local Health Unit, teen participants, parent participants, the school jurisdiction, and a school which had close ties with the program. Though it was agreed that religious groups were stakeholders, most leaders did not see themselves as sufficiently involved with, or knowledgeable about, the program to participate in the evaluation process. It was decided that data would be collected about their concerns, interests, and preferences for involvement in the future.

## **Stage 2: Understanding and Responding to Stakeholders**

All of the stakeholder representatives were interviewed by the researcher. The five open-ended questions which guided the interview were:

- What do you feel is important to know about the program and how it worked?
- What concerns do you have with the program?
- What issues relating to the program do you feel need to be raised?
- What questions should be asked of the teen and/or parent participants?
- What would indicate that the program had been successful or effective?

Interviews varied greatly in length, location and circumstances. Building rapport, trust, and a sense of ownership or partnership was very important at this stage. The groups or individuals were asked to refine the often vague concerns, issues and problems, into specific questions or requests for information. When all stakeholders had been interviewed, each was given a copy of the contribution from his/her interview, as well as a composite listing of all questions, concerns and issues raised. They checked their own contribution for accuracy and read the composite, making any comments or suggestions for further questions as they felt necessary. The questionnaires for teens and parents and interview guides for participants and others were prepared directly from the final composite list. Stakeholders also reviewed these instruments to verify that the questions were still true to their intents. Thus, the process of interviewing stakeholders brought many issues forward, provided questions for the research instruments, helped refine the researcher's understanding of the program, and helped stakeholders to clarify their own perceptions of the program and their roles.

Enthusiasm and interest grew in many of the stakeholder participants, in spite of the demands on their time. In general, they exhibited very positive attitudes toward this project

and a genuine concern for teens. When appreciation for this was expressed, many responded in words similar to "We don't mind taking the time because this work is important and because we care for teens and their parents."

Although the stakeholders seemed generally eager and willing to participate, it soon became apparent that the same degree and kind of involvement could not realistically be expected from each of them. Individual participation varied over the course of the study, for valid reasons such as health, work load and areas of expertise. As an example, one who was marginally involved in the planning phases provided very insightful comments during the later phases. Though individual involvement was inconsistent, the overall process functioned very well.

### **Stage 3: Collecting Data**

Both qualitative and quantitative methods of collecting data were employed. As far as possible, the program was studied as it occurred naturally, without constraining, manipulating or controlling it. Data were collected by observing program components, analyzing program documents, using questionnaire surveys of participants, interviewing participants, interviewing teachers and religious leaders, at a public meeting for parents, and by a community newsletter.

**Observations.** The researcher attended every *COOL* gathering (pre-workshop planning and promotion activities, parent and teen workshops and follow-up meetings) as a participant observer. These observations provided an overall picture of the implementation of the program as well as its content. Controversial portions of the workshop were video-recorded to provide an ability to review and resolve conflicting information.

**Documents.** An attempt was made to collect and analyze all documents associated with the program. These included news releases, promotional brochures, meeting and workshop agendas, parent and teen information packages, telephone contact scripts, and program manuals (parent, teen, facilitator). This was valuable when comparing the program-as-described with the program-in-practice.

**Questionnaires.** Some of the data were collected from pre- and post- program questionnaires for teen participants. These surveys of knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors were supplied by the program facilitator and completed at the workshop. It was possible to use nineteen of these pairs of questionnaires which had been coded for anonymity.

The majority of the quantitative data came from the questionnaires for teens and parents which were prepared from the stakeholders' comments. These instruments were critiqued by the stakeholders and several "expert" consultants to ensure that no key area had

been left out due to oversight or ignorance. Then, the questionnaires were tested with four teens and four parents and revisions were made according to the feedback received.

In order to maximize return rates, the researcher met with the teen participants at the schools which they attended. A brief verbal introduction to the study was given, the importance of each individual's participation was emphasized and the ethical safeguards were described. Each teen was given a package which contained an introductory letter, a consent form (to secure the permission of both parents and teens), a questionnaire for the teen, and questionnaires for the parents. After follow-up phone calls, a response rate of 78% of students and 65% of parents was achieved. Data from the questionnaires were entered and outputs of frequencies for parents and teens were produced. These findings were reported to stakeholders and were also used to refine the questions asked of participants in interviews.

**Interviews With Program Participants.** Purposive sampling of six teen/parent family units, as well as four teens and four parents at large, was done to obtain a range of backgrounds and views of the workshops as well as representation from each of the three communities. Single parent (male) and single parent (female) families and two parent families were present in the sample. Families with one parent, both parents or no parent attending the workshop were also present in the sample. An equal number of male and female teens were interviewed, but only three of the thirteen parent participants were male.

Parents were generally interviewed first, followed by the teen and, in some cases, followed by all of them together. This approach was used because it familiarized parents with the questions that would be asked of their teen and permitted both parties to respond individually as well as in a group. Detailed notes were made in all interviews and three families gave permission for recording. Telephone follow-up was conducted to clarify ambiguous comments and to ask any questions that had arisen since the first interview.

**Interviews With Teachers and Religious Leaders.** Six teachers were interviewed, four in a group and two as individuals. The researcher attempted to draw out the teachers' perceptions of the program and their possible connections with it. At the same time, information was gathered on effects the program had on teen participants and possible effects the teen participants were having on others. Telephone interviews with five religious leaders focused on how they would wish to be involved in similar programs in the community future.

**Community Feedback.** Two strategies were employed to give individuals who had not been involved directly with the program an opportunity to contribute. A public meeting was held for non-participant parents, and a very brief questionnaire was included in a newsletter which was distributed throughout the community.

## Stage 4: Reporting Findings

As the data were analyzed, summaries were prepared for stakeholders. The researcher also prepared a final report of the findings, which was presented to the stakeholder group at a special meeting. The report outlined areas of strengths, areas of concern and equivocal findings. Only those program features that were clearly either strengths or concerns, as indicated by data gathered by at least two methods, were included in those two categories. A category of "equivocal findings" was also used in reporting. Feedback on the interpretations of the data (received at the meeting, and through telephone and in-person communications over a two week period) was accounted for in the final report of the findings.

### Strengths

- The COOL program has, in most cases, facilitated positive parent/teen communication and relationships by influencing the attitudes, strategies and skills of both adults and teens. Parent/teen talk about issues relating to sexuality occurred in many families but not in all. The overall program effectiveness appears to have been greatest in cases where parents also attended workshops.
- The information provided met the general needs of participants, especially in the areas of anatomy and physiology. It also served to dispel many of the myths which participants had in areas related to sexuality and relationships.
- The program encouraged respect for members of the opposite sex. Teens became more sensitive to manifestations of disrespect and more motivated to do something positive to improve the situation.
- The ability of teens to recognize and resist pressures from peers and partners was enhanced by the program. The communications and assertiveness skills were especially important to teens. Unfortunately, no data were available on the transferability of skills to real life situations involving sexual decision making.
- On the whole, sound instructional design was employed. There were a variety of media and techniques employed, including small group activities and role playing. Important to the instructional effectiveness was a very honest, straightforward way of communicating, the use of parents and teens as "peer instructors" and an overall sense of fun. The atmosphere that was created was highly conducive to participant involvement. It was characterized by openness, honesty, trust and respect for one another's views.
- Finally, a meaningful follow-up opportunity was provided, even though few of the original participants took part in it. It served to encourage and enlighten those who attended. High quality exchanges occurred, with and between generations.

### Areas of Concern

- Teens were generally under the impression that they had received the complete "package"

of information required to make decisions about their sexual expression. One area where information was found to be incomplete was in their understanding of the consequences of intercourse, especially sexually transmitted diseases and psychological consequences.

- Another area where the information given was incomplete related to contraceptive measures and, in particular, effectiveness of condoms. It is recognized that obtaining all the facts is a very difficult undertaking in this very complex field, but it is also very important to have the facts to make good decisions. It must be stressed that the information provided in the session may not be complete, that it is constantly changing as new discoveries are made and that there may be side effects which are not yet known.
- Ambiguity in certain key words and concepts was also a concern. The concepts of love, commitment, abstinence and postponing sexual involvement were especially vague for teens. The illusion of complete information and the confusion of terminology appeared to be blocking some from confronting the difficult issues of sexual involvement.
- There seemed to be considerable ambiguity in teen concepts of what constituted responsible action and "readiness" for sexual involvement. Many participants had a very limited view of these concepts, partially due to limited views of consequences and ambiguity in language. Very few spoke of their future when discussing their concepts of readiness or responsible action.
- Abstinence from intercourse was portrayed in a relatively neutral way. Few of the highly effective instructional strategies used in teaching other concepts in the program were used when referring specifically to abstinence.

### **Equivocal Findings**

Most areas described as strengths or concerns were not completely strong or completely weak but had occasional contradictions. Areas that were categorized as "equivocal" had strong and weak points that were relatively balanced.

- The majority of teens found the values presented at the workshop to be appropriate, whereas parents more often expressed concern about this. Some participants found the personal disclosure of the leaders to be helpful, while others found it unnecessary or confusing.
- The effect of the program on self-esteem was variable. Most teens reported reasonably high self esteem before the workshop. There may have been a temporary boost from the workshops that faded with time. This, like other areas, depends a great deal on the baseline level, the family environment, peers' interactions, other events in their lives, etc..
- The sexual involvement levels and intentions of teens appear to have changed little as a result of the workshop. In general, teens felt as though they would be able to postpone intercourse, but did not have an increased desire to do so.

### **Stage 5: Generating Implications and Recommendations**

The compilation of implications and recommendations was seen as a major step in bringing the issues together for further discussion and development. Stakeholders raised some of the implications and recommendations at a special meeting that was held to discuss the findings. Most of the points, however, were identified by stakeholders in the two-

week period which followed. The final synthesis of contributions from stakeholders, researcher, and participants was organized according to four categories: Program Design, Program Delivery, Local Administration, and Program Support.

### **Recommendations for Program Design**

Most of these recommendations have application to SE programs in general. As readers will note, an open-ended reporting format was used to encourage readers from the community to reflect more deeply and develop each of the ideas further. Each recommendation statement was followed by several "questions for consideration" which probed related issues. Where resources were available, these were also noted.

- 1. Consolidate the strength COOL has in providing information and dispelling myths by expanding on the topics of sexually transmitted disease, contraceptive failure and side effects, and psychological consequences of intercourse.**
  - How can the most complete information be given without creating the illusion that what is received at the workshop is the "complete package" required to make a sexual decision?
  - How can discouraging information, such as that about the failure rate of condoms, be presented in a way that teens will be motivated to a healthier lifestyle by it rather than depressed by it (i.e., encouraging "probabilistic" rather than "deterministic" thinking)?
  
- 2. Refine the meanings of key words such as abstinence, love, intimacy, responsible action and commitment.**
  - How can these concepts be clarified so that both teens and parents can use them to discuss the issues surrounding sexual involvement?
  - How can teens discover that language can act to either promote or inhibit thought in this and any other complex area?
  - How can participants be involved in a process of refining definitions of the words above, and then personalizing these definitions?
  - How can teen and parent leaders be trained to help individuals confront these realities?
  
- 3. Clarify the concept of "readiness" and its components.**
  - Can one be ready to consider the consequences and yet not ready to accept the consequences?
  - Is there a pressure in our culture to always be "ready" for, or working toward, the "next stage?" (e.g., to be ready to go out with someone, to wear makeup, to drive a car, to go steady, to drink, to have intercourse, etc.)
  - Should a different term be used because of variation in "degrees of readiness"?
  - Are the characteristics of someone who is "ready" different from someone who "takes responsibility" for consequences?
  - How can the program deepen understanding and enable teens to go beyond the rhetoric, the euphemisms, the "line" which adults want to hear?
  
- 4. Consolidate the ties between readiness, responsibility, commitment and consequences. Make the connections as concrete as possible.**
  - How do these relate to pregnancy? STD? Psychological impact?



- How can consequences such as STD and psychological impact, that are difficult to see, be made sufficiently concrete to teens that they can grasp their significance?
- How could teens "experience" the consequences of having a child, a disease or psychological turmoil in a more concrete way than just talking about it?
- How could teens be encouraged to develop a vision of hope for their future in which long-term consequences have a context?
- What are the problems associated with various "limits" or stopping points for sexual involvement? How can passion's effect on judgment be depicted visually?
- How can the chance of condom failure, and the factors that contribute to it, be concretized and dramatized?  
In an interview, a parent stated "The real possibility of condom failure needs to be demonstrated dramatically. I don't know how you do it but you need to work on the explanation."
- What suggestions could those experienced in catalyzing thought and involving participants offer to this area of program design?

##### **5. Modify the portrayal of "abstinence."**

- In light of the universal agreement that abstinence (postponing) is the healthiest lifestyle choice, how can abstinence be even further normalized and shown to be valuable and desirable?
- How can abstinence be described in terms of what it is, rather than what it is not?  
That is, what it permits rather than what it prohibits.
- Can a path off to the side of the physical intimacy funnel (a diagram used in the workshop) illustrate movement toward a deeper, more rewarding relationship?
- Teen leaders agree to abstain for as long as they are involved with the program. How can this and other positive examples be made known? What other "teen heroes" can be enlisted to validate and normalize this behavior?
- Are there other words that could be used instead of abstinence, such as "virginity" and "secondary virginity?" An acronym? Could teens create one? Is "postponing" still workable? (Condensed from The COOL Evaluation Project. Krupa, 1990.)

### **Recommendations for Local Administration**

Many of these statements related to community and family dynamics and community development.

#### **1. Continue to work toward a "community development" and "community involvement" model.**

Progress in this area has been made and potential contributors in the communities are just beginning to develop a sense of how they could best be involved. The data gathered indicates that future plans, which make greater use of these resources and avenues in the community, would be well received.

- How can potential contributors and stakeholders be integrated in the process of setting goals and developing a functional plan for the community?
- Can community meetings be used to gather feedback from capable community people rather than simply give information to them?
- How can such feedback be incorporated to improve the "community development" and team spirit components of the program?
- Is the participation of religious leaders important? How could it be facilitated?
- How can the leadership and resources available in teens and parents who have participated in the program be channelled and developed?

Many indicated a willingness to contribute to COOL in the future. Not all wished to be workshop leaders and several suggested they could assist as promoters, artists,

writers, telephone coordinators or cooks. In addition to improving the areas in which they would work, they would serve as role models and reinforce the concepts of the program.

**2. Continue to try to attract those individuals and families who really need the help and support.**

In the opinion of the participants, a substantial number of those who really need the help would attend this program if they were approached appropriately (e.g., as individuals) and provided with a clear idea of the potential for growth which the program offers. This program, however, cannot be expected to respond to all of the needs for sexuality education in the community. Participants suggested making use of video recordings, personal/informal calls and offers for assistance from peers as means to reach those parents and teens who cannot or would not attend. Contact through peers and/or the peer support mechanism in schools stood out among the wide range of ideas supplied.

**3. Continue the "Impact Study" but employ other means of follow-up as well.**

Though basic enrollment is a first step, follow-up and reinforcement appears to be very important to achieving the goals of the program. Follow-up may take a wide variety of formats and need not necessarily be costly or require outside resource people. Participants suggested that the following resources would be helpful:

- another shorter program for parents and teens,
- trained people in the community who are available to call on ,
- parent or teen support groups meeting informally.

One parent suggested that a periodic newsletter to alumni would help to keep people moving toward the goals of the program.

*You could put in updated information, encouragement and ways to spread the word and make a difference. It could be like a reinforcement for postponing, you could put in a bit about values and remind them of the future. All the articles could be done by teens and parents. You could include some information on the evaluation and even a survey occasionally. Keep people in touch. (parent interview)*

As another example, some families described the importance of their "table talk" during meals. One parent suggested including several discussion openers printed on paper place-mats with the resource package.

Change is difficult and takes much time and energy.

**4. Continue to enlist the service of some outside resource people.**

The questionnaire results and most teens and adults interviewed saw this as important to achieve the openness required. However, use of outside help exclusively may prove too expensive to maintain.

Can the openness be achieved in other ways? Could local resource people do much of the program, as long as access to an outsider was provided at some point? "Outside" resource people may, eventually, be obtained by sharing trained leaders between the neighboring communities.

**5. Continue to place importance on evaluation and continually improving the approach used in the program.**

If several workshops were to be set up within a given year, it might be possible to set up quasi-experimental conditions to test the effectiveness of modified approaches on student knowledge, skills and attitudes.

Long term evaluation of program effectiveness is very desirable. One parent had suggested a low-cost means of obtaining periodic feedback from participants. "Send out a postcard - maybe at six month intervals. Just put four or five questions on to get

an idea if the kids are still [postponing], what the challenges are, how they are coping, etc." A comprehensive impact assessment using a variety of ways of collecting data, including questionnaires, outside observers, interviews, etc., would also be useful after about three years.

**6. Consider offering a sexuality education program, focusing on developing quality relationships, to parents of younger children.**

This recommendation does not arise directly from the data which were sought, but is placed here on the request of several parent participants. Many parents and teens indicated that their relationships were either good or poor in the present because of patterns set in the past. They pointed to the need to develop quality parent / teen relationships earlier if parents were to act as primary sexuality educators for teens entering adolescence.

**7. Secure the attendance of teens.**

Many individuals registered but did not attend. Several did not return for the second day of the workshop. Those interviewed cited hazardous road conditions and the fact that it was Sunday morning and several went to church.

- Could the program schedule be modified to avoid conflicting with church services?
- Could video or other creative methods be employed to cover the contingencies?

Very few teens or adults came to the Impact Study. Attendance at this worthwhile program component may be improved through more timely communication and scheduling, reminding people that the meeting will be held and why it is important that parents and teens participate.

**8. Secure the attendance and commitment of parents, especially fathers.**

Most teens and parents stressed the importance of parents attending their workshops. When asked "What would have helped more parents to attend the meetings?" the top three suggestions were:

- more information about the program,
- clearer idea about the purpose and goals,
- more personal contact.

Participants suggested fees, rotating the workshops between the three communities or holding the program at different times as ways of increasing parents' access to the program.

Special efforts will probably be required to attract fathers. Judging from teen questionnaire and interview responses, such efforts would be well worth expending. The survey information indicated that relationships and communication with fathers is generally poorer than with mothers. Those fathers who did become involved found the workshops to be rewarding and reported positive movement in relationships with their teens.(Krupa, 1990.)

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## **Influence of the *COOL* Program and Evaluation**

The final report was circulated widely in the community, as well as to other interested groups in the province including FCSS agencies and Health Units. Shortly after the report was delivered, I arranged a brief interview with each stakeholder to obtain final reactions to the evaluation process and their comments regarding changes which were associated with the program and evaluation.

COOL's designer / facilitator carefully considered the "Recommendations for Program Design" and incorporated nearly all of these in subsequent offerings of COOL in other communities. The recommendations were also incorporated into future versions of COOL in Bruckton and in programs which teens and adults from Bruckton instructed in neighboring communities.

Stakeholders representatives reported a deeper understanding of the program, its problems and potential, and the issues surrounding SE.

- Through the process, the issues of sex ed in our community were opened up wide. We were really challenged to think about and discuss these issues.*
- I think what it gave us was a deeper understanding of sexuality education. It broadened our awareness of ways in which we could make a difference.*
- While [the program evaluation] did bring us together, it also got us thinking about the needs we had and uncovered some possible actions we could take. In that way it was like a needs assessment and a motivator. Like watering the seed.*
- Although it seemed difficult at the time, in retrospect, it brought the issues more out into the open . . . We were at least aware that there were other ways of sex ed besides just in the schools.*

What was learned through the evaluation was significant to teachers and programs in schools and is discussed in greater detail in the next chapter.

Meanwhile, greater respect and better communications had developed between stakeholder representatives. Misunderstandings that caused breakdown earlier were cleared and the "team spirit" was restored in several cases.

*Though there were problems in the planning process and in the program itself, those efforts were a big step in the right direction. We had a reason to work together and a goal to work toward.*

Several reported that the process served to reinforce the sense of common interests.

*What it did was it got us talking together, by talking through you. We gathered that*

*long list of questions, and collapsed them, and developed them, and looked at the answers we got to them. That gave us some common ground and a sense of what was really important.*

The evaluation was commonly cited as an important factor in maintaining the movement begun by FCSS, the Health Unit, and the Community School to develop a broader, community-based approach to SE. All stakeholders were interested in continuing to work together.

Some described the satisfaction they experienced from "being able to help and contribute." Others appreciated that there was "a sense of fairness. Those who usually have less power -- the parents, teens, and religious groups -- had a chance to speak and others had listened."

There was a growing sense of ownership, responsibility, and obligation for following through. "As parents and teens we came face to face with our responsibilities to each other, and our responsibilities for making a difference in our community." The three categories of benefits described by Greene (1988) were represented:

- cognitive -- the opportunity to think about, analyze, and discuss the issues;
- affective -- the good feeling that people get from being able to help and contribute;
- political -- the less powerful receiving a voice.

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## **Other Factors Influencing Development in Bruckton**

Although the COOL program and evaluation were the most visible and ambitious initiatives in the community, several school-related, organizational and interpersonal, and political factors also influenced the development of sexuality education during Year #1.

### **Growing School Jurisdiction Support**

Interest and support from the school jurisdiction began to grow substantially in this year, a factor which would prove to be very significant in the future.

### **Teacher Action and Identification of Needs**

At the Grades 5-9 school, three teachers working with the student peer support team (most of whom had participated in COOL) were emerging as key players. They reinforced these "mobilized" teens and helped them find venues to share their experiences, and contribute to presentations relating to sexuality and relationships in the school. Two

classroom teachers, meanwhile, began to encourage students to contribute in more significant ways to class discussions and to critically review class materials. During interviews, most of the junior high Health teachers indicated that the *COOL* program was a "move in the right direction" for Bruckton, although their own programs remained virtually unchanged. At the same time, they reported these continuing constraints to effective SE teaching in their classrooms:

- lack of knowledge, training, and comfort in teaching SE.
- lack of time in class for sufficient development of skills.
- frustration and tension due to the inaccurate perceptions of some parents.
- frustration at the unrealistic expectations of parents.
- confusion as to exactly how and what to teach regarding abstinence.
- the general public perception that the health program is a low priority.

Strong statements were made on the need for better print and video resources and opportunities for pre-service and in-service training for teachers.

### The "Jesus First" Club

A small but vocal group of Christian teens and parents, the "Jesus First Club," believed that the school's SE program did not adequately present the case for abstinence or encourage students to choose this lifestyle. They proposed what they considered to be a positive alternative: a two-video presentation on sexuality and relationships. The group was granted permission to present it to students during lunch hours in the weeks that the SE units were being taught in classrooms. Key concepts were discussed afterward.

More traditional values and standards of sexual expression were reinforced through the presentations. Those who attended reported the experience to be more "dramatic" and "thought provoking" than they expected and, interestingly, "not too preachy." Overall, the series was received enthusiastically by students who chose to participate.

### Quest at the K-4 Community School

News of the QUEST program had reached the staff and the first teacher in the community was trained. At that time, the initiative was restricted to the K-4 Community School and had not yet been introduced in the 5-9 School.

The K-5 version of QUEST (Skills for Growing) is a program designed to develop skills and attitudes associated with taking personal responsibility for decisions, exercising good judgement, being self-disciplined, and getting along with others. Teachers, administrators, and parents are trained in the program and teachers receive manuals of

activities which can be incorporated into school and classroom life in general, and the health program in particular.

### Change in Health Unit Personnel and Policy

The personalities, visions, and actions of the local FCSS director and Health Unit Sexuality Educator were definitely major forces in the success of the COOL program and associated development efforts in Bruckton. By the end of Year #1, however, several changes had occurred. The SE coordinator left (on maternity leave) and a new individual took her place. Financial constraints and subsequent policy shifts within the Health Unit had also occurred. There were increasing demands for Health Unit services and a need to work in ways which would make the most efficient use of resources. As a result, the SE coordinator's involvement with SE and COOL in Bruckton was reduced. This shift in role contributed, in part, to difficulties in the relationship between the regional Health Unit and the local FCSS. It also demonstrated that government sponsored assistance in SE was not eternal and predictable. The implication was that local leaders must be found and trained if the development of SE was to proceed.

### Provincial Level Challenge to SE in Schools

On the provincial political front, controversy over SE programs offered in schools and by Health Unit personnel was growing and intensifying. One of the major public incidents was headlined in the local newspaper as follows.

#### **Tory Whip Challenges Sex Ed Program in Schools**

**A conservative MLA wants sex education stopped in Alberta schools unless it's proven the program won't increase sexually transmitted diseases and teenage pregnancy. (X), the government whip, also wants assurances that the sex ed instruction won't lead to increased sexual activity among students receiving it....With his public call for tough restrictions on the sex education curriculum, spelled out in a motion on the government's order paper, (X) has put himself on a collision course with Minister (Y). (Edmonton Journal, March 15, 1990.)**

**Opposing views on the effects of sex education made headlines and sparked lively debates for school boards, church councils, teachers, parents, and citizens in Bruckton and other neighboring communities.**

### Invitations to Continue

As the program evaluation process was coming to an end, the FCSS director and I began to discuss possibilities for my continued involvement with SE in Bruckton. There was a need for assistance in training the teens and adults peer instructors for COOL, and a

need to improve connections among stakeholders in SE. FCSS offered to provide a small amount of financial assistance and administrative support.

Meanwhile, the school jurisdiction's curriculum coordinator and I began to discuss possibilities for assisting junior high teachers in their professional development and program improvement. The school jurisdiction was also interested in improving relations between teachers and parents and between teachers and other stakeholders in the community. We agreed on tentative plans for Bruckton and two neighboring schools. The jurisdiction also offered a small amount of financial assistance and administrative support. I was attracted to the prospect of continuing to be involved in Bruckton. It seemed as though such a move would be effective in meeting the needs of Bruckton's people while providing an opportunity for interesting and useful research.

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## Implications for Future Development

Major implications for future development seen at the time were as follows:

- The *COOL* program appeared to be meeting needs in the community. Local leaders had been identified and began introductory training. Significant financial and expert support from outside Bruckton was unlikely in the future and, if the initiative were to be sustained in the long term, further local leadership and organizational development would be required.
- Changes were being made but evaluating the effects remained difficult. Improvements in the system of monitoring were required.
- New knowledge and effective strategies for SE were introduced to the community through *COOL*, but the impact on those not involved in the workshop was uncertain.
- Concern for, and interest in, improving SE was growing. However, groups remained relatively isolated and collaboration on a community level was still limited. Responsibility and control could be shared outside of professional circles, but would likely require more open communication among stakeholders and the larger numbers of individuals and groups to be involved.
- Related initiatives such as *QUEST* were beginning in the community but again were in need of connection and articulation.
- There appeared to be considerable scope for development of SE approaches within religious sub-communities. Religious groups obviously had strong interests and concerns, yet their leaders remained relatively unconnected with other stakeholder representatives.

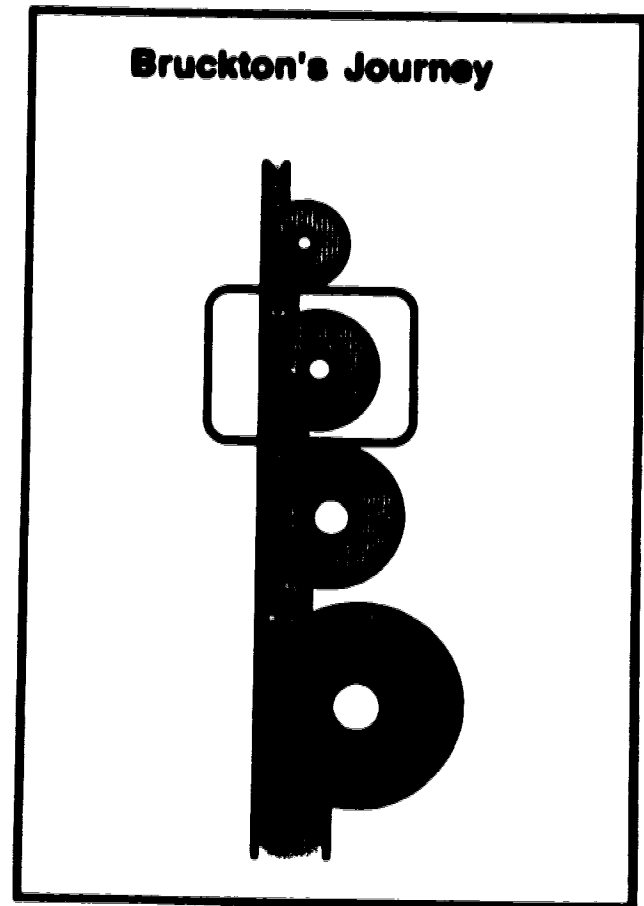


- School programs were in need of support and teachers had entered the circle of interest. The local staff and the school jurisdiction were willing to discuss possibilities for professional development possibilities and improving instructional resources.
- The general concept of sexuality education was beginning to shift and broaden from "How do we get teens to stop having intercourse at an early age?" to a recognition of the deep and complex array of factors that influence teens' sexual decision making, including the development of healthy relationships among teens and between teens and their parents.
- Baselines and issues had been identified and were being discussed, but a format to bring discussion to action was not yet established.
- Short term assistance from outside seemed necessary to achieve a self-sustaining SE "system."
- Continued attention to language in both sexuality education and community development efforts seemed necessary.
- New ethical considerations were also emerging. To this point, I had been evaluating the change efforts of others. A decision for me to continue in Bruckton would situate me more directly in the change process, and require that we resolve issues associated with simultaneously studying and contributing to improvement. A key question was "Who will own the change and direct it?"

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**Year #2:**  
**BRIDGES &**  
**Better Connections**

*The name "BRIDGES" symbolized what we were trying to achieve in "bridging the gaps" between stakeholders and between all those who contributed to sexuality education.*



During Year #2, the "bridge" image began to symbolize intentions to improve connections between stakeholders, between parents and teens, between home and school, and between theory and practice in instruction and human relations. It also came to symbolize new form of relationship that developed between individuals. Interviews with stakeholders after the completion of the program evaluation contributed to a fresh analysis "reconnaissance" of sexuality education and community dynamics in Bruckton (much of which was reported in Chapter IV). We identified several key issues to address and began to reconceptualize my further work in Bruckton as "studying the situation while contributing to it." To this point, I had focused on viewing and evaluating the change efforts of others. With the decision to continue and work more developmentally in Bruckton, I began asking questions such as "What new ethical issues, including those associated with the ethics of change, should be considered?" and "Who owns the change process in Bruckton?"

It is difficult to accurately represent the questions from the perspective of stakeholders because the words and their meanings changed considerably over the first

several months. Stakeholders were interested in improving sexuality education and, for most, this translated into encouraging teens to make wiser decisions. Whether this was with respect to sexual expression, or relationships, or lifestyles, however, remained elusive. More specific questions were as follows:

- How can we bring stakeholders in SE to work more closely together?
- What kind of professional development might assist teachers to bring about improvements in their approaches to instruction and partnerships with parents and community?
- How can we develop more peer support for teens and parents?
- How can we assist students, including the peer support team, to reach their potential as sexuality educators?
- How can we improve the COOL program? What purpose(s) should it serve?
- How should we monitor what is going on?

In the pages that follow, I discuss the initiatives and my involvement with each group -- parent and teen leaders, teachers, and community agencies and organizations -- aimed at assisting growth in instructorship and leadership, and developing organizational capacities. As in the previous chapter, a summary of other factors influencing development is presented. Those wishing to learn about factors influencing the researcher / facilitator might wish to begin by reading Appendix 5.1 and 5.3. The chronological summary of Year #2 activities and developments is included as Appendix 5.4.

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## **The COOL Program**

As Year #2 began, there was considerable hope among stakeholders that the COOL program could provide participants with important information and skills, and was a way to bring about healthier peer influence on relationships and sexual decision-making. Training local leaders was seen as a positive and necessary step for three reasons:

- to reduce the costs of operating the program,
- to develop local "expert" teens and parents who understood the problems and issues facing teens and parents and could offer support and advice, and
- to add to the pool of leaders who might assist in addressing issues in the community.

In this section, I outline the activities associated with training the teen and adult instructors, the major changes made to the program and its administration, and key outcomes observed.

## Training Teen and Adult "Peer" Instructors

The training for Bruckton's peer instructors began with observing the COOL workshop in another community (June, 1990) and continued with a three day retreat in November, 1990. Two other communities also sent novice "COOL teams" of parents and teens. The retreat was facilitated by a group under the direction of the designer/facilitator who had originally conducted the program in Bruckton in 1989. In addition to a number of team-building and leadership-skill-building activities, the leaders-in-training each had an opportunity to introduce parts of the program. All of the most important recommendations of the program evaluation were addressed and discussed.

Although the retreat provided information and opportunities to build instructional and leadership skills, we needed additional time to address personal issues and develop instructional skills before we could present a COOL workshop for others. We began in early January and met as a group on seven occasions for various purposes (e.g., rapport and team building, making teaching charts, issue clarification, giving constructive critique, practicing sessions, role plays, telephoning to invite parents to the workshop).

In addition to planning and facilitating the group meetings, I had many hours of telephone and in-person discussions with the teens and adults. Through these contacts we were able to resolve many of the personal challenges they faced as they prepared for the workshop and as they reflected on deeper issues concerning sexual decision making. We spent much more time preparing than we originally intended, but all considered the investment to be worthwhile. Others who have worked with teens and adults in similar situations found that similar amounts of time were required.

## Changes to the Program

The COOL workshop weekend took place, as it had the year before, in the warm, welcoming environment of the K-4 Community School. We had originally intended to offer two workshop weekends but, due to a lower enrollment than anticipated, held only one in early April. Twenty-five teens and twenty-four adults participated, about 75% of whom were from Bruckton. At the time, we attributed most of the decrease in numbers to problems in our approach to promotion to students at school (too "low key," occurred during students' Phys. Ed. time, took too long, too dull, etc.). In subsequent years, the promoters made the presentations to school classes more fun, enthusiastic, and personal, and had higher rates of registration.

Several parents from the previous year's program volunteered to assist in contacting the parents of the teens registered, but not all the parents and teens were reached early

enough to register. The team of peer instructors picked up this task and completed the calls.

The schedule and components of the parent and teen programs were implemented according to the model we had experienced in Bruckton the year before. Changes were made in the presentation of various components to accommodate the program evaluation recommendations, as well as insights gained through the training weekend and subsequent meetings.

A follow-up program was held but only one third of the 49 teens and parents returned for this event. The major reasons given for the low attendance were late notification and scheduling conflict. Those who attended, however, reported that the follow-up program was motivational and provided meaningful reinforcement.

### **Outcomes Reported by Participants**

On the whole, both teen and parent participants reported learning a great deal about sexuality and relationships at the workshop weekend. The evaluations of participants and leaders indicated that the "Areas of Strength" (described in Chapter IV) were similar to those of the previous year and that some of the "Areas of Concern" had been addressed successfully. The participants particularly appreciated the information that was provided on sexually transmitted diseases and the discussion on possible psychological and social consequences of being sexually active. The team provided more meaningful and accurate presentations of sexual decision-making, illustrated more clearly the possibility of contraceptive failure, and was able to discuss the reasons behind these possibilities. Abstinence as a lifestyle of choice for teens was presented in a positive way.

A former strength, the atmosphere of openness and comfort in the teen workshop, was more variable than in the 1989 workshop. In some participant groupings and sessions, the atmosphere was more conducive to free speech and involvement than in others. This degree of inhibition was attributed to three factors:

- the new leaders were less familiar with their roles,
- the leaders and participants knew each other and were less likely to disclose personal information,
- there were fewer outsiders to "dilute" the mix of people who knew each other. A point raised by leaders after the workshop was that the program, though satisfying and rewarding, was not as much fun as it had been when the group facilitated it last year. Perhaps our "presentation personalities" were too intense and serious.

One of the former "Areas of Concern" was still of concern. The team was more sensitive to the problems associated with ambiguity of key words and concepts (e.g.,

abstinence, love, commitment, responsibility, readiness) but still not communicating these concepts as clearly as they needed to.

We learned that it takes a lot of time and effort for people to move from program recipient to instructor and leader. Each of the teens had different needs and were growing at different rates. Some frustration occurred when a few of the teen leaders forgot to come to meetings or decided not to attend at the last minute. I learned to modify my expectations for some of them and that reminder calls were required.

If all the time and energy put toward training the leaders and implementing the COOL workshop were merely for putting on the one workshop, it would be of questionable value. However, the team members intended to continue facilitating workshops and school classes in Bruckton and in neighboring communities. They became more widely involved with informal peer counselling and support. On the community development dimension, we demonstrated that community self-sufficiency in such a program can be achieved. A longer term goal -- "seeding" the teen and adult population with knowledgeable and skilful leaders and supporters -- was being achieved. There was as yet little evidence of a shift in norms toward healthier attitudes and behaviors.

### COOL From the Perspective of Other Stakeholders

The members of the stakeholders' network provided a perspective from outside the program, which was considered to have important implications. They discussed possibilities for the future of COOL at their meeting in early June, 1991. All agreed it was worth continuing the workshop for teens and parents in some format. They saw difficulties with a proposal that COOL become a compulsory program in schools:

- it was not part of the provincial curriculum,
- it would not be fair, or politically wise, for the school jurisdiction to adopt COOL over other curricula that had been proposed,
- some of the benefits of having volunteer participants would be lost (e.g., atmosphere of trust and openness, willingness to learn).

A format that seemed particularly attractive was to offer it on one weekend day and one school day as a voluntary program for teens. Interested and committed students would be likely to be involved and the program's function as a "seed source" would be served. The FCSS director was to negotiate the details with the principal of the Grades 5-9 school.

The stakeholders' group suggested four ways to enhance the value of COOL:

- Strengthen the connection with the peer support teams at the junior and senior high schools. Encourage all members from the junior high team to complete the program.
- Create opportunities to mix with teens from another community or of other ages.

- Continue follow-up in some form.
- Continue to take advantage of student learning and inspiration in school classes.

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## Teachers and School Programs

Ten teachers, two administrators, and I worked together in this initiative between November, 1990 and June, 1991. As a group, we identified the most important issues, and planned and implemented the program of professional development. Through this process, we agreed on particular needs and a model for the professional development of junior high teachers. Several specific problems which led to breakdown in trust and communication between parents and teachers were uncovered along the way. These problems, as well as problems associated with policy are discussed briefly. It seemed most appropriate to use the article we created, *Making a Difference in Sexuality Education..* to outline the process of planning, the professional development activities, and the outcomes for teachers and their classes. It incorporated the teachers' perspectives and is written using the teachers' "voices." The section includes an important product of our discussions -- the "Planning Checklist" -- and concludes with reflections on the connections which resulted.

### Guidelines for the Professional Development Project

The curriculum coordinator and I agreed on the following guidelines:

- The program should be driven by teacher needs, but could be supplemented in ways which I would identify as important (e.g., coordination with other community initiatives and personnel, activities to include parents).
- Working with parents and peer instructors would be facilitated where possible.
- The philosophy and goals regarding sexuality and sexual decision making would be compatible with provincial curriculum and consistent with those articulated through the COOL program evaluation process (e.g., encouraging teen-parents communication, promoting postponing sexual involvement as a preferred life-style choice, promoting peer support for positive, non-exploitive relationships, including accurate and complete-as-possible information regarding contraceptives, etc. per the recommendations).
- We would begin with teachers in two or three junior high schools during Year #2, then include junior high teachers from all seven of the schools in the jurisdiction in Year #3.
- As far as possible we should encourage teacher participants to assist in future PD efforts.

- The curriculum coordinator would contact teachers and note specific needs he discovered.
- Whole-group meetings would be limited to three half-day sessions, with the possibility of a supper meeting if required.
- Workshops, individual consultation, classroom visits, peer networking, conference calls, and informal meetings were possible, but decisions about participation were to be left to the teachers.

As far as possible, I tried to follow the principles of effective professional development and educational change as discussed in literature by authors such as Fullan (1982) and Pansegrau (1984).

### Early Questions

Some questions I had regarding the planning with teachers were:

- *Are the political and professional climates suitable for inservice training which would lead to change?*
- *To what extent is the need for teacher inservice recognized by the school administrators and the teachers themselves?*
- *Would they support or participate in efforts in this area?*
- *What, if any, specific problems were encountered in the past that might have contributed to breakdown in trust and communication between teachers and parents?*
- *Was anyone else intending to work with these teachers? If so, what roles should be defined?*

I re-examined my data from the Spring, 1990, interviews with SE teachers and interviewed four of the current teachers. The responses indicated that the majority of junior high Health teachers in Bruckton were keenly interested in participating. Some were also willing to invest personal time and some were not. I contacted each of the principals to ensure that the intent and limits of the inservice program were clear and acceptable to them, and met with Health officials to determine the extent to which they wished to be involved.

### Specific Problems

Several problems with information that was coming to students from schools in the jurisdiction had been reported by parents and teachers over the past 18 months. I sought further information on these and other problems from staff in Alberta Education, Alberta School Trustees, and Alberta Teachers' Association (examples of the problems (in italics) and extra information I uncovered (in plain font) are given below). Although these problems were not common or frequent, teachers and parents reported that the news of these occurrences contributed to mistrust in Bruckton and other communities in the school jurisdiction.



- *Abstinence (until one is involved in a stable, long-term relationship) was discussed as one of many means of birth and disease control, as opposed to a desirable lifestyle.*  
This problem in the curriculum was recognized by Alberta Education.
- *Little instruction is given on the contributing factors which make a lifestyle of abstinence desirable and possible. Some teachers appear unwilling or unable to address these issues.*
- *Teachers have spoken and acted as though they assumed that their students were sexually active.*
- *Teachers have expressed the opinion that young teens (i.e., age 13-14 years) having intercourse could be acting in a responsible manner.*  
When considering the unlikelihood of a young teen couple having the resources to cope with possible consequences (e.g., pregnancy, STD, psychological trauma) this position would be difficult to support. According to Section 150 of the Criminal Code, it is an offense to have intercourse with anyone under age 14.
- *Teachers have not provided accurate information on birth control technology.*  
Information on some aspects of birth and STD control was changing rapidly, and what was considered to be "true" or "good advice" yesterday may be invalid, or even "harmful" advice tomorrow. As an example, some teachers chose not to develop the concepts of the limitations, and failure rate, of condoms as a means of birth control and STD control.

A decision by a teacher to withhold information is sometimes rationalized by suggesting that students might give up in despair and not use any protection if they knew how limited the protection offered by condoms really was. This may raise the issue of teacher negligence. According to Anderson (1987) and the legal advisors consulted, educators must "exercise the prudence of a careful parent." First of all, the teacher is obligated to be knowledgeable in the area of instruction. A decision to withhold information which is important in making a decision must be backed up by sound evidence from research, which does not appear to be present in this case.

- *Teachers have advised students on how they can avoid having medical service (e.g., contraceptive counselling) recorded on the family's Alberta Health Care or Blue Cross summary which is sent to the head of the family periodically.*

The consensus of legal opinion is that, at this time, instructing a class about this goes beyond the curriculum and beyond what a "reasonable and prudent parent" would do in a junior high school classroom. A parent would have reason to be concerned about this practice because it violates the trust which the parent has placed in the school and the teacher. According to the preamble of the School Act, "Parents have a right and responsibility to make decisions respecting the education of their children." Parents are also legally responsible for the medical decisions concerning the student. Students under 16 years of age do not fall within the common law concept of the "emancipated minor," those who can make decisions for themselves. The position of the Canadian Medical Association was as follows:  
*Patients aged 16 or over should be entitled to consent to their own medical treatment. Those under the age of 16 years should be able to consent to their own treatment only if the physician has ascertained that the patient is able to understand and appreciate the nature and consequences of the proposed procedure (CMA General Council, 1983).*

## **The Policy Situation**

The questions and concerns voiced indicated that some of the problems might be originating in the policy area. It appeared important to determine what policy, if any, was giving direction to the actors. There was no written policy so the task became one of articulating the unwritten policy which guided the administrators and teachers. This informal policy was generally understood as having the following features:

- SE was defined in a relatively narrow way (i.e., prevention of abuse, pregnancy, and disease).
- No curricula other than the province's were permitted.
- No provision was made for professional development of the teaching staff involved.
- The CARE kit, which focuses on sexual abuse prevention, was used with Grades 1-3.
- Standards for involvement of resource people and parents were established by individual schools and varied considerably.
- With the exception of one school, coordination of school programs with other programs in the community was not encouraged or discouraged.
- Parents were encouraged to be involved but, with few exceptions, little was done to facilitate their involvement. Educating parents was not considered to be part of the schools' mandate.
- There were no plans or procedures for evaluation of the SE program.

Borrowing ideas from Maynes (1990), I conducted an initial assessment of the policy environment to determine the range of readiness to consider policy-making. At the same time, I used Mitroff's (1983) suggestions to identify the policy stakeholders, the nature of their interests, and the issues they considered important to address. An analysis of the assumptions stakeholders made in order to arrive at their positions was also created (adapted from Mitroff and Emshoff, 1979). The policy information gathered and synthesized, including a set of tentative policy propositions, was presented to the jurisdiction representatives. This work was not requested but my hope was that it might provide starting points for structuring the problems, discussing possible solutions, and setting directions for the future. Further research and processing was required in order to produce a document which would be sufficiently complete for formal policy-making.

## Planning with Teachers

Most of the teachers who were to be involved in the professional development project gathered for a planning meeting in February of 1991. The most pressing needs, issues, and interests voiced by teachers were:

- networking with other teachers,
- setting realistic goals,
- becoming comfortable with the content and student questions,
- overcoming the sense of futility / building a sense of self-efficacy in teachers,
- obtaining current useful video resources,
- pleasing parents with diverse values,
- decreasing / delaying sexual activity,
- obtaining information on "safe sex," STD, self esteem,
- interpreting the curriculum,
- learning about the COOL program and possible use of teen leaders in school,
- coordinating with Health Unit personnel.

## The Professional Development Experiences

After that initial meeting, I sent the teachers several foundational readings which I thought would help illuminate the issues and ignite discussion. We met for three afternoons to discuss concepts of sexuality education, learn from guest speakers, preview resources, and plan approaches in grade-level groups. In order to build relationships with other stakeholders in the community, the afternoon meetings were followed by a gathering with those in the developing stakeholders' network. My role outside of the whole-group workshops varied to meet the needs and desires of the individual teachers. I acted as a "consultant-over-coffee" in after-school gatherings with a few, as colleague to talk through instructional ideas with others on the telephone, as someone to discuss the connections with larger societal issues, as a co-teacher, or as a coach of peer instructors.

As a culminating activity, I worked with the teachers (some more closely than others) to write an article, on this experience of professional development during Year #2 (Krupa et al., 1992). Each of the teachers contributed their words and manner of description. I knit the contributions together and returned the draft to the teachers for revision. The article is somewhat lengthy but warrants inclusion because it accurately summarizes the activities and reflections, and is in the voices of the teachers themselves.

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## **Making a Difference in Sexuality Education**

*Sex ed is an exercise in futility! We can't do much that will make a difference for these kids. The parents are the ones who need help, but so many of them don't seem to care. The media is the problem! Family breakdown is the problem! Peers are the problem! The curriculum is the problem!*

There are plenty of good reasons to be discouraged about our role as teachers in sexuality education. Learning about one's sexuality is complex, and so many of the factors are beyond our control. Yet, the decisions our students make, and the actions they take, can have profound effects on their future lives. We as a team of colleagues decided to take up the challenge, pool our resources, and explore ways to create more meaningful learning experiences for our students. This is the story of what we did, what happened as a result, and some of our ideas on what could and should happen in the future.

### **What We Did**

We began by meeting to chart the directions we wanted our project to take. The first issues we identified included overcoming the sense of futility we felt in the program and exploring specific areas where researchers suggest school program have potential to contribute. We wanted to become knowledgeable and comfortable enough to handle the topics and student questions, and find suitable techniques to stimulate student thought and discussion. We chose a blend of formal and informal opportunities to suit our needs and participated on a voluntary basis. Networking with other teachers, as well as with community people, was seen as a key. Finally, we wanted to build better understanding between us and stakeholders in our community, and dispel any lurking myths, misconceptions, and erroneous assumptions.

Our second meeting began with a discussion of issues arising from our own experiences and in professional literature we had read. We started to build a framework for our instruction in the classroom and our efforts outside of it. To balance the philosophy and theory, we shared specific techniques: how to involve students in planning, setting up an atmosphere that encourages openness and good listening, specific tactics for instruction about healthy relationships, assertiveness skills, etc.. Stakeholders from the community (Health Unit, FCSS, religious leaders and interested individuals) joined us to exchange information about their interests and concerns regarding sexuality education. It helped us and them to clarify and understand our perspectives and caused us to re-examine the assumptions we had been making about

the people and the programs. Equally important, it caused us to acknowledge that we held many values and beliefs in common.

We went home from this meeting with enough substance to start on unit outlines, consider approaches appropriate for our own class situations, and search for good resources. One of our members summarized factors which would likely contribute to effective instruction and satisfaction of stakeholder interests.

Our third meeting included a massive sharing of resources, a critique and update on portions of the curriculum, and some time spent on unit planning in grade groups. Then, community stakeholders and the student peer support team joined us for a physician's presentation on contraceptives and sexually transmitted diseases. Again, we discovered erroneous assumptions we had held, and came closer together as a result of sharing the experience of receiving the same information. The presentation of our planning checklist served to unify us further. Comments received from the community people gave us confidence that we were on the right track and a sense of security that we were able to satisfy the concerns of this diverse group.

#### **Meanwhile, Back in the Classroom . . .**

With the organized sessions behind us, we were faced with the very sobering task of implementing our ideas. We continued to discuss specific ideas and concerns over the phone and over coffee after school as we struggled with incorporating peer instruction, creating open environments, and addressing tough questions on relationships.

Because each of us focused on areas we felt were most important back in our classrooms, everyone got something different from our professional development experience together. Many broke through the sense of futility they felt at the beginning and found they could say "I feel I can make a difference now for some of my students." Another noted that "There is so much we can do to help students to become empowered to take control of their futures." Several reported feeling more comfortable teaching the classes, and more confident that they could help the students find the information they need. "I can see the impact that I'm having on my students. I'm glad they feel comfortable to ask questions and talk about their concerns." This was especially true in relation to communicating about sexually transmitted diseases. "I feel I am much better informed about STD, and what can and cannot be expected from condoms. I was able to make more specific and factual statements -- ones backed with statistics -- which were received with more respect."

One of our members made a discovery about the importance of language in discussing decision making. "We can so easily forget that words like love, responsibility, commitment, and even abstinence can mean ten different things to ten people. We can help students in a practical way by helping them refine what these mean." Similarly, another reported "We refined the concept of a 'relationship' and how it could be a lot more than sex. The students appreciated that."

Some reported personal changes in understandings of concepts which changed their approaches to topics. "The scary stats have led to a stronger belief in 'Safe sex' and that protected intercourse is not safe sex." Several others reported "Once I began to understand how postponing (intercourse) could be seen as a positive choice rather than a negative commitment, I was able to help my students understand that as well."

Most got the students directly involved in the planning of the unit, and many had students learning from one another. "A highlight for me was involving the student instructors. What they did with the anatomy and physiology section was just tremendous. I've used students as instructors a lot more than I ever have in the past." Another was "totally impressed with the peer instructors and the students reaction to them." These teens also led sessions on assertiveness skills, healthy relationships, and setting limits. "A personal message from a credible peer about why she has chosen to postpone sexual intercourse is worth a million teacher words." Another had student groups approach sensitive topics. "Groups came up with reasons why teens become sexually involved in a relationship, and classified them as positive or negative. This led into some excellent thought and discussion."

Several found that time spent in helping students to refine their ideas of their futures was time well spent. "I had the students really think about various aspects of their futures, and develop detailed personal timelines for their lives ahead. They did a tremendous job and referred to the timelines again and again when discussing responsibility, emotional consequences, pregnancy or STD, relationship goals, financial goals, or whatever. It helped to make the abstract concepts concrete."

In another important but abstract area "The highlight for me was what I learned and brought back to my class about fetal development from conception to birth. The videos, posters, and pamphlets we used were excellent and made those invisible things concrete for them."

Of course, some of the intentions just did not work out in practice. It was still difficult to involve parents and several came up against road blocks. A first time teacher found "I felt that I had to go through the course at least once to know where I was at before involving more people (i.e., parents) in the program." Being able to

monitor and evaluate progress also remains at a primitive level, and is a frustration to some. Many students still do not seem committed to postponing a sexual relationship, but it is really difficult to say. "I know I can't have great expectations, but I'm going to keep working and refine my approach to this."

### **Looking Back at our Process of PD**

We met a last time to evaluate the approach and offer direction for professional development in the future in discussion and written comments. All appreciated the opportunity to work with their colleagues. One said, "I have always enjoyed working with other teachers. The sharing of concerns and ideas was much appreciated. It saved a lot of time and effort, and made me feel like part of the team, rather than a lone ranger." Others appreciated the diversity in viewpoints and the sharpened insights. "We are each other's best resources. I feel freer to approach others and discuss ideas." Another reported "I clarified my personal beliefs when I had to verbalize them with my colleagues." Similarly, on the community level, "I really appreciated getting together with people from various groups in the community. I felt less constrained after meeting them. It was helpful to hear what social workers, pastors and other professionals are dealing with in their spheres."

Of course, the process was not without its problems. Time was a definite limitation, as one of our colleagues expressed. "We could have used more time but, in light of the weighting given the unit in the curriculum, it just couldn't be justified. This section, and health in general, deserves a higher profile and more time. It's a pity that an area that could save the kids' lives and a lot of heartache is such a low priority in the curriculum." More time for collegial planning, resource sharing, and previewing would have been useful. Team teaching and peer visits would also have helped, but time and logistics stood in the way.

We appreciated the resources and release time which our central office supplied, and we responded by expending extra time and effort on our own. Our hope is that administrators will continue to create conditions so that teachers can address issues of importance to them and strengthen connections between elements of our school program (elementary, secondary level, peer support groups, QUEST, etc.).

### **End for the Future**

Again, due to our different situations, we want to concentrate on different areas in the future. For some, the question will be, "How can I involve parents more deeply in the education, especially sexuality education, of their child?" Several feel that "the

largest challenge to overcome is the lack of parent involvement" and want to continue to develop strategies in that area.

Others, having discovered their students' interest in discussing ethical and moral concepts, will focus on ways of helping students to develop their capacities for reasoning in those areas. Still others, impressed with the potential of student "peer" instructors in their classes, want to pursue this avenue further. Finally, some were drawn to examine broader social issues as a result of our study of SE. They will focus on "How does our society create myths and distort understandings and expectations for relationships?"

In general, a broad perspective on sexuality education is needed. All of us felt that sexuality issues can and should be addressed throughout the health curriculum, and in appropriate places in other subject areas as well. Some are considering different formats for instruction, such as setting aside a special day for sessions with guest facilitators. Most of all, however, school programs should be thought of as part of a larger community education effort. Students can be influenced by parents, peers, churches, agencies, and organizations and community stakeholders should continue to collaborate in the continual development of SE.

Societal pressures, adverse media influence, and family breakdown will still remain. Our PD experience showed us there are things we can do at school that can make a difference. It served as a means to strengthen the educational partnership with our community, and built confidence and trust between us. We, as teachers, took the initiative and explored issues of importance to us. Most of all, our hope is that we have helped our students to be a little better prepared in this important area of their learning.

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### **The Planning Checklist**

The planning checklist produced by teachers, along with the discussions which were part of the ongoing meetings with community people, led to greater acceptance of the SE program by religious groups and others who contested it in times past. The list was our condensed version of the major points which teachers, outside researchers, and community people felt were important to consider in our school programs. It has since been used as a pre-planning guide, a mid-point check, and a final evaluation check by many of the teachers in the division. The comments teachers gave as to the nature of the problems experienced focused our discussions in later gatherings.



Although this list was most useful for programs for Grade 8 and 9 students in our area, some points were relevant to the Grade 7 program as well. We recognized that each of the teachers planned and conducted their programs in their own ways. Each was at a different place in regard to using student-centered and student-initiated learning strategies. Although teachers could not hope to do everything in the nine hours or so dedicated to SE, it helped us to be aware of some of the more useful and important directions in which to move. Appendix 8.1 is a copy of the planning checklist as revised in Year #4.

### Toward Better Print and Audio-Visual Materials

I gave some attention to designing a system whereby teachers could identify better print and video materials and share their experience in this area with their colleagues. I produced a starter package with information on resources which I and several other teachers had encountered, and encouraged each of the readers to send information on other resources they have encountered for subsequent editions. I also planned a system whereby these assessments by teachers could be pooled and made available to all in a computerized format (i.e., HyperCard) to allow individuals to add their evaluations as they used the materials.

### New Connections

The inservice program created linkages in several directions, many of which occurred without my assistance. A moderately effective linkage between teachers in the three schools seemed to develop by the end of our meetings in June. The inservice format modelled this networking and collaborative analysis of resources, development of lessons, etc.. I had hoped for greater networking, more collegial class visits and conference calls, but the constraints of time on teachers seemed to preclude further involvement for most.

Attempts to involve the school administrators met with moderate success. Of the administrative teams in the three schools, the assistant principal (from Bruckton's 5-9 school) and a principal from another school were involved, and were teaching the SE program. The principal of Bruckton's 5-9 school was unable to participate but showed considerable interest, carefully reading all of the printed materials.

One teacher associated with both the sexuality program and the QUEST program was part of the group and served as resource for Division 2 teachers on QUEST. The same teacher also linked the inservice program to the junior high peer support group because she assists in the leadership of it. The efficiency of these and all linkages proved to be very useful from an organizational perspective and moderately useful from a learning perspective (i.e., concepts actually transmitted).

# The Stakeholders

Short-term problem solving and long-term capacity building required improved connections among stakeholders, greater understanding, and working together more effectively. In order for this to happen, many issues had to be addressed. This section describes some of the major questions that we asked as we were trying to improve approaches to SE in Bruckton, and some of the answers that we arrived at during Year #2.

## Who are the stakeholders in SE and what are their interests?

We had learned that there were people who had something to contribute towards improving the situation, but were not included in the lists of "those who directly affected the program or were directly affected by it." The stakeholder representatives who participated in the program evaluation continued to be interested but did not adequately represent the range of interests in the community. I began to contact those referred to me by others. Mitroff's (1983) framework helped us to systematically uncover elusive stakeholders so we might, eventually, understand their values and interests. The seven approaches, the people they identify and miss, and the specific individuals in each category are depicted in Appendix 5.2.

Further attempts were made to contact each of the stakeholders and distill the nature of their interests and concerns. We did not ignore stakeholders if we had imperfect knowledge about them or their interests. We attempted to be comprehensive at this "listing" stage, but recognized that not all would be able to receive a high level of attention and communication in the project. We found that not all who had an interest wanted to be involved, even beyond an introductory telephone call. We concluded that we would be persistent in inviting and encouraging participation but, ultimately, individuals would decide whether or not they would contribute their ideas.

## What core characteristics connect us as community members and collaborators?

In order to start this process, I re-examined the program evaluation interviews and the discussions with stakeholders in the fall of 1990 and found the following values and beliefs were held in common:

- All individuals should be treated with respect. Using sex or anything else to exploit another is wrong.
- Teens make decisions about their own behaviors. They usually make better decisions when they have accurate information. Some non-rational elements also influence decisions.
- Parents can, and ought to, have a primary role in the sexuality education of their children.
- It is important for teens to delay sexual intercourse until they are capable of fully comprehending and dealing with the consequences in a productive way.
- Sexual intercourse among teens has physical, social, psychological, and societal consequences. It is a health issue, a social issue, a moral and ethical issue, a personal empowerment issue, and a financial issue.
- It is essential for community leaders to collaborate and manage conflicts in order to move toward the greatest good, modelling respect, cooperation, and intellectual honesty.

### **What are the Options for a Coordinating/Collaborating Body?**

The need for a coordinating/collaborating body for the project had been emphasized by several stakeholders. I felt it would be best to work for a definable group. My reasoning stemmed from my background and image of community development, my concept of collaboration as a process requiring close and regular contact, ease of communication, and concern for continuity. Historically, interagency coordination had occurred successfully under the Lifelong Learning and Leisure Committee (LLLLC) of the Community School. Below the surface, however, conflicts and communication problems had led to difficulties in coordination among various agencies and groups. Religious leaders typically accepted invitations but rarely showed up for meetings, and the Community School suffered from a "lack of focus" in the opinion of some individuals.

Pulling a new group together was not necessarily the best solution. This meant lots of work and would create another organization in an already organization-rich environment. A new group would not be necessary if a suitable related group was already in place and could accommodate the SE project within its mandate or enlarge its mandate to include it.

### **The Proposal to the Lifelong Learning and Leisure Committee**

Both the FCSS representative and the Community School Coordinator suggested I present the LLLLLC with a proposal that their members form the core of a coordinating body and add other contributors in as required. This was done at a special meeting in early February, 1991. Those present reflected on the concept, and discussed it further at their next meeting. They concluded that, although many of the same people should be involved,

their interests and those of the community would best be served if the new organization would function with an identity of its own. The group felt that this was best because they were not involved in any other single project in such an intensive way, and that many outside people would and should be involved. I learned several months later that several felt that LLLLC should be insulated from controversy. The group agreed that the new organization should have the structure and composition it required to most effectively link with those interested in addressing related issues. The LLLLC also agreed to help the project get started by sponsoring the survey of teens and parents, and attending at least the first meeting of the new organization.

At this point, two new questions became important.

### What should a new organization be like?

In discussions with stakeholders' representatives, I asked them for, or they offered, a description of what a new organization should be like. Among other things, the stakeholders described an organization which had the following characteristics:

- a loose structure -- a forum for sharing ideas and discussing problems rather than doing the busy work of coordinating programs,
- tolerance for differing views and commitment to one another and the community,
- individual members having a sense of the whole picture,
- free and direct communication between the members when outside the organization,
- an atmosphere of fun and friendship,
- a culture of appreciation ,
- the ability to accommodate the turnover of people,
- an equal sharing of power.

### How can we share power most effectively?

Some of those interviewed suggested that there had been problems associated with sharing power in the past. Developing a shared working knowledge appeared to be one way that could be explored immediately.

*Some of the power problems in the past were due to differences in knowledge.*

*Some had lots of knowledge while others felt ignorant. One way to get around this is if we all grew in knowledge together.*

We decided to pursue this by inviting guest experts to come in for all to hear and question. This happened at the second *BRIDGES* meeting and was later remembered as an effective way to begin to reduce the differential in power due to knowledge.

Another way to share power was through sharing the tasks of leadership and control in meetings. We began this by rotating the responsibilities of chairship and recording among the members. Although this was suggested in March, we did not actually begin this practice until the following September (Year #3).

### **BRIDGES Begins**

People in the community were using the *BRIDGES* name for the integrated development project.

*The name BRIDGES symbolized what we were trying to achieve in 'bridging the gaps' between stakeholders and between all those who contributed to sexuality education.*

It was also intended to symbolize the connection between theory and practice in instruction and curriculum, as well as the connection between parents and teens in families. The name provided a useful image for the stakeholders' organization, the PD project, and the movement in Bruckton.

*The name BRIDGES was very useful. It shows what we need to do and how we can help people connect: parents and teens, home and school, etc. It was consistent with an ideal -- a vision -- and it helped articulate that vision.*

As the *BRIDGES* projects evolved, gaps in our theory and practice of capacity building, community, and collaboration were uncovered and addressed. Plans and activities undertaken under *BRIDGES* were based on the premise that people can, and should, collaborate to address community issues. We assumed that such collaborative action would build a progressively stronger sense of community and a foundation for development in the future. Increasing the "capacity" meant enhancing the ability of community members to articulate their needs, identify possible actions to address these needs, and facilitate action.

### **An Aside: Personal Reflections on the Project**

Readers interested in learning more about the project at this point are invited to turn to Appendix 5.3.

### **The BRIDGES Network**

As mentioned in the section on teachers and school programs, the first gathering of the new *BRIDGES* Network was held as part of the teachers' inservice workshop in early April, 1991. This provided an automatic connection between teachers and the other stakeholders. Invitations were extended to all those contacted to that date. I expanded

extra effort on some groups (two churches, family/school liaison workers, and the Lions Club) because their involvement appeared to be especially important.

The meeting was attended by the teachers and representatives from two churches and three agencies. We began by discussing a "group contract" (derived from the COOL program) that might help to facilitate communication and understanding on issues which involved strongly held, diverse values. I presented the "common values and beliefs" that I had found in interviews with stakeholders, which led to individuals talking about individual perspectives and programs. We concluded with discussion on a general strategy, agreeing to start with issues where there was agreement and build confidence and trust in one another.

Although many simply described the situation, the comments were expressed with concern and compassion. The meeting atmosphere, the views expressed and the way in which they were expressed, were remembered over a year later as contributing in a major way to opening paths for communication and understanding among stakeholders. This meeting was also remembered as a time when emphasis began to shift from "sexuality education" to "healthy relationships" among teens and within families. The following is a sample of the comments offered as participants presented their groups' perspective and programs.

- *Moral/Ethical issues can't be separated from sexuality education. This is expressed in our common values and beliefs statement, as well as in the curriculum guide (p. 16).*
- *Christian groups have a poor reputation for cooperating with community initiatives, but are trying hard to overcome it.*
- *Our church is working in several areas. These include creating a peer group where abstinence is normal and acceptable, reducing the opportunity for sexual misadventure by encouraging group activities, trying to build comfort for discussions with adults, providing role models, providing practical, psychological and spiritual support when problems arise (e.g., unwanted pregnancy).*
- *There is a great concern for the well-being of families in Bruckton. Sexuality issues are broader than just health, but are often related to abuse and violence. Churches and pastors often deal with these aspects.*
- *Closely associated with the sexuality issues are self-esteem and personal empowerment. (QUEST program was mentioned specifically.) Some school workshops on self-esteem have been attempted in the past but with limited success because the reinforcement didn't come from other sources, especially the home.*
- *The importance of parents being involved in meaningful ways and taking their responsibilities seriously was emphasized many times. We need to think, plan, and act carefully and purposefully to support this.*
- *Girls and boys still suffer from stereotyping and labelling.*

- *Parent roles are stereotyped. The Focus series has been useful in overcoming some of this.*
- *Reinforcement from different sources was mentioned a number of times as having merit. It can occur effectively through programs like COOL that are voluntary. Students have said that they probably heard the same things in school, but weren't listening.*
- *People have the capacity and, perhaps deep inside, really want to change.*
- *We cannot be dogmatic. People of any age do not accept it.*
- *Role models are very important -- especially in relation to the moral / ethical issues.*
- *We need to show more of the positives (e.g., teach in terms of do's rather than don'ts, draw out concepts such as the freedoms which waiting can produce rather than the avoidance of negative consequences only.)*
- *Peer group norms can and do shift, but it takes time and deliberate, cooperative efforts.*
- *We can achieve healthier norms. Those who can contribute to sexuality education are heading in the same direction and want to achieve the same things.*
- *Continue to teach and reinforce decision making, but take care to be as complete and accurate as possible (and recognize shortcomings) when supplying information for sexual decision-making.*
- *The issues reach back to the earliest days in the family. There is a "chicken or the egg" syndrome. Less can be expected of parents who have loads of problems themselves, so we should be really tackling the situation by targeting parents much earlier. Issues reach back even to premarital counselling.*

### **STD, Information Power, and the Checklist**

Members of the stakeholders' network met for the second time three weeks later. Again the meeting was coupled with the teachers' professional development workshop, this time with the community people arriving at 3:00 p.m. to accommodate the teachers' regular schedule. Students from the Grades 5-9 peer support team were also present for the first item -- a presentation by an obstetrician-gynecologist with extensive experience with teen pregnancies and STD. The information he presented on chlamydia, gonorrhea, herpes, HIV/AIDS, HPV, and hepatitis B had a strong impact on many of those present, as did his points relating to sexuality education and health policy. For many of the students, teachers, parents, and community group representatives, this presentation moved them to more critical analysis of these issues in their community. In addition to the inspiration and motivation the speaker offered, receiving the same information, and critiquing it together after, provided an effective means of "power sharing" through shared information.

The second part of the meeting also had far-reaching implications. Once again, we went around the table to introduce, explain the nature of our interests and involvements, and bring up concerns or problems. In response to one of the questions the teachers presented the "planning checklist" and, as described earlier in this chapter, had a very positive effect on building the atmosphere of trust and respect.

### Changing Stakeholder Representatives and Relationships

It is important to note that there were many changes in stakeholder representatives during this period. The Health Unit's sexual health coordinator took a different position and a new individual took over. The Health Unit's trend away from direct involvement in Bruckton continued, but puzzled several in the community. Many of those representing religious groups changed as well. A local theater group became interested in social drama, and there were indications that the larger municipal FCSS agency would become involved.

The relationships and interactions among the representatives were changing constantly. In the midst of all the signs of progress, a variety of interpersonal conflicts between professionals became evident. In three cases, major breakdowns in communication occurred, steps backward on the path toward building trust and respect. In two of the cases, mistrust resulted from inaccurate assumptions about each others' motives.

The COOL peer instructors were providing some valuable connections outside and inside Bruckton. All were active with peer support teams. Several of the leaders and registrants were high school students, and three of the leaders were on the high school peer support team. One of the teen leaders and one of the adults leaders was very active with a local church. Two of the teens were involved with a local social drama group.

### Evaluation and Plans for the Future

The stakeholders, including teachers, gathered for a discussion on where we had come from over the past year, and where we should go in the future. The participants' summarized the processes of identification, organization, sharing information, gaining common knowledge, building confidence, building leadership, etc. (as noted above). They reported increasing willingness and ability to discuss issues relating to sexuality and relationships, increasing understanding and acceptance of the improved school program, increasing trust, and increasing appreciation for one another. This evening also marked the beginning of the tradition of offering appreciation to groups and individuals for special efforts and contributions to SE in the community. There was an expression of pride over the progress we had made according to the purposes we had and the questions we had asked. Many voiced feelings of increasing sense of ownership in the movement, team



spirit, and hope. The group was aware that I would be active through the fall, but would gradually withdraw from active service by the end of February (1992), and I asked them to think about how I could best assist them until that time.

In response to the question "Where should the Network go from here?" all agreed the network was worth continuing, and that we should meet quarterly. The purposes for meeting should continue as they were (discussing concerns, identifying needs, problem solving, monitoring, maintaining continuity). In order to clarify any confusion over our mission, we agreed to formalize a statement of purpose and a list of objectives by the end of September.

As an activity to reinforce critical thinking, a poster promoting the use of condoms was circulated and those present were invited to discuss its strengths and weaknesses. The language used and information presented in the poster stimulated the group to a lively discussion and a sophisticated level of critical thought.

When asked, "Would you be willing to share responsibilities in such a network? If so under what conditions?" most indicated willingness to share in a limited way if the organization were kept simple, informal, and collaborative as originally planned. FCSS offered to continue to provide administrative support and the school representatives offered the use of their facility and of their service as a conduit of information. A third major question which guided discussion was "Where should the COOL program be headed?"

Other areas to attend to in the future included: assist individual organizations (in addition to teachers), meet needs of parents of younger children, continue to develop church programming, improve liaison and continuity with high school students, and improve contact between COOL and peer support teams in the junior and senior high schools.

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## **Monitoring the Changes in Bruckton**

Discussion among stakeholders in February, 1991, led to a tentative plan which comprised six components:

- descriptions of programs implemented,
- case studies of three contributing groups (school, FCSS, and a church group),
- statistical records of teen pregnancy and STD (to be obtained from the Health Unit),
- questionnaire survey of Grades 8 and 9 students to obtain quantitative data,

- case studies of four families to obtain qualitative data on "client participant" perspectives.
- individual evaluations of programs done by the particular contributor.

By April of 1991, I had collected or created descriptions of the programs that were being implemented by agencies and received the first statistical health summaries. Two of the four families were identified for case study, but no interviews had taken place with them. Working with stakeholders and expert informants, I began to prepare new questionnaires for students and parents.

The questionnaire for teens turned into a major project in itself. We moved away from looking at knowledge and from more "comprehensive" types of evaluations involving various possible correlates. Instead, we focussed on attitudes, values, perceptions and self-esteem. There were several reasons for this:

- Knowledge was specific to individual programs and would vary depending on exposure to those programs.
- Evaluations done on SE programs in the past had shown that knowledge is not a problem, and that nearly all programs demonstrate gains in knowledge (Kirby, 1989). Changes in attitudes, however, have been found to be short-lived or were not measured at all. The effect on values is similar, except in programs where values and value-analysis were systematically addressed and reinforced.
- The self-esteem emphasis was suggested by stakeholders, and supported by the literature and expert informants.

Various connections were considered in the development of the questionnaire. We wanted it to connect with other evaluations and, therefore, borrowed items from authors like Kirby (1989) and Weed & Olsen (1990), and extensively from the questionnaire which those implementing COOL are asked to use. We also wanted to connect it with key questions from Bruckton's program evaluation research which contained items of interest to stakeholders.

While able to gather helpful information, the evaluation needed to be short enough that students would give it serious attention. We determined that a maximum length was six pages requiring no more than twenty-five minutes. Other features of the questionnaire included:

- minimal demographics,
- simple two, three, or four-point scales to be consistent with other evaluations,
- about one page on self-esteem (condensed from Battle's self-esteem inventory),
- about one page on parent/teen interactions,
- about one page on values and attitudes using the COOL evaluation as a base,

- one page addressing specific areas of knowledge, personal empowerment / locus of control, perceptions, and future orientation.

The final version was printed and administered by the Health Unit Sexuality Education Coordinator during the first week of April, just prior to the implementation of the COOL and school programs. I completed a preliminary data analysis for the April 30th meeting of stakeholders and teachers, to provide teachers with information before beginning their programs. Unfortunately, the plan for case study interviews with families was not feasible in the time available and was abandoned -- one of the down sides of having only one researcher trying to do too many things.

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## Other Factors Influencing Development

### Provincial Factors: The "Minister's Committee" on Sexuality Education

Criticism of the "Theme 5" curriculum, reports of questionable instructional approaches employed by teachers.

Alberta parents, community groups, health professionals and many others regularly expressed both support for and concerns about the program through letters, meetings and personal contact with the Minister of Education and members of the educational community. (Cherry et al., 1992. p. 4.)

A motion in the legislature to suspend sexuality instruction in schools prompted the Minister of Education to create a special committee to address key questions:

- What role should schools play in teaching human sexuality education?
- Are the current policies, programs, and learning resource materials for human sexuality education at the elementary and junior high levels and in the senior high Career and Life Management course appropriate ones to maintain for the future, or should changes be made? (Alberta Education, 1991)

The committee's report (Cherry et al., 1992. p. 4.) added two other tasks:

- Identify and make recommendations on issues, questions and concerns related to human sexuality education.
- Help Alberta Education encourage partnerships with interest groups and involvement in the development and delivery of high quality human sexuality education programs.

This announcement stimulated much discussion among the residents of Brackton at a time when there were several viable SE initiatives in the community to discuss. I prepared a submission in consultation with members of the BRIDGES Network, which again provided an opportunity to review the situation. Although at times concern for the future of SE was voiced, the overall impact of the committee's work was positive.

## Summary and Implications

This was a very busy and worthwhile year of improvements, particularly with respect to development of instructors. Professionals, teens, and parents took advantage of the opportunities and grew in knowledge and skills. They also made useful connections with those outside of the community, many of which would prove to be a valuable source of assistance in the future. Respect for the COOL and school programs continued to grow in the community as the instructors improved and grew in credibility. Although SE issues had a higher profile among those in religious groups, formal programs had not emerged.

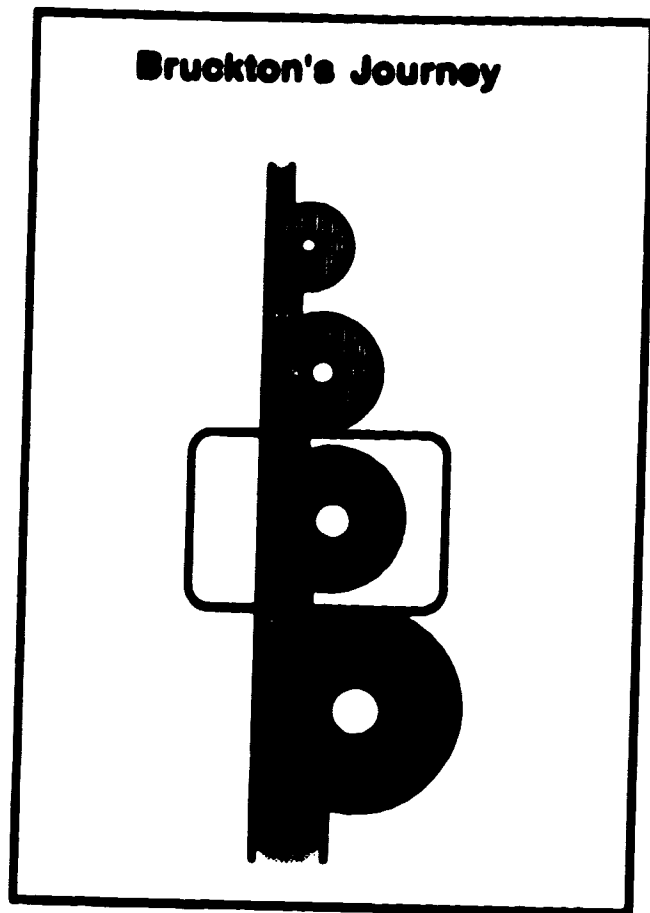
Leadership and organizational capacities were also being built and discovered in the community, and hope for the future was high. New stakeholders and representatives were identified and were developing connections with others but some were still having only minimal influence. There seemed to be substantial potential for growth in numbers and in quality of involvement, and several were interested in exploring this potential.

Control of planning and implementation, though still dominated by professionals, was softening as the *BRIDGES* Network structure encouraged sharing these roles with more people and with non-professionals. FCSS, for example remained involved strongly at the community level but others were now involved the program level. Positions on Arnstein's (1969) levels of stakeholder participation in planning still varied from token to high, with professionals still having more control than their share, in the views of some. Like the other features described above, however, development in planning appeared to be on a reasonable course and it seemed very likely that further progress would occur in Year #3. The structure of support was changing as groups like the Health Unit and FCSS moved back while the school jurisdiction, religious groups, and teens themselves increased their support. The community school and the LLLLC continued to provide a strong positive influence.

Organizationally, the work done through the stakeholders' network appeared to be of great significance. Benefits such as improved communication and understanding, discovery of common ground, appreciation of differences and contributions, and growth in confidence and trust were already being noted. Some positive steps were made in the organization that stirred thoughts about principles underlying community and development. I was motivated to investigate community development and participatory/action research now that I appreciated their application to this study. The stage appeared to be set for substantial growth and we seemed well equipped to facilitate that growth. Having the assistance of the researcher / facilitator enabled progress on fronts that would not have otherwise been possible. I began making plans for leaving.

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*Year #3:  
Developing  
Capacity*



This was a year of adaptation and consolidation of the changes resulting from the initiatives of Years #1 and #2. As we focused on developing the capacities necessary for self-sustaining development, we encountered major opportunities to help other communities and receive benefits from them. There were also challenges, including personal, interpersonal and organizational obstacles to overcome. As our knowledge and experience of community participation in research and development was increasing, we began to be more aware of the dynamics within Bruckton and with others outside of Bruckton.

During Year #3, I continued to work with adult and teen peer leaders, teachers, and various stakeholder groups and representatives. Often I acted to connect those in Bruckton with those outside the community. The connectedness seemed to broaden experience, enhance motivation, strengthen support networks, while positively influencing other communities. As groups and individuals increasingly "took ownership" and shared leadership, I assisted in lower profile ways and, gradually, withdrew from each area except COOL. My role in Bruckton officially came to a close with the delivery of my final report to the BRIDGES Network members in June. This document, prepared from observations and interviews in Bruckton, summarized our history and current position, and suggested

possibilities for future directions. After revision to accommodate comments from stakeholders, this report provided a base from which to create Chapters I, V, VI and IX.

The sections which follow describe the activities and growth of teens, peer instructors and COOL, and the stakeholders and their network. Factors such as the emergence of local parent leaders, supplemental school programs emphasizing self-esteem and decision making, the Minister's Committee Report, and ongoing conflict between groups at the provincial level, also influenced development in Year #3. These are discussed briefly at the end of the chapter. Those wishing to learn about factors influencing the researcher / facilitator might wish to begin by reading Appendix 6.1. There were a wide variety of experiences associated with academic life and community development work with other communities that had an important influence on the study in Bruckton. Appendix 6.2 is a summary of Year #3 activities and developments. Copies of the materials or activities described in this or other chapters can be obtained by contacting the author.

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## **Teachers and School Programs**

As Year #3 began, several changes were affecting the development of SE in schools and our plans for my work.

- Timetabling, transfer of staff to other schools, and retirement resulted in the loss of half of the teachers involved in the Year #2 PD program.
- Our PD plans broadened from the school level to the jurisdiction level.
- Key teen instructors moved on to high school. A new, enthusiastic group of junior high teen leaders was emerging but, to be effective, required considerable growth in knowledge, skills, attitudes and experience.

While assisting to meet the immediate needs of teachers for background information and resources, I continued to work on appropriate and sustainable strategies for enhancing professional development. In addition to participating in the jurisdiction's PD initiative, some of the teachers attended other workshops on sexuality, building self-esteem, cooperative learning, and developing support group skills. Their learning in these programs appeared to be reinforcing the improvement of educational and organizational approaches in Bruckton.

This section outlines school-related activities in Year #3, including work with administrators, teachers, and peer instructors, and the impact in Bruckton. Brief

descriptions of the perspectives of teachers and their efforts with teen leaders are included below. My efforts with teen leaders in COOL are discussed in the section which follows.

### **Continuing PD Work at the School Jurisdiction Level**

The teachers involved with the Year #2 program were generally satisfied with their experience of professional development and reported increased understanding and substantial improvements in their classroom programs and practices. They also noted constraints (insufficient instructional time, lack of resources, and student and family factors) which continued to limit the growth of some students via school programs and made recommendations for future PD programs. The school jurisdiction curriculum coordinator asked me to continue with SE teachers, but with a program that would include all seven junior high schools in the jurisdiction. Once again, he offered modest financial assistance and I, again, made an offer of additional volunteer time. Continuing PD work at the jurisdiction level appeared to be the best option for several reasons:

- The teacher time and jurisdiction money available limited the amount of attention that could be given to SE at the school level. A teacher expressed this as follows:

*For the amount of time devoted to sexuality education in the curriculum, (7-9 hours) we simply couldn't justify any more time for inservice efforts. Other major areas had taken a back seat while we concentrated on SE last year and it was time to attend to those needs.*

- Teachers in other schools were expressing the same kinds of needs and problems as were identified earlier in Bruckton. These teachers were eager to enhance their approaches as well.
- The opportunity to establish a jurisdiction-wide network of SE teachers held considerable potential for continuing development among professionals, in the curriculum, and in strategies for dealing with difficult areas.
- There was greater potential to acquire video and print resources and coordinate human resources, such as teen instructors, through working at the jurisdiction level.
- Jurisdiction policy and regulations affecting instruction in sexuality education would more likely be influenced.

### **Guidelines for Year #3**

Recommendations from teachers in Year #2 and negotiations between the curriculum coordinator and me led to the following guidelines for working with teachers in Year #3:

- **Emphasize the personal empowerment of teachers, but also collegial networking and helping one another in planning and solving problems. Use the workshops and other means, such as printed newsletters, to support this.**
- **As far as possible and practical, involve the teachers who have developed expertise (those from the Year #2 project as well as others) to share their insights and act as informal resources to assist others.**
- **Promote the use of the checklist created in Year #2 as a framework for planning to increase the likelihood that community concerns and necessary learning elements will be addressed.**
- **Encourage teachers to bring concerns, ideas, resources, and activities. Work toward building a bank of resources and a framework of lesson ideas that could be shared among the group and continually improved.**
- **Identify a contact person in each school who might coordinate communication, monitor materials, assist others in school to find resources etc. in order to overcome problems in these areas.**
- **Encourage the development of expertise in SE. Where possible encourage individual teachers to be involved with more than one class.**
- **Plan two full-day sessions to begin with (suggested dates in October and January). Further plans would be made following an assessment of the progress made and needs remaining. I would be available for in-progress inservice assistance on a limited basis.**
- **Sufficient funds for release time would be made available to permit up to three people per school at workshops.**
- **Encourage the organization of resources on the school and jurisdiction levels. Teachers could request funds for video tapes.**
- **Work with the Health Unit SE Coordinator in developing a resource binder for each school which could serve to organize activities and information, be readily update-able and help to increase the longevity of print resources in the schools.**

**Although some teachers recommended that participation in PD be a pre-requisite for teaching SE, we agreed eventually that participation could only be by choice.**

### **Themes Emphasized with Teachers**

**Seventeen teachers were involved and all seven schools were represented. Two workshops happened as planned in October, 1991 and February, 1992. The meetings with teachers provided opportunities to investigate a variety of themes and grow in knowledge, skills, and attitudes relating to sexuality and facilitating learning about it. Once again, most teachers read articles which I provided to stimulate thought and discussion. Groups**



identifying possibilities for taking sexuality out of isolation and naturally integrating the concepts within the Health curriculum (i.e., under Relating to Others, Body Care and Knowledge, and Self Awareness) and within other curricula (Social Studies and Language Arts). Teachers presented and discussed format options such as hosting workshops, fair days, and teen guest speakers. This led to discussion about developing peer support and peer instructorship, and possible connections with programs like COOL as a training opportunity. Several possibilities for involving parents more deeply and assisting them to do the best job possible, were also examined. Finally, teachers presented their most effective teaching activities and resources.

### The SHaRE Notes Newsletter

Between November and May, I prepared three editions of a newsletter for SE and Health teachers, an idea which resulted from conversations with teachers. SHaRE was an acronym for "Sexuality, Health, and Relationships Education." Its assisted in the following:

- providing a forum for teachers to share their experiences,
- valuing teachers' experiences,
- facilitating collegial networking within the school jurisdiction and reinforcing the concept of professional collaboration in planning and problem solving,
- assisting teachers to connect with resource people inside and outside of the jurisdiction,
- increasing understanding of outside events with implications for SE (e.g., Minister's Committee on SE),
- organizing information (rationales, meeting notes, resources and activities, etc.) in written form for future reference (eventually in a resource binder) and systematic improvement ,
- extending the essential points from the meetings to those teachers and administrators who were unable to attend but were interested in the learning.

We planned to develop a system that would continue to facilitate professional interaction with a minimum of effort from a coordinating teacher, should someone emerge who would be interested in carrying on the effort.

### Outcomes for Bruckton's Teachers and Students

Teachers and students in Bruckton received several important benefits as a result of PD efforts at the jurisdiction level. These related to a variety of areas:

- networking with other teachers,
- improving resources for instruction,
- developing leadership.

- gaining recognition,
- improving the profile of health and sexuality education,
- improving teacher/jurisdiction relations,
- working out theory in practice.

The benefits are briefly described below and discussed further in Chapter IX as examples of a much larger concept of "inside-outside dynamics" operating to enhance development in Bruckton.

**Networking With SE Teachers Throughout the Jurisdiction.**

*The meetings started that process of networking. There were others going through the same struggles and together we began finding ways of slowly and steadily improving our planning and teaching.*

Several teachers reported that the SHaRE Notes Newsletter was effective for the networking purposes it was intended for.

- *They are well done, timely, what we need as far as resources and information about what others are doing. I used the table that shows who teaches where and contacted (other teachers) to discuss plans and resources. That networking has been helpful. I'll have something to put in next time.*
- *It has been fun to read. Each (edition) stimulated a lot of conversation in the staff room. Networking is a key.*

The higher technology ideas for networking which we investigated did not turn out to be as useful. The ideas of the drop file in the computer network and electronic mail technology were interesting to several, but not sufficiently practical to pursue. The jurisdiction network was still in the formative stages and teachers had not yet become accustomed to using it. The FAX technology would have been more useful, but it was not available at some schools, including Bruckton.

**Improvement in Resources for Instruction.** As a result of discussion during the second teachers' meeting (January), a committee was created to review videos and make a proposal for purchase. The resources which were acquired as a result were reported to be appropriate and useful in classroom instruction. They complemented those used in the COOL program and those available from the regional Health Unit. Several instructional posters were also acquired.

As a student described below, resources like the posters and videos helped to concretize concepts and stimulated critical thought.

*The poster showing the developing baby, week by week from fertilization to delivery, was really something. Our teacher had it up in the room and we pretty well taught ourselves about the effects of drugs, about what the baby can do at what*

*age, etc. (Teens from the COOL program) pointed out some really amazing things the baby has at really early stages - like the heart beat and the organs. It was awesome.*

Quotations such as the one above also indicated that teens participating in the COOL program were providing informal instruction with their peers.

New print resources, mostly pamphlets, were also acquired by teachers during Year #3. The Bruckton 5-9 School, however, had received a variety of such resources during Year #2 and only a small addition was made to their collection.

**Developing Leadership.** Bruckton teachers did not take on jurisdiction leadership roles to the extent we had anticipated. Rather, they focused their attention on their own students in their own schools. (As stated earlier, several felt that their participation in Year #2 was all they and their school could afford, considering the number of other areas that needed attention and the limited time available to them for professional development.) This was not a problem, however, as individuals from other schools provided leadership in updating resources, policy and regulation in the jurisdiction. Other teachers led in the development and distribution of resource binders introduced by the Health Unit SE Coordinator. Those in Bruckton benefitted from these actions.

**Recognition and Satisfaction.** Several commented that they very much appreciated the recognition given to them for the time and energy they spent in working through concerns and developing approaches during Year #2. This recognition was given to them by teachers in other schools, as well as jurisdiction administrators and school trustees. There was a general good feeling of being able to contribute, and satisfaction that the recommendations they had made were received and that many were acted upon.

**Improvement in the profile of Health and Sexuality Education and in Teacher / Jurisdiction Relations.** Several that had doubted jurisdiction interest in PD and curriculum development and resources were pleasantly surprised to see action in these areas. Respect appears to have increased as a result. Teachers directed substantial credit to the curriculum coordinator and the trustee representing Bruckton for the initiative and leadership they demonstrated in SE during this time.

More details about the profile of Health and SE, which had been a chronic problem, will be discussed in Chapter VIII.

**Working out theory in practice.** Some concepts were developed further in other schools, then taken back to Bruckton. Examples included the integration of SE within the Health curriculum, working more effectively with parents, and working with teen instructors and peer supporters were taken further in other schools.

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## **The COOL Program and Peer Leadership**

The COOL program continued to be a major feature in Year #3, and I continued to work directly with the team of peer instructors. We facilitated one workshop in Bruckton in February, as well as several in neighboring communities. All but one of the original team members continued to be involved through Year #3.

What follows is an outline of the dynamics within the team of adults and teens, planning and preparation, the weekend workshop, work with other communities, and the impact and implications for SE in Bruckton.

### **Dynamics of the COOL Team**

All four of the teens in the team were attending the regional high school, about 20 minutes drive from Bruckton. All were heavily involved with the formal and informal peer support, sport teams, and/or other extra-curricular activities. They were becoming more serious students, having more serious relationships, and holding part time jobs. As their lives became more complex, trying to find times to meet and train became a challenge. As a result of their experiences, however, they became much more credible, effective, and mature, and brought many skills and living examples to their work with the COOL program.

We had originally planned to add four to six new teen leaders and two or three new adult leaders in January, giving them minor responsibilities at the workshop in February. In January, however, the team as a group decided not to take on any new members until the following year for several reasons:

- The team wanted another chance to work with the COOL curriculum and put on the best workshop possible.
  - They finally knew what they needed to do in their presentations and how to help one another.
  - They felt comfortable as a team and enjoyed working together.
  - The members felt they were effective teaching younger teens who were not their immediate peers.
  - There were no really strong candidates who had already participated in a workshop.
- The decision to postpone training new individuals eliminated the work involved in training and permitted more energy to be put toward innovation and enhancing the presentation. The major cost was a delay in bringing on new members and the possible loss of this teen leadership at the school level.

## **Planning and Preparation**

**Negotiations with the school.** At the end of Year #2, stakeholder representatives expressed strong support for offering the workshop on one weekend day and one school day. This was seen as a way to strengthen connections between COOL and the school, its teachers, and the peer support program. It also increased the possibility of participation for more influential but busy teens, particularly males. The program could address provincial education curriculum requirements, thereby satisfying concerns in this area. Unfortunately logistical problems could not be resolved and the program was again scheduled for a weekend in February.

**Connections with neighboring schools.** While I worked most closely with the COOL team and SE teachers in schools, I also met with peer support teams in the Grades 5-9 School and the regional High School. Teachers outside Bruckton were very interested in having student leaders and peer supporters participate in the COOL program and return to their schools with the skills and concepts. I worked with each of the interested parties to ensure they had every opportunity to become involved. Several from outside Bruckton registered for the weekend workshop but, unfortunately, none of them actually attended. Both the teachers and I were disappointed at the time because it appeared as though a tremendous opportunity for developing leadership and peer influence -- locally and in neighboring communities -- was missed. (Now, about two years later, this idea has emerged again and is attracting considerable attention.)

**Planning with the COOL team.** The team of adults and teens met once in November and four times in January. Among other activities, we reviewed films, presented our sessions for feedback, and created new presentations. We discussed the language we were using and fostering, reordered the program to improve the flow and make it more effective, ate a lot and laughed a lot. Members of the team were familiar with what needed to be done and we shared responsibilities more equitably than in the previous year.

Meanwhile, we considered various means of maintaining momentum and enthusiasm, encouraging growth in the leaders, and ensuring continuity into the future. We planned to meet every two months for both socializing and "professional development" with a guest speaker. We also considered ways of developing an image and designed buttons and T-Shirts.

**Promotion to teens.** The team delivered promotional presentations to each of the Grade 8 and 9 classes in Bruckton. These presentations were much more animated and entertaining than those of the previous year, and we ensured that the students were not being pulled out of special activities in order to attend. Our redesigned registration form

made it easier for the students to apply and their information to be processed. In addition to the verbal presentation, we provided a printed summary of essential information about the workshops for the teens and their parents. This time, forty of the one hundred students registered. Nearly all were female. Several indicated that much of this imbalance was due to the way in which the program was promoted and the influence of informal teen networks. The reasons would have been pursued further, perhaps from a variety of research perspectives, if we had had the time.

### **The COOL Workshop Weekend**

This version of COOL received strong positive reactions from participants. They generally rated the experience as "excellent," with many commented to the effect that it was "a life-changing experience" or "something that really turned my head around." This was without a doubt, a smoother, more creative, more articulately presented, more effective program. Credibility increased because the teens were in high school, had serious relationships of their own, and had interesting life experiences to share. They spoke freely about their goals, their virginity, and the struggles they had experienced. All team members were more creative, fun-loving and relaxed. Their modelling and skills opened communication channels for teens and parents. Further details on approaches are in Chapter VIII.

**Improved Approaches.** The approaches to which teens and parents reacted most favorably are described below, along with the objectives we were trying to achieve.

- We used three video vignettes of teen couples and their sexual decision making to open discussion on the multiple dimensions of relationships, peer pressure, exploitation in relationships, assertiveness, setting limits to physical intimacy, and secondary virginity.
- Fetal models and a large poster depicting development of the baby from conception to delivery (Johnson and Johnson's "Safe Passage") helped teens make the abstract concepts of pregnancy and fetal development more concrete. These props also stimulated open, high-quality discussions on pre-natal care and the effects of drugs and alcohol. We were interested in reaching teens who were either denying a pregnancy or knew someone who was, and was not taking adequate care of themselves. We also wanted to convey accurate information about the degree of development which a human fetus achieves at various stages. This information was considered to be important in enabling teens to make better decisions for themselves or to assist their peers.
- The "Responsibility Tree" helped teens understand the complex nature of sexual decision making. We wanted to convey that, in order to responsibly make the decision to have intercourse, one must consider many possibilities and decisions (e.g., whether or not to

use contraceptives, what kind, what to do should pregnancy result, the possibility of STD, changes in lifestyle, reputation, relationship with partner and relationship with parents)

- We used "Babies, Bugs, and Dice" to give teens a more concrete notion of the degree of probability of contraceptive failure.
- A physician specializing in STD and pregnancy among teens gave a presentation on STD to teens and parents. They listened to the presentation together, but had separate question and answer sessions with the guest afterward.
- We modelled "personal moments" and worked more closely with the groups of teens as they created their original responses to key concepts in the workshop. This resulted in superior products which had a greater impact when presented to the whole group.
- Recognizing that a healthy relationship between parents can be of great importance, we asked parents to reflect on qualities of their relationship together. We provided an opportunity for them to identify possibilities for improvement and to make tentative plans for action.
- We recognized that parents sometimes limit their expectations and hopes for their children's sexual behavior to that which they themselves had experienced. A brief discussion was added, aimed at helping parents to free themselves from these limitations.
- After the workshop, teens and parents received a follow-up letter suggesting ways to make a difference at home, school, on the street, etc.. We had a follow-up meeting and group interview for teens at the school as well.

Conflicts help us to identify tensions. Two conflicts occurred in conjunction with the workshop. The conflicts alerted us to inter-personal and inter-organizational tensions. These tensions had limited the development of collaborative relationships in the past, and their manifestation provided an opportunity for a process of resolution to take place. Some of what we learned through these experiences is discussed in Chapter IX.

### The COOL Team in Other Communities

Some of the teens facilitated COOL workshops in neighboring communities and brought new ideas, resources, and information back to Bruckton. Lasting contacts were made with those conducting similar programs elsewhere and some reciprocal arrangement for sharing resources and training leaders were negotiated.

A mutually helpful relationship developed between our team of adults and teens and a parallel group from a native community. Both hoped to make a difference with their people, but faced different challenges. In the native community, sexual abuse, dating violence and date rape, substance abuse, and internalized racism were major issues. The team learned a great deal about these issues as we prepared and facilitated our COOL

workshop there. Through the experience, we were motivated to learn more about dealing with substance abuse and abusive relationships on dates and within family situations in Bruckton. The group was particularly affected by interactions with the elders at the workshop and afterward. They impressed us with their respect for all life (from conception to death), and their concept of the sacred trust of children, and sacredness of sexuality.

### **The Impact and Implications**

The official core of teen and parent COOL team members was small but sound. Two new team members (a mother and son) joined for the workshop with the native group, resulting in a team of 5 adults (2 male and 3 female) and 5 teens (2 male and 3 female). Individuals demonstrated their abilities to learn and to be flexible, and to readily identify and address new issues. We became more aware of possible problems associated with perceptions of sexuality education programs and activities. We needed to go beyond simply presenting a balanced curriculum, but had also to appear to present a balanced curriculum.

While the core of instructors grew in ability and credibility, the support for their efforts began to grow as well. However, continuity in leadership for the COOL program continued to be an issue. Although many were willing to take on smaller tasks, a central person was needed to draw the loose ends together to "pick up the slack and keep us on track."

**Formalizing a supportive structure.** Action was undertaken by the COOL team, with the help of FCSS, to form a "society" that would act as an administrative support board for the program. This formalized structure would enable the community to access government grants available for special projects such as leader training. This, in turn, led to questions about how best to use funds that would be acquired. Suggestions were made for leadership development experiences, the acquisition and creation of specific resources, and bolstering communication through a conference with other similar groups.

*What books and videos could be purchased? Could several teens work in the summer to create resources for our community and other communities? Could we hold a conference and invite other COOL folks, or peer support teams?*

**Perspectives on leadership.** Those who spoke about teen leadership tended to look toward teens who had been involved with the COOL program.

*Many parents and teens have been through COOL and through other programs put on by FCSS, churches, the foster parents association, etc. These individuals are now capable of helping provide the leadership and the instruction. We are finding them and encouraging them and we could do more to include them.*



Other programs not directly connected with the sexuality education movement (e.g., Life Skills, Nobody's Perfect, the Peer Support Team, Quest) also served to increase the quality and numbers of knowledgeable and skillful people.

*Some stakeholders reminded others to keep a broad perspective on peer leadership. We have to be careful not to limit our ideas of leadership to the COOL team. We need all kinds of teens and parents to be involved . . . to suggest ways to help families and individuals develop good relationships . . . to take active roles . . . to make a difference.*

By the end of Year #3, many stakeholders had noted an increase in parents and teens contributing to leadership and willing to act as resource people in the community.

The ways in which teens acted as resources at the community level were more elusive. Most agreed that teens were informally supporting one another to a greater degree. Some teachers commented that it is often difficult to create opportunities for them to contribute in formal settings such as school classes

*But it varies year to year. Last year, the COOL team kids worked really well. This year, it's not turning out as well, but next year there will be some really good peer instructors again. A lot depends on the personality of the teens who would be instructors.*

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## The Stakeholders' Network

The BRIDGES Network met formally on five occasions during Year #3 (September, November, January, April and June). In general, the group continued to grow in numbers and in potential to be self-sustaining. Some questions and issues we addressed during Year #3 were:

- What is the purpose of the network?
- How can the network become fully self-sufficient?
- What is collaboration?
- What must be learned or overcome to develop deeper, collaborative relationships?
- What traditions would be most meaningful and useful?
- What is the most practical approach to monitoring?
- Can we affect change in parent/teen relationships and teen/teen relationships at a more basic level?
- What changes in image and language have become evident?

- Where are we in our development process?
- Are we listening better?
- Where is the *BRIDGES* Network in developmental terms?
- Where should we go with the Network?
- What sort of final report would be appropriate?

Our responses are presented below but ethical considerations preclude detailed reports in some cases. Several of the topics are also discussed further in Chapter IX.

### What is the purpose of the BRIDGES Network?

After working together over a period of about five months, most representatives agreed that a more formal statement of purpose was needed. A committee condensed the group's brainstormed thoughts. Eventually, the following mission statement was adopted:

*The BRIDGES Network is dedicated to the identification and integration of all community resources which will, through a holistic approach, foster, encourage, and support our community members in their journeys toward full and healthy lifestyles.*

An feature of interest to many was the evolution of the focus -- from "pregnancy and disease prevention," to "relationships," to "full and healthy lifestyles."

*The change in focus, I think, has been very positive and natural. It's like we're travelling and as we come to different places we realize where they all are on the map. Never-the-less, you have to start someplace, and we did, and those early questions continue to be important and we shouldn't lose sight of them. Now we're putting it together, getting things in perspective.*

The evolution of this statement of purpose turned out to be quite important in light of developments such as the "Self-Esteem of a Community" initiative in Year #4.

### How can the network become fully self-sufficient?

A "sense of ownership" was becoming noticeable and being reported by the end of Year #2. Many new representatives, however, were just beginning to become involved in the first half of Year #3. In spite of the range of experience, there was a consensus that the people in Bruckton could and should take full ownership, direction, and control of *BRIDGES*, and that some structural changes were necessary. We began to create statement of purpose, change the responsibility for communication, and share the chairship. (The processes of transferring ownership and the facilitator "taking leave" are discussed further in Chapters IX and X.)

Although I did much of the contacting and encouraging to get the group going, this role for the September meeting was assumed totally by a community school committee, and with considerable success. My former duties as chairperson were performed by other members on a rotational basis with the second and subsequent gatherings. By the third meeting, others had also taken the responsibility of preparing a summary of the meeting for those unable to attend. Individual initiative, control, and influence continued to increase as members became comfortable in the organization and as I moved away from the "hub." All of the leadership and maintenance functions were assumed by others, and our goal of "a growing, self-sustaining group using me as a resource person only" was achieved by the end of the year.

### **What is collaboration? What must be learned or overcome to develop deeper, collaborative relationships?**

*Collaboration is at the heart of what being a community is all about. It is a shift from optimizing your own efforts to optimizing everyone's efforts -- like a team.*

Learning and practicing the ideals of cooperative and collaborative relationships was an important part of Bruckton's journey. Parallel processes occurred among the stakeholder representatives, those in the teen and adult peer instructors' group and, to a lesser extent, in the teachers' group.

*We're learning, but sometimes we're finding it tough to "walk our talk" when it gets right down to living this collaboration. We know it in our heads -- that trust, respect, and sharing are important -- but it's not always in our hearts and in our actions yet.*

Most areas of progress fell under the following categories:

- dealing with personal problems relating to sexuality and relationships,
- working through interpersonal conflicts and histories of conflicts, particularly between professionals,
- recognizing and overcoming organizational problems.

A variety of stories illustrated how individuals became aware of, and dealt with their personal, organizational, and inter-organizational challenges. Major breakdowns had occurred in several key relationships. Chronic conflicts resulted in considerable frustration and non-cooperation. The lack of trust and, in some cases, lack of respect which resulted was evident. Although there were examples of conflict between professionals and parents, the most serious breakdowns appeared in relationships between professionals. This aspect is discussed further in this chapter and in Chapter IX.

In some cases, breakthroughs in the ability to trust and respect one another occurred, and significantly improved relationships with others inside and outside the group resulted. It is interesting that stakeholder representatives perceived some of the stories to be negative as they encountered them in the first draft of the final report. Members suggested that struggles and conflicts were common in efforts to improve situations, and that we should not expect our community development situation to be different.

*The struggles, the turf wars, the communication problems are not unique. They typically happen whenever people come together for a common cause, or (community development) work is attempted. You can imagine a pool of what typically happens and we (the organizations and representatives) weren't exempt from any of it.*

Some of the lighter prerequisites to collaboration, such as better information, listening for understanding, greater exposure, and restoring communication were readily identified. On a very basic level, we needed to understand exactly what it was that each of us was doing if we were to harmonize our efforts and help others to improve theirs.

*Sure we know their titles and the names of the programs, but we need to take the time to get the inside story, complete with emphases, issues, and struggles.*

Showcasing a program or two at each BRIDGES meeting provided an opportunity for the presenter to say more than could be relayed in an introduction, to field questions and comments, and to "reveal the heartbeat."

From another perspective, several stakeholders suggested that we needed to take more time, listen more carefully, and understand more deeply what others were saying. This was seen as a prerequisite to giving and receiving the kind of critique that would be necessary if we were to sharpen one another's approaches and help one another to do the best work possible.

Several interest groups, including some of the religious groups, remained somewhat distant from the core of the networking circle. Their distance did not result in conflict, but it did provide an obstacle to building the trust and respect necessary for collaborative relationships and efforts in Brackton. Several were frustrated by the non-participation of some groups, and assumed it was due to lack of interest and/or lack of willingness to be involved. We discussed both of these possibilities and resolved, individually and as a group, to continue to invite and encourage these groups. Most often the lack of attendance was due to late notice, emergencies, and human error.

### What traditions would be most meaningful and useful?

Several traditions were associated with network meetings. Gatherings were held at the community school, a site viewed by all of the representatives as "friendly, neutral ground." The chair, a different individual each meeting, began the meeting by briefly discussing an aspect of his/her philosophy as it related to the work we were doing. At the November meeting, for example, the chair (a religious leader) presented a brief statement on the importance of collaboration, community, and interdependence. He used the Bible passage quoted below to present his view:

There are varieties of gifts, but the same spirit. There are many forms of work but all of them, in all people, are the work of the same God. In each of us, the Spirit is manifested in one particular way, for some useful purpose. One man, through the Spirit, has the gift of wise speech, while another, by the power of the same spirit, can put the deepest knowledge into words. Another, by the same spirit, is granted faith, and another gifts of healing. Another has the gift of prophecy, and another ability to distinguish truth from falsehood. All these gifts are the work of one and the same spirit. For Christ is like a single body with its many limbs and organs, which, many as they are, together make up one body . . . . The eye cannot say to the hand, "I do not need you" nor the head to the feet "I do not need you." Quite the contrary: those organs of the body which seem to be more frail than others are indispensable, and those parts of the body which we regard as less honorable are treated with special honor. (1 Cor. 12)

The image of collaboration and cooperation he presented was remembered as being profound in terms of the goals of the network. Chairs in subsequent meetings continued the tradition, receiving similar positive responses from participants.

Several other traditions are also worthy of note. As mentioned, one or two programs were "showcased" at each gathering, gradually expanding the understanding which participants had of one another and their emphases. Time was also taken for voicing appreciation for one another's efforts and contributions. Although most representatives first encountered this idea in *Bridges*, I observed the practice in earlier community school committee meetings. The "time for appreciation" idea has since been adopted by several other organizations in the community.

Many of those in the network found satisfying the tradition of ending the meetings with food and a time for socializing. The community school coordinator prepared a simple meal and the majority of the members stayed to talk and network informally.

*It happens naturally because we take the opportunity. Every time I stay after, I learn something or make a connection with someone that has made an important difference to my outlook or my plans.*

## What is the most practical approach to monitoring?

Most representatives appreciated having information about teens and life in the community, and having input into the design. Most viewed positively the opportunity and challenge of interpreting this information and the freedom of using it as they wished.

Gradually, representatives came to understand that many experiences contributed to changes in the attitudes and behaviors of teens (and parents). We found out what the needs were, did the best possible job in formal instruction, encouraged networking among those delivering instruction, and encourage positive peer support among the teens and parents. Under the constraints we faced, it appeared unlikely that we could attribute important, long-lasting changes to a specific program or component. Programs became interconnected as we had hoped they would.

*For example, I know teens who have participated in Quest or Innerchange and have registered for COOL. They used the things they learned (at COOL) in their school classes or peer support team or church youth group. Other teens may not be involved in any of these programs, but are being influenced by those who were.*

As a result, we moved toward trying to monitor characteristics of teens at a community level, with the emphasis on using the information (separated by Grade level and gender) to enhance instructional understandings, practices, and situations.

Although we were getting a better idea of the specific needs of teens through the survey, we had not attempted to determine what changes had occurred as a result of specific efforts. In Year #3, we conducted the survey a second time in mid-June, when school programs were nearing completion. Twelve teens participated in a group interview the following day.

Some possible trends toward healthier relationships and sexual decision-making appeared to be emerging, but accurate assessment of numbers at this time was not yet possible. Examples of unhealthy and exploitative relationships continued to be present. Comparison with previous years was problematic due to a lack of quantitative information beyond two years ago, and the speed with which individual teens change their positions in the early adolescent years. In recognition of a need for better information, a longer-range plan was proposed.

*The real evidence will be gathered 5 or 10 years down the road when these are young adults. Then we should ask them what kind of decisions they made along the way and why. Did they have sex? Did they contribute to a pregnancy? Get an STD? Were they assertive? What were the critical incidents and influences? Until then, we have to be content with knowing more about the teens we are working with and doing our level best to improve our programs.*

After a considerable pause, the speaker added the following adjustment.

*. . . but then you never will know for sure, because there are so many other things that will happen between now and then. In the long term, I believe a lot will have to do with the kind of families they were in and the kind of people they chose to keep company with. And that's why we work on a family and community level.*

By the end of the year, all word-processed materials which I had produced (including the surveys and all materials for COOL, the Network and teachers) were accessible by computer within the community. Plans were made to improve the monitoring in Year #4 by conducting the first survey teens in October to establish a baseline for planning, account better for the integration of sexuality education throughout the year's health program, and provide a better pre/post estimation of impact. We planned to gather information for other health initiatives at the same time.

### Can we affect change in parent/teen relationships and teen/teen relationships at a more basic level?

On several occasions, individuals proposed we provide more opportunities for parents of younger children, young childless couples, or couples in preparation for marriage to learn more about sexuality and helping their children learn about sexuality. These proposals re-emphasized the need but did not result in direct action.

The lack of specific SE programming is not surprising considering the lack of need being expressed by potential participants. Parents of younger children in Bruckton had not voiced a need for support in this area. Elsewhere in the province, programs that were offered (e.g., *For Kids Sake*) were often poorly attended or cancelled due to lack of registrants. We concluded that further movement would have to occur among parents before new programs would be viable. Attention to the present and future needs of parents of younger children was important, and individuals agreed to be sensitive to these needs, working with parents as opportunities arose. Limited work was being done in the area of parent/teen relationships and assertiveness through the QUEST program at the K-4 Community School. Some of the religious groups also began purposive discussions on these related topics.

### What changes in image and language have become evident?

Some commented on changes in their image of themselves in this Network group -- the movement from a more mechanistic "stakeholder" image to a more relationally oriented "co-labourers" image.

*Though we started by considering how we might increase the participation of stakeholders, we wound up working toward a greater kind of mutual benefiting and cooperation. Co-labourers, maybe?*

Their image of me and my role also changed in this way. By the end of Year #3, I had moved from being a "researcher" to a "facilitator," something I had hoped for and reinforced. I was introduced or referred to with other titles as well, including resource person, amateur, co-laborer and co-sojourner.

As images changed, we noticed a common language emerging. Many metaphors had been used as we discussed our understandings, practices, and situations. At various times we spoke of the community or its organizations as though they were machines, organisms, families, political units, and cultures among other things. However, the dominant metaphors seemed to be those associated with travel or "journeying." This seemed to be a unifying thread which permeated the language of thought and action of the participants, and moved them in helpful directions.

*When we think and talk in terms of a journey together, rather than a battle, the whole picture changes. It is easier to be patient, easier to be kind, easier to be committed to one another. The goal of "the best life chances for kids" stands out in front of all the garbage.*

Again, more is said about this common or middle language in Chapter IX.

### Where are we in our development process?

I asked representatives this question as I interviewed them in preparation for my final report to the BRIDGES Network. The quotation below summarized the view that the foundational capacities for self-sustaining development were nearly in place.

*We're right where we should be, in my opinion. Yes, there are still problems, but we're on the right course. We can see the issues relatively clearly, we have a base to work from, and can meet our own needs along the way.*

Many questions remained to be answered, but questioning of a new kind was occurring.

*In some ways, we're still confused, but it seems we're confused on a deeper level now. We're wondering about other, perhaps, more important things, like "What is at the core of positive relationships?" and "What does 'living in community' really mean?"*

Some suggested that the early, most difficult phases of setting development in motion and increasing momentum had been accomplished, and we were moving into a "maintenance" phase.



*The hardest part has been done. The topic -- sexuality and relationships -- has been opened. Some organization is in place, and people are starting to use it. Sometimes conflicts occur now so people can work at refining their efforts. Now we just need to maintain (the growth of the movement), water it, stand back, let it grow for awhile.*

On a community level, many of the people required to address needs were in place. The number of resource people -- leaders and instructors -- in the community had increased markedly from earlier days when the "resource person" was the sexual health worker from the regional health unit.

*We are starting to realize that we have a lot that we can offer each other. There are people right in this community who have expertise in the areas of AIDS, sexually transmitted diseases, parent/teen communication, handling abusive relationships, etc. We haven't begun to explore the variety of options in counselling expertise available among lay people and professionals -- either in Bruckton or in neighboring communities.*

Although work began on barriers to development, many suggested attention would continue to be needed in the future.

*For example, efforts in identifying and overcoming organizational paranoia should continue. Inter-organizational and interpersonal wounds from the past still require healing. Some need to renew their commitments to one another, and to the process of resolving conflicts. Some will need to learn to forgive and forget.*

### **Are we listening better?**

As we analyzed interactions in the network and the community, many became more aware of listening and its importance in improving relationships. My observations and the comments of stakeholder representatives indicated that some were experiencing considerable growth in their attention to listening and, through this, in their capacity to understand others. They were more likely to move their own agendas back in order to be more attentive to what the other was saying. This kind of listening was having a positive effect on developing collaborative community relationships, capacities for conflict resolution, and feelings of hope for making a difference. Others, however, continued to hold their own agendas and assumptions tightly or were less willing or less able to listen deeply to understand.

### Where is the BRIDGES Network in its development?

By the end of Year #3, the Network was running on its own but, "as one might expect a young child to move -- with uncertainty and caution." Nearly all agreed that it was a useful body and should continue.

*It's been a worthwhile development and it should keep going. It serves an important purpose. (This kind of) inter-agency cooperation is going to become even more important as we go through the 90's.*

Most reported experiencing an exchange of information and ideas that made their work easier or more effective.

*It's amazing how many times I have made a connection with someone at those meetings. Some of those connections led me on to the answers I needed.*

Most members feel as though they are part owners of their organization, and participate in its control and direction. A statement of purpose and goals was created, but not yet fully tested in practice.

Although not all community groups were involved in the Network, there was also a general willingness to excuse some of the groups, as the following passage shows.

*It was too bad that the Lions and the foster parents association didn't get involved (in the Network). But then again, maybe the Lions feel they are involved already through QUEST. Lord knows, the foster parents have lots to keep them busy, and they do have their own organization.*

Several expressed frustration in that the representatives of several groups, "the faces at the meetings," kept changing. Some saw this as a barrier to coming together as a group while others saw it as a fact that had to be accommodated.

*As far as the Network, I am not sure that we have jelled as a group. The process needs to take into account that the players change on a continuous basis. We'll always have new people joining the troop as we go along.*

Some felt that the comings and goings would stabilize in time, but that there are definitely benefits to seeing new faces regularly in the Network meetings.

### Where should we go with the Network?

Some suggestions were offered for the future, many of which related to nurturing the ability to adapt in a changing environment.

- *We need to retain that "chameleon effect," that quality of flexibility to adjust and discover and address new issues as they come up.*

- *We should not lose sight of the fact that the Network can change "horizontally" to emphasize other issue areas, or "vertically" to serve teens or parents or both. It could also disappear altogether if it has served its purpose and is no longer needed.*

Several individuals spoke of the need to model in the area of collaboration and community relationships.

*I wouldn't want (the Network) to turn into a body that's just giving lip service, or degenerates to hollowness or tokenism. We need to model in the area of relationships and in the area of cooperation or collaboration or community.*

One emphasized that we should always consciously work on team building at the meetings.

*We should always include some ice breakers, team builders, whatever you want to call them. We could share the responsibility for that too.*

Most spoke of the need to continue going outside of Bruckton for fresh ideas and perspectives. A few added that this means going outside to share experiences, and not just to bring back information and skills.

Several suggested we continue to focus on families and enabling parents to be the primary sexuality educators that many hope they could be.

*•We need to continue to focus on the family unit but, at the same time, allow for those who aren't well connected in their families.*

*• I think the emphasis has to be on the parents. You can never find a substitute for the home. It is the root of the problems and the root of the solutions.*

Other possibilities raised were:

- developing a resource center for parents,
- working directly with "high-risk" individuals,
- revisiting the list of common values and beliefs of some two years ago and see whether those ideas still formed the nucleus of what is important in the discussions of our goals today.

Some also spoke in terms of what they didn't want -- another programming body. *I wouldn't want the organization to believe it is more important than it is -- a network of people who go back to their own worlds and take action there. The Network shouldn't be "doing" a lot of things. We should keep it as a place where we can learn from others and share our insights.*

Discontinuing the Network was also suggested by me and by others.

*Of course, it is also necessary to consider the option of discontinuing the organization. If it doesn't continue, it has certainly served its purpose well already. Hopefully, the awareness that it has created will lead to the needs being recognized and dealt with through other bodies in the community.*

## The Final Report . . . For Now

My role in Bruckton officially came to a close with the delivery of my final report to the BRIDGES Network members in June, 1992. This document summarized the past, the present, and suggestions for the future?

*What are the implications for us, as we continue to improve our understandings, practices, and situations in education about relationships and sexuality?*

I revised the draft, taking into account comments received at the BRIDGES Network meeting (June 16th/92) and through personal contact within several days of the meeting. Some revisions were made to improve accuracy, but several were made to amend statements which could be interpreted in an overly negative way, possibly resulting in problems for that individual or the process. The revisions were returned with a cover letter, designed to reinforce and clarify points relating to the source of the information and the way in which it was organized. It also provided an explanation of ethical considerations.

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## Religious Groups

As I reduced my involvement in the Network organization as Year #3 proceeded, I spent more time working with individual representatives and leaders of religious groups. I endeavored to work with each leader to identify their concerns and connect them with resources as required.

The qualities, characteristics, and progress varied among the religious groups but several important trends were beginning to be evident. This section describes interactions within the network and some of the responses to these interactions, the degree of contestation of school programs, and their own educational efforts.

### Interactions Within the BRIDGES Network

One of the pastors in Bruckton related the major goal of "healthy relationships" to the role of the BRIDGES Network in the following way.

*A journey of a thousand miles begins with one step. The BRIDGES Network is a step towards the establishment of healthy relationships in our community. Where there are healthy relationships the world is a better place. Healthy relationships with others and with God are the answer to the problems we face.*

Most, but not all, religious groups became involved in the Network. Their representatives participated actively in meetings, shared leadership functions and reported being pleased with the developments that have occurred. They cited the shift from sexuality to a broader "relationship focus" as an important and meaningful development.

*My whole job is about relationships and helping people toward better relationships and living in "community" with one another. Focusing our attention on relationships has been a very important role of the Network, an area in which (religious leaders) can contribute.*

Leaders reflected on various roles, directions and actions which had been influenced by interactions in BRIDGES. Roles emphasized included modelling family and community life, helping bring about healing and forgiveness in relationships, and supporting "at risk" families.

- *We need to be models of "community" ourselves, so families can take that home and live that there . . . . We can help create an environment where individuals discover they are lovable and they are needed.*
- *One of the church's roles is in helping healing to occur. It is in helping people to find forgiveness, and forgiving them, and accepting them . . . .The first thing is for us to understand that the church itself needs forgiveness.*
- *Families today are taking a beating. My most important role is to be in the messiness of the homes of his people, to be part of their lives. When there is family breakdown, or breaking down, we as a church need to surround them with love and acceptance and support, as well as counselling.*

Several emphasized the need for leaders, especially in the church, to be approachable and to model forgiveness, humility, and listening.

*The worst thing is to have leaders looked on as being perfect and unapproachable. The church, after all, was built on forgiven people. We are needed in the community to model forgiveness and humility, and willingness to listen. We still have a ways to go but we'll work on it.*

### **Contestation of School Programs**

Opposition to school programs virtually disappeared while positive support increased during Year #3.

*(Contestation) by religious people has been a problem in the past. It doesn't seem so much of a problem now. Most of the very religious families are dealing with the (SE) issues well. They are solid people and they support the school in many ways.*

Several individuals belonging to religious groups outside of the community (i.e., groups not involved with the network or local developments) did voice concerns.

*Opposition from these groups to school programs is rare, but it happens. Once in a while someone calls up or writes a note. We usually find that it's a matter of making (inaccurate) assumptions about the program or how its taught. Sometimes they have read something and their views are so strong that it doesn't really matter what it is that we're doing or how we're going about it. There is a problem.*

As an example, a parent wrote a note to protest certain classroom practices. The message reflected three assumptions:

- that all children in Canada received the same type of instruction in sexuality education,
- that this generic SE curriculum perpetrates myths that distort sexual decision making, and
- that teachers were not aware of curricula or resources which would provide other perspectives on abstinence and contraceptives.

This parent did not have a connection with the network or know that religious groups in the community had approved of the program and felt secure about the situation. S/he was unaware that Bruckton's school programs had been modified according to the checklist which teachers had devised, and that this addressed each of the concerns. The principal met with teachers to gather their comments and they responded in a way which included this information.

### **Educational Efforts by Religious Groups**

Development of curricula and programs proceeded at a slower pace and on a smaller scale than community and religious leaders originally anticipated. Near the end of Year #3, three groups reported that they were in the process of examining SE programs and resources for use within their church youth groups. Two churches which served Bruckton residents but were located in a neighboring community were investigating a program similar to COOL, with plans to incorporate a section on sexuality and relationships from a Christian perspective. One leader was especially enthusiastic and ordered a wide variety of video resources for preview and possible use in Bruckton and the neighboring community.

All of the groups reported at least one event where specific, planned discussions with teens or parents relating to sexuality and relationship issues occurred. Several described informal efforts to make sexuality a more approachable topic.

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## **Other Programs and Factors Influencing Development**

Several important community and outside influences during Year #3 are important to note. They include the emergence of a parent with experience as a communicator on HIV/AIDS, the increase of foster parenting in the community, developments in the K-4 Community School relating to the CARE Kit and the QUEST program, changing programs and emphases in the local FCSS and the regional Health Unit, a program sponsored by the provincial Home and School Association, release of the "Minister's Committee" report on SE, and changes in information regarding sexual health.

### **A Parent Talks About HIV/AIDS**

A Bruckton parent who had suffered the loss of a loved one due to AIDS began to act as an advocate for HIV/AIDS education and as a peer instructor in Bruckton and neighboring communities. She participated in the BRIDGES Network, filling leadership roles and securing a wide variety of publications and information for the group. She was also active as a leader in regional and local organizations associated with HIV/AIDS education.

### **Foster Families**

Over the past three years there has been a marked increase in the number of foster parents and foster children in the community. Professionals and volunteer educators in Bruckton noted that children in these living situations tend to be less stable emotionally and socially than those living with their own parents. In some cases, the children were working through difficulties associated with managing anger, substance abuse and/or dealing with physical and sexual abuse. Parents and teachers reported being challenged but appeared to be having considerable success in the short term. Many felt there were insufficient resources to cope as well in the long term or to handle continued increase in numbers of foster children in the community.

### **The CARE Kit**

The CARE Kit is a program designed for the use of schools in the prevention of sexual abuse. The goal is "To encourage and promote the rights of children, with special emphasis on the prevention of sexual abuse."

**Specific Objectives are:**

- **Expand children's safety knowledge to include the prevention of sexual abuse.**
- **Help children to recognize sexual abuse.**

- Make children aware of situations that may lead to sexual abuse.
- Teach children that they have the right to protect themselves from sexual abuse.
- Provide children with skills such as assertiveness (ways to say "no" to an adult or teenager) and ways to report sexual abuse (whom and how to tell). (Care Kit Manual, p. 3)

Although the kit had been in use for several years, critiques of the program in the media and professional literature renewed interest and raised questions from several groups of Bruckton parents. The kit continued to be used in Grades 1 and 3, in accordance with school board policy.

### QUEST at the K-4 Community School

QUEST at the K-4 Community School had grown steadily since the first teacher was trained in Year #1. In addition to the school activities, three or four meetings were held with parents each year to enable them to understand the program and reinforce the concepts, skills, and attitudes. The parent meetings were well attended and, in Year #3, were facilitated by parents. An evaluation by the school's counsellor indicated that QUEST had become fully integrated, or "infused" into the curriculum and daily life at the K-4 School. By the beginning of Year #4, all teachers had received training and were using the concepts and materials in their classrooms. Teachers and parents I encountered were enthusiastic about QUEST and its impact on the children at the school. There was general agreement that parent/child communication was improving, with a portion of the credit attributed to interactions associated with QUEST.

### QUEST and Innerchange at the Grades 5-9 School

During Year #3, two teachers at the Grades 5-9 School received training and began a pilot program with Grade 5 students. The school staff discussed the experience and decided to send three teachers for training in the version for junior high students, entitled "Skills for Adolescence." Four teachers received this training and taught most of the Health classes in the school. A program with similar objectives called "Innerchange" was also piloted with junior high students and continued the following year.

### FCSS Coordinated Programs

FCSS programs were typically pursued in cooperation with the community school and other agencies and organizations. The projects generally reinforced the growth of community capacities for self-sustaining development. Of particular interest in Year #3 were three initiatives aimed at supporting those "at risk" due to family violence and those in need of skills to enhance parenting and career potential.



The "You Deserve Better" program, aimed at family violence prevention, was a cooperative effort with four neighboring communities. A catalyst drama by a local theater group (Caviar Players) was attended by a large number of people from Bruckton. The drama was followed by a panel discussion with various agency and organization representatives. In conjunction with this initiative, FCSS created a pamphlet which outlined the issues, support programs available, and directory of services in the community.

"Life Skills" was an annual, four month, full-time program for adults who wished to upgrade basic life skills and enhance career opportunities. The "coaches" for the program participated in COOL and integrated some aspects of sexuality education in Life Skills. This project was recognized nationally as "Program of the Year" by the Canadian Association for Community Education.

"Nobody's Perfect," another annual program, was of six weeks duration. The focus was on building parenting skills and providing support for young parents, particularly those struggling with low incomes and low educational achievement.

### **Health Unit Changes**

In Year #1, the regional sexual health coordinator worked closely with FCSS in developing and implementing the COOL program, as well as with teens and teachers in the school. Since that time, there had been two changes of personnel and a steady increase in responsibilities. The sexual health coordinator served dozens of communities in the region, many of which were at earlier stages of development and required much more time and energy. Involvement with COOL in Bruckton ceased but participation with the BRIDGES group and teachers continued. Future emphases included professional development of teachers on a regional basis and providing information for community groups on AIDS and other STD.

### **Talking With Children About AIDS**

The Provincial Home and School Association embarked on an initiative to motivate parents and supply them with video and print information which would enable them to communicate with their children about HIV/AIDS.

### **Continuing Conflict Between Groups at the Provincial Level**

Conflict between a group which promoted abstinence from sexual intercourse among teens and a group which promoted contraceptive use continued at the provincial and regional levels. In my assessment, each group continued to misunderstand and

misrepresent the other. Both maintained polarized positions, continued to ignore a portion of the information available, and refused to test foundational information and assumptions.

This broader scale conflict spilled over briefly into Bruckton on several occasions, but created a deeper stirring on one occasion. The series of events that followed resulted in breakdown in trust among professionals and considerable confusion and frustration among parents. This issue was eventually resolved and growth in community capacities to resolve conflict occurred, but the trust among local professionals was not fully restored.

### **Minister's Committee Report**

The "Minister's Committee on Sexuality Education" commissioned by the Minister of Education in 1991, released its report in April (Cherry et al., 1992). Recommendations from the Bruckton submission contributed to the committee's study and the report provided strong support for the progress made locally. In summary, the committee's recommendations were as follows:

**Policy.** Schools should continue to offer the program as part of the health courses, and be free to use other instructional structures (curricula), provided the Alberta curriculum goals are met.

**Communication with parents and others.** Alberta Education should provide information packages and encourage school boards to develop policies on SE "that reflect the values of their community" (p. 12) and address curricular requirements. Parents should continue to have the right to opt out. Schools should provide parents with information and opportunity to meet with teachers before instruction begins. Parents should be encouraged to observe and be fully familiar with classroom activities. The active involvement of health units, community agencies and groups should be facilitated to enhance the program and promote two-way communication.

**Teachers.** Teachers should be selected who are "willing, sensitive, appropriately trained, and well qualified" for SE as "the teacher is the program." The Minister should work with universities to "include a mandatory health/SE component in the training program for elementary teachers . . . and a major or minor route in the training program for secondary teachers" (p. 13). Boards should provide inservice training to all before they begin to teach SE and upgrading and refresher sessions on an ongoing basis. Alberta Education should set up an interdisciplinary team to develop and deliver inservice to meet needs of teachers.

**Curriculum and Resources.** Programs should help young people to "understand growth and development, concepts of healthy sexuality, and ability to make positive personal decisions and develop healthy relationships." They should also "be designed to

help young people acquire understanding of their growth and development, to be able to make mature, informed decisions about abstinence or postponement of sexual intercourse (the most desirable and healthiest choice for young people), and to avoid sexually transmitted infections and the risk of pregnancy" (p. 14). They encouraged full and accurate knowledge, support without discrimination for all students, abstinence as an appropriate lifestyle choice rather than method of contraception. There should be linkages with other school programs, such as the natural sciences. Alberta Education should regularly review and update SE information in curriculum and learning resources, and school boards should make these available to teachers. Better use of available community health professionals was advocated (however, they did not mention relieving the constraints which currently limit this).

**Instruction.** Alberta Education should include teaching suggestions in the SE curriculum documents. Classes should go beyond the provision of factual information and students should be given opportunity to express values and feelings and make responsible decisions. Instruction should be developmentally appropriate and sensitive to individual student needs and parents.

**Evaluation.** School board should regularly evaluate teacher performance and assist teachers where problems are apparent. Alberta Education should survey students. Both should evaluate SE programs regularly and make changes as appropriate.

**Coordination.** The government should encourage cooperation, consultation and coordination among government departments with responsibility for programs serving children. (Cherry et al., 1992, pp. 11-17.)

### **Changes in the Field of Sexual Health**

Research and development in the field of sexual health continued to affect approaches to education in several areas. Perspectives had broadened from a focus on pregnancy and disease prevention to a focus on healthier relationships. New information on sexually transmitted diseases affected recommendations for educational approaches. Those educating about and treating STD in regional clinics, for example, have changed their views on some STD.

*We have changed our views somewhat. We used to not worry too much about HPV but now we take warts and HPV seriously, test more rigorously, and treat genital warts aggressively . . . . We don't doubt the connection to cervical cancer anymore, but we are still very aware of the importance of other co-factors.*

More attention was being directed at Hepatitis B and chlamydia. Recommendations have changed for contraceptive materials and the language of prophylaxis evolved.

"Safe sex" was replaced by "safer sex" which was, in turn, replaced by "less risky behaviors." Teens rarely heard the term "safe sex" from people in Bruckton. Most in Grade 9 would understand condom-protected sex is "less risky," and with regard to physical consequences only. The term "safe" still appeared on magazines and posters.

*The language is getting better. Every now and then, though, I still see a pamphlet or a poster written in confusing or misleading terms and I cringe, but you have to recognize it is a big ship and it takes a while to turn.*

### **Critique of HIV/AIDS Policy**

Critiques of HIV/AIDS information, policy, and research were frequent in the popular press and affected views in Bruckton. Excerpts from one example, offered by an epidemiologist (Mintz, 1991), are included in Appendix 6.3. While recognizing the seriousness of the disease, Mintz drew attention to logical inconsistencies, erroneous assumptions about the comparability of populations, and distortions due to the politics of HIV/AIDS. He challenged leaders to re-examine the information and assumptions.

**What kind of society do we have if we have to misuse science, if we have to distort reality, if we have to give messages to the public which have been misleading or downright lies? . . . Perhaps we feel that people are so vicious and bigoted that, if we told them that this disease will probably remain primarily a homosexual disease in Canada, nobody would care. We have to lie to develop enough support, to get enough research funds, to fight this disease, to do enough clinical trials . . . One can see an atmosphere set up where it is very intimidating to say anything that goes against the prevailing view -- which has set itself up as being the morally acceptable view.**

This position was not the consensus view of the scholarly community but it did provoke substantial reaction and was difficult to refute.

### **Superstars and AIDS**

Teens took note of several sports and music celebrities who tested positive and/or died as a result of HIV/AIDS. The superstar with the greatest impact in Bruckton was probably Earvin "Magic" Johnson. When he came forward to announce his infection and to encourage individuals to practice "safe sex" using condoms, political leaders and media personalities declared him a national hero. Contrary opinions and critiques of his lifestyle

and media presentations were also expressed. One was prepared by Douglass (1992), a leader in AIDS treatment in Uganda. In his "Open letter to Magic Johnson" he drew attention to several logical inconsistencies in the case (Appendix 6.3).

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## Monitoring Characteristics and Impact

In Year #3, we continued to use and develop the questionnaire, primarily to provide us with a window into the the thinking and specific needs of Bruckton teens. The survey was conducted in February to gain a sense of the knowledge, skills, attitudes, values, self-image and self-esteem as the Grade 8 and 9 students entered the traditional "season" of sexuality related programs (February to June). Teachers felt that the survey provided important information for planning and for enhancing student-oriented discussions.

*Each year brings a new crop of students, and the survey can provide important information about what this particular group is like and what they are thinking . . . . The differences between the grade 8's and 9's is certainly noticeable, but I think the differences between the guys and the girls are especially important. The items on attitudes and self-esteem make for some really good discussion.*

Other network participants also received the survey results. Most found the information to be helpful in increasing their understanding, while some used it in their own presentations.

*I find these results to be very useful. They help me to understand, at a general level, how teens in those groups think and how they perceive their situations. I used the information in my planning and presentations on several occasions with both teens and parents. I think its an excellent resource and worth continuing.*

Information from teens and parents was gathered through the survey, group interviews, interviews with teachers and parents, and observations. This information was summarized in the final report to stakeholders and further checked with comments received in the fall of 1992. In order to avoid repetition, this summary is presented once only in Chapter VII. In brief, most teens seemed to be having their needs met.

*We are getting pretty close to where teens are at. They are saying that we are on the right track with the COOL program and the school program. The topics we are raising and the ways in which we are handling them are appropriate . . . . The activities are causing them to think, to see some of the myths, to evaluate their opinions and their relationships.*

## Summary of Implications

Although few new concepts of SE were added in Year #3, those introduced earlier were tested and modified in practice. Approaches which did not work or were found to be impractical were abandoned. Community capacities grew through the practical working out of relationships and organizational challenges, and through building individual skills rather than introducing new structures. In general, groups of people working on SE initiatives came to a deeper level of communicating and working together, but not in all cases. Some of the most important results flowed from one-on-one interactions, rather than large group gatherings. Limitations on local resources and opportunities for personal development available outside the community often made "going outside" an attractive way to encourage development inside. Similarly, outsiders looked at development in Bruckton to provide new ideas or feedback. By the end of Year #3, the connections between those with similar interests inside and outside Bruckton were generally strong and effective in influencing in both directions.

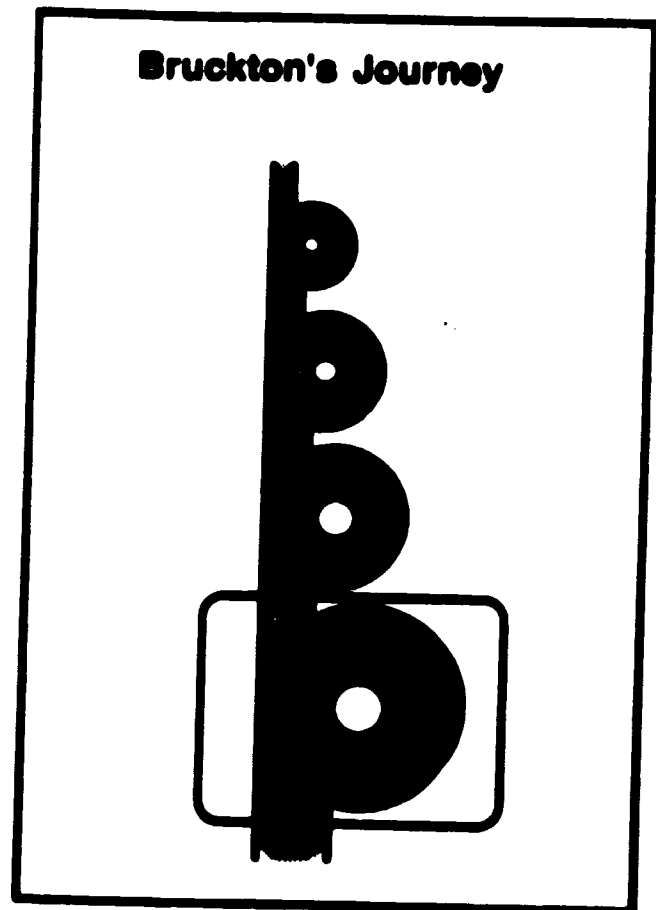
As communication improved, some helpful language patterns and images associated with "the journey" began to emerge. I noted this tendency and reinforced it in my communications. Some images worked better than others for communicating what we were doing and how it was going. The one below, making the analogy to a sailing journey to a distant shore, was repeated several times and seemed to be effective in describing where we were and how our progress and experience of change in SE and CD was going.

*We are making headway, but progress is somewhat slower than we had originally imagined it might be. Although we are still headed in the same general direction across the lake, we seem to be shifting toward a slightly different place. Winds come up and die down, sometimes change direction. Waves and currents come and go and affect our progress and program of development. We continue to tack toward a distant goal. Though this tacking can be uncomfortable, even confusing at times, it is intriguing and exhilarating at others. It still seems to be the only option available.*

With my final report at the end of Year #3, I officially took leave as the "facilitator." Stakeholder representatives were challenged to plan and operate as an independent, self-reliant group and were free to pursue the course they felt would be most worthwhile.

**- VII -**

***Year #4:  
The  
Journey Continues***



This is the last in the sequence of four chapters describing the path of development in Bruckton. Although I was no longer the "facilitator" with teachers or other stakeholders, I remained in casual, natural relationships with several individuals who had acted as stakeholder representatives. I also continued to be involved with the COOL team. These associations resulted in several benefits, including opportunities to watch the progress reported in this chapter and check the analyses made while in more active roles.

The outline of experiences influencing me as "past facilitator" is included as Appendix 7.1. The text below begins with reports on the continuing progress by teachers in school programs, those involved with the COOL program and peer leadership, the stakeholders' organization, and the influence of other programs and factors. As this year began, some key questions were:

- What action should occur on issues raised in the June '92 report to stakeholders?
- What form of network of stakeholders might best serve the needs in the community?
- How could the work with sexuality education complement and enhance other initiatives, such as the larger "Self-Esteem of a Community" project?

- How can we increase the likelihood that the *COOL* program will continue, along with the leadership development which occurs in it?
- How can we continue to be aware of external forces and use them to enhance development?

(The chronological summary of Year #4 events and activities is included as Appendix 7.2.)

The second part of the chapter is a summary of ways in which sexuality education changed over the years of this study, as might be seen from the perspectives of teens and parents. A complementary summary of change in SE from an organizational and professional perspective is located in Chapter VIII.

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## Teachers and School Programs

Teachers and administrators reported that any needs for information and professional development in sexuality education had been satisfied through informal networking among teachers, consulting with resource people, and individual action and reflection.

*From my perspective, as far as teachers are concerned, what was set in place appears to be working. (Teachers) feel comfortable, they know the questions they should be asking themselves and the things they should be looking for. They have what they need or they know where they can find it.*

All the Health / SE teachers in the Grades 5-9 School were trained in QUEST and had at least one year of experience with the SE program. Three of the four teachers had participated in either the Year #2 or #3 professional development programs. The jurisdiction curriculum coordinator advised teachers of special workshops offered by other agencies and continued to facilitate the informal networking of teachers. The curriculum coordinator also promoted programs such as COOL to teachers and students outside Brackton. In the perception of educational staff, no further school or jurisdiction professional development programs relating to SE were required, and none were undertaken.

Meanwhile, the school jurisdiction curriculum coordinator acquired the print and video materials requested by teachers in Years #2 and #3. Early in Year #4, these and other useful items discovered in schools were made available to teachers through the jurisdiction's distribution system. The Health Unit also continued to provide many useful materials.



My informal interviews with teens and parents associated with COOL lead me to believe that substantial progress has occurred in instructional strategies and that many student needs were being met through school programs (further details are provided later in this chapter). Suggestions for continued growth in effectiveness included greater participation of peer instructors and deeper involvement of parents. More formal assessment of teacher and student perceptions were planned in conjunction with the design of the "Self-Esteem of a Community" model.

Teachers at the 5-9 School continued to actively support the COOL program and connect it with their peer support team. They recommended teens and adults they felt could become effective peer instructors for COOL, school classrooms and informal settings with peers.

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## **The COOL Program and Peer Leadership**

This section includes descriptions of re-connecting the program with the Health Unit, consolidating local administration and support, changes within the team of adult and teen leaders, recruiting and training new leaders, and evolution of the concept of a regional "pool" of peer instructors. Each of these steps were important in addressing the question, "How can we increase the likelihood that the COOL program will continue, along with the leadership development which occurs in it?"

### **Re-connecting with the Health Unit on a Community Level**

At the provincial level, the Health Unit that produced COOL was releasing its control on the program and allowing communities to more easily adapt it to their needs. The degree of the regional Health Unit's control in the COOL program remained poorly defined. A significant degree of resolution occurred when professionals and parents in Brackton finally accepted that the intensive role taken by the regional sexuality coordinator in Year #1 would not, and could not, be sustained. Brackton would have to find its own resources for leader training, coordination, and curriculum development.

We again examined options for re-connecting local sexuality education efforts with the Health Unit and re-discovered Brackton's community health nurse. Her extensive responsibilities and time commitments constrained her from becoming involved as coordinator of the COOL team, but opened other possible avenues for assistance. Her work in Brackton's schools and homes brought her into contact with the teachers, children,

parents, and LLLC members. She was knowledgeable, credible, personable and respected by professionals and volunteers. Although she was not "the sexuality education expert," she was able to integrate sexual health into the broader health and well-being picture. This connection seemed much more natural and appropriate, and she became progressively more integrated in the movement toward healthier relationships and lifestyles in Bruckton. When we began to see all of the possible benefits to this "re-connection" we regretted not having acted to establish this relationship before.

### **Re-thinking Local Administration and Support**

Up to this time we had not created formal role descriptions for a local team coordinator or administrative support board for COOL. I met with the FCSS director, the community health nurse and three parents in September to create possible role descriptions. Possibilities for the coordinator's role were grouped under the following categories:

- planning for development of program and personnel,
- recruiting and training new leaders,
- promotional visits at school,
- workshop and follow-up responsibilities,
- communication with the board,
- contact with team coordinators in other communities.

The FCSS director recruited parents for an administrative support board. This group met in October and took full responsibility for the support tasks which were necessary to hold the COOL workshop, including acquiring financial assistance.

### **The COOL Team**

Bruckton's original teen leaders were in Grades 11 and 12. They continued to be enthusiastic about their involvement, making statements such as *"Of course I'm in. It's part of my life!"* All were involved in formal and informal leadership roles at school. All were active as peer supporters, helping others work through problems in relationships, drug and alcohol abuse and suicide prevention. They reported that this was likely to be their last year with COOL and it was time for a serious effort to recruit new leaders.

Meanwhile, two of the five adult team members (parents of teens on the team) also indicated that this was their final year. I agreed to continue with COOL in Year #4, but announced my intention to act only as a resource person after the initial workshop.

The teens and adults and the current teachers at the 5-9 school provided suggestions on desirable characteristics for new leaders and recommended several individuals be invited to apply. We were very pleased with the enthusiastic response to the invitations, especially

because four credible males were among the eight who were interested. Unfortunately, however, no new adults indicated a willingness to join the team. The teen leaders took responsibility for communicating with the novices and involving them in a training workshop described below.

### **Cooperative Team Training**

Thirty-eight teen and adult leaders from three communities joined together for a three-day training event in October. Another leader and I planned the program to allow each team opportunities to present their innovations and explain the approaches they were using. Individual participants each presented part of the workshop and received feedback.

Three questions we focused on were:

- How can we make COOL sessions as learner-centered and engaging as possible for participants?
- How can we encourage deeper thinking about the issues being presented?
- How can we help participants connect their learning and understand the significance of each of the concepts in the overall framework of the workshop?

Bruckton's experienced leaders (now five teens and four adults) played a major role in instructing and motivating others. They modelled collegial support, willingness to discuss difficult issues, and willingness to listen to explanations of contrary views. Eight new leaders (four male and four female) from Bruckton participated in the training event, and the original team agreed that each of the new individuals be asked to continue and help with the Bruckton workshop in November.

The teens and adults shouldered nearly all responsibilities for preparing for the workshop. The experienced teens assigned sessions, arranging for each of the new teens to work with an experienced partner. In contrast to the numerous meetings in Year #2, we met only once as a group for a two-hour period to ensure everything was ready. The teen leaders also took responsibility for promoting the program to the peer support team and Grade 8 and 9 students. Five local parents who had experienced the COOL program telephoned all of the parents of those teens who applied.

### **The COOL Workshop Weekend In Bruckton**

We made several improvements in the program and in our approaches. We focused on making the sessions more learner-centered, more engaging, more connected, and more challenging to higher-order thinking. Leaders felt that we reached the full potential of activities like the dice game, the personal moments, the decision making tree, and the "expectations" sessions we had introduced the year before.

In spite of two teen leaders experiencing unrelated major personal traumas, we allowed ourselves to have fun as we presented the program. Many of the sessions were presented with "a relaxed sense of humor." One of the adult leaders suggested a reason. *We had tried to be humorous in the past and, usually, it was well received. (In addition to this), though, we were confident with the content, confident in one another, and confident in ourselves. We have matured, and the program has changed at the same time.*

As an example, several of the teens came forward with a comment similar to the one following.

*The (presentation) of the male anatomy was incredible! We've heard that (information) before but we never killed ourselves laughing or realized what an awesome, 'designed for success' machine it really is.*

Several other innovations were also received favorably by teens and parents.

- We were sensitive to both Christian and non-Christian perspectives, and used language and illustrations that were meaningful to both.
- We invited both teens and adults to periodically pass co-participants "nurture notes," positive messages to recognize strengths and build up their peers. It personalized interactions and gave experience in what it felt like to give and receive sincere positive feedback, and underlined the importance of encouraging and supporting peers and family members.
- We added a brief "time for reflection" in both the teen and parent programs. After discussing how past hurts block communication and need forgiveness, we asked participants to recall a moment when they had been hurt, or had hurt, a loved one. They were then challenged to imagine themselves forgiving, or ask forgiveness of, that person. Finally, they were invited to practice the conversation in their minds.

Participant evaluations of the weekend workshop were overwhelmingly positive. Once again, we sent a follow-up letter to remind teens and parents of the principles and to encourage them to take leadership in making a difference in their school as well as in their social circle. Again, however, very few people came to our follow-up meeting. As we investigated the reasons for this, we learned that the parents and teens were not notified sufficiently in advance for most to be able to attend. Several recommended that the follow-up occur two weeks after the workshop, instead of two months after.

### **Evolution of the Regional COOL "Pool" Concept**

In addition to the workshop in Brackton, team members facilitated workshops in two neighboring communities during Year #4. We received four other requests but were

unable to accommodate them because of our adults' busy schedules. This situation in combination with other factors led to increased interest in the concept of a regional "pool" of peer instructors. Neighboring community teams had complementary strengths and weaknesses. One had adults with time and motivation; another had adults with skills and life experience to share; one had credible young adults who would be excellent role models; while another had excellent teens that could relate directly to junior high or high school students.

Other factors included the following:

- A large group of acquainted peer instructors had emerged as a result of the three years' experience.
- Team members experienced the benefits of working outside of their own communities: they were less inhibited, had greater respect, were freer to learn from others, and were more bold and adventurous.
- Leading more than one workshop per year encouraged growth and increased satisfaction.
- Strong connections existed among FCSS coordinators in many neighboring communities.
- Community leaders who had tried raising teams realized how much time it required.
- There were few people who would take the role of team coordinator and trainer.
- The professionals could not easily justify it under their existing job descriptions, and volunteer coordinators were likely to be rare.

As Year #4 was drawing to a close, representatives in four neighboring communities were discussing various models for training and maintaining peer instructors. One proposed that two to four neighboring communities each contribute a sum of money toward the honoraria for the coordinator/trainer and peer instructors. Each of the communities would host one COOL workshop each year, but residents would be free to attend whichever program they wished. Training and social events would be rotated, giving each group an opportunity to host. The idea of concentrating team activities in a four month period (January to April, 1994) was proposed as a way to reduce the need for administration while accommodating the needs of teens, adults, team leader, and those requesting assistance outside.

### **Looking Ahead**

The new and old team members met in July for an evening of celebration, evaluation and suggestions for the future. All discussed the concept of the regional team, evaluated the training in the past and made suggestions for the future. The out-going team members reflected on the personal and professional benefits they had received as a result of their involvement. Several offered to continue as resource people and to assist with

coordination. The new members said, "We're pumped and want to do as many workshops as we can -- maybe 5 or 6 next year."

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## Stakeholder Issues

As mentioned earlier, the stakeholder representatives were addressing questions relating to the best form of networking which might best serve the needs in the community, and how the work with sexuality education could complement and enhance other initiatives, such as the larger "Self-Esteem of a Community" project.

On the interpersonal level, many obstacles to collaborative relationships between representatives had been overcome in Years #2 and #3. However, a small but significant number of relationships remained problematic up to the end of the study.

This section includes brief reports on what happened regarding the stakeholders' organization, the "Self-Esteem of a Community" project, other related initiatives, and monitoring.

### A New Structure for Networking

Various options for changing or dissolving the network were discussed during the spring interviews with stakeholder representatives and were included in the "Final report." In order to reduce my influence on the community leaders' decision making, I arranged to be absent from their fall meeting, and explained this in a letter to stakeholders. Representatives of nearly every group, the largest gathering ever, attended the September meeting and discussed organizational options for the future.

The group decided to merge with the Lifelong Learning and Leisure Committee as described in this excerpt of the minutes.

*The members discussed the feasibility of having the BRIDGES Network exist independently. The group felt the needs of all could be best served by joining the Lifelong Learning and Leisure Committee. This group discusses programs undertaken by various members of the community and has a mandate comparable to the mission set out by the BRIDGES Network.*

Although formally a part of LLLLC, the representatives planned to meet twice each year to discuss sexuality education and other aspects of healthy relationships and lifestyles as required. Some reinforcing activities were already in progress through this body, such as a joint program to encourage better communication between teens and parents.

I agreed that the work could be most effectively and efficiently continued under the LLLLC, the organization we began discussions with early in Year #2. The separation was no longer required to protect the community school's image, and the principles and capacities necessary to continue with community action in sexuality education had been established. Further discussion of the impact of BRIDGES and this decision is included in Chapter IX.

### The Self-Esteem of a Community Project

*... the FCSS Board has been invited to submit a proposal to Canada Employment and Immigration for a "Stay in School Initiative" grant.*

After receiving a national award for the Life Skills program, the FCSS board in Bruckton was invited by a federal government department to apply for program funding to encourage teens to complete secondary schooling. This news, officially announced at the fall BRIDGES meeting, added a new dimension to collaborative action among network participants, many of whom became almost instantly involved with the new project. Some saw it as a natural extension and broadening of the work with teens and relationships, and developing leadership and organizational capacities which had occurred with BRIDGES. Others saw the stay-in-school initiative as more discrete, considering the connection to BRIDGES to be less direct and less significant.

Over the next two months the advisory group met to generate ideas and develop the proposal they entitled "Self-Esteem of a Community." They referred to it as "a model integrating community, family and school efforts to address the needs of students at risk of dropping out of school." Enhancing the self-esteem component of programs and emphases in the community was, as one would guess, a major theme in the plan.

The proposal was officially accepted in March, 1993, and a full time coordinator was hired in April to direct the project for one year. Further discussion on "Self Esteem of a Community" and its relationship to previous work is included in Chapter IX.

### Related Initiatives

As the stay-in-school initiative got underway, the FCSS board began to shift emphasis from introducing and expanding programs to developing programs already in place and expanding the base of volunteer support. Looking ahead to Year #5, the FCSS director planned to dedicate a significant portion of time to recruiting and developing COOL leaders and to coordinating school staff more closely with COOL. She intended to involve school staff more in decisions regarding the program and to maximize the beneficial effects with peer leaders.

FCSS and the Health Unit planned to work together "to assess and improve community conditions to address HIV/AIDS issues." COOL leaders and various stakeholder representatives were to be involved in the plans.

FCSS was also planning a retreat that would emphasize skills to enhance family relationships and communication.

### **Monitoring Mishap**

The survey of teens was conducted at the beginning of Year #4 as planned but, unfortunately, not at the end of the year. Some attributed it to simple human error, or "one of those things that just got missed when we were rushing around doing too many things." Others said it was due to lack of formal coordination such as occurred in the past through BRIDGES. Still others interpreted it as resulting from inter-organizational communication breakdown.

Several had been looking forward to the "pre-post" test of progress in Year #4. It was a very unfortunate loss but suggested the need to have someone designated, perhaps a volunteer, to ensure that these "little things" ran smoothly.

*We finally had it all together. All the resources, programs and people were in place and doing their best work. It would have been interesting (to have the survey results). It's too bad.*

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## **Other Programs and Factors**

### **Approval for Audio-Visual and Print Resources**

As Year #4 began, the provincial Ministry of Education brought several teachers and regional Health Unit sexuality educators together to review audio-visual resources for use in elementary and junior high classes with the purpose of updating the list of approved resources for use in schools in the province. The review process continued within the provincial ministry and the final list of approved resources was announced at the end of Year #4 (July). Also included in the approved list was a print resource for teachers and students entitled "Choosing Abstinence."

This outcome is significant because teachers had voiced considerable concern for the shortage of good quality audio-visual resources, and the tension associated with using ones that neither the province nor the jurisdictions had approved. The provincially approved resources and those approved and acquired by the local jurisdiction were



appreciated by teachers. The move also coordinated with a time when teachers' abilities to assess and use SE resources had increased.

### Other Video Materials

Those teens who participate regularly in religious youth groups are likely to have encountered videos addressing issues of sexuality. A selection of educational videos on sexual decision making and family communication had become available free of charge at video rental outlets.

### Nearby School Jurisdictions Investigating Options for SE Programs

By the end of Year #4, several school jurisdictions nearby were investigating options for abstinence-based or abstinence-emphasizing curricula (e.g., Teen-Ed, Sex Respect, Values and Choices). It was interesting to note the way in which the various curricula were perceived and judged. Particular programs were praised and accepted in one jurisdiction because of their strength and effectiveness in communicating desirable messages, while in another jurisdiction nearby the same programs were rejected because of their weakness in portraying the same messages.

Of particular interest to me and others in Bruckton was the way in which the COOL program was perceived elsewhere. In two nearby jurisdictions, COOL was adopted and supported as a program in which each student in Grade 8 or 9 participated. It was selected because of the accurate portrayal of controversial issues, the attention to relationships, the portrayal of healthy relationships, and the emphasis on postponing. In another jurisdiction, however, COOL was seen as being heavily weighted toward encouraging and normalizing contraceptive use.

### Popular Press Challenge

Articles such as that by Gibbs (1993) and Levin et al. (1993) were referred to by several stakeholder representatives in Bruckton. The Gibbs (1993) survey indicated that 20% of 13-15 year olds and 50% of 16-17 year olds experienced sexual intercourse at least once. The reasons the American teens gave for having sexual intercourse were as follows:

|                                       |              |             |
|---------------------------------------|--------------|-------------|
| curious, wanted to experiment         | girls<br>80% | boys<br>76% |
| wanted to be popular, impress friends | 58%          | 58%         |
| in love                               | 63%          | 50%         |
| under pressure from their date        | 65%          | 35%         |

(It was uncertain whether this for all occasions or just one.)

The articles outlined the range of contradictory messages about sexuality which teens receive from their major information sources -- school, media, peers, and parents. They also noted the confusion among teens with regard to concepts of sexuality and sexual expression. Signs of hope, however, were also noted and later quoted by those in Bruckton, as a confirmation that through our attempts to work together we were headed in the right direction.

Faced with evidence that the kids are suffering while they bicker, parents and educators are seeking some common ground about what works and what doesn't. It is becoming possible to discuss the need for responsibility and commitment without being cast as a religious fanatic and to accept the need for "safe-sex" instruction without being considered an amoral pragmatist. (Gibbs, 1993, p. 51)

### COOL Supported in Christian Magazine

Favorable coverage given to COOL in the widely read *Focus on the Family* magazine appeared to increase confidence in the program among members of some Christian groups in Bruckton. COOL was portrayed in this magazine as promoting healthy relationships and premarital abstinence.

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## Changes For Teens

This next two sections of this chapter are summaries of the changes which occurred for those directly affected by SE in Bruckton -- teens and their parents. They were prepared in response to a question asked by many stakeholders, synthesized in the statement below:

*If a fourteen or fifteen year old and his/her parents were to return to the same age and situation four years later, what differences would they find in sexuality education? Have influences and practices changed and, if so, how?*

The summaries are not to be taken as high quality evaluation. Rather, they are the "best possible" synthesis of the outcomes I could make within the limitations of available time and data. The information was gathered from interviews, observations, and surveys of teens and adults during Year #3 and in the first few months of Year #4. I attempted to

bring the information together in a way that would illustrate the nature of sexuality education which most of Bruckton's teen leaders were experiencing, as well as the major changes which a hypothetical teen or adult learner would find. (Readers will note that portions of the text are written in present tense to help communicate the comparison.) Of course, the experience of "sexuality education" varied (as it did in Year #1) according to the family, the school class and the social circles with which a particular individual was associated. Readers are asked to recall this variation as they proceed through this generalized report of the outcomes.

### **Summary**

Within Bruckton, an obvious change is the increase in the number of formal and informal sources of positive influence on teens. There are more programs, but also more people who are willing and able to skillfully work with teens and help them address their concerns. With minor exceptions, these sources give clearer, less contradictory messages in such areas as postponing sexual intimacy, healthy relationships, contraceptive controversies, and responsible decision making. The sources tend to reinforce one another and emphasize key elements such as self-esteem, assertiveness and analysis skills, and using accurate language. In the school classroom, a teen would most often find the program to reinforce the concepts listed above. The activities would be more engaging, more relevant and sensitive to the needs and interests of the learner (in spite of the fact that there is often too much emphasis on puberty).

Less obvious are the trends toward healthier relationships among teens and better family communication. The COOL program often provides a catalyst for changes: some of the participants then extend their knowledge and model their healthier ways for others.

### **Outside Influences**

While those in Bruckton proceeded on their journey, by Year #4, changes had also occurred in the messages teens were receiving from outside the community. Teen television shows frequently address sexuality issues, albeit with varying degrees of depth and accuracy and questionable helpfulness. Depictions of sexual intimacy on television and in movies continue to be frequent, while models of "responsible decision making" continue to be rare. Sex is a common theme in advertising in all media, with explicitness and exposure increasing. Advertisements for condoms have become common on radio and television, as well as in magazines. According to teens, their magazines present a more accurate view of sexuality and decision making than they did four years ago. Authors often encourage young teens to postpone sexual intimacy and to handle exploitation assertively.

Meanwhile, at the library, the "Madonna" book arrived and its accessibility has sparked lively debate both inside and outside Bruckton. Musical taste among teens has diversified, with more teens listening to forms such as rap and reggae. Popular musical groups are testing the limits in both directions: while some groups have become extremely explicit in promoting sexual intimacy and exploitation, other groups have emerged which encourage postponing sexual relations and providing peer support toward non-exploitive relationships.

### Trends Toward Healthier Relationships Among Bruckton Teens

In Bruckton, teens, professionals, and parents have noticed a trend toward healthier, less exploitive relationships among teens. Teens reported that they and many of their peers have consciously chosen to postpone sexual intercourse, and that they feel they have the personal resources to maintain this decision. Because of a lack of baseline data, it is difficult to discuss the degree of change. Although examples of sexual activity or exploitive relationships among those in early teenage can be found, the trend is definitely toward healthier relationships, as seen in the following statements:

- on rights and responsibilities in a relationship.

*I didn't really ever think about how to handle things like being pressured or my rights and responsibilities in a relationship. What I learned was that I could stand up for myself and what I believe. I have to stand up for myself, but I don't have to be a jerk doing it.*

- on dealing with pressure more effectively.

*As teens, we still have lots of pressure to have sex, and to drink and stuff too. I'd say that we feel more able to handle the pressure. We have a few tricks up our sleeves you might say. People are using the assertiveness skills.*

- questioning assumptions about sexual behavior.

*I thought everybody was doing it once they went out for awhile and loved each other, and those who didn't were weird or something. I think most of us assumed that one day, maybe in Grade 10, we'd just do it. Now I think, what's the point? I'm going to wait.*

Again, one should note that comparison with previous years is hindered by many factors, including lack of information from teens in this area from several years ago, and the speed with which teens change their positions in the early adolescent years. Several stakeholder representatives suggested that we will need to gather follow-up information several years from now.

*The real evidence will be gathered about five years down the road when these are young adults. Then we can ask them what kind of decisions they have made along the way. Until then, we have to be content with doing our level best to improve our programs . . . But so many other things will happen between now and then. Much has to do with the kind of families they are in and the people they chose to keep company with.*

Possibilities for collecting these data are discussed in Chapter VIII.

### **Clearer and Less Contradictory Messages**

As teachers, teens, parents, and other leaders developed more common understanding over the years, the "messages" given to teen learners have become clearer, less contradictory and more accurate. As stated previously, programs and emphases have become more interconnected.

- *For example, teens who have participated in Quest or (other programs) may have registered for COOL and employed the things they learned in their school classes or peer support team or church youth group. Other teens may not be involved in any of these programs, but may be influenced by someone who was.*
- *Teens are saying that we are on the right track with the COOL program and the school programs. The topics we are raising and the ways in which we are handling them are appropriate . . . . The activities are causing them to see some of the myths, re-evaluate their opinions and their relationships.*

Several important messages (most of which were discussed in the literature review) were being broadly, although not universally, communicated with teens in Bruckton:

- **Sexuality is more than sex.**
- **Learning about sexuality is important and can be fun.**
- **Sexuality is only a part of a relationship.**
- **Healthy relationships are free from pressure and exploitation.** There is a better chance of making and maintaining healthy sexual decisions when relationships are healthy. Individuals have rights in a relationship and can be assertive about those rights. You are a person of great value and well worth waiting for. The message that an individual has a responsibility to act in the best interests of the other is the logical conclusion.
- **Sexuality is not bad and can exist along with spirituality.** In order to be a spiritual or "good" teen you do not have to deny your sexuality. Rather, it is important to be aware of your sexuality and how it affects you and your relationships with others. It is a gift that you received when you were created. As with other gifts, it is intended for wise use.

- **Responsible sexual decision making is essential and can require considerable information and careful consideration.** It is important to get high quality information and have the sense that you are able to decide. Realize that biases and controversies are present and take personal responsibility to get as close as you can to the truth. Consider the potential decisions and consequences that flow from the initial one (the decision tree). Myths and mind games can block the process of making good decisions.
- **The consequences of early sexual intercourse are more than physical** (pregnancy and disease). There are emotional, social, financial, and spiritual consequences to consider.
- **Contraceptives/prophylactics are available but several issues must be addressed.** Teens are aware of contraceptives and instructors acknowledge that reality. They are generally providing accurate and appropriate information and stimulating thought about controversies surrounding effectiveness and non-physical consequences to consider.
- **Postponing is probably the best choice for young teens.** It is a wise decision and possible in practice, but some skills and some support from friends are important.
- **Family communication and relationships with parents are important and deserve persistence.**

*In our family, the big thing was that we started to talk to each other and listen more.* Teens are being invited to reflect on and analyze relationships with parents and what could be done to improve them. This message comes through somewhat stronger outside of school, but that does not seem to be a problem.

• **It's up to you to make a difference.** There is tremendous potential for improvement in relationships as a result of your efforts. Your support can be important in helping others as well. In some cases, however, other people may not respond as you would hope.

Several skills appeared to be reinforced with greater regularity. The strongest and most obvious are the assertiveness skills, which have been discussed in several locations. Analytical skills are receiving more attention, including analyzing controversies, myths and assumptions (particularly about sexual behavior), language (double standard, disrespectful, exploitative), and analysis of personal values and goals.

There are undoubtedly other important messages that are being (or should be) communicated that might be uncovered by a more thorough assessment of outcomes.

### **COOL: Opportunity and Catalyst**

COOL is often cited as the catalyst for change toward more positive attitudes and behaviors, whereas school programs have been described as most often having a reinforcing function. Those who chose to participate in COOL were encouraged toward

improving family communication, healthier relationships, being a supportive peer, and postponing sexual intercourse. These are being presented as attractive choices, rather than being "preached." Knowledge associated with these is being communicated accurately, while skills required are being acknowledged and partially developed. A broader picture of consequences is presented (i.e., not just physical ones).

There is about a 50% chance that a teen at the end of Grade 9 has participated in the COOL workshop weekend, but all teens experience the improved classroom program. If the teen did not participate in the COOL program s/he knows several who did. COOL participants tend to discuss the workshop activities when they return to school classes and/or informal conversation, relaying some information and modelling some skills.

Improvements to the program were made according to the recommendations of the evaluation in Year #1, and were noted in previous chapters. The following are some examples:

- more information on consequences of early intercourse, STD, contraceptive efficacy, and controversies.
- introduction of concepts such as secondary virginity, forgiveness, abstinence from alcohol and drugs.
- more effective instructional techniques, especially concretizing abstract concepts (e.g., babies, bugs, and dice), visualizing possibilities (e.g., being assertive or asking forgiveness), using humor appropriately.
- more and better print and AV materials.
- more attention to language with clearer meaning developed in key words like responsible decision, ready, abstinence, committed relationship, intimacy, love.
- more attention to self-esteem, healing hurts in families, and creative expression.
- appealing to broader spectrum of value orientations.
- more fun, with locally developed, appropriate humor.

### **Improved School Programs**

Instruction on sexuality is carried on in all Health classes now, and is given at least the degree of attention specified in the provincial program of studies. The concepts are taught in a discrete unit as well as integrated with the three other relevant themes (self-awareness, relationships with others, body knowledge and care) with the degree of integration varying from moderate to complete depending on the teacher. Most students now find their classes to be interesting and involving, even fun most of the time. They take part in greater numbers and variety of learner-centered activities including small group tasks, discussions, games, poster projects, board games and role plays. Most often, teens

find video presentations to be appropriate and stimulating, rather than outdated or irrelevant. Other specific points have been included under the section on "clearer, more consistent messages" or are mentioned under "key elements."

Teachers appear to students as being comfortable, capable, and confident as they lead the classes. More teachers seem able and interested in helping students learn about relationships, sexuality and decision making.

*Many teachers have come to see Health and SE as a real program, with real themes that run through, and that kids need to have this program and this series of developmental steps. There is quite a different attitude that has developed as a result of your work and BRIDGES . . . . If you go back a few years, you wouldn't have teachers saying (to their principals), "I've taught health before. Can I keep it?" Back then, it was the kind of course they were quite happy to get rid of because they saw it as just an add-on, unimportant thing. Kids didn't care about it, they wouldn't do homework in it, and it wasn't taken seriously. Now that has changed for quite a few. If teachers want the course they need to negotiate it with their principals and a number of them have.*

Almost all sessions at school are still led by the teachers but, in one or two sessions in each class, others students have led portions of the classes. The regional Sexual Health Coordinator no longer teaches, but a teen or teacher could easily contact her with any questions or concerns.

In general, postponing sexual intercourse is being emphasized and reinforced. The information about why this is a good decision for young teens is being communicated accurately, the skills required are being acknowledged and developed, and it is presented as an attractive choice, rather than being "preached." Consequences are discussed in broader terms, not just the physical.

Outside of the health classes, learners might experience any of several positive complementary influences in relationship areas -- interaction with members of the peer support team, an informal peer supporter, or activities in Quest or Innerchange.

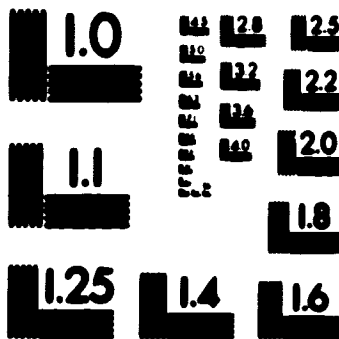
### **More Knowledgeable, Approachable Adults**

**Professionals.** Outside of class, the counsellor and several of the teachers are now knowledgeable and approachable. Students talk with them regarding sexuality concerns. The regional Health Unit's sexual health coordinator no longer teaches classes but is available both in and out of school for consultation with individuals. Other knowledgeable and approachable professionals in the community include the FCSS director, the Family Liaison workers and several religious leaders. These individuals are capable of addressing



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most concerns with skill and accuracy, and are more able to connect those with special needs to other who can assist them.

**Parents and Extension Parents.** Many more parents, particularly those who have participated in the COOL program or the foster parents' association, are ready, willing, and able to speak with their teens. Several "extension parents," those who speak with teens from other families, have emerged as well.

### **More Helpful Peers**

**Informal Peer Support.** Teens in Bruckton appear to be supporting one another with greater effectiveness toward healthier relationships.

*In our group, (the programs) got us thinking about helping each other out a lot more, not just standing by watching something bad happen, or (allow) one person to take advantage of another. We made a kind of agreement to do that for one another.*

COOL is cited as the most direct force behind the increase in peer support in the specific area of sexuality. The school's Peer Support Team and Quest programs, and the leadership programs offered through community organizations (mainly religious groups) have also served to increase the quality and numbers of knowledgeable and skilful peer supporters. These other initiatives appear to be the main forces behind the more general movement toward positive peer support.

**Formal Peer Instructors and Leaders.** There are now more trained teens with whom teens can communicate more openly about sexuality concerns (although confidentiality is still of concern). Trained teen instructors have emerged as a result of the COOL program but, again, often increased their effectiveness as a result of experiences elsewhere. As one might expect, if the teen had experience presenting on a particular theme and was addressing a younger grade level or the same grade in another school, the likelihood of satisfaction and success was increased. They have been effective as instructors and role models in the workshop setting and have led many activities within school classes. They handle delicate issues with sensitivity and power issues with tact.

COOL participants who have not received additional training have made good contributors and peer supporters but have had only limited experience as instructors in formal settings. Much depends on the particular group of teens and the teacher's estimation of their readiness to instruct and their peers' response to them. During Year #3, for example, teachers tended to be less eager to have non-team member COOL participants act as instructors.

*It seems to vary year to year. Last year, the peer instructors were there from the COOL team and worked really well. This year, I don't think it's turning out the same way . . . I can see that next year, though, there will be some really good peer instructors again.*

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## **Changes for Parents**

Parents in Bruckton also experienced some changes in sexuality education over the period of the study. They had more sources of information and support, increased confidence in school programs, and were experiencing some changes in family relationships. More details are provided below.

### **More Sources of Information and Support**

Parents responding to the surveys conducted by FCSS and the Community School are no longer identifying a need for better approaches to sexuality education in the community.

*It's interesting that parents aren't saying anymore that they need more information, or that we need to do something different in SE . . . About three years ago, it would turn up on every program evaluation and survey that we did.*

We cannot assume that this, in itself, is a sign that the needs are being met. However, parents do have more opportunities to learn about sexuality and communicating with their teen. This can be reinforced in any one of several programs offered through FCSS and/or the community school.

*Many parents have been through COOL and through other programs put on by FCSS, churches, the foster parents association, etc. These individuals are now capable of helping to provide some leadership and instruction. We are finding them and encouraging them and we could do more to include them.*

There is about a 50% chance that parents have attended the COOL program if they have a child who has been in the target age range. The Community School has hosted several evening programs focusing on family communication and living with teens. Parents also have access to print and video support materials in the resource center operated by FCSS. Finally, those involved with religious groups (beyond a token level) are likely to have encountered presentations or discussions on sexuality and family relationships.

### Increased Confidence in and Acceptance of School Programs

One of the early concerns was the degree of suspicion parents had with regard to school programs. Over the past three years confidence in the schools' programming has increased dramatically.

*On a community level, some very exciting things have happened. The parents' apprehension and suspicion is virtually gone, and that's positive.*

The majority of those who previously opted out of school programs now participate there.

### COOL and Improved Family Relationships

Parents are generally aware of the COOL program. It is accepted and has a positive image in the community.

*Very few people in this town don't know about COOL and that it does good things for teens and parents. Parents are aware that sex ed is more than just what goes on at school.*

For many of the parents that attended, the COOL program has served as a catalyst for them to reflect on their attitudes and actions and bring about change in relationships with their teen children. Year #3 and #4 versions also emphasized reflection on parent-parent relationships. Positive change resulted for many participants in this area as well.

*• A surprise for me has been what's gone on with the parents. The relationship revitalization that has happened through COOL is really special . . . About half way through the second meeting, I suddenly noticed most of the couples were holding hands... and some of those were the type that never do that sort of thing.*

*• Since those meetings, I have spoken with several couples who talked about the difference that weekend, and beginning to talk about sexuality and relationships, has made in their own marriage relationships. They were motivated to re-think their priorities and find more family time. That's had a positive effect on what goes on at home with (their teen), and the modelling they see at home.*

These reports are encouraging because of the importance of husband-wife communication in terms of modelling healthy relationships, communication with their child, happiness at home, integrity of family, etc. The emphasis on healthy family relationships was also reinforced through PCSS/Community School programs and Quest.

Once again, we recognized that these types of experiences vary considerably.

## Continuing Challenges

Some difficulties remain in the area of communication between professionals and parents. One professional described how two groups of parents continued to present challenges.

*There are those parents who do not deal with these issues . . . They feel their kids will learn about it like they did. Then there are those who are convinced that they have the only right answer, or that their program will solve all the problems, and they push their solution . . . Neither group is helpful. Trying to "fix" others can be just as bad as doing nothing.*

Others reported barriers due to privacy and pride.

*Some community members continue to feel sexuality is a private matter and is not to be discussed openly . . . Pride is another. Some can't admit that communication is a problem in their family.*

"Time pressure" and "busy lives" were cited as ongoing problems for many of those who might act as though they did not care to be involved with the sexuality education of their child.

Other needs were related to being freed from the limits of past experiences, seeking or offering forgiveness, and examining values and the communication of them.

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## Summary

Some very important outcomes in terms of community action occurred during Year #4. The BRIDGES network folded into another community networking operation. Growing capacities for self-sustaining development became evident through the "Self-Esteem of a Community" project. Although the collaborative environment is generally healthy, a few problematic relationships persist. Teachers, the COOL team, and religious groups, meanwhile, seem to be in a position where they are supported and can continue to improve their approaches.

Meanwhile, positive outcomes in sexuality education received by teens were noted. There is still a considerable range of experiences, depending on factors beyond the control of instructors and there are still areas of weakness in the community approach and in individual programs. For most teens, however, the concern regarding lack of information from accessible, confidential, credible sources has been resolved. Although quality

information and counsel is available for those who would seek it. some teens continue to choose not to access any sources outside of the classroom.

*Are we sufficiently sensitive to those teens who may need information or support but may not, for whatever reason, be asking for it?*

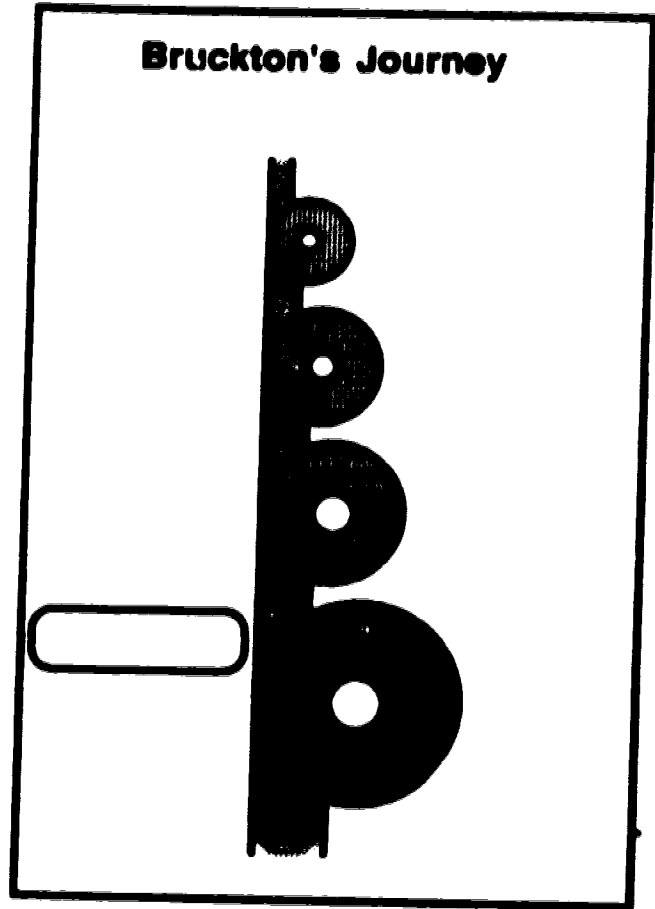
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This is the end of the four-chapter historical account of Bruckton's path of development. See Chapter VIII for further analysis of sexuality education issues, Chapter IX for community development issues, and Chapter X for research issues.

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## *Sexuality Education*

*We know more about the possibilities and the problems and have a greater confidence that we can meet the challenge.*



Teen and adult perspectives on changes in sexuality education were presented in Chapter VII. This chapter opens with a summary of changes in capacity for SE instruction in Bruckton, and recommendations for continued related research and development in the community. Then, moving to a broader field of view, I outline some major considerations for SE policy and practice which emerged or were reinforced in this study. A revised version of the "planning checklist" for classroom instruction is included, and the chapter concludes with suggestions for further research and development in the field of sexuality education.

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### **Changes in Capacity for Instruction**

Noticeable growth has occurred among teachers and other professionals, as well as among parent and teen "peer instructors." In addition to increasing in number and in ability

to contribute to the educational delivery system, connections among those providing instruction have become increasingly helpful.

## **Teachers**

For the most part, the concerns expressed by teachers during Year #1 have been addressed. The extent to which qualities apply to individuals varies, but the text which follows describes teachers as a group.

**More confident and comfortable.** As one summarized, "Teachers have what they need to do a good job in this area. We have background in the content and we feel comfortable and capable." The factors described below contributed to an increased sense of comfort in teaching SE. Most teachers are feeling as though tension associated with instruction in the area of sexuality and relationships has declined and are interested and willing to teach Health and SE. Teachers say "I can do this."

**More knowledgeable.** "Teachers are much more comfortable in terms of their own knowledge and in terms of relating to kids." They are knowledgeable about sexuality issues as well as effective, learner-centered strategies for teaching in sexuality education.

*I began to realize that the kids have the "switch" that permits learning to happen. In that sense, being able to teach (SE) in a learner-centered way might be the toughest challenge to face, but it might be the door back into what teaching is really all about -- meeting the needs of the learner.*

They are aware of how to deal with controversial issues, as well as the school and community constraints within which they must operate. The rate of turnover has now slowed enough to permit systematic professional and program development in the future.

**Willing and able learners.** As a group, teachers are much more active learners in the content area of sexuality and relationships. They seek their own information and incorporate their new knowledge to modify approaches and make presentations more accurate. Most spoke of the need to continue going outside the community for fresh ideas and perspectives, as well as going outside to share experiences. Skill in self-analysis / reflection and systematic improvement has also grown. The school jurisdiction and regional Health Unit plan to provide in-service development opportunities for new health teachers. If the Minister's Committee's suggestions are acted upon, pre-service teachers will also have greater opportunity for preparation in sexuality and health education.

**More skillful in planning.** Teachers are cognizant of the multiple dimensions of SE which they should keep in mind as they prepare for instruction. In addition to the local curriculum (including the planning checklist) and the provincial curriculum, most have become able to assess the needs of their teen learners and modify classroom approaches to



suit these needs. They include learners in planning programs and use information gathered through the survey to engage students more deeply. One described this as "achieving a freedom from trying to reproduce the curriculum -- rising above just doing the technical things of teaching." Most have become skillful in integrating SE in health and with other curricular areas. "(We) are looking at how relationship issues, for example, can be dealt with and reinforced across the health curriculum, and in social studies and language arts as well."

Better able to access and evaluate resources. Improved print and video resources were acquired by the jurisdiction and, more recently, were approved by the provincial government. Some became aware of the quality resources available through the Health Unit and some discovered worthwhile resources within their schools. As a group, teachers are able to critically assess resources for instruction in SE. They are aware of helpful professionals and volunteers, and have gained experience and insight into working with resource people.

Better connected, recognized, and supported by other teachers and administrators. This includes colleagues, school administrators and jurisdiction administrators. Teachers feel moderately well-connected with colleagues in their school as well as with those in other schools. "It's been good to be able to toss ideas around, share resources and activities and generally work together on this." The contributions of teachers involved in the earlier efforts have been recognized in several areas: through the plan for ongoing professional development in the division, networking of health teachers from the seven schools, the major initiative to review and secure better quality video materials, and the emphasis on integrating elements of SE naturally throughout the health curriculum. Teachers from other schools are benefitting from the planning checklist, while those in Bruckton are benefitting from resources others have identified.

There is an increased sense of being supported by the jurisdiction's administration as well. Teachers have seen administrators take action on their behalf and respond to their concerns in a way many thought would be unlikely in the past. They feel as though they are more able to influence the jurisdiction's actions.

The knowledge and interest of school administrators has also grown. The assistant principal participated directly in the professional development program. The principal participated faithfully through reading and commenting on printed materials relating to professional development and community networking in Years #2 and #3. Both are quite familiar with SE-related issues and able to provide more instructional leadership in this area.

**More effective and coordinated counselling.** The school's counsellor participated in all PD and BRIDGES Network activities. In addition to being a resource person to teachers, she is able to provide some counselling for individuals who are in the process of reshaping family or couple relationships. The counsellor works closely with the FCSS organization, Family Liason workers, and religious leaders to increase the likelihood that counselling needs of individuals and families are met.

**Better connected and supported on the community level.** Teachers also described examples of helpful connection and support (professional development, video resources, positive recommendation, etc.) from religious leaders and others associated with the Network. They feel they have the respect, confidence and support of most parents and key people in Bruckton, at least in regard to SE.

*What (the teachers) have done has been of tremendous value. They've proven that teachers can and will work with community members -- be they parents or pastors or whoever -- and solve problems. They've shown that teachers are interested enough to plough in some of their own time -- and we're aware they have to keep that in balance . . .*

**Constraints.** Two factors appear to be constraining growth in capacity for SE instruction among teachers. First, the role of teachers in Bruckton is steadily increasing in scope and complexity. "We could always do more if we had more time, but we're saturated with programs and expectations." An increasing amount of time and energy is required to fill the obligations they have to students, parents, colleagues, administrators, and provincial policy makers. Booi et al. (1993) in "Trying to Teach" have documented this for teachers throughout the province. One of the conclusions of this committee of the teachers' professional association was that the extreme demands being placed on teachers today may be resulting in a decline, rather than an improvement in professional service.

The combined impact of (changes in educational policy in the province) has produced a situation in which many teachers maintain that they can no longer render professional service or meet the educational needs of their students. (p. 26)

Although teachers in Bruckton have responded well to the initiative in SE, the other demands on them are such that they have little time to devote to continuing to improve SE at this time.

A second constraint is the perception that health education is of little value. *An ongoing problem is the low profile of the health program in general and the sexuality or relationships part in particular. As teachers we have to ask ourselves "How much time can I afford to spend on something that is less than ten hours of my program?"*

The situation regarding this issue improved at the jurisdiction and school levels. Time and financial resources were allocated, value was demonstrated, and teachers and parents were very pleased with this. However, the profile remains low in comparison to other subject areas.

*If we want to give more time to health, what should we take time away from? The public wouldn't let us reduce the time we give to language arts, or math or science, that's for sure.*

The larger-scale problems persist and teachers are doing the best they can.

### **Other Professionals**

The growth of other (non-school) professionals in Bruckton has also contributed to an increased capacity for instruction. Religious leaders and agency workers have become more knowledgeable of sexuality and relationship issues, and informal educational opportunities are now often occurring within their organizations.

Another contribution to instructional capacity in Bruckton is related to the closer connection between non-school professionals and teachers and peer instructors. The knowledgeability of these others adds a degree of motivation and accountability, enabling them to provide constructive critique for those working both inside and outside of the school environment. Non-school professionals also contribute by acquiring resources (e.g., videos on sexuality and spirituality) for review by instructors.

### **Teen and Parent "Peer" Instructors**

Teen and parent COOL team members grew in numbers, in understanding of sexuality and relationship issues, and in the quality of their instructional practices. Most became flexible, self-motivated learners, interested in addressing challenging issues within the COOL program. Peer instructors have become sensitive to political issues: the need to present, and appear to present a balanced curriculum in the workshops. Both team members and program recipients acted successfully as leaders and instructors in classroom situations. Teen and adult leaders acted as sources of information and support with peers outside of formal programs as well.

In Year #5, past and present members of the COOL team joined with various professionals and parents working on an initiative in AIDS education. At the time of writing (February, 1994), the original team had been replaced entirely by a "second generation," although some of the originals continue to assist with promoting the program to school classes. In comparison to the original team, the new individuals are in need of considerable knowledge and skill development, but are working diligently on this. The

partnering concept was good in theory but, in practice, the second generation had little opportunity to gain experience by doing. Nevertheless, the group was prepared to cope with what they have. A new parent (also a nurse) was acting as resource person, particularly with regard to STD, pregnancy, and family communication.

**Constraints.** Several minor difficulties constrain further growth at this time. Although there are many willing and able teens, there are very few adults (particularly males) in Bruckton who are sufficiently interested, skillful and available to act as peer instructors. This problem may be addressed if plans to join forces with a neighboring communities are successful, and if FCSS implements plans to devote time to recruiting and developing leaders for COOL and other related programs in Bruckton.

A second problem is that of enhancing the skills and maintaining the interest and enthusiasm of instructors during the long periods between workshops. This might be addressed through regional cooperation and exchange of peer instructors and extra opportunities to facilitate more workshops which may emerge over the course of the year.

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## **Future Research and Development in Bruckton**

*We are on the right track with the COOL program and the school program. The topics we are raising and the ways in which we are handling them are appropriate . . . The activities are helping them to see through the myths, re-evaluate their opinions and their relationships.*

Several areas for further research and development are presented below as a stimulus to further discussion in Bruckton. As in the responsive evaluation of Year #1, questions for reflection are included in cases where such questions emerged.

### **Junior High School Program**

Areas warranting further investigation include integrating SE concepts and skills in other curricular areas, and finding ways of meeting the needs of parents.

**How can learning about sexuality and relationship be enhanced through learning experiences in other curricular areas?**

- What possibilities for exploring concepts associated with healthy relationships and responsible decision making exist in the study of art? music? drama? social studies? science? mathematics?

- How can learning in other curricular areas be enhanced through employing SE and relationship themes?
- How can the universal values presented in the health curriculum -- honesty, equality, promise keeping, respect, responsibility, self-control, and social justice -- be reinforced in other classes?
- How can the processes of language learning be enhanced by themes from SE and contribute to student understanding of SE issues? How can the meanings of words such as "responsibility, readiness, healthy, and exploitation" be explored? How can patterns of communication be analyzed to illuminate hidden agendas, aggression, or exploitation?
- How can professional development initiatives at the jurisdiction level (e.g., cooperative learning strategies) be integrated?

What needs of parents can be met through the school program? Although parents are integrated to a greater extent on the community program level, there is still some concern that the potential for parent involvement through the school was not achieved. Factors which constrained in-depth work with larger numbers of parents were the shortage of teacher time and the variation in positions on the extent to which the school should act to educate parents/adults.

- What kinds of parent interactions in sexuality/health education would result in the most positive outcomes for students?
- What are the possibilities for continuing to improve communication with parents and integrate them in health / sexuality education?
- How might work done with parents in the area of SE / Health transfer to yield benefits in other curricular areas?
- Other schools have struggled, or are struggling with these same issues. What insights might they have to offer?

### Elementary Health Education

Many patterns of skill and attitude development associated with sexuality, relationships, decision making, family communication, higher-order thinking and self-esteem begin to coalesce during the elementary school years. A participatory "action research" project, with teachers at the elementary level and focusing on health education, has the potential to address critical questions relating to relationship skills, classroom instruction, parent communication and involvement, and the community environment. At the time of writing, preliminary discussions with teachers have yielded questions such as the following:

- What is happening in health education in our school?

- How do individual teachers conceptualize health education?
- What are the major foci in practice?
- What are the implications for current work with the "Self-Esteem of a Community" project?
- What are the implications for health education at the junior high level?

Several questions had implications for SE/health education beyond Bruckton:

- How can we better prepare teachers to meet the students' needs in health education?
- How can the university help the school? teachers?
- How do our findings relate to research on teacher thinking in health education?
- What can be learned from research in science education relating to constructivist models of learning and higher-order thinking skills?

The study is currently planned with the K-4 Community School, but could be enlarged to include the Grades 5 and 6 classes and teachers at the 5-9 School. The expanded option offers the potential to directly enhance collegial connections and continuity for students.

### **Religious Groups**

The major question area open to investigation at this point is "How can religious groups achieve their potential to contribute toward healthy sexuality and relationships among teens?"

- What SE messages are teens and parents currently receiving in religious settings?
- How are the understandings and intentions of religious groups communicated in practice?
- What approaches and curricula are used, or are planned for use, with youth groups?
- What questions and issues do teens and parents raise in the context of religious groups?
- How might leaders help their people to interpret information from religious and non-religious sources outside of the community?
- How do leaders deal with the relationship between sexuality and spirituality in practice?

In the broader Christian community, it appears as though interest may be growing in relating these concepts. Will this interest outside reinforce changes within the religious community in Bruckton?

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

Although there is variation in the value placed on monitoring and evaluation, the desire for accurate information about Bruckton teens was frequently expressed. Several felt the need to gather the long-term information which is necessary to go further in estimating the effectiveness of the approaches pursued over the past years. Others saw

considerably less need for ongoing survey data, and were satisfied with their own perceptions and those communicated by other stakeholder representatives.

**Parents.** Three questions pertaining to parents were suggested:

- To what degree are parents (of both teens and of younger children) aware of the possibilities for, and potential benefit of, their involvement in their children's learning about sexuality and relationships?
- To what degree do parents (of both teens and of younger children) desire assistance in this area?
- What messages are communicated at home? How effectively?

What are the possibilities for assisting parents of younger children? Several suggested a continuing focus on enabling parents to be the primary sexuality educators that many hope they could be. "We need to continue to focus on the family unit but, at the same time, allow for those who aren't well connected in their families." Are there still needs in this area? Although in theory, preventative strategies with this group should be most effective, little action has occurred. "The emphasis has to be on the parents. You can never find a substitute for the home. It is the root of the problems and the root of the solutions." What are the important gaps? Is action required?

**Teens.**

- How are teens in Bruckton making health-related decisions?
- What are the major pressures and challenges they face today?
- What needs or gaps in knowledge or skills do they perceive?
- To what degree do the trends toward healthier lifestyles (suggested in Chapter VII) hold up under more rigorous investigation?
- Is it becoming popular to retain virginity?
- Do Bruckton teens have healthier relationships?
- Do they make more responsible sexual decisions or, having recognized problems, return to more responsible sexual decisions?
- Do they have lower rates of unwanted pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases?
- What critical influences do they associate with their decisions regarding sexual expression?
- Are they less likely to experience other "at-risk" behaviors or results (e.g., alcohol and drug abuse, school problems, depression, etc.)? To what degree is it popular to abstain from "at-risk" behaviors?
- How effectively are teens transferring / applying skills (e.g., assertiveness) in their everyday lives?

## Other Questions

Several other questions appear to be important in Bruckton and might be considered in future evaluation ventures:

- How can we better meet the needs of "at-risk" individuals? What, specifically, are those needs on a broader scale? How should "at-risk" be defined?
- What special challenges, if any, do foster children in Bruckton face? Are their needs being met in the area of sexuality and relationships education?
- What effect is the "self-esteem of a community" initiative and model having on teens attitudes and behaviors in the area of sexuality? How can those "at risk" in the area of sexuality and relationships be accommodated as well? Can this be included with those being trained?
- What human and financial resources are available to update and support community programs (COOL)? What possibilities exist for focusing tasks of instructors and coordinator?
- Are issues associated with homosexuality of concern in Bruckton? Issues surrounding homosexuality, considered to be quite important in related literature and in neighboring communities, did not appear to attract much interest in Bruckton teens. Is this, indeed, the case? If so, what does this indicate (e.g., fear, level of maturity, acceptance, lack of interest, or something else)? What are the interests of the stakeholders with regard to homosexuality issues? What values and beliefs do stakeholders have in common?

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## **Considerations for Policy and Practice**

One of the most frequent requests was to summarize the points which appear to be most important for those outside Bruckton to consider. The experiences associated with this study and the literature certainly suggest implications for the policy of provincial and national interest groups, provincial and national government departments, schools and school jurisdictions, community agencies and community organizations.

Such a summary is included below, although it is written with Bruckton's forces and factors in mind and offered only as a starting point for reflection. Readers should judge the appropriateness of the recommendations for their own situations, consider possibilities for improvement in each area, and view the points below from a fresh perspective.



### **Emphasize Long-Term Strategies**

There do not seem to be any single-program solutions or "magic units" that address adequately the many issues of teen sexuality and relationships. A "quick fix" is an insufficient and inappropriate response to the complex array of instructional, ethical, social, economic, structural, and political issues. They are interconnected and reflect deep problems in our society. The process of change, often meaning cultural change and re-socialization, is unlikely to be accomplished to a significant degree, or in a long-lasting way by brief, single-thrust programs. Rather, long-term, developmental, coordinated strategies with individuals, families, schools, and stakeholders in the community seem to have the greatest potential. Although the teens and families at greatest risk are frequently the most difficult to reach, they also stand to benefit the most.

### **Stop Battling: Work Together**

Although within Bruckton the metaphor of the "battle" has been replaced by that of the "journey," provincial and national groups with similar interests in healthy teen relationships continue to struggle against one another. Direct and indirect statements in their presentations show they continue to perceive themselves to be on different sides, but both consider themselves to be on the side of "the good." Printed materials, posters, pamphlets, and audio-visual materials of both groups frequently show disregard for the other's perspective, literature, and critique. Their conflicts, generally resulting from failure to really listen to the other, have repeatedly spilled over into communities like Bruckton. For the less educated, this situation is regrettable but understandable to a degree. For professional groups and academics, this failure to account for the concerns and the information available is appalling. The greatest loss is to the teens and parents that are supposed to benefit from the efforts of these groups, but must doubt the credibility of one or both camps.

As a leader in Bruckton said, "It is time to stop battling and work together for the benefit of teens and their families." Both sides need to critically examine their own information and assumptions and identify those arguments which are well-grounded. Then with an attitude of openness, view one another's information and perspectives and employ these to improve existing theories and practices. Teens and parents need to become the beneficiaries of the collective knowledge and wisdom, rather than victims of the blizzard of contradictory information. It is unfair to ask teens and parents to judge the truth value of presentations by professionals. Adversarial competition can result in a loss of respect for those who are trying to help them.

An example from Bruckton may be helpful in illustrating this point. The following is an excerpt from my journal, written after an encounter at a particular program.

*I met him/her at the door and asked his/her name but s/he refused to answer. I asked where s/he was from. S/he replied "from the community" and plowed through to take a seat across the room. I followed him/her, thinking s/he was hurting somehow . . . When s/he was seated I asked if s/he felt uncomfortable and s/he said s/he was uncomfortable about sexuality. It was time to begin the presentation but I still felt uneasy. I stayed close to him/her in case there were any problems . . . After the presentation s/he slipped off quietly without staying for the question period . . .*

Unknown to me, the visitor and the guest speaker (and the groups they represented) were in a battle. These professionals brought their conflict, based on poor quality information and inaccurate assumptions, into Bruckton. At the time, I did not appreciate the depth and extent to which the outside battle would affect our community. The resolution required considerable energy, patience and humility from the parties involved, but some success and growth in critical thinking resulted.

Although members of the religious community have introduced conflict unfairly in other situations, religion was not directly associated with this particular clash. Some individuals in a variety of professions, including scientists, educators, health professionals, religious leaders, and news media representatives seemed to desire to continue battling in the area of sexuality education.

Several ideas to encourage the process of coming together are described in this volume. It was important in Bruckton to find common values and interests, and cultivate the attitude of wanting the best for teens and their families. Mediation, as is generally the case, was more successful when it focused on interests rather than positions. Along the way, both "sides" discovered that they have made some mistakes, that humility was required, and that asking forgiveness for wrongs of the past was important. (This discussion continues in Chapter IX.) Some questions we found useful were:

- What factors are acting as filters on our perceptions? What distortions are resulting?
- Are we really trying to understand the other's points?
- Have we examined their evidence or literature with an open mind?
- Are we negotiating according to interests or still dedicated to positions?
- What can we agree on (e.g., the consequences of early intercourse, what constitutes a "responsible" sexual decision)?

The Alberta Health (1993) "Condom Fact Sheet" for professionals is a step in the right direction. It, too, could be improved by but including information on theoretical vs practical failure rates and showing the comparative estimates of efficacy for teens.

This is our appeal to those in battle. Conflicts based on different value positions will likely persist but those based on erroneous assumptions, misinformation, and caricatures of suspected motives can be addressed immediately. Such conflicts have done considerable damage in local communities. As Roosa and Christopher (1990) suggested, political decisions (and lack of decisions) based on the relative power of the lobby groups may be compromising the well-being of the next generation. Groups interested in providing leadership could lead by joining forces and working together for the sake of teens and their families. Those contributing to academic literature must be more careful in examining one another's arguments (see Lickona, 1993, and Brick & Roffman, 1993, for a current example).

### **Integrate SE in the Context of Teen Issues**

Efforts to address teen sexuality and relationship issues should be connected with the array of issues affecting teens. In Bruckton, as elsewhere, "at-risk" sexual behavior is frequently associated with other at-risk behaviors and correlates (e.g., substance abuse, low self-esteem, school attendance). The associated skills, attitudes, and values (e.g., assertiveness, sense of self-respect, honesty) and the desirable outcomes (e.g., feeling of belonging, healthy relationships, desire to limit exploitation, positive peer support) are similar as well. Addressing these components in an integrated way makes planning much more complex but can enhance learning, minimize gaps and overlaps, and open opportunities for funding.

### **Emphasize Prevention: Postponing is Just the Beginning**

Preventing consequences (rather than treating and coping with them) should be given the highest priority in any strategy to address social problem issues. The human and monetary costs of teen parenting, STD, and unhealthy and/or abusive relationships are extremely high. It is almost universally agreed that delaying the initiation of sexual activity is wiser than partial avoidance of only the physical consequences through prophylactics and contraceptives. In order to be effective, however, we need to learn more about how to encourage and enable teens to choose and retain this option, and direct resources toward initiatives that hold promise (see last section of chapter). (Emphasizing postponing and the associated skills does not mean avoiding discussion of contraceptives. Please refer to the checklist of Appendix 8.1) Authors such as Milliron (1993) have summarized various

curriculum considerations, but such lists need to be examined and refined further. Curricula such as *Values and Choices* (Williams, 1989) appear to be useful (see Chapter II).

### **Emphasize and Support Community Planning and Participation**

**Young people develop their capacities and talents, sensibilities, and values in a lifelong process that weaves together the experiences of home, work, community, and school. Schools are essential in creating success for the young, but they are not sufficient. (Melaville, 1991, p. 4)**

**The issues of teen sexuality and relationships result from forces in the community and in the larger society. Although schools and agencies do excellent work in sexuality and relationships education, they cannot be expected to bear the major responsibility. Furthermore, it is unlikely to be in anyone's best interest for them to do so. Kirman (1990) described it this way.**

**When society has a problem it can't solve, a quick and easy response is to dump it into the laps of teachers. This way, the politicians can claim something is being done, and the public can observe an attempt to do something. Then, if it does not work, the blame can be laid at the door of the school. (p. 28)**

**Responsibility must be shared among interested individuals, families, volunteers and organizations in a community. Facilitation should occur sensitively, with professionals clearing paths and helping local people get where they want to go wisely as much as possible and increasingly so as initiatives proceed.**

**A path toward resolution of the problems of collaboration may be found in the wise application of techniques of community development. Municipal and provincial governments should encourage and support local communities in the process of developing their own strategies. Some of these processes have been discussed in Chapters IV-VII or are presented in Chapter IX. We can also learn from the "Healthy Communities" projects currently underway in Alberta (Swann & Wiebe, 1993). Some of the key points are as follows:**

- Uncover elusive stakeholders using a process such as Mitroff (1983) suggests. Attempt to uncover common values and interests while identifying range of interests. (Similarly, provincial processes should be formulated with a broad view of stakeholders (i.e., Mitroff criteria and not just agency representatives). Those moral / religious groups willing and able to cooperate should be invited.**
- Define sexuality education and its boundaries with stakeholders. Broad definitions are useful and encourage connection with related areas. Involve stakeholders in the identification of issues and in securing resources to address them.**

- Bring the interests and suggestions of stakeholders into the development of policy and practices. Use the comments, including those of religious and service groups, to balance and improve the programs.
- Encourage collaborative community efforts in tangible ways. Among other things, funds, staff time, and recognition are required. Consider supporting the involvement of non-professionals as well.
- Move toward ever higher levels of participation but be patient as this takes time.
- Be prepared to work on many fronts at once.

Finally, although networking and collaboration among agencies and organizations is cost effective, it is not without requirements of recognition and support from above.

Melaville (1991) summarized the need in this way:

Local initiatives do best when they are rooted in local needs and resources and nurtured by top-down support -- assistance that facilitates rather than mandates local action . . . The availability of adequate technical assistance is essential if local initiatives are to effectively pool funding streams and budget creatively. (p. 7)

Collaboration is clearly not a "no cost" endeavor. Nor can supporting collaboration be seen as a temporary activity. "Coordinating services and reconfiguring existing resources so they better serve children and families require staff and financial resources over a long period of time" (p. 7).

### **Assist Parents to Be "Primary Educators"**

Next to teens themselves, the key stakeholders are parents. Almost without exception, authors and committees consider them to be the primary educators with regard to sexuality and relationships and values. Studies repeatedly show that, although it may not be easy, teens and parents desire that parents play this role (King et al., 1988; Doherty-Poirier & Munro, 1991). Furthermore, parents have the ultimate responsibility for educating their children (Alberta Government, 1988) and every effort needs to be made to help them take this responsibility. The possible benefits of such an experience are far-reaching.

Beyond the rhetoric, however, continued effort must be made to encourage and assist parents -- especially fathers -- to fulfill their responsibility effectively, and provide opportunity to participate at the highest level possible. An important question to address is, "What does the role of 'primary educator' entail?"

The format for helping parents to do this should be established in each community, with sensitivity to variations in school, agency, and organization policies and traditions. The work to be done includes encouraging communication between parents and children, assisting parents with information and approaches, informing and integrating parents in the

school program, assisting parents to address the barriers they face in sexuality and relationships, and assisting where there is breakdown and hurt from past relationships.

Schools and teachers can assist parents to become more capable and more approachable sexuality educators. Schools can make systematic efforts to maintain a high standard of communication with parents and, thereby, reinforce important concepts, skills, and attitudes. Ideally, this should begin in the elementary years and continue through junior high. Cherry et al. (1992) made suggestions with regard to involving parents with school programs in Alberta.

### **Assist Teens to Provide a Positive Influence**

The influence of peers becomes an increasingly important force through the teen years, but is often given only token attention. Helping peer influence to be as positive and effective as possible in both formal and informal situations requires substantial effort but, in our opinion, is well worth it. Our efforts in Bruckton did not achieve all we hoped for but notable progress was made. Areas worthy of special attention include involving males in planning, leading, instructing, and counselling, and promoting participation in programs through exciting, creative, presentations.

Training programs need to be engaging, full of fun, full of social and team building. Our experience leads us to suggest that communities focus on only a few goals and allow plenty of time for development of teen leaders and instructors. Depending on the natural talent of the individuals, considerable training and coaching can be required before facilitating a lesson with a high degree of impact. While charisma and talent are important, credibility and suitability as role models are essential to consider when selecting leaders.

Creating and sustaining a teen and adult peer instruction group requires considerable leadership, instructional skill, versatility and energy, and may not be a practical approach in many communities. Several neighboring communities found it difficult to organize and generate sufficient enthusiasm for the workshops, let alone the training of teen and adult instructors. Those who work successfully with adults are not necessarily successful with teens. The multi-community team concept appears to be worth considering.

### **Continually Analyze Sexual Health Messages and Resources**

The sexual health scene is not as simple as it once appeared to be. Understandings in this complex area change year by year, as indicated by a sexual health professional.

*What was once thought to be true is no longer true. And so we continue to come closer to truth in the area of sexual health, and closer to talking about it in ways that are more accurate and less confusing.*

Hepatitis B, HPV and genital warts, limitations of non-oxynol 9 and birth control pills, AIDS, and emotional consequences are all taken more seriously than they once were. Perspectives on sexuality education have broadened from a focus on pregnancy and disease prevention to a focus on healthier relationships.

There is also a growing understanding of the need to adapt strategies to the community context. The "diagnosis and prescription" model is not as easily applied as it once was thought to be.

*We're coming around to recognize that different approaches are needed in different situations . . . We still find it hard to accept that we don't have all the answers.*

Continuing priority should be given to reviewing and accounting for the range of findings in scientific literature.

Better print and audio-visual materials have also been produced, and should be acquired for the use of instructors. These resources, however, need to be examined for the logic and accuracy of their messages, the hidden messages they carry, the assumptions they present, and the language they use. An erroneous assumption or message can make the poster or publication useful to teach skills of critical analysis to students. Teachers, other instructors, and stakeholders alike will find training in this kind of analysis to be invaluable. Resources from the range of sources should be included. We learned a great deal through analysis and critique of both our provincial health department's "Spaceman" poster and Focus on the Family's "In Defense of a Little Virginity." Both communicate valid points while seriously misrepresenting the "facts" to teens.

### **Assist the Media to Provide More Positive Influence**

The media contributes to the pressures teens face, the images teens have of themselves, and concepts of responsible behavior and consequences of sexual behavior. What are the possibilities for working with the media to create the kind of environment that is most helpful? Incentives to alter messages and models are still weak, but are changing slowly. Various heroes, including actors, musicians and athletes, are becoming involved in promoting responsible decision making (i.e., beyond simply advocating the use of condoms) and healthy relationships. Professional organizations, such as the ATA and other associations of stakeholder groups, may find they serve their purposes well by developing an advocacy role with the media.

## **Emphasize Quality in Formal Instruction**

Along with assisting parents to take responsibility for instruction of their children, support is need for others who are helping teens to learn about sexuality and relationships. The interpretation of any program is in the hands of the instructor. Due to the complex and sensitive nature of this role, teachers who work in this area should be chosen very carefully and should receive pre-service preparation. This was reinforced by the Minister's Committee (Cherry et al., 1992). As one stakeholder representative said, "Seldom does a teacher without formal training in music instruct that course at the junior high level. Why should health be less important?"

Jurisdictions are obligated to provide teachers with the support they require to do the job they are required to do. Learning opportunities for teachers should acknowledge issues brought forward in this document and in provincial reports such as Cherry et al. (1992). Teachers who do not feel prepared adequately for the role, and are not able to access the professional development support they require, might wish to consider their students' interests and exercise their 'right to protest and, in extreme cases, refuse the assignment . . ." (Alberta Teachers' Association, 1992, #8, p. 2). In addition to the degree of engagement the learner has with the lesson, a major portion of the impact of instruction in schools may be due to the relationship that occurs between the instructor and learner. In taking action to assist individuals develop the capacities to make wise decisions, teachers should be sensitive to variations in values, religious perspectives, and other characteristics of individuals and families. Teachers should be learners themselves, motivating teens to become self-directed learners.

Three questions should be given special attention.

- **What constitutes responsible, ethical instruction in SE?** Students can, too easily, be left with the illusion that they have all the information and skill they require to make a responsible sexual decision. For example, the "decision-making process" is unlikely to result in a responsible decision with regard to sexual intercourse unless the learner has high quality information and is engaged in higher-order thinking. Attention must be drawn, through effective processes, to factors such as the dynamics of a relationship, the many other decisions that one needs to make prior to engaging in intercourse, the possibilities of contraceptive/prophylactic failure, non-physical consequences, etc. Effective process means, in part, developing an attitude of searching for the truth. Along with this prevention action, the positive aspects of one's sexuality should also be emphasized.
- **Is it ethically and educationally imperative that effort be made to re-connect parents with their children in this critical area of learning and decision making?** This has already been discussed in a previous section.



• What factors are constraining or limiting the effectiveness of instructors in formal programs? In our situation, as in many schools, there was a shortage of time and a general perception that sexuality/ health education were not highly valued in comparison to other areas of study. Other demands and increasing pressures on teachers in general are also constraining, as noted by Booi et al. (1992). It is interesting that health education retains a low profile in practice in spite of discussions at upper levels about the crucial role of education in the face of escalating costs of health care, spread of disease, need to make wiser health-related decisions, need to seek healthier lifestyles, etc.. An essential question might be "How can health education (and SE) gain the profile it requires in order to be effective and overcome some of the weaknesses inherent in a school setting?" If health is not a high priority, why is that? What are we prepared to do about that? What are the limits?

One way this gain in profile may be achieved is through being infused into all curricular areas, as has been attempted with environmental themes. Advocates wishing to address this aspect might wish to consider the experience gained in Alberta through such initiatives as the Classroom Agriculture Program or environmental educator work done by FEESA (Friends of Environmental Education Society of Alberta). They have developed "ambassador" programs, teacher incentives, and teacher institutes. Advocates might also monitor action on the principles, guidelines, and recommendations submitted by the Minister's committee (Cherry et al., 1992). Muraskin (1986) suggested showing value through financial support for demonstration programs, recognizing and rewarding exemplary teachers, creating a certification program for SE teachers, and requiring pre-service or in-service training. One very direct policy mechanism might be to include health items, including sexuality and relationships, in the jurisdictional and provincial achievement tests.

The Revised "Planning Checklist." This list, devised with teachers in Year #2, was intended for instructors at the Grade 8 and 9 level in Alberta. The goal was to synthesize the findings from the literature, accommodate the range of values of stakeholders, and acknowledge the insight gained in Bruckton and in neighboring communities. The "Year #4" version, written in the form of questions, is written with the assumption that teachers have the following qualities: basic training for instruction in sexuality and relationships (issues, sensitivity, etc.), sufficient time in Health Education, and a degree of interest and skill in integration with other subject areas. Interested readers are invited to review the checklist (Appendix 8.1) and offer critique and suggestions for improvement.

**Desirable Learner Characteristics.** A mandate for teachers to create conditions for developing "desirable learner characteristics" already exists (Alberta Education, 1986, p. 16). Professionals in education need to periodically review the list of these qualities and assess the extent to which they are being incorporated into school life.

- The ethical/moral list includes: respect for self and others, accepting of responsibilities, fair/just, tolerant, kind, forgiving, committed to democratic ideals, and commitment to others.
- Intellectual characteristics include: open-mindedness, critical and higher-order thinking, intellectual curiosity and honesty, creative problem solving, desire for excellence, and appreciativeness.
- Social / personal qualities include possessing a strong sense of self-worth, accepting others as equals, unselfish, observant, and being a good listener.

### **Support Monitoring and Evaluation**

There is a great need for quality evaluation of sexuality education programs in Alberta. Good evaluations of appropriate programs may result in fiscal, educational, social benefits. Because of lack of financial and human resources, lack of expertise, and/or lack of perceived relevance by practitioners such work is not done frequently. Although this component was considered to be important in this study, rigorous evaluation was not undertaken because of insufficient time and resources available, and because of the developmental stage of the programs in the community. Small (1990) proposed guidelines for selecting programs for outcome evaluation. Suitable programs are those which have the following characteristics:

- are highly visible, well accepted, and show the greatest potential for being effective,
- have a history of formative evaluation,
- address topics of high public interest and have the greatest potential for supporting and strengthening family life,
- are well established (i.e., have eliminated potential obstacles and shortcomings),
- have adequate resources and expertise available.

Qualitative evaluation in SE is useful but open to the legitimate concerns of practitioners, policy makers, funders and users. There remains a need to defend naturalistic evaluation findings and, hence the need for audit practices. Useful guidelines and examples are provided by Greene et al. (1988).

Low budget means of monitoring also need to be identified and tested. Efforts can be multiplied through connecting with other monitoring initiatives but this requires time and cooperative planning. Overall, the framework and methodology should be appropriate for

the interests of stakeholders, and allowed to evolve as information needs are better defined and as new information comes available.

In addition to the views of teens and parents, some important process factors to include are:

- the level of satisfaction reported by stakeholders (especially parents, teachers, and students),
- degree and kind of participation (especially of parents),
- degree of influence parents and students have on teacher and school decisions in this area,
- perceptions of quality of communications (especially between parents and children),
- degree of integration of school and community programs,
- evolution of school policies in sexuality education,
- evolution of individual roles of teachers and coordinator,
- curriculum changes and change processes.

Provincial departments should support monitoring and evaluation of programs and policies. Financial and technical support is required immediately. Without information on impacts and outcomes, the quality of policy development will be limited by the accuracy of perceptions of policy-makers and lack the rigor required for credibility in this controversial area. "How is program or policy helping teens and their families to help themselves?"

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## **Possibilities for Further Research**

Although many possibilities for research outside Bruckton arise from our experience and the literature reviewed, I have chosen six to discuss in this section:

- designing a program of research,
- participatory action research in other communities,
- a comprehensive review of literature,
- a comprehensive review of policies and programs in Canada,
- comparative studies of decision making,
- evaluation studies of rival strategies.

### **Designing a Program of Research**

Research into understandings, practices and policies regarding sexuality and relationships education appears to suffer from a lack of coordination and connection. Many

unconnected field research activities and literature reviews are conducted each year in many departments at the University of Alberta, as well as in neighboring universities and government departments. Researchers I have encountered have not gone as far or as fast as they could have because they have been re-discovering foundational principles. There is a tendency to gravitate to a particular segment of the literature available and give undue attention to that segment. There is often a lack of connection to earlier or concurrent research, and without consideration of later research. A team approach might overcome some of these challenges.

Research into teen sexuality and relationships should be connected in several dimensions: with development and education over the lifespan, with other teen issues and "at-risk" issues, with social policy, and with psychology to name a few. In a methodological dimension, qualitative and quantitative studies should check and inform one another. Plans for case studies of individuals and families might be tailored to make them more easily comparable and enhance opportunities for synthesis of theory.

A coordinative body at the provincial level could involve researchers and government agency representatives, and provide for the voices of other stakeholders. Initial tasks might be to produce a description of research priorities for the next five years and begin work toward securing financial support for future research.

The project descriptions which follow provide some possibilities for consideration. They reflect the need to study and, where possible, contribute to development on various fronts: the community, the research literature, the policy and program, and the individual.

### **Participatory Research in Other Communities**

More case studies of participatory research in other communities would be useful to develop a broader view of community dynamics and research which can directly contribute to development. Case studies are important because they examine factors and interactions together, rather than isolating factors from their context. Conditions and questions varied markedly in the communities I worked with and so must emphases and strategies. In my opinion, participation with stakeholders is ethically essential and the only way to gather information on local requirements. Studies where the researcher is sensitive to ethical considerations, and where the process contributes to improvement in understandings, practices, and situations, are more consistent with the ideals of sexuality/health education and community development.

## **A Comprehensive and Critical Review of Literature**

The reviews of literature which accompany most reports of research in SE (including this one) tend to concentrate on particular problems and particular kinds of research and researcher opinion. It would be very worthwhile to critically review the research literature with several goals in mind:

- to uncover the range of questions that have been, or are being, investigated,
- to describe the range of philosophy and methodological approaches that have been employed and are being suggested,
- to critically examine the approaches and the conclusions or tentative hypotheses which have resulted,
- to describe the major gaps that appear to be present in the body of knowledge, major weaknesses in current theory, and
- describe areas most likely to be fruitful for further investigation, particularly in Alberta and Canada.

This task is most appropriate for a team comprising individuals with diverse interests and research experiences, and with sensitivity to the issues associated with SE.

## **A Review of Policies and Programs in Alberta**

Dramatic changes have occurred in the field of sexual health and in the field of health and sexuality education since the Ajaenstat and Gentles (1988) review of the Canadian scene. Many government departments, agencies, school jurisdictions, and family advocacy groups have designed policies and, with varying degrees of rigor, monitored the effects of policies and programs.

Questions to address might begin with the following:

- What variations in policies and programs exist?
- What were the major factors that shaped the policies and programs?
- In what ways are the outcomes of the policies and programs monitored?
- What important differences are there between the policy-in-practice and the policy-as-written?
- What implications do the findings have for future policy and program development?
- What related policy studies are available (e.g., drug and alcohol abuse prevention, suicide prevention, parent involvement, self-esteem, enhancing life options, peer instruction, health, school-community cooperation in social problem issues)?

Ajaenstat and Gentles' (1988) framework would be useful as a starting point only. It could be enhanced by increasing specificity in the areas of monitoring and evaluation.

curriculum development and instructional concerns. As the critical review of the findings proceeds, other kinds of questions might emerge:

- How have the factors (assumptions, information, political forces, etc.) which shaped the original policies and programs, and knowledge about these factors, changed?
- What issues and questions result from a critical review of these findings?
- What does this analysis suggest for the process of policy and program development in the future?

Studies in other provinces, the U.S., Europe, and Australia may have implications to offer as well. Researchers could benefit from networking with individuals undertaking related studies in other places and merge the findings in a later project. However, I have intentionally delimited this study to Alberta in order to reduce the complexity due to variation in social policy, government involvement, population dynamics, and cultures. A participatory mode of research, where questions and findings are returned to illuminate issues and stimulate thought among policy and program decision makers, would be appropriate from educational, political, and ethical perspectives.

### **Comparative Studies of Sexual Decision Making**

Although there are many mediating forces which contribute, teens ultimately make decisions with regard to their sexual and relationship behaviors. In my limited review of research literature, I found many studies which identified correlations between sexual activity among young teens and other "at-risk" behaviors or peer and family variables, but few studies which actually examined the decision making, and decision-sustaining, processes within individuals. (After completing this study, I believe that special attention should be given to males, their sexual decision making, their involvement in creating healthier, less exploitive relationships in couples and amongst their male peers.) There is general agreement that healthy relationships and delaying the initiation of sexual activity are the options of choice, but we need to learn more about how to encourage and enable teens to choose and retain this option.

Both qualitative and quantitative studies of teens in Alberta could contribute to our understanding of how and why teens of various groups come to be sexually active. Such a study has tremendous potential for informing program and policy design. Working with the 18-19 year old age group would seem to pose the fewest ethical obstacles.

### **Evaluation Studies of Rival Strategies**

Experimental or quasi-experimental studies of the impact of rival strategies present many problems. It is extremely difficult to find equivalent groups to compare, control

transience, control peer and family influence on individuals, and account for effects over the long-term. Ethical implications make it difficult to deny one group a treatment which is thought to be superior. There are possibilities, however, for using naturalistic evaluation approaches, such as the responsive evaluation we experienced in Year #1. Each of the communities I have worked with employed a somewhat different strategy, and each has identified somewhat different concerns, constraints, and opportunities. A degree of coordination in evaluation studies carried on at the community level could raise the potential for comparative analysis for stakeholder audiences. For example, several communities in Alberta offering programs to encourage healthy relationships and abstinence could learn from each other's evaluations if some components were standardized.

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## Concluding Remarks

Although questions remained, we had made many improvements in our understandings, practices and situations regarding learning about sexuality and relationships. As in the sailing analogy, we continued to tack toward a distant shore -- a little off course in one direction, correcting and, perhaps, going a little off course in the other direction. Some of the issues and questions are different now, but some of the old ones remain. As one of the stakeholder representatives said, "We know more about the possibilities and the problems and have a greater confidence that we can meet the challenge." Unfortunately, some say, we cannot report with certainty yet on changes in the rates of pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases. We can, however, report that the capacity for self-sustaining development in instruction has increased and that our leaders and organizations are working together better and with much more understanding, greater skill, and more helpful attitudes than in times past. Teens and parents generally perceive that the sexuality and health education environment is improving.

This work contributes to the sexuality education literature in several ways. It demonstrates that, while many of the improvements in approaches suggested in literature are time and energy intensive, they are possible to achieve in practice. It is possible, for example, to:

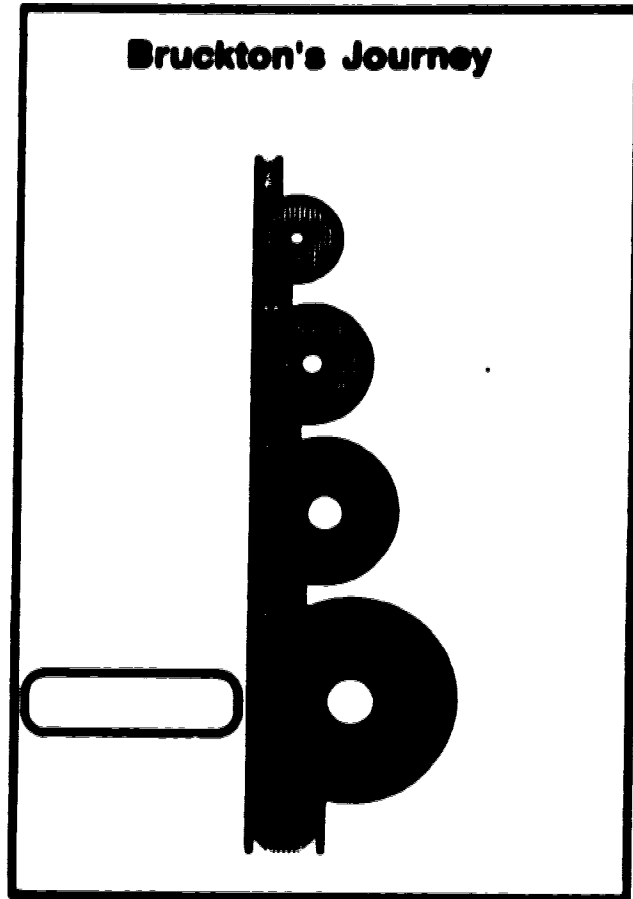
- establish a team of adult and teen peer instructors / supporters,
- develop the components (concepts, skills, attitudes, support network) which make postponing sexual intercourse a desirable and viable choice for teens,

- increase the effectiveness of school programs inspite of limitations of time (although the low profile of health education and the current stresses on teachers and school provide considerable barriers to overcome),
  - get stakeholders with diverse interests and values in a community to work together and learn from one another, as opposed to simply tolerating one another,
  - achieve a consensus on educational issues with ethical / moral undertones, such as instruction which encourages postponing, yet includes information on contraceptives.
- Other suggestions for policy and practice have been offered in this chapter and deserve careful consideration. Among other things we need to emphasize long-term strategies and prevention (and postponing), sensitivity to our personal agendas, assisting parents, teens (particularly males), and community professionals to be positive influences, critically evaluate messages and resources, and provide support for monitoring and evaluation.

Such actions require considerable amounts of time and energy, sensitivity to the community dynamics, and mutual adaptation of the strategies and the community. Over the four years, we learned a great deal about the community of Bruckton, its organizations and leaders, and ways in which we can work together for the benefit of teens and their families. The community development dynamics can make the difference between quality action and tokenism in sexuality education. They have been discussed along with the SE story in Chapters IV-VII and are the focus of Chapter IX which follows.



***Community  
Development  
Issues***



The first two sections of this chapter are summaries of the leadership and organizational capacities that developed over the period of the study. I wish to emphasize that the actions of many individuals and groups in Bruckton contributed to this growth. In the third section, I discuss the major strategies we employed to encourage the development of these capacities. The chapter concludes with suggestions for further research in Bruckton and in the field of community development.

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**Leadership Capacities**

The number of leaders has increased, as has the quality of their contributions. This section opens with a definition of leadership as seen by the participants in Bruckton, and continues with a description of the increase in the numbers of leaders, their capacities for

leadership and their collaborative capacities, and a summary of reflections and recommendations.

### **Leadership in Bruckton**

The word "leadership" evokes a variety of images and definitions in academic and educational circles, as it does in Bruckton. By Year #3 of the study, most of the Network members were defining a "leader" in terms similar to the following.

*Someone who facilitates, takes on tasks or roles, looks ahead and has a vision of where it is we ought to be going, identifies places s/he can make a difference, and takes the initiative. Leaders can be volunteers or professionals, and they can be adults or even children. Sometimes they show the way. Sometimes they make a way for others to get involved.*

I noted evidence of this broad concept of "leader" as I became acquainted with the community by the end of Year #1. It seemed to be emerging from the history of cooperation and shared leadership in Bruckton, as well as the influence of the community school. During the study, this concept of leaders was further strengthened and spread by activities associated with the community school, the FCSS, and each of the initiatives I was associated with. Although some still consider leadership to be a role, it is more often considered as "part of the fibre of the organization" (Sergiovanni, 1992). This view was consistent with our models of community development and appropriate research. Through these we sought to open opportunities for individuals to envisage progress, evaluate, participate at a high level, share in leadership tasks, contribute to decisions, act as a guide and seek ways to contribute toward improvement in understandings, practices and situations in the community.

### **More Leaders, More Diverse Backgrounds**

As the period of this study began (1989), few people were involved with sexuality education and very few, if any, could be said to be leading or guiding. Several parents were expressing concerns with the school program and the newly appointed regional sexual health coordinator made occasional visits, but no individual or group organized, planned, directed, or otherwise facilitated improvement in Bruckton.

The first individuals to be generally recognized as "taking leadership" were the parent and the FCSS director who gave the initial momentum to planning for COOL, and two parents who organized and presented concerns and alternatives for the school program. Since that time, many individuals joined the pool of visible leaders. Among those

acknowledged as contributing to leadership in education for healthy sexuality and relationships in Year #4 were the following:

- the FCSS director and two individuals on the FCSS board,
- 2 teachers and the counsellor at the Grades 5-9 school,
- two teachers at the K-4 community school,
- the community school coordinator,
- several professionals spending part of their work time in Bruckton (the school jurisdiction's curriculum coordinator, two family school liason workers, the Health Unit's community health nurse and sexual health coordinator),
- at least six adults associated with religious groups,
- at least seven parents of teens (including individuals with special interest in community health, community education, and counselling),
- a parent who is active locally and provincially in HIV/AIDS education,
- at least twelve teens, many of whom are now in high school, who have been especially active with COOL and the peer support teams.

A balance of perspectives and range of experiences characterizes the pool of leaders. As a group they represent the range of value perspectives in the community. There are teens as well as parents, and volunteers as well as professionals. Some of the adult volunteers work as professionals in health care, education, or social work outside Bruckton and bring their knowledge and skills to their role in Bruckton. Other adults bring experience from community work and from parenting. Almost all the adults are parents with first hand experience and, usually, motivation at the family level. Both adults and teens are, on the whole, very well connected within the community and with related agencies and organizations outside of Bruckton. Most work in either formal or informal peer support roles. Some came with well-developed communication and decision-making skills, while others did not. Although most leaders are female, several male adults and teens have become deeply involved.

Most of the parents, teens, and professionals entered originally through COOL and, subsequently, became contributors in the Bridges Network. Most adult and teen leaders have received some training in a related, but not directly connected program or are (e.g., Life Skills, Nobody's Perfect, Quest, recreation leadership, church leadership, peer support team).

In addition to those performing leadership tasks currently, there are others who could contribute, if they were asked.

*Many parents and teens have been through COOL and through other (leadership oriented) programs put on by FCSS, churches, the foster parents association, etc. These individuals are now capable of helping to provide leadership and instruction. We are finding them and encouraging them and we could do more to include them.*

Many teens are interested and available to participate in training, and are also eager to share leadership roles. Adults are often interested and skillful, but are already quite busy with commitments outside of their families.

Although the regional Health Unit's role has diminished and changed, it continues to be an important one. Information, expertise, and print and video materials are still available through the regional sexual health coordinator. The focus of attention has shifted from direct instruction of students -- which was not sustainable with the resources available -- to professional development for teachers, education for professionals on AIDS and other STD, and special needs -- all on a regional level. The shift moved the sexual health coordinator to the periphery of leadership in Bruckton but created space for the community health nurse to become more involved. The potential capacity for systematic improvement in approaches appears to have increased through the subsequent re-integration of sexuality into the larger health promotion picture, the greater contact with Bruckton's residents and educational contributors, and greater inter-agency linkage.

*Several felt that it was important to maintain a broad perspective on leadership. We have to be careful not to limit our ideas of leadership to (professionals) or the COOL program and the COOL team. We need all kinds of teens and parents to be involved . . . They can help us figure out what could and should be done and how to do it. They'll want to do some of those jobs and be the guides.*

### **More Effective and Credible Leaders**

Skills and attitudes contributing to increased effectiveness and credibility of teen, adult, and professional leaders continued to increase over the four years. Although individual growth varied, several traits described below applied to nearly everyone. These traits were reported in interviews and observed directly.

Firstly, leaders obtained a broader perspective and deeper insights into sexuality and SE issues.

*I like getting the views from a variety of perspectives. Today we heard about the views of the Home and School Association, the Catholic Bishops, the Minister's Committee, Alberta Health's evaluation, and the (local newspaper). When you put that all together you get a more complete picture than if you just read any one of them. I'm going to do that -- see what these groups have to offer us.*

Comfort in analysis has also increased as participants experienced various research and development activities. As one leader described,

*The comfort levels of community and school people in relation to research and development have really increased. They feel 'Hey, we were involved in research before. Nothing bad happened and we learned a lot.'*

By Year #4, leaders became accustomed to critiquing surveys and formulating questions, reviewing qualitative and quantitative data (in summary documents) and generating implications and recommendations. Many looked forward to receiving this information and voiced their appreciation for being able to access it.

*You don't realize how helpful it is to have good information, from (a variety of perspectives), at your fingertips, until you get it. You are able to discuss these matters more intelligently. Your opinions (in the decision making process) are worth more. I keep my eyes and ears open for (other materials) like that now.*

Growth in skills of analysis was also evident. Many became skilled at recognizing assumptions and more sensitive to their own. Members became increasingly interested in the language they were using and the meaning of key words. At several points the meaning of words like "community" and "humility" were discussed in depth. As a group, they also showed increasing skill and interest in the critical review of printed materials, looking for hidden messages and problems of language within it.

*We, as a group, have the ability to make more reasonable assessments of programs and approaches. We are getting less hung up by our assumptions and are asking better questions.*

In general, individuals have improved in their capabilities to evaluate concerns expressed by various agencies outside the community, judge the relevance to the local situation, and formulate an appropriate response. These skills enable the leaders to act as buffers, helping make the community less susceptible to spill over from the political and ideological battles that continue outside.

Leaders are increasingly more at ease and able to articulate their concerns, successes, and challenges honestly with one another.

*What struck me about the reports and discussions was that they were not the bland sort that one gets at (various meetings). They were colorful and lively. Questions and comments were also not the mundane sort. They were straightforward but probed deeply. They brought us to explore the meaning of self-esteem, self-concept, community, and motivation to be of service to others.*

Many reported developing a stronger sense of "vision" for the community, and a greater ability to articulate that vision with others. The following example relates to the quality of caring.

*I can see some exciting possibilities ahead for a community that doesn't let people slip through the cracks; a community that really cares about what happens with individuals.*

Related to this is a deeper understanding of central questions and a wider sense of possibilities for continued development in Bruckton.

*In some ways, we're still confused, but it seems we're confused on a deeper level now. We're wondering about other, perhaps, more important things, like "What is at the core of positive, healthy relationships?" and "What does 'living in community' really mean?"*

Most leaders are not apprehensive when faced with the prospect of participating a similar project, such as the stay-in-school initiative. They are willing to get involved in a deeper way, having some experience under their belts. There is a general sense of self-efficacy among adults and teens in contributing as leaders in other movements to improve understandings, practices and situations. "I feel as though I can do this. I can help to make a difference."

### Collaborative Capacity

During the period of the study, the word "collaboration" became increasingly popular among those in Bruckton, as it did with professionals and academics elsewhere. Both inside and outside of Bruckton, the meaning of collaboration varied a great deal, ranging from cooperation to mutualism to interdependence, as indicated in the examples below:

- *working together on a project,*
- *working relationship where each tries to maximize the efforts and satisfaction of others as well as their own,*
- *a sense of community among leaders, where we as individuals come to work together out of a sense of the need we have for one another.*

Individual leaders came together with considerable differences in capacities for and interest in developing mutual trust, respect and reciprocity. Over the course of the study, individual growth also varied considerably, but the "collaborative-ness" or "sense of community among leaders" that was moderately strong before has increased among the leaders as a group.

Elements of collaborative capacity that emerged are discussed briefly below. (They are discussed here rather than under "organizational capacity" because they were noted as traits of individuals rather than organizations.)

**Awareness of relationship dynamics.** A first step for several leaders was becoming conscious of the characteristics of their relationships with others and, often in conversation with other leaders, gaining insight into problems and possibilities for improvement in these relationships. Although the process of uncovering relationship dynamics was varied, some found that an image used in the COOL program -- the relationship triangle -- was helpful for making this abstract concept more concrete. In COOL, the three sides were used to depict degrees of passion, intimacy, and commitment in couple relationships (Trotter, 1986). We found that we could concretize working relationships for analysis with equivalent triads such as "trust, respect, and commitment" or "excitement about working together, common values and beliefs, sense of value for the other."

**Valuing others and their perspectives.** A second step was the appreciation of the value of other leaders and the perspectives they brought. It often paralleled a discovery that they themselves lacked a portion of what it took to make a difference with teens, and that they had to depend on others. One explained it this way.

*An essential factor, before community development or collaboration can grow, is to be able to see each one -- professional and non-professional -- as having a valid contribution to make, a vital role to play in the process.*

Another called this "learning about community by doing -- needing others and feeling needed by others." A third described this experience of coming to value others and their contributions after a negative experience with particular individuals in the past.

*At first I thought, how am I going to tolerate him/her? (I'm going to have to) bite my tongue. Then I started to hear what s/he (contributed) in the meetings. S/he actually had some important things to say . . . . S/he was constructive, even kind, in his/her criticism.*

In addition to greater appreciation for the strengths, skills, and abilities of others, some individuals came to understand more about the role another played in their organization and the constraints which came with that position.

*An important thing that I learned was that s/he has a job to do and can only operate within (certain limits). S/he has to make all kinds of people happy, and consider the implications of the things s/he does.*

Three leaders, including one from the religious community, were recognized for their contribution to articulating the need for coming together and valuing others. Some linked value, respect, and needing one another. "I feel that there has been a general

increase in the value or respect that we have for one another. Maybe we are starting to actually need one another."

**Resolving conflicts.** Skills in conflict resolution and willingness to resolve conflicts are essential aspects of collaborative capacity. With few exceptions conflicts were between pairs of professionals, rather than between professionals and lay people. Although some were disappointed that this was the case, others thought that this was where any conflicts should occur.

Although reflection and action in conflict resolution turned out to be an important aspect of this study, it is very difficult to describe situations in detail without raising problems for the individuals involved. It must suffice to say that activities associated with this study complemented other events in Bruckton to lead to greater interest and effort in resolving conflicts. Positive outcomes resulted in some cases, but not in all. There was no evidence of negative outcomes of efforts in conflict resolution.

**Deeper listening.** Associated with collaborative relationships and conflict resolution is the specific challenge of listening to understand the views of others. Several found this very difficult but did eventually succeed in setting their own agendas to the side in order to be more attentive or "hearken" to what the other was saying. Fundamental for some was the challenge of finding a new level of humility and honesty in order to be able to fully listen to others. In several cases, negative situations were resolved and relationships were restored.

An example of two individuals who successfully resolved such difficulties is illustrated in the following passage.

*We weren't listening to each other. Well, we were superficially, but we weren't really hearing one another . . . . I thought I was making his/her job easier by not involving him/her, but s/he thought I was not recognizing his/her experience and making some poor decisions that maybe s/he could have helped with . . . . It was misinterpretation and a bad case of assumptions all along, but I didn't see it . . . . After (some time) it clicked. With the help of (a colleague), we sat down, listened, and discovered what we each really wanted to say. . .*

The two experienced a breakthrough in the area of learning to listen to one another. They put their communication theory into practice and laid to rest the stereotyped images they had carried of one another.



*No longer was s/he the ----- and I the -----, We each had experienced that the other had valid contributions to make, and that we actually needed each other if we were going to do the best job possible for the kids . . . . We put into practice the theory that we had about going beyond assumptions . . . . We began to listen in a new and deeper way.*

While some pairs made progress, others experienced more difficulty in listening deeply to understand the other. Some reported trying but without success.

Overcoming personal tensions associated with sexuality or relationships. Some individuals faced the challenge of overcoming personal tensions, paranoia, or defensiveness. Negative associations with experiences, or individuals or groups from their personal pasts blocked the development of collaborative relations in Bruckton.

Some individuals related tensions associated with domination by the other gender (both male and female), negative images of sex and sexuality, and associations with unhealthy relationships in the past. One described growing up "in a setting where sex was dirty -- disease and horribleness. It took me some time to work through it and change that image of sexuality." Hurtful images were brought to consciousness in some cases by the language or profession of another and resulted in obstacles to listening and relating afterward. "When I heard him/her speak, that is exactly what I heard -- sex was dirt and disease and horribleness." Comparisons with what others heard in presentations (in one case, with video-tape records to refer to) helped individuals to understand areas in which their perceptions were accurate and inaccurate. As one of the leaders described,

*It really made me wonder how often this happens on a day-to-day basis, and how many rumors get started under similar circumstances. How strong is the effect of our personal baggage? I believe very strong.*

More Collaborative Language. As other elements of collaborative capacity developed, it appeared as though a more collaborative language was growing among leaders. During Years #2 and #3, the metaphors and images associated with "journeying" appeared to be slowly replacing those of "battling." Outside of Bruckton, the journeying images and metaphors were present in sexuality education circles, but seemed to lack the strength and consistency that appeared in Bruckton.

I noted examples of metaphors in individual spoken and written communication in Year #2, and began to reinforce these through my own spoken and written communications with those in Bruckton. Others began to see how the language we used might have a positive influence on our images of working together toward a common goal, on our concepts of depending on one another and our sense of community. The journeying

images and metaphors seemed to allow leaders to feel more patient and more accepting that there were no easy solutions to complex problems.

*We haven't succeeded in solving all our problems, and we aren't likely to in the near future. We have found answers to our most important questions, and made progress on the journey, but these answers have raised a whole new set of questions.*

At the end of Year #3, in my final written report to the community, I took the liberty to bring together the bits of one journeying analogy that was referred to by various individuals in Bruckton on various occasions. Most leaders had, by that time, freed themselves of negative religious associations and expressed appreciation for the synthesis.

*Upon reflection, I was struck by the similarities to another story of a journey to a "Promised Land" which took place thousands of years ago. In our case, however, "Moses" has become a slowly changing team of individuals. Both journeys seem to have taken quite a lot longer than the travellers thought they would when they set out. Various expected and unexpected adventures occurred along the way that caused changes in the people involved and in the relationships between them. Changes were often made in direction, speed, and in the climate which surrounded the group as they travelled. To the surprise of some, the promised land -- the ideal sexuality education delivery system -- isn't quite where we thought it was. On several occasions, when we thought we were there, we found there were still some giant challenges before us. Even as we overcame these challenges and began to feel as though we were "right where we should be" we found fresh challenges continually emerging before us.*

Out of respect for those who were not comfortable with this image, I also included the analogy to sailing mentioned in Chapter VI.

As with the other elements relating to collaborative capacity, a more thorough analysis of this would have been interesting and worthwhile, but was impossible within the constraints I faced.

### **Other Reflections and Implications for Further Development**

Several points are included below because of their potential to stimulate valuable discussion on further development of leadership capacities.

**Nurturing volunteer leadership.** FCSS and the Community School both have strong traditions of appreciation for volunteers and creating a climate for them to grow in their leadership capacities. The volunteer leader circle appears to have enlarged to a point where it has become self-reinforcing and self-perpetuating. The programs and people

regularly attract attention and recognition at the provincial and federal levels -- Junior Citizen of the Year, Program of the Year, Alberta Achievement Awards, etc. It is "normal" to encourage and motivate one another, and to help one another create new possibilities. These traditions and these organizations seem to have had a very positive effect on the growth of volunteer leadership capacity in Bruckton. How might they be preserved?

Leaders tend to move on quickly. Most of the people involved as leaders in SE are extremely busy in their work, as well as their volunteer and social lives. They have little extra time for reflection and little time outside of meetings for personal research and development associated with leadership in SE. It is to their credit that they found time within their complex schedules to participate in this project.

Leaders also moved in and out of the community. Those associated with school programs are generally stable in their positions. However, there was a steady flow of others, especially those involved within the teen and religious groups. What level of expectations is appropriate for leaders in initiatives such as this? What creative solutions can be generated for working within and overcoming some of the practical constraints under which leaders work?

Evaluations of others tended to change slowly. Change in perceptions and assumptions about other leaders, their "agendas," or motivations for involvement changed slowly, in spite of events which underlined the need for change. It was easy to become frustrated, disappointed, and discouraged in the short term. Some erroneous assumptions, perceptions, and images of others resulted from third party influence. Rumors affected trust and respect and were especially difficult to address.

*Perhaps the thing we can learn is that we should be aware of the potential of our backgrounds to affect our perceptions. We must be extra careful to be straightforward with one another, to go directly to one another when we sense there is something wrong. And avoid, at all costs, spreading our perceived information about (one another).*

How can leaders continue to recognize positive interactions and helpfulness and spread the news of these? How can facilitators help individuals to discover merit and build trust and respect?

Becoming more honest and more courageous. This is not to say that individuals were dishonest at one time. As I worked in Bruckton, as well as in other communities, I encountered several situations where critical points in historical conflicts were reached and leaders made one of two choices. Some acknowledged their roles in problems of the past and began the difficult but essential work of apologizing, making restitution, and restoring the relationship or credibility. Others decided to avoid the issue, cover it up, or delay

actions. The cost of these decisions appeared to be the loss of trust and respect and, therefore, truly collaborative relationships. How can those who need to take difficult action, whether it be to open discussion, ask forgiveness, or begin to listen, be supported?

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Overall, leaders appeared to grow in competence as well as in virtue. Most seemed to have a strong sense of hope for making a difference in Bruckton. "We do things differently now. Wiser. There is a feeling of confidence in others."

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## Organizational Capacities

Several specific areas of growth in organizational capacities were observed. These occurred in the following areas:

- involvement of stakeholders,
- integrating important programming,
- monitoring dynamics among teens,
- interaction with outside organizations and leaders,
- securing public support,
- securing resources,
- developing local organizations.

Further reflections and implications for future research / development conclude the section.

The *BRIDGES* Network was a key factor in the growth of organizational capacity in the community. To enable readers to more easily connect the Network activities with the discussion of organizational capacities I have summarized the major questions below.

### Summary of Questions Addressed in the *BRIDGES* Network

Major questions that directed reflection and action in the Network were as follows:

**Year #2** • Who are the stakeholders in SE and what are their interests?

- What core characteristics connect us as community members and collaborator
- What are the options for a coordinating/collaborating body?
- What should this new organization be like?
- How can we share power most effectively?
- How can we build trust and respect?
- Where are we at the end of Year #2? Where should we be going?

- Year #3**
- What is the purpose of the BRIDGES Network?
  - How can the network become fully self-sufficient?
  - What is collaboration? What obstacles must be overcome in order to develop deeper, collaborative relationships?
  - What traditions would be most meaningful and useful?
  - What is the most practical approach to monitoring?
  - Can we affect change in parent/teen relationships teen/teen relationships?
  - What changes in image and language have become evident?
  - Where are we in our development process?
  - Where is the BRIDGES Network? Where should we go with it?
- Year #4**
- Can we reconsider the relationship with LLLLC?
  - How can we apply what we learned to meeting the needs of teens, particularly those "at risk" of leaving school early?

### **Involvement of Stakeholders**

Capacities associated with involvement or participation of stakeholders have grown in several ways. First of all, there is a greater ability and willingness to acknowledge the diversity of stakeholders and accommodate the diversity of their concerns and interests. Organizations have become more successful at drawing together professionals and non-professionals, religious and secular groups, teachers, parents and teens to share information and better understand one another. BRIDGES Network activities and the subsequent merger with LLLLC have helped in this process

*There is full participation by many of the church groups in (and around) Bruckton. This is a perspective and involvement which was virtually non-existent in the inter-agency group previously.*

Community service clubs (e.g., Lions) and support groups (e.g., Foster Parents' Association) did not participate in the Network to the same degree. Although some expressed disappointment at this, there was a general understanding that appropriate contributions of groups in a community may take a variety of forms.

*The Lions (did not participate but) feel they are involved through QUEST. Lord knows, the foster parents have lots to keep them busy (at home). They also have their own organization and we hear from them in other ways.*

The rapport and relationships developed between stakeholder groups appears to have helped clear the path for future projects. To varying degrees, the sense of "journeying rather than battling" has increased as common values and goals were recognized. As one of the representatives indicated,

*The Self Esteem of a Community Project has been facilitated by the fact that the key players already viewed each other as partners in a concentrated effort to support teens and their families.*

Similarly, groups and individuals found the networking to facilitate their own work. As one indicated,

*It's amazing how many times I have made a connection with someone at those meetings that has led me on to the answers I needed.*

Capacity for self-sustaining development has also increased through encouraging stakeholder involvement at increasingly higher levels. The climate for participation did improve, however, as agencies and professional groups who historically retained power and control found merit in sharing and created opportunities for this to happen. With respect to Arnstein's (1969) model (Appendix 2.1), stakeholders involved only in the lower tokenism levels on the "ladder" (teens, parents, pastors) may now participate at the partnership level. Creating space for others to exercise power and adjusting to new forms of participation has been challenging and attention should continue in this area.

### **Capacity for "Integrating Important Programming"**

Integrating programming in a true community education fashion is very desirable, but challenging in practice. Those in Bruckton made definite progress on this front.

*The collaborative work done through teacher in-service and with stakeholders has served to demonstrate that community organizations and agencies can open new possibilities and make services available to students and their families more effective.*

Several organizations noted a positive impact in terms of credibility and increasing the pool of resources available to them, citing "The BRIDGES project" as having had a major and ongoing impact on the programming of (organization X)."

One of the factors contributing to this growth is the clarification of organizational roles in Bruckton. Several organizations have re-examined their purposes and resources, and gained a clearer idea of capabilities which can enhance opportunities or facilitate organization for learning in the community.

*I feel we are able to assess the overall situation better and use organizations like the Network or FCSS or LLLC to address issues relating to (learning about) sexuality or relationships.*

The role of FCSS as a networking force in teen and family issues has been confirmed. The roles of religious groups in modelling healthy community qualities and supporting families in practical ways has been acknowledged in a similar way. Constraints upon the school's

functioning (lack of funding, demands on teacher time, lack of mandate to work with parents, etc.) were articulated and were understood, by some for the first time.

Assessing and communicating about organizational strengths and constraints has contributed to a increasing appreciation for the resources in the community and a greater sense of community efficacy in addressing larger, more complex issues.

*We are starting to realize that we have a lot that we can offer each other. There are people right in this community who have expertise in the areas of AIDS, sexually transmitted diseases, parent/teen communication, handling abusive relationships, etc. We haven't begun to explore the variety of options in counselling expertise available among lay people and professionals -- either in Bruckton or in neighboring communities.*

There has been a transfer of this sense of community efficacy to other child and family issue areas such as the "stay-in-school" project with its undergirding theme of self-esteem. Identifying and integrating these "extra community resources" is part of the challenge of that project. The merger between LLLC and BRIDGES Network might also increase possibilities for this.

*The Bruckton (Community School) Advisory Council accepted the proposal to merge LLLC and BRIDGES with open arms.*

### **Resolving Organization-Level Tensions**

With a few exceptions, interactions between organizations were cordial and helpful, and continue to improve. Several stakeholder representatives emphasized this point.

*Let's remember that, for the most part, things went really well between us. If you look at the whole picture, the negatives were only a small part of all our interactions.*

Some of our reflections and actions were related to inter-organizations' struggles, sometimes referred to in terms of rivalry and suspicion, woundedness, and paranoia. Organizational tensions within and between health, educational, social service, municipal, and religious organizations emerged over the course of the study. Aside from minor matters associated with day to day communication, some were strong enough to cause significant disruptions. In one case, an individual described the climate in his/her organization as one of defensiveness resulting from comparison.

*Defensiveness. That would describe how we often feel. It's probably the reason the remark was misinterpreted, and why it got all blown out of proportion. People tend to compare us to (X) and we're never going to be like that. So many comparisons have been made that we really are on edge.*

In other examples, individuals were stereotyped because of the organization to which they belonged.

*I knew what s/he'd say because s/he's from (X) and that's what all of them think like. We at (Y) are pretty familiar with him/her and his/her bunch . . . .*

Factors other than organizational ones often contributed to the tensions that were experienced. The important changes, however, were the increases in willingness and skills to resolve such tensions.

### **Developing Local Organizations**

Local organizations have benefitted to varying degrees from the opening of issues and the modelling of organizational dynamics at the community level. Impacts were reported by the schools, FCSS and associated agencies, town council, schools, religious groups, and other community groups.

Several reported becoming more aware of, more able to, or more comfortable in communicating about sexuality and relationship concerns. Two examples were:

• *One interesting thing that I see is happening outside of the programs. X's meetings have changed and people are much more open and relaxed in discussions of sexuality-related issues. That just wasn't the case even 2 or 3 years ago . . . . I would attribute a large part of that to what we've been doing in the programs and meetings. The exposure to the issues is important.*

• *The education and availability of information made possible by the time dedicated to BRIDGES has made the knowledge level and hence the comfort level for discussion in the area of sexuality rise significantly at all levels in the community.*

Further to the discussion in the previous section, several pastors spoke of a rediscovery or confirmation of the church's roles in the larger community of Bruckton, particularly in modelling family and community life.

*We need to be models of "community" ourselves, so families can take that home and live that there . . . . We can help create an environment where individuals discover they are lovable and they are needed.*

Other role descriptions focused on modelling forgiveness, healing and acceptance, and supporting families "at risk" of breaking down. The three examples illustrate the range of role descriptions re-discovered.

• *Families today are taking a beating. A pastor's most important role is to be in the messiness of the homes of his people, to be part of their lives. When there is family breakdown, or breaking down, we as a church need to surround them with love and acceptance and support, as well as counselling.*



- *The church's role is in helping healing to occur. It is in helping them to find forgiveness, and forgiving them, and accepting them . . . The first thing is for us to understand that the church itself needs forgiveness.*
- *The worst thing is to have leaders looked on as being perfect and unapproachable. The church, after all, was built on forgiven people. We are needed in the community to model forgiveness and humility, and willingness to listen. We still have a ways to go.*

Organizations acknowledged the need to adapt to meet changing needs. One of the representatives commented in this way.

*We need to retain that "chameleon effect" that we have cultivated -- that quality of flexibility to adjust to new information and issues as they come up -- and help it grow in other organizations.*

The Network's movements to meet changing needs (e.g., broadening the scope from sexuality education to relationship issues, merger with LLLLC, serving teens or parents in a variety of issue areas) triggered thoughts of how members' own organizations could move to meet changing needs. "We had the freedom to change Bridges, and that has given us a bit more courage to consider changes in X."

Expectations of the speed of change were adjusted. This example refers to religious groups.

*I learned that it is unrealistic to expect rapid changes in a short time among those most conservative of organizations. It takes time for new ideas to trickle through (organizations like religious institutions) which are not organized for rapid change, but for maintenance of principles and a culture through time.*

Appreciation has also grown for the time and difficulty associated with change in other large organizations with complex structures, such as schools.

### **Securing Public Support for Sexuality Education**

Capacity for self-sustaining development in SE has grown as a result of an increase in public support. For example, COOL is now "commonly accepted by the community as an important contribution to their students' well-being." In a similar way, perceptions of the school program are more positive and support is stronger. Those outside the school generally recognize the importance of the teachers' role in SE, as well as the limitations they have. Although individuals belonging to religious groups outside of the community (i.e., not involved with the network or familiar with developments) continued to voice concerns, "opposition to school programs is rare." Educators were frustrated by such situations, but they tended to respond in helpful ways that built support. In one example,

three false assumptions were present (that all children in Canada receive the same type of sexuality education, that this generic SE perpetrates many myths, and that teachers are not aware of research which provides a balanced perspective). The teachers and principal discussed the matter and addressed the concerns appropriately and accurately.

Aside from SE, some parents have held unrealistic expectations of schools.

*Schools are still looked on as the way to fix the problems in society. Let's face it. Kids come to school with problems, and there are a whole lot of other things that we are expected to do at the same time.*

Although the "instrumental" view of schools as "problem fixers" still persists among some, it has become less of a problem among those contacted through the study.

### **Securing Financial Support**

Nearly all groups in Bruckton were constrained by insufficient financial resources. The funds allotted schools, for example, continued to decrease over the period of the study, in spite of increasing expectations.

*Schools are taking on more and more responsibilities, yet we are not being equipped financially, or given the personnel to do the job. We're doing the best we can. We should be saying to other agencies, give us some of your resources -- money -- and we'll get the people and do the job.*

Some funds for beginning COOL and training leaders were obtained. In order to qualify for further support grants, an official "society" in support of sexuality education was formed. The successful record of the community and the skill and networking of those applying enabled Bruckton to secure funding for many projects and programs. For example, two additional full-time staff were hired from funds obtained to begin the stay-in-school project.

Unfortunately, as of the time of writing, the provincial budget plans were such that funding for PCSS and the schools in Bruckton was substantially reduced. The capability to obtain financial support may prove to be more important than ever.

### **Monitoring Dynamics Among Teens and Families**

Those in Bruckton now have the capability to monitor key dynamics among teens through formal surveying and through their own less formal means. "The opportunity to survey the students on attitude and value issues is accepted by school staff and the process to do so has been simplified." Stakeholders have "better ways of telling where teens are at. Not just through the survey, but through (their) own, better informed questions." Information can be obtained in such areas as sexual decision making, family

communication, sense of self-respect and self-efficacy, future orientation, "at risk-ness", etc.. This information may become useful in the "Self-Esteem of a Community" project.

With the creation of the survey instruments, a format or template has been set up that can be modified to suit any related purpose. The survey can be changed easily with the word processing software available at the community school and the data can be processed using optical scanning available at the regional high school. Currently available technology can prepare a "frequency of response" output the same day. Problems such as getting a satisfactory sample and administering the survey under favorable conditions still need to be addressed each time the survey is used. Stakeholder representatives have experience in judging and refining questions, as well as in interpreting the information gathered.

### Connecting/Interacting With Those Outside

As connections among stakeholders in Bruckton have grown, so have the connections with those outside the community. As mentioned earlier, several important connections have been made with outside resource people in the sexuality education area, as well as in academic and research areas.

Most organizations also appear to be in close contact with their organizational counterparts outside. They have become more aware of common goals and activities, and pursue cooperative ventures (e.g., leadership training) to maximize resources and program effectiveness. The connection between schools has grown stronger through the collegial networking and communication flows between peer support groups in the junior high schools. Formal communication between the peer support group in junior high and the group in the high school has not developed as we imagined earlier. On an informal level, however, Bruckton teens remain in communication and return to assist at the junior high level.

On a third dimension, connections between local agencies or community coalitions in Bruckton, and regional administrations of other agencies (e.g., school jurisdiction and Health Unit) have also improved, leading to increased capacity for cooperative ventures.

*One major thing that changed is that the BRIDGES project gave us real credibility with the school jurisdiction. Before that time, they thought we ran coffee parties for parents and places for moms to go out, but that we really weren't professional and making a difference. That's changed. Now they treat our programs with respect. They are willing to participate. Now they trust that things will happen when we say they will.*

This increase in respect and subsequent willingness to participate is also reflected in the following comment.

*The fact that through BRIDGES "we did what we said we would do" with integrity and understanding has long served us. The assumption (that) we will conduct ourselves in a similar fashion on subsequent projects has made "buy-ins" by the school jurisdiction much easier than previously.*

Cooperative ventures with the Health Unit, such as a recent initiative on AIDS awareness, have also proceeded.

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## **Reflections on Strategies for Community Development**

Over the course of the study, we employed a variety of strategies to encourage development of capacities. Most of the strategies also contributed in some way to improving the quality of research. In order to avoid repetition, those that had greatest contribution to the research component are discussed in Chapter X and those more oriented toward development purposes are discussed below. Because each topic is only discussed in one place, comments relating to the other theme may be present. Each discussion includes recommendations for others who may consider using the strategy.

The topics discussed in this section include:

- responsive evaluation,
- examining the concept of stakeholder,
- analyzing assumptions,
- fostering the network,
- identifying common values and beliefs,
- attending to language,
- focusing on teens and teachers,
- one-on-one communication,
- facilitating connections with outside resources,
- valuing listening,
- developing a system of monitoring,
- reporting with stakeholders,
- examining other community development processes,
- leaving.

### **Responsive Evaluation**

The responsive evaluation process proved to be an effective community development strategy for several reasons. It opened up the issues associated with sexuality education, provided a forum for exploring community interactions, uncovered issues to address over the next few years, and facilitated the entry and deep involvement of stakeholders. Representatives confirmed this "illuminative" function (Pariett & Hamilton,

1976). As Greene (1988) suggested, there were cognitive benefits (learning to discuss, reflect, analyze, etc.), affective benefits (good feelings from being able to help and contribute), and political benefits (the less powerful received a voice). We also found relational benefits (opening possibilities for listening, resolving conflicts, etc.), as well as benefits to leaders and organizations. For the most part, individual participants developed a sense of ownership, responsibility, and obligation for follow-through.

The organizer of the responsive model -- audience concerns and issues -- makes it powerful and flexible as a community development strategy.

If some audience wants to see information relating to the achievement of objectives, that is admissible with the responsive rubric. If another audience wishes to influence or service decisions, assess general effects, or elicit critical judgments, that too can be provided for within the responsive model (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, p. 38).

The model accommodates both qualitative and quantitative approaches, as well as design features which may emerge to meet particular needs. In this study, it provided the researcher with freedom to investigate the areas which were in need of investigation using the most suitable instruments available. Both description and judgement were emphasized, and responsibilities in judging were shared with stakeholders. The researcher and stakeholders were able to explore the range of experiences which participants had with the program and, at the same time, become more aware of community dynamics.

From a research perspective, maintaining neutrality is a challenge and a potential problem associated with the responsive evaluation design. We attempted to increase the truth value by involving a group of stakeholders with as diverse values and interests as possible. Stakeholders were encouraged to question and critique the instruments and develop their own interpretations of the findings. They were invited to challenge the implications and recommendations suggested by other stakeholders or the researcher. This degree to which this was pursued varied among the individuals.

The flexibility of the approach also made it challenging to bring closure to some phases. There was always more refining that could have occurred and more feedback that would have been useful. The researcher is forced to weigh the importance of various aspects of the data collection and to impose limits on the time and money that would be spent to accomplish the task. It was difficult, but often necessary, to compromise between the goals: achieving the highest quality product, having the most satisfied clients, and getting the job done in time for the results to be of use.

A team approach would be useful if it were possible to arrange. Using both qualitative and quantitative techniques should strengthen the analysis, permit the utilization and expression of data from a greater variety of sources, and increase stakeholder

confidence in judging areas of strength and weakness. Readers desiring practical examples and criteria for auditing naturalistic, qualitative evaluations might wish to consult the article by Greene et al. (1988).

A responsive form of evaluation seemed quite suitable for programs of this kind which involve social problem issues, stakeholders with diverse values and interests, and a willingness to contribute to community development. It can be more sensitive to the political and human dimensions of evaluation than other models. Ethical questions such as who owns / controls the process are more easily addressed but practices should be monitored throughout the process. If the goal is the greatest benefit to stakeholders, they must participate at the highest level possible. (Readers may wish to see Chapter IV for further details.)

### **Examining the Concept of "Stakeholder"**

Mitroff's (1983) framework was very useful in that it broadened the concept considerably and stimulated thought in the community about who else "ought to be" involved. While in the process of uncovering elusive stakeholders and inviting participation, we discussed the nature of their interests / concerns / stake and some of the possible strategies they saw for improvement. It is likely that the framework will continue to be relevant in Bruckton and I would encourage its use elsewhere.

In retrospect, I should have also tried to better understand the personal and organizational constraints under which stakeholder representatives operated, as well as the strength of those constraints. After obtaining this information, I would update it periodically and encourage the representatives to make others aware of their limitations. That which an individual cannot do was sometimes a source of frustration for others who do not know about or understand the nature of the constraint.

Where possible, care should be taken in selecting individuals to represent a stakeholder group. Meeting with the group to discuss possibilities for the role and criteria for selection was helpful in a few cases. Meeting with the individual and mentioning the representative to others may give some early feedback as to the degree of respect or credibility they may have in the network. At the same time, we realized that it is impossible to please everyone, that conflicts can arise afterward anyway, and that the identification of hidden conflict can be important.

We found it wise to avoid assuming groups are homogeneous and that representatives always speak for that group. Reflecting the representative's views off others in their group can provide for a check on the generalizability of the views. We found considerable variation within religious groups, teachers, parents, and teens. Another

assumption to avoid is that representatives will continue for the duration of your project. We found that the individuals changed and that we needed to create ways of bringing the new individuals up to date with the network group.

### **Analyzing Assumptions**

The technique of assumption analysis, as proposed by Mitroff and Emshoff (1979), was employed in connection with interviews with school trustees, teachers, school and district administrators, a community school coordinator, parents, and teens in Year #2, as an aid to structuring problems in sexuality education for further analysis. In order to analyze assumptions held by stakeholders, reactions to three scenarios were examined:

1. Schools discontinue their involvement with SE altogether.
2. Schools maintain the current SE program and policy.
3. Schools become much more involved, providing leadership and focus in SE.

The assumptions of the stakeholders were organized according to the scenario they supported, rather than according to the stakeholder group or individual from which they originated. Accompanying the scenario and list of assumptions was information which supported or illuminated them. This was followed by an examination of the assumptions in a negated form and a brief listing of alternative strategies which arose from the analysis.

The process and outcome was very useful to me in understanding the problems and seeing possibilities for research and development. There were many assumptions that constrained thought and action regarding sexuality education as well as processes of community development. Examples of assumptions relating to community development were the following:

- that others were acting in a particular way for particular motives,
- that "community" or "collaborative relationships" already existed,
- that these do not exist and would be impossible to achieve,
- that we can only develop community or collaborative relationships by building skills,
- that these are only developed by realizing our individual weaknesses or lack, or finiteness.

The process was very helpful to me but I found that the direct benefits to stakeholders were limited. It was too complex and "academic" for most representatives at the time it was introduced (early in Year #2). If the process were to be employed now (e.g., in conjunction with the stay in school project) representatives would be much more likely to contribute to, and profit from, the experience.

I would encourage others to consider a similar process of assumption analysis in cases involving "messy" problems, as is typically the case in community environments

where development of capacity for self-analysis is a priority. The process can be of benefit to the facilitator as well as stakeholder groups and their representatives. Consideration should be given to the timing, the willingness to be open about assumptions and the skills and motivation level of the participants.

### **Fostering the Network**

A coordinating body is generally considered to be a "must" in community development and community education projects. Much has already been said about the evolution of the BRIDGES Network (see Chapters V, VI, and VII). In a period of about two years, stakeholders and representatives were identified, the network organization formed and became the focus of our efforts in developing leadership and organizational capacities, and the group metamorphosed into new and existing coordinating bodies in Bruckton.

Overall, the time and energy put toward developing this coordinating body of stakeholder representatives was very worthwhile. Among the specific purposes it served were the following:

- facilitating an exchange of information among stakeholders
- providing a forum for professional networking
- providing a forum for bringing information to the community
- creating a safe environment for expressing conflicting views
- building trust and respect through experience
- fostering future collaboration
- allowing professionals and non-professionals to work together on the same level
- providing a forum for problem solving
- identifying emerging needs and questions to investigate (areas open to contestation)
- building a common vision and a sense of community among leaders
- modelling healthy organizational qualities and shared leadership in an organization
- facilitating monitoring of sexuality education and trends among teens and adults.

I would advise others to consider the questions that emerged and how we addressed them. It is helpful to be persistent and investigate several options for the way such a network would relate to other organizations in the community. We began with the LLLLC, formed a separate organization and, eventually returned to the LLLLC. Be patient with respect to timelines and expectations in bringing stakeholder representatives together and beginning to do important work with this kind of network. Although rapport grew quickly, it took several meetings before most representatives were comfortable with one another to raise deeper issues. Few essential conflicts and hidden issues became open to



inquiry for several months. Readers may wish to see the proceeding sections and Chapters V and VI for further details.

### Common Values and Beliefs

Re-analysis of data collected during the responsive evaluation process resulted in a synthesis of the values and beliefs which the stakeholders held in common. I originally thought this information might be worthwhile in order to address some of the difficulties individuals had in conceptualizing how others could be working for the same notion of what was "good," yet going about this differently. (See Chapter V for further details and the list.) Presentation of the values and beliefs to stakeholders in print form assisted some to realize how close they were on the most important issues and goals, and modelled a helpful pattern of analysis.

*It was a first step toward a common vision for some. It began a pattern of looking at what we agree on before focusing on our differences.*

As we discussed the list, I thought it might be useful as a starting point of a constitution or a mission statement and objectives for the network organization. It took several months, however, before the group wished to proceed with that step. By that time, much more was known, several of the representatives had been replaced with others, and the "common ground" issues were essentially resolved.

I would recommend this step where data and time permit. It was relatively simple, provided an excellent starting point for discussion, and was helpful in one-on-one discussions and orientations of new members.

### Attending to Language

The notion of attending to the language used in discussing concepts, positions, and progress was new for most in Bruckton. Language and images associated with power, domination, and oppression had been a historic problem in discussions of sexuality and relationships, as well as in health, politics, and conflict resolution. During Years #2 and #3, we experimented with various images, analogies and metaphors as we discussed concepts relating to such topics as collaborative relationships, community and development. Their use grew rapidly in Year #3, becoming more common and more often public. Unfortunately, I was not present often enough in Year #4 to learn much about the continuation of this pattern of communication and its usefulness in the longer term.

The journeying metaphor discussed earlier in this chapter was, by far, the most popular and useful. It became a kind of "middle language" which related to stakeholders with diverse values and interests. Along with other advantages already discussed, it

seemed to allow leaders to feel more patient and more accepting that there are no easy answer solutions to complex problems.

*We haven't succeeded in solving all our problems, and we aren't likely to in the near future. We have found answers to our most important questions, and made progress on the journey, but these answers have raised a whole new set of questions.*

Some were journeys by land whereas others were by sea. Some incorporated other concepts, as did the backpacking analogy with the backpack representing the concept of capacities (associated with leadership and organizations).

Five other images which we found to be useful are described briefly below:

- A triangle, as described earlier in this chapter, was used to illustrate collaborative relationships.
- The image of a "body" was presented at a BRIDGES Network meeting (Chapter VI) as an illustration of the interdependence of the stakeholders and the various roles contributors play in the community.
- Music metaphors were offered to illustrate concepts of leadership and collaborative relationships, as well as the "facilitator" role (Chapter VI).

*Individual notes emanate from a diversity of instruments and the characteristics of these notes are affected by the characteristics of the instruments. But what makes the difference between a beautiful symphony and a cacophony is the relationships among them. Their tones and character, their strength and balance. Who or what brings it together? Is there always a need for a conductor? Trained and sensitive individuals get together like a chamber quartet, but they must really be able to hear one another.*

- The process of birthing, rearing, and releasing children to independence was offered as an analogy to various processes and roles, including facilitating change, nurturing new organizations, and withdrawing as ownership of change grows.
- The layers of skin were depicted as analogous to levels of listening (everyday, skillful, and heartening), levels of honesty, and strengths of values.

In our experience, images, metaphors, analogies, or emotional word pictures became very useful instruments for communication abstract concepts. I worked with what was emerging and encouraged it and felt this strategy was successful in reinforcing helpful relationships and concepts of development. I would recommend that others in similar kinds of projects attend to these very useful emergent patterns of communication, help participants become conscious of them, and work together to reinforce helpful ones.

## Focusing on Particular Groups

In addition to the network, Bruckton had many groups which could contribute to sexuality education. I chose to work most closely with two of them -- the teachers and the COOL team -- for several reasons: they invited me, appeared to have need of what I had to contribute, seemed to have considerable potential to make a positive contribution in the community, provided opportunity to contribute to the work of professionals and volunteers, and formal and informal settings. As a result of my choice, I spent a considerable amount of time with these two groups, learned a great deal about them, connected with others through them, connected them with outsiders, was able to report more about them, and discussed their challenges on a deeper level. In contrast, my association with parent associations or religious groups was less deep and less visibly influential.

Some of my actions with these groups were to serve short term purposes, while others were designed to support long term capacity building. Several of the initiatives were sustained while others ceased when I withdrew (e.g., SHaRE Notes newsletter).

Both the COOL team and the teachers were exciting and challenging to work with. Both the professionals and the volunteers were clever, motivated, compassionate. Work with the teens was frustrating when they forgot about meetings or arrived late, or when they were not prepared. Sometimes they were "pumped" (i.e., really enthusiastic) and sometimes they were tired and depressed. Once I was able to adjust expectations appropriately, these disappeared as problems.

On the whole, though, work with the teens was extremely rewarding. From observations and conversations with similar groups in neighboring communities, I learned that ours ran more smoothly and was longer lasting than any. Our teens frequently were called on to assist other groups and, on their return, were full of compliments for the way we did things organizationally and instructionally. I recall feeling very happy for them as they analyzed and worked through their own relationships using concepts from our training, and assisted other individuals in their struggles with exploitative relationships, substance abuse, and depression and suicide. To varying degrees, we had those "collaborative" relationships built on trust, respect, reciprocity, caring, and commitment, just like the adults.

Working with teens was difficult, frustrating, and time consuming, but extremely rewarding and satisfying as well. I cannot really imagine anyone working for teens without the valuable deep interaction with teens. If I were to go back and do this again, I would become more involved in other aspects of school life, perhaps with the students union or sports associations instead of just the SE teachers and the peer support team.

I often wondered how things might have turned out differently if I would have chosen different groups to work most closely with, or if I could have arranged factors somehow to provide support to more of the groups. I related easily to religious leaders and parent groups and could have assisted them to make greater steps in their areas of influence. However, these groups did not invite me to help them, and their issues were less clear and more closed as I began the study. I was also concerned that teens and other community members not label our development process as a "religious" or "parent" movement.

I was surprised and pleased that regional health unit and education jurisdiction representatives became so involved in the community process. I spent a significant portion of my time with them, and more with the school than the health unit. Although I could have contributed more at these levels, I felt I gave the maximum amount I could without reducing the energy and attention at the community level. I was also concerned that the movement miss opportunities for local capacity building because of increasing dependence on these outside administrations, and that the change process be seen by those in Bruckton as more "top-down" than "grassroots" in nature.

### One-On-One Communication

Much important work was done away from group events and meetings, and apart from the strategies, in one-on-one conversations. My relationships with individuals in Bruckton varied in closeness. Some had substantial mutual trust, respect, reciprocity, and caring, while others were more cool and business-like. In the section below, I describe some examples of ways I was able to assist those with whom I had a closer relationship.

Several commented that it was useful to have someone, such as myself, who would draw attention to, or confirm, a particular need in their community or organization.

*What I appreciated was the "third eye" you provided that helped us see something that was in need of attention.*

I was also able to assist individuals in generating options for approaching particular problems.

*Sometimes you came with an idea or a question that sparked an idea and we were able to find a way out of a difficult situation.*

On some occasions, I was able to assist individuals in recognizing assumptions that led to judging the motives of others. Recognizing these as assumptions sometimes made a difference in the relationships between the individuals involved. Some quickly became sensitive to these assumptions and began to help others see them as well. On three occasions, the assumptions, leaps in logic, and conclusions from loose associations were

in reference to me. On each of the occasions, the other individual gave me an opportunity to present my "side" and to draw attention to misinformation and assumptions s/he held. Two of those experiences were successful and resulted in our relationship growing closer and more collaborative.

*A bubble seemed to burst. I got the sense that we were finally (understanding one another), that the bridge was in. S/he asked if we could talk again . . .*

My attempts at resolving the third situation was only marginally successful.

Sometimes individuals discussed inter-personal conflicts with me in one-on-one situations. This was, of course, a very difficult area of involvement, and one which required considerable thought. I was cautious because I did not want to be considered a meddler. Yet, in cases where conflicts were clearly causing difficulties -- where the elephant was under the rug, as it were -- I felt there was no alternative but to suggest reconciliation and discuss the concern to the degree that the individuals could consider resolution a viable option. The outcomes varied from neutral to positive and, in several cases, led to significant improvement in relations between individuals. One individual was later reported to have been "moved a long way" for the positive as a result of our interactions. Another was considered to be much more responsive and willing to work cooperatively. I generally got along well with those others perceived as "difficult." In my journal.

*I can honestly say that I like him/her. I forget the (problems) and put in positive plugs for others where I can . . . Although s/he speaks from a different perspective than (the other), his/her information is accurate and s/he is enjoyable to talk with.*

Professionals and volunteers appreciated feedback that enabled them to realize how much they knew or how much they could do. I thought of this as helping them build their sense of self-efficacy. Sometimes I was able to help individuals recognize their understanding of a situation and trust their judgement about a particular action. In retrospect, I should have done more of this kind of reflecting, particularly in Year #2. The sense of self-efficacy can be a strong factor in motivation.

I had a minor role in encouraging and supporting others to take time for reflection. As mentioned previously, most participants had very busy lives. Some found little time to consolidate and reflect on progress to date. I was able to share my own struggles of finding time to periodically re-examine my lens or paradigm, and to adjust my focus and priorities. As usual, the outcome of this encouragement was variable.

New members appreciated extra support until relationships with others could grow. It was sometimes difficult to decide whether to get deeply involved with this or to stand back and wait for others to do so. As time progressed I provided less support to new

individuals and others seemed to assume that role. Another time, though, I would probably spend more time providing initial orientation to new representatives.

Some said I provided a positive influence by modelling practices such as listening, time for self-reflection, collaborative relationships, and leadership that allowed others to share in leadership.

### **Connecting: The Inside / Outside Dynamic**

Sometimes, in order to build and discover local capacities we had to encounter people and experiences outside. There was tremendous value in bringing back useful information, materials, skills, attitudes, and resource people when these enabled us to develop our local capacities in Bruckton. This meant working out appropriate applications for our particular community context. While we gained as individuals and Bruckton gained as a community from the development process, we also gained the satisfaction from having made a contribution to others and to broader scale initiatives. "helping one another bridge the gap."

Time and energy spent in facilitating connections for others to work with individuals and groups outside of Bruckton proved to be very worthwhile. Over the course of the study, each of the groups discovered the value in developing external networks. I took my role in this seriously and facilitated many connections, and many more were established by those in Bruckton. I tried to become sensitive to needs and be pro-active in investigating possibilities for helpful connections but, as far as possible, have the process of linking up with externals driven by those in the community. Further details have been described in Chapters IV-VII and the related appendices.

### **Valuing Listening for Understanding**

Although this may appear to be common knowledge to some, I believe it is worth including as a specific strategy. This means modelling and designing situations where listening for deeper understanding -- hearkening as opposed to everyday listening and skillful listening -- is valued and reinforced. Personal agendas and strongly held positions must be allowed to fade, temporarily at least, in order to allow listening for understanding to occur. I believe this is important in many applications, but particularly important with respect to the value laden, emotionally charged, personal history dependent areas of sexuality and relationships.

Many found it challenging to listen for understanding. Some lacked a model while others did not understand the potential of this kind of listening to transform relationships.

Strongly held values, and strong concepts of ourselves often got in the way. Humility, acceptance, forgiveness, time, skill, and desire to understand appear to play roles as well.

Learning to listen for deeper understanding seems like an elementary step but was vital in developing collaborative capacity, in bringing forth the best ideas, and in resolving conflicts. The associated skills and attitudes should be considered part of a development process. I began to emphasize listening quite late in our process as I learned more about its importance. Another time, I would prepare myself and assist others to enhance listening capacity earlier.

Sometimes change required a sense of hope. On two occasions, I was encouraged to forget conflict resolution and greater collaboration because of a lack of hope that the individuals involved could ever come to really hear one another. My own experience, however, led me to be hopeful, even for those whom others considered to be "terminally deaf" cases. The element of time seems to be an essential though. I wrote in my journal,

*My question would be, is there sufficient reason to hope for the capacity for real listening and is it just the time scale that is the problem? Are we sometimes, simply permitting the deaf to remain so because of our hurriedness? Or is it that some cannot develop the capacity to listen, and will never listen no matter how long we wait, and hope, and model, and listen ourselves?*

I felt that there were individuals in the first category whom we have given up on too early.

### **Developing a System of Monitoring**

The tradition of stakeholder involvement in the design of monitoring instruments and in generating implications and recommendations began in Year #1 with the COOL program evaluation. Each year afterward, representatives participated in the revision process and the interpretation of the data. The greatest interest and feedback was shown in the original design of the COOL evaluation and in Year two with the major re-design. Once the instrument appeared to be relatively stable suggestions for change decreased considerably. Some felt that there was simply no need for further change and that time and energy should be spent on other things, and I agreed. We had originally intended the survey to evolve to monitor the impact of educational efforts on teens, but it stayed as an instrument to help inform instructors, teens, and community leaders.

We faced a variety of challenges, including deciding what factors to follow, keeping the survey to a manageable size, making the questions as useful as possible, making the data processable with resources available locally, and administering them under favorable conditions. Details about these and other challenges are included in Chapters IV - VII. Some of our original plans for monitoring and evaluation (e.g., case studies over

time, data from individual program evaluations, surveys of parents and community members, etc.) proved to be impossible with the resources available. Other specific information that we thought might become available (e.g., pregnancy and STD rates for our community) did not materialize. Representatives worked with qualitative data which were presented to them in summary form in the oral and written reports. They were not involved with qualitative analysis for ethical reasons and because it was too time consuming.

Nearly all representatives found their participation in monitoring to be helpful and examined with interest the data we gathered. They felt the data stimulated them to think about what it was that was really important to know, and that it increased their insights into the dynamics among teens. Non-professionals were also pleased to have an opportunity to give input as equals.

### **Reporting With Stakeholders**

Several oral and written reports were created to bring together information which would help stakeholders understand and analyze various aspects of our process and progress. These included:

- Year #1**
  - draft and final documents relating to the surveys
  - oral and draft written and final written reports on the program evaluation
  - final written report on the evaluation
- Year #2**
  - summary of possibilities
  - documents relating to teacher PD activities
  - documents relating to stakeholders' network
  - summary document for Year #2
  - "Making a Difference" article on teacher PD for ATA Magazine
- Year #3**
  - submission to Minister's Committee on Sexuality Education
  - documents relating to teacher PD activities
  - documents relating to stakeholders' network
  - summaries of surveys
  - summary document for Years #1-#3
- Year #4**
  - revised summary document
  - thesis chapters

Some "exploratory" documents were created in addition to the very purposeful summaries. By this, I mean documents that caught a particular stream of interest but might be too radical to be interesting to stakeholders in general. As an example, I rewrote a portion of the article on the teachers PD program from a "critical" perspective (taken here as meaning examining situations with an eye to uncovering oppression or injustice). My re-



writing of the experience was intended to provide a sample to those who wanted to pursue thinking about the situations from this perspective (e.g., as in Carr and Kemmis (1986). It showed the shift in the focus of questions from the individual, to societal, to the socio-political dimension.

I aimed for a high level of participation in the creation of the documents and invited feedback to increase accuracy and usefulness. In general, these syntheses provoked deeper thought on essential issues and were much appreciated by stakeholder representatives. These documents were an essential component of the research process as well and are described further in Chapter X.

### Consolidating Information in the Community

It was not profound but it was important to have all materials accessible to others in the community. In our case this involved getting various documents (surveys, brochures, applications, program plans, schedules, etc.) into local computers. We also created paper copies of role descriptions, administrative timelines, names of contact people, etc. A variety of print and video materials were secured for local use. Finally, a system for organizing information for teachers was designed.

### Examining Other Community Development Processes

As we began the study in Year #1 many individuals used the term "community development" but few shared the same concept of it. For some, CD was synonymous with workshops. Others thought of it in terms of economic development and job creation. By the end of Year #2, we had defined community development for the purposes of this study as "the deliberate, collaborative efforts made by the people living or working in Bruckton to increase the local capacity to identify, analyze, and address issues and problems associated with sexuality education, but also related needs in the community." This definition was useful in focusing my efforts and in occasional conversations with leaders, but I did not encourage others to adopt it. CD, for me, continued to have meaning beyond this definition and I was thinking that a local definition might emerge. The journeying metaphor might have been important to the definition or the beginning of one at the time.

As discussed in Chapter II, Christenson (1989) described three approaches to community development: self-help (non-directive or cooperative), technical assistance (planned change), and conflict (confrontation). As far as possible, I attempted to operate in a self-help mode but, at times during Year #2, a considerable amount of technical assistance was provided. Not everyone agreed with the ideals of the self-help mode. A few preferred a model whereby outside experts assessed the situation and prescribed particular courses of

action. At first, some could not see value in an organization of stakeholders (i.e. the Network) or in concepts such as building capacity for self-analysis and self-sustaining development. Others who plan to engage in similar projects might expect to encounter similar variations in opinions on community development concepts and strategies.

Although the analysis of levels of participation (Amstein, 1969) did not receive emphasis on a community level, it was a very useful concept to several professionals. It helped them to see intermediate possibilities for involving non-professionals in ways that were non-threatening or less threatening. It also provided a concrete, visual framework for marking progress in cases where his/her goal was to increase the depth and quality of participation among those who had previously been at token levels.

Periodically throughout the study, various areas that were previously difficult to approach became open for investigation and change. As we looked back we saw how windows of opportunity to address particular issues were constantly opening and closing. Sometimes we took advantage of opportunities smoothly and praised ourselves for our "sensitivity to serendipity." At other times, we missed the obvious solution to our problem (e.g., working more closely with the community health nurse) because we were still thinking in a previously set pattern (working closely with the sexual health coordinator) even though conditions (regional policy and needs) had changed. Similar examples were found in the conceptual development and leadership of the COOL team, professional development of teachers, networking of stakeholders, and communication among religious leaders. We took time for creative problem solving activities, but could have incorporated more in our design.

As a general recommendation, facilitators might consider bringing these concepts in earlier. We could have encouraged discussion of these concepts with the groups at appropriate times in order to more quickly build common understanding and language, and to increase their capacity for understanding the layers of process. (In our case, not all concepts would have been useful with all of our groups [the COOL team, the teachers, the religious leaders, and the stakeholder representatives]). I have since followed this course in work with other communities and have found it to be valuable.

### **The Process of Leaving: Interdependence and Constructive Disengagement**

Among other things, it was important for me to take interest in the lives of others, act cooperatively, listen for understanding, model empowering and shared leadership, and value honesty and truth. I did these things because they tended to encourage growth in leaders and organizations and because they were the right things to do. Others acted in similar ways and, in time, relationships characterized by trust, respect, and reciprocity

resulted. They continued to deepen and interconnect and, in some ways, I considered myself to be a part of that community. Those in Bruckton voiced appreciation for my contributions and facilitating style and there was still much that we had to contribute to one another. On the other hand, it is assumed that community development facilitators will work themselves out of the scene. I needed to leave the work in Bruckton to be true to this ideal and to focus attention on other work. I felt that the process of leaving could, as any of our research/development process, be conducted in a way that would best serve the interests of the community.

I departed gradually from Bruckton over a period of about one year (Year #3), giving plenty of notice and leaving one area of involvement at a time. I tried to be sensitive to the timing of the departure and the particular areas that needed to be addressed before departing. My involvement with the COOL team continued longer than I originally planned because we could not find a person or group to take on my responsibilities, and I found the contact with teens and parents to be very valuable. Departure from the teachers and Network occurred within a few months of the original planned dates. After withdrawing, I remained accessible by telephone so that no one would be without support because I had "left the site."

In spite of months of advance notice and preparation, some were surprised when I left. I planned not to attend meetings where my presence might influence decisions, but advised participants of the reason for this. Several commented that this made it easier for them to consider their best interests without any distraction about my interests or feelings in a decision. Some issues at the meetings acted as a "test" to see if sufficiently strong interest, motivation, administrative capacity, etc. was present for the community to sustain a particular initiative without me. As I looked back, I wondered if I should have maintained a closer relationship with several just a few months longer. At the time of departure, I was moving into a position to motivate and assist others just a little more in areas of leadership, organizational change, or collaborative relationships just a little more. In a couple of cases, I had opened a "window" for development, but left before seeing the result.

Since I have left, representatives from various groups invited my participation on various projects (evaluation, planning, instructional, motivational roles), suggesting that various qualities and contributions that I would make could help the initiatives to be successful. I, similarly, realized that individuals in Bruckton had precisely the kind of insights and skills I needed to assist me in projects I was working on. At the time of writing, over a year after departure, I have become reconnected with many of those I

worked with in Bruckton, through teaching, research, or in other projects or other networks.

Those considering such a venture should begin it with "leaving" in mind. Consider making "leaving" problematic, and explore the associated issues in a journal and with critical friends.

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## Further Research and Development

Several possible avenues for further research and development in Bruckton have emerged and are described briefly below along with questions for reflection.

### Bruckton's Journey: Continuing with the "Stay-in-School" Project

The "stay-in-school" initiative (Spring, 1993) has several parallels to the initiation of the work in sexuality education four years earlier, albeit on a much larger scale. It is a new phase of the journey in Bruckton with a new focus, new funding, the added resource of a researcher / facilitator, and a community development purpose. Assuming the current plans are followed, the three year project will be completed by the spring of 1996. Data on various community dynamics will be gathered, and a final report and evaluation will be produced. It seems as though much can be learned about the community of Bruckton and about community development concepts by continuing the story.

- How should elements of Bruckton's Journey (e.g., community dynamics and capacity building) be studied through the work associated with the stay-in-school project?
- What model emerges from examining the forces and factors at work over the extended period?
- What long term impacts resulted in key areas such as leadership, organizational capacities, networking and collaborative relations among stakeholders, external connectedness, professional / non-professional dynamics in decision making, professional / volunteer instruction, involvement of parents and religious leaders?
- What effect, if any, have the reductions in provincial funding for education, health, and preventative social services had on the development of the community?
- How can we continue to build the sense of community in the schools in spite of provincial reductions in funding?

## **Collaborative Relationships, Language and Community Development**

In association with the project described above, it would be interesting to pursue the concepts and relationships between patterns of language, collaborative relationships, and the process of community development.

- Did the images and metaphors associated with journeying persist in Bruckton?
- Do similar images and metaphors emerge in other community development projects and in other communities?
- Is this a "middle language" which might be indicative of potential for the formation of collaborative relationships?
- Is "collaborative capacity" a useful concept when considering schools as communities? How is it similar to / different than the sense of needing others and being needed?
- Does it coincide with deep listening and humility?

## **Healthy Communities Movement**

Swann and Wiebe (1993) reported on the "Healthy Communities" Project in Alberta which sought to "engage individuals and communities with local government in collaborative action to improve the quality of life and health" (p. 8). Although several innovative projects resulted in the province, most lost momentum due to several factors:

- The multidimensional nature of health made it difficult to focus on concrete, manageable issues.
- Many groups and sectors were not prepared to work collaboratively.
- Citizens were reluctant to address complex and intimidating systems which control resources.
- The lack of resources to undertake projects resulted in volunteer overload.
- There was a lack of philosophical and political support provincially and locally (pp. 8 - 9).

For a variety of reasons, including size and program scope, Bruckton was not a part of this movement. Progress made and current conditions in Bruckton, however, appear to be quite amenable to support and guidance which this movement might offer. The concerns which would fall under local control seem to have been addressed in Bruckton.

- How could the resources, findings and expertise resulting from the "Healthy Communities" project be of benefit to Bruckton?
- How could the experience gained in Bruckton advance thinking with respect to healthy communities in our province?
- Which of the above factors should be monitored as efforts to address sexuality education and related issues (e.g., staying in school) continue in Bruckton?

- Are conditions for policy decision-making at the school jurisdiction level sufficient to reopen policy questions on health education, particularly relating to sexuality and relationships?

### Organization of COOL

Potential exists for re-conceptualizing the COOL team of teen and adult peer instructors as a multi-community pool. Among other possible advantages, this restructuring could facilitate leader training and sharing, compensate for the shortage of adult leaders, open new possibilities for a coordinator's role, improve the atmosphere of openness and increase access to participants. Over the course of the year, a regional team might facilitate more programs, thereby maintaining momentum and justifying training costs. Other communities agree in principle with the plan.

- What are the advantages and disadvantages of organizing a peer instructor team beyond the community level?
- What other options for reorganization would serve the purpose and overcome the constraints?

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## Summary and Concluding Remarks

Through our efforts to improve sexuality education understandings, practices, and situations in Bruckton we learned much about the community and about the process of development. This case was somewhat special in community development literature because it involved an education topic, including elements relating to curriculum as well as instructors and program administration. We identified underlying patterns and followed the development of the community action system, as well as growth within particular organizations (Garkovich, 1989). The bodies of academic and professional literature relating to educational change, action / participatory research, empowerment, and other areas were useful to support our actions and stimulate our reflections. The categories used to report on growth in community capacities were chosen in an attempt to relate what we learned to these literatures, as well as to be understandable and useful in Bruckton. Our evaluative comments on the elements of the process may be useful to others in the future.

Throughout the study, we attempted to understand and work with the complexity associated with administration in education. We found merit in considering and creating a community delivery system for education relating to sexuality and relationship. Implementation "gaps" were identified and, where possible, appropriate strategies were devised to address them. The strategies evolved through the process of testing them in action, monitoring our progress, and reflecting on the implications for the future. This process also brought us to think about concepts of community, interdependence, collaborative relationships, change, leadership and ethical/moral questions in deeper ways.

Among the factors which were helpful in developing leadership and organizational capacities were the desires among key players to build collaborative relationships, to resolve conflicts, to listen to others, and to share leadership. The skills and insights which those in Bruckton had developed through previous community process, as well as conflicts from inside and outside of the community, also provided a stimulus to increase capacity.

We found some strategies to be more useful than others. Among those which stimulated growth were:

- introducing major foci such as a responsive evaluation, a professional development program with teachers, the COOL program and leadership training with teens,
- encouraging the BRIDGES Network of stakeholder representatives,
- encouraging participation at the highest possible levels,
- shifting power to those who ought to share it,
- facilitating networking relationships so individuals could work together more directly, by choice, and on a deeper level,
- facilitating connections and gaining experience outside which permit receiving and giving,
- becoming aware of external forces and attempting to use them to advantage,
- taking time for one-on-one work with leaders and in-progress support,
- encouraging language and communication practices conducive to collaboration,
- valuing time for reflection and listening.

Although many of the paths we travelled were fruitful, a few of the paths came to a dead end and a few were abandoned because they were were too inefficient.

Some factors appeared to stall development. Among these were over-busy lives, overwhelming expectations, negative and erroneous assumptions stakeholders had about one another, breakdown in trust and respect in relationships, a low profile of health education in comparison to its potential importance, and limited concepts of "community" and possibilities for development. We confirmed that structures and programs change quickly in comparison to people and organizational cultures. It takes time for substantive change because it takes time to develop commitment, trust and respect. It takes time to

before individuals sense they are needed and that they need others, or develop the ability to listen for understanding.

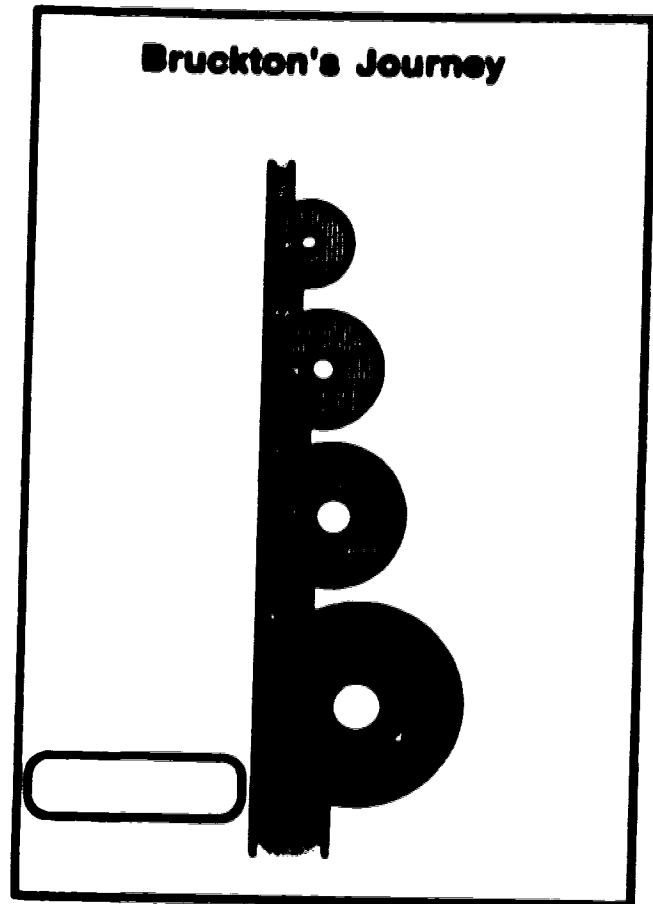
Overall, leadership and organizational capacities increased and Bruckton appears to be able to sustain its development in the area of sexuality and relationships education. Greater resources, along with moral support, should be made available from community and business associations, government, and university departments.

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## *Research Issues*



In this, the final chapter, attention is directed to some of the research issues that emerged as we studied, and contributed to, the development of sexuality education and the community. The first section is a brief re-examination of what we thought was "appropriate research," the purpose and principles that guided the study, and some of the opportunities that resulted. In the second section, I briefly discuss political, methodological, and ethical challenges. Some of the research strategies are reviewed in the third section and some recommendations are offered for those who might consider similar strategies.

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## **Appropriate Research**

One of the questions I sought to address was "What principles and approaches will be most appropriate for this research/development situation?" In the section below I review the purposes and principles that evolved, and briefly summarize some of the benefits and challenges that resulted.

## The Purpose

The purpose, questions, and principles developed together. It was important to learn but ethically imperative and personally satisfying to contribute to those I was learning from -- to make a difference in Bruckton -- at the same time. My purpose was to study the development of sexuality education and community capacities in Bruckton while contributing in appropriate ways. The specific questions I wanted to address were:

1. What changes occurred in sexuality education approaches (programs, curricula and their rationales, processes, roles of those involved, instructional techniques, intergroup communication and organization, etc.)?
2. What were the historical, cultural, and organizational contexts in which development occurred?
3. What forces, factors, and processes influenced development?
4. Who are the stakeholders in sexuality education in Bruckton, and what are their interests? What changes occurred in the way in which stakeholders were involved and what effects did these changes have on sexuality education?
5. What changes occurred in the community and, specifically, in the capacity of its people to foster development in the future?
6. What challenges and opportunities emerged because the project involved both studying, and contributing to, the improvement of understanding, practices and situations?

In Bruckton, and in communities everywhere, the community dynamics and the education about sexuality and relationships are complex. Fewer themes and factors would have made the analysis simpler and easier, and led to a deeper level of insight, but I wanted to acknowledge the complexity and try to find ways of working with it. In addition to those complexities, I felt I also had to make the research process problematic and so added the last question.

## The Principles

The principles guiding the research, as described in Chapter III, resulted from consideration of the nature of the topics, the issues raised in research literature, and my knowledge of the situation in Bruckton. The principles were as follows:

- Research and development processes can, and should, reinforce one another.
- The ethics associated with change must be carefully and regularly examined.
- The potential for enhancing the involvement of stakeholders and increasing the community's capacity for self-sustaining development should be a primary factor in the selection and prioritizing of research/development activities.
- Research/development perspectives and practices should be allowed to change over time.

Adopting these principles simplified decision making at numerous points during the study. They directed me along what I believe was an ethical path -- acting in the best interests of those in Bruckton rather than "the study," in cases where both could not be

optimized. In general, the principles released me from rigid adherence to my own research agenda and allowed me to contribute and receive opinions and information relatively freely. I used them as a standard as I developed strategies and particular methods for studying and contributing. The cost of travelling this "appropriate" path, however, was the need to address many issues, decisions and complexities that were not part of simpler, more predictable paths. This took much extra thought, work and time but it was worth it.

Appropriate strategies emerged which enhanced both development and research. Some examples were strategies for evaluation and monitoring, re-creating the story of events, participation in various group events, one-on-one discussions with individuals, studying the dynamics of instructional change, tracing curriculum development, facilitating professional development and leadership development, working with synthesis documents, and attending to language and listening.

With the help of a several "critical friends" I tried to become more sensitive to the "lens" with which I viewed situations, and to view situations through a variety of perceptual modes and metaphors. I also tried various data collection methods -- seeking ones that would gather the most useful information, especially for those in the community. Among the techniques were questionnaire surveys, discussions / interviews, participant observations, and document analyses. I produced thematic analyses, processed "living documents" and kept reflective and interactive journals. For ethical reasons, some of the information was not reported and, in some cases, not recorded.

The blend of eclectic, ethically imperative, developmental research evolved over time. At various times I referred to it by various names: action, participatory, empowerment, and appropriate research. Individuals warned me not to pursue this route. They felt it had much merit but that it carried considerable political risk, took too much time, and was too messy (and they were right). As I reconsidered the situations in Bruckton and in the field of sexuality education, however, the advice sounded more like a challenge and made the route even more attractive.

### **Benefits for Bruckton and the Study**

Overall, I was pleased with the process and results of this project, as others in the community were. I must reiterate that the outcomes (discussed in Chapters VII, VIII, and IX) were due to the actions of many people, as well as the external events over which we had little control. My own actions were just a part of this bigger picture.

*In some ways, you were like a conductor. We are all good musicians and play well, but we are still a little independent. You set a rhythm which helped us to play together.*

In the text below, I have described some of the benefits which occurred as a result of my active contribution while studying the development in Bruckton. Had I assumed a more passive, traditional research role, I suspect that some minor benefits in these areas may yet have occurred through the participants engaging in reflection on surveys or checking interviews and interpretations.

On one level, I was an (almost free) additional resource to attend to needs which others had identified but were unable to attend to. These needs ranged widely, from organizing and solving logistical problems, to data gathering, to leadership training. A rapid response to such needs, particularly those associated with finding or processing information, helped speed the development of individual and organizational capacities and the linkage of theory and practice. On occasion, meeting a need made a lasting difference in the life of an individual in the community.

On a second level, I brought expertise to supplement and complement that which was already in the community. Sexuality education issues and community development processes were relatively familiar to me, and I was comfortable working with volunteers, adults, teens, religious leaders or professional educators. Depending on the needs at the time, I functioned as a research technician, a facilitator of community originated research, a mediator, or an instructor. Among other benefits, this had a positive influence on building understanding of the issues, bringing improved practices, and analyzing local educational situations. My actions helped to build connections among stakeholder groups and individual representatives.

On a third level, I provided a view from an outside, perhaps more objective, perspective on some of the educational and relational dynamics. In the role of a "friendly, informed critic" I could support individuals in pursuing sound courses of action or challenge them to acknowledge the entire range of information available. I could contribute to change by assisting them in reflecting on their own situations with just a little more clarity and accuracy, and supporting them in taking action.

On a fourth and final level, I was able to facilitate connections between various groups in Bruckton and others outside. Again, this was timely and occurred rapidly. Some of these connections proved valuable for continued growth of leaders. Some resulted in new resources for groups and the community.

As some described the bottom line, "nothing bad happened," and most are ready to tackle the next experience in research and development with more insights, resources and enthusiasm.

Several opportunities to enhance the quality of the research also resulted because I contributed to the development process. As a facilitator or participant observer in many

formal and less formal events, I was in direct contact with people who had information. I observed and spoke directly with teens, teachers, parents, and other stakeholders in these natural settings as well as interview settings. The frequent working contact over an extended period of time facilitated relatively free and honest interactions. I was able to raise questions about various inconsistencies or reported changes that did not occur, and received volunteered comments on community dynamics.

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## Challenges

More problems were created for the research than for the development dynamics, as I anticipated would be the case. I have grouped them below as political, methodological, and ethical.

### Political Challenges

Both sexuality education and community development have strong political components. It would have been impossible to continue without the full or strong support of stakeholders. The first challenge was becoming accepted as a participant in the community. I was fortunate in that I had several strong factors in my favor:

- contacts and character references among stakeholder representatives,
- gradual, non-threatening, service-oriented entry during Year #1 with the program evaluation, and
- some expertise in areas where the community had needs.

It was difficult for some to believe that I was actually interested in assisting them to bring about improvement. They assumed I wanted only to "get them under the microscope" (i.e., take their information) and would be gone as soon as I had what I needed. After I had been around for several months and began to contribute on various fronts they realized I was sincere and they became quite helpful. Two had diametrically opposing concerns about my "personal agenda" and my connections with other groups. One thought I was an agent of a radical contraceptive-promoting group and was trying to subvert his/her parental authority and encourage sexual activity among teens. The other thought I was an agent of an "abstinence only" organization and was doing a disservice to teens by preaching a dangerous abstinence only message. Each of these concerns was resolved through conversation and greater trust was gained through additional exposure. The concerns might have been more serious if they had not surfaced and been addressed

before they became more widely spread as "rumor-fact." On another occasion, rumor spread about how narrow the focus of our efforts in Bruckton were and how much we overworked people. This resulted in some confusing interactions for a time, until the concern surfaced and could be addressed directly.

At one point in Year #3, our work in Bruckton appeared to be "at risk." An unknown individual joined a group gathering for a 45 minute presentation of a guest speaker, then without hearing the question period or the rest of the program. About one week later, I determined who the individual was and found that s/he had taken the speakers comments out of context and formed judgements about the program based on faulty assumptions and leaps in logic. The individual warned me that s/he would be reporting on the program and the guest. "The report of this will go high up and you will likely be hearing about it." Our discussion drew attention to the errors in assumptions, and I explained what had transpired after his/her observation (i.e., the question period and balancing activities). The process provided an excellent learning experience for both of us. Finally, we discussed ideas on how to approach concerns in more productive ways in the future.

### **Methodological Challenges**

The process of formulating the principles and questions has already been mentioned. The other major challenges are discussed briefly below.

**Honest responses.** On the spectrum of relationships between just "working together" and being in a close, collaborative relationship with another there seemed to be an intermediate level of relationship of "semi-closeness" when there was a possibility of participants telling me what they thought I might want to hear. In two cases, the participants didn't want to disappoint me or others that were hoping for success, or break the illusion that everything was fine in the community. Another individual simply believed in the power of positive thinking and in "speaking a particular concept into being". In my reflections I referred to this syndrome of questionable validity of responses from individuals with a particular level of familiarity as "the zone of uncertainty." Before this zone, s/he can be honest because nothing is at stake. Beyond this zone, we cared enough about one another that we could speak with honesty even if the truth were disappointing. Examples of this phenomena occurred on occasion in Year #3.

I recommend that other facilitators watch for things sounding too positive -- too good to be true. Think of how you might allow the respondents to revise their statements without losing your confidence. It should matter that the individual be as accurate as possible in their assessment, yet develop the skill to express this without feeling s/he is

disappointing you. Of course, periodically use techniques to ensure accuracy (triangulation, re-examination after time elapses, a planned absence, anonymous responses). A stakeholder representative recommended that it would have been helpful to talk about this phenomenon in a group setting like the Network and, perhaps, practice presenting negative feedback to the facilitator in role play (e.g., preface remark with something that will soften the blow, let the person know you want to give honest feedback, writing a note may be easier).

**Gathering data.** This was not a problem as much as a challenge in versatility. I gathered data from a variety of sources: documents, interviews (teens, parents, teachers, pastors, agency directors, other stakeholder representatives, etc.), surveys, participant observations, non-participating observations, focus groups, and journals. This diversity in sources coupled with the ability to collect information over a period of time (during some of which I was an insider and some an outsider) provided me with an ability to check where results were puzzling or contradictory.

I had to change my plan to type transcripts of all of the interviews. The cost in time and money associated with transcribing so many interviews became unreasonable. I typed those that were the most important and retained the others on audio-tape. If I had had extra time, I would have gathered more complete interview data at the end of Year #4 as the *Self-Esteem of a Community* project got underway.

**Moving data efficiently.** Appropriate research, in this case, meant that information had to be shared frequently and speedily among many people. Facsimile technology (FAX), just coming into common use as we began, helped make this possible. By the end of Year #2, I had a FAX as did most of the stakeholder representatives, schools, regional offices, research associates, or other advisors. We used the equipment to transmit and receive questionnaires, agendas, notes or minutes from meetings, samples of curriculum materials, lists of resources or participants, newsletter articles and drafts, role descriptions, portions of documents, and articles between co-authors.

Stakeholders appreciated the easy flow of complete information and responded quickly, often the same day, to requests for review and feedback. We used the FAX to transmit items of interest to those who might be interested in becoming involved, and as an act of "transparency" to those who might wonder what we were up to. The FAX now seems to be an indispensable piece of equipment for those undertaking such an interactive kind of research/development project. The benefits of rapid transmission and reception of information are made even greater in rural settings where distances are too great for personal delivery. Computer/modem technology and expertise was not yet sufficiently

developed to make electronic mail practical. As of the time of writing, however, many of those involved could receive information via this mode.

**Managing the mountain of data.** This was a predictable problem because of the multi-dimensional, multi-factorial nature of the study. I worked with two complex topics (SE and CD) with numerous themes and sub-themes which could be followed in each. The process set me working with stakeholders as a group, local organizations, individual leaders, and others from outside who interacted with the community, for an extended period of time.

The data that resulted filled a bookshelf. The system of organization went through two evolutions before it stabilized. I used different 2 1/2" binders for each year's research journals, records of community contacts and documents, records of school and teacher contacts and documents, and records of COOL contacts and documents. Other binders held the monitoring instruments, the COOL curriculum and its developments, interview transcripts, and the various synthesis documents that I created along the way. Nearly all of the data were processed on my own computer, enabling easy organization in files parallel to the paper files.

Steps in data reduction occurred as required in order to prepare the documents and oral presentations for community representatives or academic purposes. I also prepared summaries of contents for the binders. This took much longer than I imagined it would, but provided a means of ready reference and an excellent review of the mountain of data.

I would encourage those embarking on a similar study today to acquire the background and technology and create a computer database to handle some (but probably not all) materials. This would expedite analysis and writing, as well as facilitate comparative studies. I investigated this possibility in Year #2 but decided not to proceed because my experience with data bases was limited and the cost of upgrading to accommodate the level of technology required was prohibitive. By Year #4, the software and hardware costs had dropped considerably, and I had the equipment and skill to use computer technology to advantage, but the time required to go back and reformat the documents, appeared to be prohibitive. Now that I have completed the study, I think it might have been worth the time to reformat.

**Focusing on particular factors.** There were many forces, factors, and processes and it was quite difficult to decide what degree of attention to pay to each. I coped with this by noting everything I learned about. Focus came with experience in the community, further reading, personal reflection, and feedback from stakeholder representatives and "critical friends." Journaling, interactions with my friendly critics, and the documents were helpful. I would advise others to make as efficient as possible the process of



identifying the most important factors, or creating that framework for data collection and analysis.

Deciding on the level of involvement and the balance of development and research in the study. I found that I needed to periodically examine my involvement to forecast the implications for the process of development, the value of the study, and my personal growth and well-being. There were many more meritorious things I could have attended to than I had time for. For example, I was close enough to obtain higher quality monitoring and evaluation data, yet had to leave that task to attend to other affairs which seemed more fundamental or of more immediate importance. It was helpful to have those inside and outside the community with whom to discuss these decisions.

Making the research itself problematic. I wanted to find this to be "appropriate research" for the situation I was studying, and to experiment with techniques to encourage participation, yet maintain rigor. It seemed as though one of the areas of research should be the researcher himself. These issues are discussed further in the section on strategies later in this chapter.

The length of time.

*The truth is that (a project like this) takes a lot of time. And it takes someone to keep the momentum going and help all the good intentions and energies come together so everyone isn't pulling in six different directions.*

To say this study took a lot of time is an understatement. It took extra time to involve community people from planning to evaluation, to process the volume of data, and to make meaningful contributions along the way. Others contemplating similar studies should consider several points in their planning:

- Find a partner to share the workload.
- Be very selective at the beginning about your involvement and look for ways to further reduce and focus as you proceed. I did not originally place sufficiently strict limits on the time I would spend, then wound up having such a large commitment that it was difficult to carry.
- Accept that some valuable, important projects (in my case, a more rigorous monitoring and evaluation system) might not be possible within the constraints you have.
- Obtain funding for the research.
- Obtain funding for developmental activities.
- Use course assignments to consolidate research thoughts where possible.

Deciding on an end point. Having a flexible end point and gradually withdrawing was appropriate from a development perspective and an ethical perspective, but added greatly to the time required of me to complete the study. One of the reasons I was able to

continue as long as I did was because I received scholarship funding, as well as payment for some of the work I did with the teens and teachers. Having more time allowed me to gather more data and make a greater contribution to the community. Close association with Bruckton for three years seemed to be long enough to watch changes occur and acquire an understanding of local dynamics.

Extending the study enabled me to note later developments, do further checking, and otherwise increase the supply of material to work with. Having more data to analyze, synthesize, report and review, however, necessitated extending the writing into a time period when I was very busy with other work. Progress slowed, then stopped for several months. I had to take substantial time to review before continue to write.

I recommend that others, if possible, set timelines so that the entire writing process, including editing, is completed well in advance of returning to other full-time work.

Some of the strategies I applied addressed several of the problems above and, sometimes, several addressed one problem. I discuss some of the strategies in further detail later in this chapter.

### **Ethical Challenges**

Working in the field of sexuality education certainly presented a variety of ethical challenges. Confidentiality was essential, except in a case where the person sharing the secret is about to endanger himself/herself or others. The questions I discuss below, however, relate to the research process as it relates to change.

As described in Chapter II, Carson et al. (1990) suggested several specific questions be considered:

- In whose interest is a change being made?
- Who initiates or controls a particular change process?
- How are participants involved in each phase?
- How can sensitivity, critical reflection, and disclosure be encouraged without placing participants ( or their professional rights and responsibilities) at risk?
- How can caring and responsibility grow as change is implemented? (p. 31)

I endeavored to address these questions as I proceeded through the study and have included some information on this with the description of events in Chapters IV-VII. The interests of teens and parents were the major factor in deciding on the appropriateness of changes introduced. For the most part, stakeholders initiated and controlled changes (discussed further below). The nature of their participation varied with particularly phases, but the general trend was toward deeper levels as the study progressed through Years #2 and #3. Sensitivity, critical reflection, caring, and responsibility grew as the various changes were implemented.

Another question was abstracted from Hall (1981) and participatory / action research literature, "How can research be useful in shifting more power to those who ought to share it?" The activities associated with the study generally provided opportunity for those who traditionally had less control and responsibility in formal sexuality education at the local level (i.e., teens and, to a lesser degree, parents and other stakeholders who were not professional educators). The activities also provided opportunities for those in particular organizations to assume greater status, control, and responsibility. Teachers, for example, were involved in higher levels of decision making and influence in the school organization.

A fundamental question was "Who owns the change?" On a general level, two changes were planned: to improve approaches to sexuality education, and to increase the capacity in the community for self-sustaining development. My brief answer is that I decided that those in Bruckton would own the changes and implied that in my principles. I believed that the stakeholders in Bruckton ought to own and control any changes that we worked toward. Ultimately, that is what happened but I did not begin fully operating in this mode until the second half of Year #2.

There were many specific initiatives along the way. In Year #1, COOL was discovered, planned, and implemented by FCSS and the regional Health Unit. In Year #2, the professional development of teachers, training of local peer instructors and program changes developed in response to the previous year's work. The school jurisdiction and FCSS asked for my proposal and I prepared one. I involved participants to a high degree beginning with planning, but I did provide significant "technical assistance." The idea of the Network grew out of the evaluation and discussions with FCSS. Most stakeholder representatives either came to a similar conclusion or agreed that it would be useful and the movement gained momentum relatively easily.

After this, changes were suggested by those inside and outside Bruckton, but the implementers (teachers, stakeholders, leaders, etc.) were given the freedom to decide whether or not they wished to try the changes. Moreover, the people were encouraged and enabled to reflect on understandings, practices, and situations, and create their own changes and strategies for improvement. The degree to which this actually happened, of course, varied with the individual and the organization.

With each year of the study I got progressively better at analyzing ownership in change and ensuring that those in Bruckton were the major forces behind suggesting and bringing about change. I made suggestions, as one who knew the situation well and spent considerable time reflecting on possibilities for improvement. Those in Bruckton recognized this and could take my advice too quickly. Therefore, I became careful to

present suggestions in a way that would draw attention to other options and encourage their own critical thought.

There are many examples that illustrate that the people in Bruckton found their own way. Organizationally, this was demonstrated in the story of agreeing on a mission statement, which was told briefly in Chapter VI. I wrote this in my journal afterward.

*The discussion was well balanced -- new and old members, professional and non-professional, men and women, contributed in approximately the same ways . . . Again my comments were received, considered, but not necessarily taken as "the best" ideas. A good thing! I thought the statement should stick closer to relationships, but the consensus of the group was that it should have "room to roam" to lifestyles. So be it.*

Other examples can be found in the eventual unfolding of the BRIDGES Network into the LLLLC and the stay-in-school project. I stayed totally apart from the decision-making process and was pleased with the outcome. The Network was supposed to be a temporary organization that would meet an immediate need and be able to grow and change or disappear altogether. In that sense it has met my expectations as well as those of the community.

Similarly, the teachers led their professional development initiative after the initial meeting. We knew that this movement could not be sustained for more than one year on a school level, but would be very appropriate to continue at the jurisdiction level.

In some cases, structures we set up appeared not to be sustainable in the way we originally imagined. We thought that COOL might be sustainable on the community level, but it now seems much more appropriate at the regional level. Again, I was not leading the change.

It was definitely challenging to decide how strongly I should present some points and recommendations. We came to several decisions within the major initiatives that I felt should have turned out differently. In the school program, for example, I would have emphasized some issues more with teachers, such as better integration of peer instructors, and greater emphasis on communication with parents.

Sometimes I wanted to pursue points and resolve conflicts and issues that others thought were best to drop. In one case, a parent had written a letter of concern that illustrated the kinds of problems with unfounded assumptions and misinformation that we were currently working through with the stakeholder representatives. The educator who received the letter responded, but did not want me to pursue the matter further with the parent. I felt it was most important to respect his/her judgement and did not pursue the matter further. In my journal I wrote:

*I would have liked to have seen for myself if we could have a breakthrough in this case . . . but I will have to live without that for the sake of "the greater good" and respecting his/her right to make the decisions.*

It seemed best for ethical and community development reasons for the facilitator to allow his/her personal agenda to move to the background in order to allow a common agenda to emerge and provide space for people to develop their leadership through reflected experience. This assumes that the facilitator is aware of his/her personal agenda.

How did receiving payment affect the study? In Years #2 and #3, I received about \$4,000 as payment (wages and expenses) for working with teachers and peer instructors. In negotiations, I proposed that I would work at least twice that amount as a volunteer (to allow for time spent in experimental development activities and time that I would have put toward contact with people in any case). Depending on what I included, my expenses totalled about \$1000. Depending on how I calculated my time, my wage at a teacher's rate would have been between \$12,000 and 19,000 over the two years (a 4:1 and 6:1 ratio).

The funding was fair and very much appreciated, and I made sure that there was no question that they got their money's worth. I did not feel obligated in any way because of the payment and in my opinion the accuracy of the reporting was not affected. The teachers and teens received more of my time and, therefore, I had much more data relating to them than to other groups (e.g., parents or religious groups). This situation, however, would have probably been the same whether or not I got paid as I had planned for other reasons to focus on these groups.

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## **Reflections on Research Strategies**

As has been discussed in the previous chapter on community development, the strategies chosen generally advanced both research and development fronts. Several that contributed to the research dimension of the project are discussed below.

### **Cycles of Reflection and Action**

Major cycles of reflection and action on the community level could be thought of as having a period of about one year. It was often helpful to separate for analysis smaller-scale cycles within a given year. In Year #1 the planning and implementation and initial evaluation of the COOL program might be considered to be separate from, but related to, the cycle associated with the responsive evaluation. In Year #2, the process of identifying

stakeholders and the nature of their concerns and interests might be considered as separate from, but related to, the cycle associated with designing the network organization and, perhaps separate again from the beginning of network operations near the end of Year #2.

Meanwhile, at the organization and program levels, somewhat separate cycles of action and reflection occurred as well. During Years #2 and #3, teachers and peer instructors each operated separately, with their own questions and their own process.

As a researcher / facilitator I went through my own cycles of action and reflection. Through various processes I sought to understand more about myself as instructor, research facilitator, as well as my own relationships. My conception of participatory / action research went through several cycles of change as well:

- the community development model of Lewin (1946),
- the very practically oriented notion of teacher as researcher as presented by Stenhouse (1975),
- the "Australian" critical social science model as presented by Carr and Kemmis (1986),
- and to concepts such as depicted by Carson et al. (1990) and Rahnama (1990).

These were geared progressively toward listening for understanding, increasing sensitivity of the researcher, enhancing collaborative relationships, allowing the change agents within a system to emerge and be effective. I did not achieve this ideal because of the constraints I faced, but continued to work toward it.

### **Changing Situations, Changing Roles**

Some appreciated that I was able to change roles to meet changing needs, and as I learned more about the community and being a researcher / facilitator in development. One referred to this as my "chameleon" ability.

**Association with various groups in Brickton and outside.** It was helpful to relate successfully to various groups. I found I was equally comfortable with teachers, pastors, parents, and teens. I was at ease with professionals and volunteers, and the religious and the secular. My previous experience helped me to be sensitive to and understand their needs and interests, and helped me to communicate with them. Nearly all understood that I was not a "snake in the grass" or anyone's mercenary.

Outside of the community, I was pleased that I was accepted and able to communicate with those who saw sexuality education issues from a variety of perspectives (e.g., Alberta Health, Focus on the Family, Planned Parenthood, the STD clinic, and Teen Ed). Along with others, I discovered that each of the groups had worthwhile ideas to offer, and that all have been guilty of misleading people at some point.

**Outsider / Insider / Co-laborer.** One challenge that presented itself was that of being an "insider" and an "outsider" at the same time. There was a constant balancing required between getting close to, and keeping distance from, the stakeholders involved with the project. Tremendous rapport developed between many of these individuals. We cooperated and helped each other overcome various hurdles and, on occasion, even shared one another's joys and sorrows. The high level of trust allowed individuals to share their deepest concerns and uncover the most basic underlying issues. At the same time, distance was required periodically to better examine the issues affecting the program as a whole. By the end of our time together, I was considered an "insider" or "co-laborer" by several of those I worked with. The relationship that began as "me/them" in 1989 had, in many ways, become "we."

### **Research on the Researcher**

One of the "instruments" in this research/development venture was the facilitator. It seemed important to learn as much as possible about this aspect of the study, to monitor my influence and contributions, to identify gaps in my theory and practice, and to examine my own action and reflection. I conducted this process through my journal writing, through discussions with critical friends and through the preparation of various documents and presentations.

Self-reflection and discussion with others brought out numerous issues and questions including the following:

- What do I need to learn about sexuality, and learning about sexuality, in order to be effective?
- What is the spiritual significance of sexuality? Of community?
- What is the nature of the lens/frame/paradigm through which I am perceiving situations? How should it adjust to accommodate new understandings?
- What are these personal values and beliefs? How strongly do I hold them? Why do I hold them?
- How should I manage my personal values and beliefs when they conflict with those of others?
- How can I better model the characteristics I am trying to encourage in others: family communication, healthy sexuality, reflective practice, deeper listening, truly collaborative relationships, attention to language, analysis of assumptions, sensitivity, restoration of damaged relationships, concept of community?
- How can I become a better learner?
- What am I learning in Brackton that I should apply to other situations?

- What important connections am I overlooking?

I was generally pleased with the approaches taken and the results achieved as a result of this research on myself. With few exceptions, unsolicited comments received from those I worked with indicated that I had "walked my talk," successfully addressed important gaps and tensions, and learned to work effectively with the diverse assemblage of people encountered. I was often surprised, even overwhelmed by the acceptance in the community. On one occasion I asked, "Do (people in Bruckton) just love everyone that you work with? They responded . . .

*No, there have been some who have come to "save" or to "show us the way."*

*These have not been received with open arms, as you were.*

Other changes have occurred on the personal front for me. I have experienced a deepening in my own understanding of what it means to live in community relationships. I came to understand "needing and being needed" as an essential element in close community relationships because I felt that connectedness and the commitment that comes with it. I have grown to have a deeper appreciation for, and understanding of, my relationship with those in my community who are especially dear to me. In related ways, I gained fresh appreciation and insight into the value and practice of listening, of leading a principled life, and of accountability and support. I mention this because I want to acknowledge the change that goes on within individuals, and encourage readers to reflect upon the changes that have occurred within them over the last few years. The collective impact of such changes in individuals has tremendous potential significance on a community level and, I believe, the reverse is also true.

In this kind of venture, it seems essential to continually learn about oneself and one's relationships with others, and to systematically act on the gaps and tensions as they are uncovered. Individuals carrying on similar research should consider how they will conduct research on the researcher (using whatever label seems most appropriate).

## **Jouralling**

My jouralling practices changed over the four years, depending on my understanding of journal writing and my particular needs and purposes at the time. Where possible, I coordinated my research jouralling with "living documents" I was creating, and with writing required for courses I was taking. The way in which my jouralling was related to the courses, the nature of the journals and the significance to the research is summarized in Appendix 10.1.

I experimented with a variety of ways of viewing situations and relationships and writing about them. According to my needs and the direction of the courses, I wrote in



descriptive, reflective, interpretive, phenomenological, critical, or post-modernist modes. I used the journal to record research activities but also as a forum for self-analysis, noting and analyzing relationships, hypothesizing, synthesis and evaluation of processes. As a result of the diverse experience, I was able to develop the capacity to use the instrument from my repertoire which best suited the application.

I recommend that others investigate various approaches to journal writing and begin a format that has the most potential within a few weeks of entering the community. To complement the exploration encouraged in courses, a good course in journaling would be helpful for most individuals. I would encourage experimentation with the "four quadrant" style at some point. As a final note, I suggest researchers consider integrating their journal with their computerized data base.

### **Reporting With Stakeholders: Living Documents**

The iterative process of reporting was essential to both the development and the research processes. I say reporting "with" rather than "to" stakeholders because I emphasized a high level of participation before, during, and after the actual report. Key players expressed considerable satisfaction with the reporting process, though all did not always agree with what was said.

**Assessment of Development-Focussed Purposes.** The documents we created helped build the capacity for self-assessment in the community, including the sense of community-efficacy in being able to read and react to reports, identify implications, and make recommendations. They helped to broaden the concept of research which had been limited to quantitative presentations which, for most, were neither understood or easily applied. In contrast, participants really appreciated the accessibility and utility of the information in the documents.

*I read the document and found it to be really interesting and useful. I especially enjoyed the quotes. I never saw anything like that before.*

In one case, where organizational paranoia was an issue, the representative felt their organization was cast in a negative light in several places. S/he did not see that all the outcomes were positive, but got distracted because of negative elements in the story along the way.

I wanted to involve stakeholder representatives more in drawing out themes from the data collected, but was unable to overcome the limitations of the representatives' time or address the ethical issues satisfactorily. Closer connection with qualitative data might have enabled representatives to uncover central questions more directly, or they might have found other questions and themes.

The written reports provided something concrete to stimulate and focus discussion on topics that were complex and, for many, difficult to enter. They provided a way for the diversity of perceptions and experiences to be presented and the weaker voices to be presented with equality beside the stronger ones. They served to develop a kind of community view, and marked progress and refinement. Of course, one also needs to be cautious of the possibility of a document like this creating an artificial version of a community view.

In the documents I endeavored to reinforce helpful language (i.e., journeying as opposed to battling) and attitudes, such as acceptance and equal consideration. The iterative process itself modelled a willingness to accept feedback, correction, adjustment, and a valuing of transparency, truthfulness, and trustworthiness. As one might imagine, I suffered through some anxiety about the interpretation individuals might cast on sensitive comments. However, after considerable reflection and consideration of the opinions of my critical friends I would come to a point where I felt the accuracy and sensitivity had been presented to the best of my ability and was unlikely to cause damage.

As a final note, we found that an appropriate way to revise these iterative documents was to make revisions on substitute pages with the correction underlined. Changes were done easily and were easily understandable. The superceded pages could be removed or retained as desired by the reader. In addition to providing an accurate, direct means of communicating corrections, the revised pages drew the attention of a few who had not read the document.

Assessment of Research-Focused Purposes. The documents were also very valuable from a research perspective. In addition to a technique of data reduction and first level interpretation of themes, they acted as a check on the accuracy of the syntheses. An individual's words or ideas were presented in a context and the owners (unlabeled in the document) had the opportunity to comment on the accuracy and the interpretation they were given. The comments and criticisms on the synthesis of community dynamics I presented helped them and me to gain a more accurate picture of what was happening and what should happen. The participants and I both improved in our ability to provide and receive feedback on the documents, which was especially valuable for the final summary document presented at the end of Year #3. I was especially happy that most individuals had read the paper and thoughtfully critiqued it. Some had taken it back to their organizations for others to read and comment on as well. Although many felt that the paper was accurate and complete as presented, others made substantial contributions to the accuracy and clarity of the portrayal of dynamics, organizations or individuals.

As in any research or development activity, I did not expect that all participants would comment on all documents. About one month after the report had been presented I felt satisfied with the level and quality of the feedback and wrote this in my journal :

*I am impressed by how many people have read the paper and offered comments on it -- about 90% . . . . Nothing new is turning up now (from the last few comments) so I think I must be getting close to the point of "saturation" on this document.*

From time to time, individuals under considerable strain and feeling overwhelmed by other work would not read and comment. I tried to be sensitive to these points of balance of trustworthiness at the cost of longer-term alienation.

*S/he was burnt out and really looking forward to the holiday time. It's unfortunate because s/he might have had valuable comments to make, but s/he made his/her contributions on so many occasions in the past.*

**Reporting on problems.** Not everything worked out. Not everyone was happy all of the time. When one is around as much as I was, a great deal of sensitive information emerges and one has to decide what to do about it. I endeavored to illustrate such points in ways that were vague enough to be safe but in sufficient detail to be helpful. In other cases, I have tried to tell enough to indicate the nature of the problem without accusing an individual unfairly. In some cases I could address an issue using a description of perceptions, while other stories were best left untold here because of their sensitive nature.

Some of those in Bruckton did not believe there were any problems. On one occasion, several individuals expressed disappointment that I should say anything negative had occurred. We used this as an opportunity to examine the issues behind what I reported, and to work together to modify the wording so that it would be accurate, yet meet the need to protect people from damaging speculation.

Frequent reporting with stakeholders, particularly using iterative "living documents" seems to be a very valuable tool for both research and development purposes. I have used the concept while since working with two other groups and have been similarly impressed by the usefulness. As in Bruckton, reporting documents drew some fire but also assisted individuals to discover organizational problems, defensiveness, motivations, etc. One should anguish over sensitive areas and discuss the presentation of these with critical friends. Think of easy ways for participants to provide feedback and to find corrections (e.g., substitute pages, underlining). The usefulness of this approach in research depends on care in presentation but also adequate attention to securing feedback. Finally, it seems wise to adjust expectations according to the forces acting on individuals.

### **Reporting in the Dissertation**

I used the summary documents as much as possible in the dissertation, but went back to my journals and date summaries to develop it further. Writing journal entries and syntheses was not as challenging as translating these to the format of the dissertation. At first, I was somewhat overwhelmed by the complexity of the many topics, themes, dimensions, chronology, and cycles and spirals. It took me several tries before I settled on a way to organize and consolidate it in a way that might meet the needs of the many audiences I hoped to make it accessible to: academics, practitioners in sexuality education and community development, other "would-be" research facilitators and, most important of all, individuals in Bruckton.

I felt it was important to achieve balance in several respects in this document. One was in trying to use appropriate language for the diverse audiences. I wanted to reduce the use of "shorthand" labels and professional jargon to a minimum, yet I also wanted to economize on words. I wanted the language to be accessible to both participants as well as academic readers.

As readers have found, I included format features that considered those in Bruckton. The comments of participants were set in italics and standard spacing because several voiced their preference for that. They suggested it made them part of the story, yet made their words seem more special and "living." It also freed them from the comparison with carefully crafted academic text (quoted with the standard typeface and in single spacing).

In organizing the particular topics and sections, I tried to balance the application to our local setting with the need for knowledge and broader recommendations. In the literature review, I sought to balance the literature of those with various perspectives on sexuality education, Albertan and Canadian literature with the much larger body from the U.S., and draw in various views of educational change and participatory research.

I recommend that those who wish to advance theory with more authority establish a framework for analysis and principles and format the thesis earlier, perhaps within the first months of the project. Be cautious of limitations this may present, especially if it makes the process less meaningful to community members. Finally, resist the temptation to put in everything you know that is important.

## Working in Parallel Initiatives

Working in other projects at the same time helped me to understand several dynamics in Bruckton. I included this "outside work" in my journaling and have included a sampling in the section below.

Teens appeared to have similar needs for skills relating to sexual decision making and relationships (e.g., assertiveness skills, concept of setting limits, concept of responsible decision making, future orientation, approachable parents).

There were similar needs in capacity building among leaders, organizations and instructors and similar seeds of dysfunction. Erroneous assumptions, misinformation, and lack of trust were obstacles to overcome and were commonly supported by outside sources. Those working on problems often overloaded and had little time for reflection.

Some of the same concepts and strategies were employed with the other communities and found to be useful. Among these were Mitroff's (1983) framework for identifying stakeholders, the idea of using a variety of images and metaphors for analyzing organizations, the concept of "levels of participation," iterative documents, working with a friendly critic, and thinking in terms of capacities being developed by leaders and organizations. As with some groups in Bruckton, there were organizations where few visible outcomes resulted (i.e., few new or different programs) but significant changes were occurring in attitudes toward sexuality and relationships and working with others in the community. On several occasions I had an opportunity to work with other professionals in health education. They used some of the strategies we employed in Bruckton and found they were successful. One health educator reported as follows:

*I guess I had given up on the community development approach as something that just wasn't practical, but now I'm rethinking my work with (the Bruckton experiences) in mind.*

On occasion, a personal skill or attitude that I worked on in Bruckton was recognized when I went to work elsewhere. One such compliment about my listening was given to me by the leader of a native group we worked with.

*There are few who really listen to what people here are saying. Most of our people, and almost all of your people, are too busy with their own ideas and their own plans. You are among the few who listen . . .*

Gaining experience with other groups helped me to see many ways that I could have been a much more effective facilitator in Bruckton. I would recommend that others also gain experience with other groups if at all possible.

## **Critical Friends**

Interactions with my "critical friends" (or friendly critics) were very helpful in overcoming the methodological and ethical challenges of the study. The individuals and their backgrounds, perspectives, and roles have already been described in Chapter III. The text below includes discussion on the multiple meanings of "critical" and "friendship" that evolved and an assessment of the system that was established. Further details are to be presented in a manuscript entitled *Critical Friendship in Action Research* (Krupa & Doughty, in preparation).

**The meaning of "critical" and "friendship."** "Critical" took on several meanings. As stated above, no one person had the time or the background to meet all of my needs. A team of individuals, each bringing their own perspectives, catalyzed thought and assisted me to piece together the larger picture as I proceeded. The less-formal yet complex nature of this study made it important to have individuals with time and energy to review my data and check my understanding. The critique provided by these individuals assisted me in seeing and avoiding potentially serious ethical and methodological errors, as well as in identifying forces or factors influencing a situation. Occasionally, they assisted in identifying factors (e.g., organizational and interpersonal forces, structures, language) which limited the depth of participation and development. Finally, the support and encouragement they provided was valuable in maintaining my momentum to complete the study.

The "friendship" interactions were characterized by the "deep listening and deep questioning" suggested as part of an envisioning process by Ziegler (1989). In each case, I could count on the feedback to be honest, constructive and creative. The critique was intended in the interests of obtaining the highest quality study possible and was delivered in a way that demonstrated caring and commitment. The relationships were characterized by high levels of trust, respect, and reciprocity which continued to increase as the study proceeded. In several instances, we helped one another to broaden and improve our professional networks. This networking, on occasion, contributed to further improvement in the study or new resources available to those in Bruckton. In addition to being purposeful, our interactions were frequently fun, supportive, and encouraging toward balanced, healthy lifestyles, and giving attention to family. We advised one another on managing stress and shared joy in one another's achievements.

**Assessment.** The team of individuals that evolved proved to be effective in enabling me to identify and overcome the methodological and ethical issues in the multiple dimensions of the study. For the most part, these were reciprocal arrangements where the others benefited as well. Having this team of individuals with varying areas of expertise,

along with an individual who could integrate throughout the issue areas was helpful. Both the in-person and telephone discussions were very productive. Developing an agenda helped to focus our discussions; however, it was paramount that we had time to talk about the "crisis or opportunity of the day."

In addition to the Bruckton study, I have worked with critical friends in two other situations. In each case the relationships has proven to be invaluable in terms of enhancing the quality and rigor of the study. Interactions have enabled access to more diverse sources of information, better awareness of emergent themes, and more effective decisions and strategies for dealing with problematic situations. Collegial support from someone who is intimately familiar with the situations is also extremely valuable when working with high degrees of complexity and uncertainty and, especially, when things are not going well.

I would heartily encourage others to adopt a small group of friendly critics. People must be chosen carefully for compatibility as well as their capacity to contribute. Long-term involvement is desirable but may not be possible. Monitor the relationships and include a teen in the team if possible.

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## The Journey Concludes . . . and Continues

I feel fortunate to have been a part of *Bruckton's Journey* in sexuality education and community development. It was exciting to be there to "feel" the change, and sobering to see how often those changes did not last as long or run as deep as we thought they had. It was very rewarding to watch individuals -- teens, parents, teachers, pastors, and other professionals -- grow and make a difference in the lives and work of others, or to hear that an activity or concept that we developed in Bruckton was being used effectively elsewhere. The experience has certainly had an impact on my thinking about sexuality education and development. I have learned things that have helped me be a better learner, listener, researcher, facilitator, teacher and friend. I would do it all again -- but I would do it differently, as I described. Among other things, I would listen more and be slower to make suggestions about how to do things. I would keep enough of a vision to know the general direction, but not one so strong that it would be difficult for what we were learning locally to influence it. I would make the project smaller or find a partner to work with.

I heartily believe researchers should contribute as much as is wise to the improvement of the understandings, practices and situations which they are studying. In

my opinion, others working with educational problems of a similar nature should consider the approaches and strategies we have used, and look carefully before embarking on such a journey . S/he may wish to prepare by carefully examining the community situation, their own characteristics, the time they have, and philosophies and ethics of change. S/he should get ready to give up much of the control that researchers traditionally have, and trust that the research and development will be "better" because of this.

There were successes and disappointments, but I am pleased that we made substantial progress along the road to improving our understandings and practices and increased our capacities for self-sustaining development in the future. It was timely because now, in the spring of 1994, our environment has changed dramatically and those self-sustaining abilities are about to be tested. The provincial government has drastically reduced financial support for schools, health care, and social services, including agencies such as FCSS. Funds for community schools have been eliminated.

Meanwhile, the atmospheres at the schools are surprisingly positive. The ones working with junior high health are especially keen . . . Bruckton's COOL team is planning for a local workshop in March and programs in neighboring communities in April and May. They are working up some new approaches to increase the interaction and engagement in some of the sessions . . . A group of parents and teens in a local church began a discussion group on sexuality and spirituality . . .

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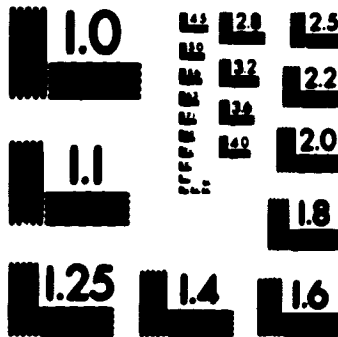
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## Appendix 1.1: Curriculum Vitae

### **Qualifications:**

***Doctor of Philosophy (Educational Administration).*** University of Alberta. (Spring, 1994).

***Master of Education Degree.*** University of Alberta (Fall, 1990).

***Permanent Teaching Certificate.*** Alberta Education. #1457371 (1983).

***Professional Education Certificate.*** University of Alberta (1982).

***Professional Agrologist.*** Alberta Institute of Agrologists (1981).

***Bachelor of Science "With Distinction."*** University of Alberta (1978).

### **Experience:**

#### ***Professor in Teacher Education.***

Curriculum in Elementary Science (ED EL 431). Dept. of Elementary Education, U of A (1994).

Health Education in the Elementary Years (ED EL 495/596). Dept. of Elementary Education, U of A (1993, 94).

Environmental Studies (ED EL 372): Introduction to Health, Science, Environmental and Social Studies. Dept. of Elementary Education, U of A (1992-93).

Teaching Practicum (ED EL 430). University Facilitator. Dept. of Elementary Education, U of A (1989, 90, 93).

Professional and Ethical Dimensions of Teaching (ED ADM 401). Dept. of Educational Administration, U of A (1990-94).

Educational Foundations and Introductory Practicum (ED PRA 151). Concordia College (1991).

#### ***Researcher in Teacher Education.***

Development of the "Cohort Program," an experimental approach to teacher education in the Department of Elementary Education (1992-94).

Development of the practicum component of the Elementary Education teacher preparation program (1991-92).

Collaborative action research with Junior High Health teachers in (X) (1990-92).

#### ***Author of Curriculum Materials.***

Undergraduate course in Dept. of Educational Administration (1992).

Junior High Science. John Wiley & Sons (1988-89).

Junior High Agriculture. Alberta Education (1988-90).

Elementary Science. SEEDS / Alberta Environment (1986).

***Curriculum Designer / Manager.*** Alberta Education (1988-90).

***Teacher.*** Grades 4-11 with focus on Grade 6. (1982-88).

**Adult and Community Education Consultant / Facilitator.**  
(X) S.D. -- Professional Development Facilitator (1990-92)  
(X) -- FCSS Agency (1990-93).  
(X) -- Community Health (1992-93)  
(X) -- AADAC (1991-92).  
(X) and (X) -- Teen and adult peer instructors (1992-93)  
Alberta Agriculture -- Extension and Volunteer Mgmt. (1978-81).

### **Awards:**

**Graduate Student Teaching Award.** For excellence in the performance of teaching duties. Committee for Improvement of Teaching and Learning, University of Alberta (1993).

**S.S.H.R.C. Doctoral Fellowship.** Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (1992-93).

**Walter H. Johns Graduate Fellowship.** (1992-93).

**Province of Alberta Graduate Fellowship.** (1991).

**CASEA "Thesis of the Year."** University of Alberta Nominee and Honorable Mention at the National Level. Canadian Association for the Study of Educational Administration (1991).

**Alberta Wheat Pool Award.** Highest standing - Agriculture (1976-77).

**Department of Geology Award.** Highest standing - Geology (1975).

**Queen Elizabeth Scholarship.** Honors standing (1974-77).

### **Presentations:**

**Bruckton Revisited: Possibilities for Developing Approaches to Health Education in Your Community.** ATA Health and Phys. Ed. Council's Annual Conference (May, 1994).

**Research For Building Community Capacities: Toward More Appropriate Strategies.** Conference on research in the Faculty of Education (January, 1994).

**Inside a Cohort Program: Connecting School and University Experiences.** WestCAST Conference, *Teacher Education: The State of Our Art* (March, 1993).

**The Next Generation: Preparing Teachers in Health Education.** ATA Health and Phys. Ed. Council's Annual Conference (April, 1993).

**Community Development and Action Research: Look Before You Leap.** Conference on research in Educational Administration, University of Alberta (October, 1992).

***Stakeholder Participation in Research and Development: Three Case Studies. Educational Leadership: Challenge and Change***, an international conference commemorating the 35th Anniversary of the Department of Educational Administration, University of Alberta (October, 1991).

***Community Action in Sexuality Education: Tools and Tactics. Well-Being for the Future: Tools for Action***, a western Canadian conference sponsored by the Alberta Centre for Well-Being (November, 1991).

## **Publications:**

***Bruckton's Journey: Sexuality Education, Community Development and Research***. Ph. D. Dissertation (1994).

***Bruckton's Journey: Sexuality Education, Community Development and Action Research***. Condensed report for *In Touch* [1, (3), 5-6] Faculty of Education, University of Alberta (Spring, 1993).

***Making a Difference in Sexuality Education***. Article on professional development for *The ATA Magazine* (Jan/Feb 1992).

***Gandhi and Unity in Canada***. Discussion document for a conference sponsored by the Gandhi Foundation for World Peace (May, 1992).

***Sexuality Education: A Community Perspective***. Discussion document prepared for *The Minister's Committee on Human Sexuality Education*. (August, 1991).

***CPEP: A Final Report On the Evaluation of A Sexuality Education Program***. Alberta Family and Community Support Service Agencies (1990).

***An Evaluation of a Sexuality Education Program for Young Teens and Their Parents***. Master of Education Thesis (1990).

***School Jurisdiction Sexuality Education Policy***. A discussion document prepared for school trustees (1990).

***Agriculture: A Synthesis***. Student text, teacher's guide. Alberta Education (1990).

***Science Directions 7***. Grade 7 Science textbook. John Wiley & Sons (1989).

***Managing Water Resources***. Student text & teacher's guide. Alberta Education (1989).

***People, Machines, and Grain***. Student text & teacher's guide. Alberta Education (1989).

***Milk and Milk Products***. Student text & teacher's guide. Alberta Education (1989).

***The Water We Use***. Grade 6 student and teacher materials for the SEEDS / Alberta Environment Water Literacy Project (1987).

## **Productions:**

*Currently involved in creating an interactive video disk learning package to supplement the Elementary and Junior High Health programs.*

*Directed Reading / Thinking Activities: A Curriculum Supplement for a course on "Professionalism in Teaching." Department of Educational Administration (1992).*

*HyperHelp: A HyperCard-Based Resource for Instructors. Department of Educational Administration (1990).*

*Junior Leadership: A Training Program for Teen Leaders. Alberta Agriculture (1980).*

*First Things First: A Training Program for Adult Leaders. Alberta Agriculture (1981).*

## **Publications In Progress:**

*Supportive and Accountable Relationships Among Men.*

*Between Friends: Developing Critical Friendship in Action Research.*

*Considerations for Sexuality Education in Grade 8 and 9.*

*A Planning "Checklist" for a Junior High Sexuality Education Program.*

*Responsive Evaluation: Problems and Promises.*

*Looking at Language in Health Education.*

*Leaving the Community: Three Experiences.*

*Possibilities for Working with Parents in Health Education.*

## **Research In Progress:**

*The Cohort Program: Implications for Teacher Education Program Design.*

*Multiple Concepts of Health Education Among Those Preparing Professionals.*

*Dynamics of Health Education: A Case Study of an Elementary School and Its Community.*

*Toward a Program of Research in the Health Education of Elementary School Children.*

## **Related Experiences:**

### ***Guest Instructor in University Courses***

Action Research and Community Development (Doctoral students in the Department of Elementary Education)  
Action Research Strategies (Doctoral students in Department of Secondary Education)  
Program Evaluation and Community Development (Master's students in Educational Administration)  
Leading Children in Studies of Astronomy (Undergraduate students in Elementary Education)  
Sexuality Education: Principles and Strategies (Undergraduate students in Secondary Education)  
Sexuality Education: An Overview of the Possibilities and the Problems (Undergraduate students in various faculties)

### ***Advisor on Curriculum and Resources***

Elementary Health. Alberta Education (1992-93).  
Junior High Health. Alberta Education (1992-93).  
Junior High Agriculture. Alberta Education (1986-87).

### ***Advisor for Community Groups***

Azimuth Theatre (social catalyst drama on issues affecting teens).  
Canadian Foundation for the Love of Children (issues affecting children).  
Y Wak (sexuality education for teens and parents in religious groups).  
Student International Health Association.

### ***Leader of Seminars and Professional Development Programs***

Health (Elementary and Junior High)  
Science (Elementary and Junior High)  
Sexuality Education (Elementary and Junior High)  
Computer Applications (Elementary)  
Process Writing (Elementary)

### ***Member of Professional Organizations***

Alberta Teacher's Association  
Council on School Administration  
Science Council  
Guidance Council  
Health and Physical Education Council  
Environmental and Outdoor Education Council  
Phi Delta Kappa Professional Fraternity  
National Council on Family Relations  
Alberta Institute of Agrologists

***International Exchange Participant and Host.*** With African educators and extension and community development personnel.

## **Appendix 1.2: "Community School Ideals" (from "Beyond Classroom Walls" leaflet)**

### **1. Community Related Curriculum**

Basic education is enhanced by relating the curriculum to real life situations in the community. Students go into the community to use available facilities and resources, and to provide service while they learn. In turn, community resources are brought into the school. Intense study of the local community becomes the basis for study of life in other communities and the world.

### **2. Involvement of Parents and Other Community Members**

There is an effective involvement of parents and other community members in helping to develop the curriculum of the school and in helping teachers through appropriate voluntary service.

### **3. Collegiality**

A democratic, collegial philosophy is encouraged by the School Board and Principal in the administration of the school. Parents and other interested community people are regarded as allies.

### **4. Everyone a Teacher**

The faculty includes teachers, working in cooperation with each other, and community adults and students.

### **5. Everyone a Learner**

Although the education of the young is the priority, all members of the community are potential students, including pre-schoolers and adults of all ages. Educational activities involving people of all ages are encouraged.

### **6. Interagency Co-operation**

The school regards itself as an integral part of a total community education system. The school co-operates with other community organizations and agencies to provide comprehensive educational, recreational, cultural and social services to people in the school attendance area.

### **7. Facility Adaptation**

School facilities may be designed or modified with effective teacher and community involvement so that, ideally, the entire structure is designed to facilitate community use as well as to accommodate community education activities.

### **8. Community Use**

The school facility is available for community educational, recreational, cultural and social use on an extended time basis daily and yearly. Community activities might be scheduled at any time during each operational day.

### **9. Community Issues**

The school, by policy, encourages a study of problems and issues of significance to the community, often in cooperation with other agencies and organizations in the community.

### **10. Sense of Community**

The school has a vital stated goal, which is to foster a sense of community. It assumes it is important that the people who live in its attendance area know and care about each other.

### Appendix 1.3: Summary of developments prior to the study

| Year | Facilitator   | School   | Community  | External  |
|------|---|--|--|---|
| 1978 | APRIL - Graduated with B.Sc. (Agriculture) and began work with teens and adults in rural Alberta. Gained experience in volunteer management, adult education, community development, teen and adult leadership. |  |  |   |
| 1980 | AUG - Married to Mary. Parallel interests in issues associated with sexuality and family led us to work closely in this area and increase one another's effectiveness.  |  |  | AIDS was recognized as a major health problem in Africa and, potentially, in certain groups in North America.<br><br>PSI (the program on which COOL was based) was developed in Atlanta, Georgia, with the aim of reducing the incidence of unwanted pregnancy among teens. |
| 1981 | MAY - Returned to university for "after degree" program in education.<br>OCT - student teaching assignment in Bruckton (K-9) school.  |  |  | First cases of AIDS identified in Canada. Increasing concern over spread of STD in general and AIDS in particular.  |
| 1982 | April - Completed education program.<br><br>SEPT - began teaching in a rural K-12 school.   |  |  |   |
| 1983 | Teaching  | SEPT - Bruckton K-9 school divides to become:<br>• Community K-4 School<br>• Bruckton 5-9 School |  | Increasing concern for AIDS and other STD in Alberta. HIV, the virus linked to AIDS, is discovered.   |
| 1984 | Teaching<br><br>Began working with new health curriculum  | SEPT - Introduced new Health curriculum in Elementary  |  | Provincial implementation of new elementary Health curriculum, including Theme 5 - Human Sexuality.   |
| 1985 | Teaching  | MAY - K-4 School is formally designated as a "Community School."                                 | Interagency communication and cooperation begins, coordinated under the community school initiative. | COOL program developed by S. Panytek, while working with Alberta West Central Health Unit.  |



|      |   |  |   |  |
|------|---|--|---|--|
| 1986 | Teaching<br><br>Author in Elementary Science curriculum project   |  |   |  |
| 1987 | Teaching<br><br>Began volunteer work in SE.<br><br>Son Joel was born.   | SEPT - implemented new junior high health curriculum.<br><br>LLLC (Life-long learning and leisure committee) forms as a subcommittee of the community school advisory board. | LLLC (Life-long learning and leisure committee) forms as a subcommittee of the community school advisory board. This permits more formalized interagency communication and cooperation. | MAY -- Release of "In Trouble - A Way Out" document.<br><br>SEPT -- Provincial implementation of new junior high health curriculum (Theme 5 - Human Sexuality remains optional)<br><br>OCT -- Alberta Health AIDS program begins with release of strategic plan "Education and Caring: Alberta's Program for AIDS."<br><br>DEC -- release of "Alberta AIDS Survey"<br><br>Federal Organizations (FCA, NHRDP, CPHA) and universities plan research to determine "how young Canadians were responding to the AIDS epidemic." |
| 1988 | JAN - JUNE -- Teaching .<br><br>JULY - AUG -- Author in Jr.High science text project.<br><br>SEPT - Began as manager of a provincial curriculum design and development project.<br><br>OCT - Daughter JoyAnne is born | SEPT - Peer support program begins for junior high students at Bruckton (5-9) School.  |   | JAN - School Division brings several teachers together to create "transitional" lesson plans for junior high SE.<br><br>APRIL - Minister of Community and Occupational Health provides new funds to regional Health Units. They appoint sexual health coordinators to assist communities and schools in their efforts in SE.   |

|             |  |   |  |  |
|-------------|--|---|--|--|
| <p>1989</p> | <p>Continued as manager of provincial curriculum project (to March of 1990)</p> <p>FEB - Attended conference on teen pregnancy in Alberta.</p> <p>JULY - began Master's Degree Program in Educational Administration.</p> <p>AUGUST - Learned of the "COOL" program to be offered in Bruckton through a newspaper article.</p> | <p>MARCH - Survey by peer support team indicated a need among junior high students to learn more about healthy relationships and sexuality.</p> | <p>JAN - local FCSS agency obtained a new director who is to have major influence on SE and community development process.</p> <p>MARCH - surveys confirmed a need for new approaches to SE at school and in community.<br/>- A parent (also school trustee) discovers the COOL program and brings the idea to the community agency and school.</p> <p>JUNE - Decision to offer COOL to Bruckton teens. To be coordinated by FCSS and supported by various agencies, organizations and school. Planning begins and the program is advertised</p> | <p>Canada, Youth, and AIDS (Federal but not provincial statistical study) report is released. It focuses attention on knowledge, attitudes and behavior of youth with regard to AIDS and other STD.</p> <p>MAY - Minister of Education makes it mandatory for school boards to offer the sexuality theme in the health program</p> <p>Health Unit's sexual health coordinator becomes involved with bringing COOL to Bruckton.</p> |
|-------------|--|---|--|--|

**Appendix 2.1: Arnstein's (1969) "Ladder" of Participation**

|                             |   |                                 |
|-----------------------------|---|---------------------------------|
| 8<br><b>Citizen Control</b> | The degree of power or control which guarantees that participants can govern a program or an institution, be in full charge of policy and managerial aspects, and be able to negotiate the conditions under which outsiders may change them. There should be no intermediaries between the citizens and the source of funds.  | <b>Degrees of Citizen Power</b> |
| 7<br><b>Delegated Power</b> | Citizens achieve a dominant decision-making authority over a particular plan or program. Citizens have sufficient power to assure accountability of the program to them. To resolve differences, powerholders must start the bargaining process rather than apply pressure. Sometimes this level takes the form of parallel groups of citizens and powerholders, with provision for citizen veto if differences of opinion cannot be negotiated.  |                                 |
| 6<br><b>Partnership</b>     | Power is redistributed through negotiation between citizens and powerholders. They agree to share planning and decision-making responsibilities through such structures as joint policy boards, planning committees and mechanisms for resolving impasses. Once rules have been established (through compromise of some kind) they are not subject to unilateral change. This works best when leaders are accountable to an organized power-base in the community and when there are sufficient resources to pay honoraria and some wages for resource people. The key is citizens having bargaining influence, over the outcome of the plan. "Like coming to city hall with hat on head, rather than hat in hand." |                                 |
| 5<br><b>Placation</b>       | Citizens have some influence, though tokenism is still apparent (e.g., handicapped "worthy" citizens on a board). If they are not accountable to a constituency in the community and if the traditional power elite hold the majority of the seats, the have-nots can be easily outmaneuvered. Powerholders retain the right to judge legitimacy or feasibility of advice. The degree to which citizens are placated depends on the quality of technical assistance they have in articulating their priorities and the extent to which the community has been organized to press for those priorities.  | <b>Degrees of Tokenism</b>      |
| 4<br><b>Consultation</b>    | Levies citizens' opinions, but offers no assurance that their concerns and ideas will be taken into account. Frequently used methods are attitude surveys, neighborhood meetings, and public hearings. People are primarily perceived as statistical abstractions, and participation is measured by how many attend meeting, complete surveys, etc. Citizens have merely "participated in participation" while powerholders gathered evidence that they have gone through the motions of involving people.  |                                 |
| 3<br><b>Informing</b>       | One-way flow informing citizens of their rights, responsibilities, and options. Often information is provided late in the planning process through media, posters, pamphlets, responses to inquiries, and sometimes meetings. People have little opportunity to influence the program designed "for their benefit."   |                                 |
| 2<br><b>Therapy</b>         | Hidden agenda masquerading as participation. E.g., tenant groups used as a vehicle for clean up campaigns.  | <b>Non-participation</b>        |
| 1<br><b>Manipulation</b>    | People are placed on rubber stamp advisory committees or advisory boards for the express purpose of "educating" them or engineering their support. This is the distortion of participation into a public relations vehicle.   |                                 |

## **Appendix 4.1: Experiences Influencing the Researcher and the Study in Year #1**

The section which follows is a description of the experiences which had considerable influence on the decision to conduct the evaluation and on subsequent decisions regarding the design and format. These included interactions with colleagues in the provincial Department of Education, instructors and literature associated with university courses, and interactions with those in Bruckton. Where practical, I included notations from this section in the Summary of Activities and Developments During Year #1.

### **Continuing Interactions With Colleagues**

My project with Alberta Education finished in the fall of Year #1. The four people who were involved with SE, however, continued to be interested and take time to discuss research options with me. They became my first "peer reviewers" and "critical friends," suggesting potential questions for investigation and, as the study developed, offering critique from their perspectives. Their comments helped me to gain insight into the political dynamics of SE in the province, as well as to discover several pieces of literature that were not available in our university library system.

### **University Experiences: September to December, 1989**

The people, readings, and projects associated with the courses (toward the Master's degree program in Educational Administration) brought me into contact with ideas that strongly influenced the design and format of the study. Four of the courses and their texts had a direct influence during the time I was creating the proposal:

- Human Sexuality (Hyde, 1986),
- Concepts in Educational Administration (Owens, 1988),
- Planned Change in Education (Fullan, 1982),
- Research Design (Jackson, 1988; Bogdan & Biklen, 1982; Sirotnik & Oakes, 1986).

The first of these helped me to develop a better working knowledge and vocabulary in the "context" of my study. In addition to more in-depth knowledge of anatomy and physiology, I gained insight into the historical, cultural, political, and medical dimensions of issues including gender roles, family planning, homosexuality, spirituality, and sexual exploitation. The material I encountered in the course caused me to re-examine my assumptions in several of these areas. I was given the opportunity to lead the last session on sexuality education, in which I analyzed the text and related literature and presented observations on sexuality education as I observed it in Bruckton.

Other courses provided me with starting points for understanding organizational dynamics and the difficulties associated with bringing about change in educational systems. I became aware

of theories of motivation, leadership, decision making and conflict management in organizational settings. In one project, (*Sexuality Education: Innovation, Adaptation, and Intrigue*, Krupa, 1989) I summarized the problems which led to the perceived need for the innovation (*COOL*), the important features of *COOL*, and some of the "intrigue" behind the implementation. I discussed possible fits with theoretical descriptions of change and implications for future action as I saw them at the time. Some of the models I applied were:

- Lewin's (1947) force field analysis of forces driving and restraining change,
- Lewin's 3-step change theory - unfreezing, moving, and freezing,
- Rogers' model (antecedents, process, results) from the perspective of teens and parents,
- Leavitt's model of the inter-relationship between the task, structure, technology, and people in a change (from the school and community perspectives).

I began to experiment with ways of visually depicting the forces and factors that I was observing, a technique which I used often when communicating with people regarding the situation in Brackton. Some of these early diagrams are included as Appendix 4.3. Finally, I became more aware of the ethics of change, particularly the need to involve deeply those affected by the change.

My course work also exposed me to differing perspectives on research. The variation in beliefs, assumptions and methodologies represented in positivistic, interpretive, and critical social science research helped me to understand the range of possibilities for approaching the study and sensitized me to the major ethical considerations. I used the projects to advance the study and build essential skills: a questionnaire for parents, a trial interview with an SE instructor, and a first draft research proposal.

### University Experiences: January to June, 1990

My formal study during this period included the following courses and texts:

- issues in human sexuality (Francouer, 1989),
- program evaluation (articles assembled to cover the spectrum of issues),
- research design, and
- philosophy of leadership in education (Foster, 1986; Hodgkinson, 1983).

In addition to value of the course content, these courses provided formats for monitoring, discussing, and critiquing the study that was getting underway in Brackton. They also brought me into contact with professors and colleagues who provided sound advice and assisted me in reflecting more clearly and more comprehensively on issues relating to research and development, as well as sexuality and leadership. Several of my colleagues were concurrently working in either sexuality education or educational leadership.

The journaling experiences helped me become more aware of my own action and reflection and worked with greater sensitivity to the views, values, and concerns of stakeholders. I gained

experience in understanding all sides of controversial issues. Journal writing and the comments of readers also helped me to examine the development of my personal attitudes, values, beliefs, and assumptions relating to sexual decision making, parent/teen communication, the politics of teen sexuality issues, gender relations, exploitive relationships, violence against women, homosexuality, abortion, the connection with my own spirituality, etc.. I explored strategies to closely attend to the morality of situations and structures and the ethics of change and reflected further on the moral, ethical, and political aspects of the program evaluation as it was beginning to unfold.

One project (*Sexuality Education: Success? Failure? Or?*) brought to focus some of the issues and controversies I was becoming aware of in Bruckton and throughout the province. These included defining "sexuality education" and "success," an examination of social, political, and cultural factors, how the issues were handled in the popular press, and controversies that persisted in the research and professional literatures. During this time, I read widely about sexuality education programs and perspectives. These included the works of the traditional pillars -- Gordon, Kirby, and Scales -- as well as a variety of critiques such as those presented by Ajzenstat and Gentles, Ferland et al, and Kasun.

Other projects brought focus for my interactions at the Grades 5-9 school and in the community. I worked with the teens and teachers involved with the peer support program and learned more about the opportunities and constraints they faced. The issues, concerns and interests of stakeholder representatives were summarized in *Because We Care*.

#### **Documents and Information Summaries Supporting Chapter IV**

*Sexuality Education: Innovation, Adaptation, and Intrigue*

Questionnaire, Interview, and Observation Assignments

Master's Research Proposal

*Philosophy of Administration* (Journal)

*Issues in Sexuality Education* (Journal)

*Because We Care*

*Sexuality Education: Success? Failure? Or?*

COOL Program Evaluation Plan

*COOL Program Evaluation Project Final Report*

*Evaluation of a Sexuality Education Program for Parents and Teens* (Master's Thesis)

## Appendix 4.2: Summary of Activities and Developments in Year #1

| Time    | Facilitator   | School   | Community  | External  |
|---------|---|--|--|---|
| Aug 89  | Learned about COOL in Bruckton through a news article.  |  | Planning for COOL.   |   |
| Sept 89 | <p>Began university courses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• human sexuality</li> <li>• educational change</li> <li>• research design</li> <li>• computer applications</li> </ul> <p>Continuing to work with Alberta Education in Curriculum Design (although not with Health Curriculum).</p> <p>Participant observer in meeting of stakeholders.</p>   | <p>School Health programs continue to be conducted as before.</p> <p>The school counsellor (also LLLC representative) attends "Stakeholders Information Meeting" for COOL.</p> <p>COOL program is promoted to students at an assembly and interested ones register</p> <p>School personnel help to promote COOL, especially among peer support team members.</p> | <p>SE stakeholders identified and contacted by FCSS.</p> <p>Representatives from stakeholder groups in Bruckton meet together to be informed about the COOL program's philosophy and activities.</p> | <p>COOL program facilitator and Health Unit representative promote COOL in school assemblies in neighboring communities.</p>  |
| Oct 89  | <p>Began serious review of literature in sexuality education and program evaluation.</p> <p>Participated in planning meetings for COOL</p> <p>Identifying and contacting those directly involved with SE programming.</p> <p>Decision made to facilitate evaluation of the COOL program as Master's research. Looking toward an evaluation style which would contribute to community development process.</p> <p>Drafting and piloting a questionnaire to capture the views of parents might have regarding SE. Identified some questions and issues from parent perspective.</p> |  | <p>Parents of teens interested in COOL are contacted by phone.</p> <p>Planning meetings for COOL.</p>  | <p>SE in Alberta receives considerable attention in popular media. Often negative views are expressed.</p> <p>Controversy over supplying condoms in high school in a neighboring community.</p> |

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| Nov 89 | <p>Literature review and interviews with university and provincial personnel to learn about evaluation styles.</p> <p>Participated in contacting parents of COOL registrants by phone</p> <p>Began collecting documents and interviewing stakeholders in search of appropriate format and process for the program evaluation.</p> <p>Drafting and piloting an interview with a teacher to gain an early idea perspectives, assumptions, constraints, and suggestions for improvement in SE.</p> <p>Presented <i>Sexuality Education: Innovation, Adaptation, and Intrigue</i> paper on initial views of dynamics of change (force field analysis, etc.) in Univ class on change.</p> | Teens for COOL program receive packages, etc. at school. | Planning and coordinating COOL and contacting parents continues.  |  |
| Dec 89 | <p>Participant observer in COOL workshop, but restricted to attending the program for parents.</p> <p>Presentation on issues in SE to Family Studies class</p>   | K-4 Community School hosts COOL workshop                 | PCSS sponsors COOL workshop. About 40 teens and 40 adults participate (about half from Bruckton and half from two neighboring communities). COOL participants complete pre and post tests (Appendix ) |  |



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| Jan 90 | <p>University courses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• research design</li> <li>• issues in sexuality education</li> <li>• philosophy of administration</li> </ul> <p>Began journals on SE issues and philosophy of administration.</p> <p>Reviewing literature in sexuality education and program evaluation.</p> <p>Development of research design and proposal.</p>   |  |  | <p>ATA Magazine article by Kirman entitled <i>Sex Education Needs More Than Teachers</i>. emphasizes the need to take a broader view of SE than just what happens in schools.</p> <p>Controversy over supplying condoms in neighboring high school continues and intensifies.</p> |
| Feb 90 | <p>Responsive evaluation process continues with more formal interviews with stakeholders to determine the questions and foci of the evaluation, and the associated issues</p> <p>Attended conference on teen pregnancy issues</p> <p>Group interview with Junior High Health teachers.</p> <p>Observation and discussion with students and teachers associated with peer support team at Grades 5-9 School.</p> <p>Attended follow-up meeting for teens and parents who participated in COOL program.</p> | <p>K-4 school counsellor takes training for QUEST program, and introduces the concept to school.</p> <p>Junior High Health teachers participate in group interview and identify needs and possibilities in SE.</p> <p>Students and teachers involved with peer support team discuss COOL and SE in Bruckton.</p> | <p>First QUEST committee meeting. Financial assistance offered to school by PCSS and Lions Club.</p> <p>Responsive evaluation process continues with more formal interviews with stakeholders to determine the questions and foci of the evaluation, and the associated issues</p> <p>Follow-up meeting for COOL. teens and parents to reinforce concepts and support one another.</p> | <p>Sexual health coordinator takes leave and a new one is appointed</p>   |

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| <p>Mar 90</p> | <p>Further interviews with teens and parents, program facilitators, stakeholders in community, and other interested individuals at the provincial level.</p> <p>Analysis of interviews and isolation of questions.</p> <p>Jouralling on research and administrative philosophy.</p> <p>Preparing paper and seminar on <i>Sexuality Education: Success, Failure, Or?</i></p> <p>Narrowing of evaluation focus and questions.</p> |  | <p>Teens, parents, agency and church reps participate in interviews re issues in sexuality education in Bruckton.</p>   | <p>Prominent government MLA challenges SE program of schools in the Alberta Legislature. This began the chain of events that significantly increased public discussion and political action and eventually led to the establishment of the Minister of Education's Committee on Sexuality Education (May, 1991).</p> |
| <p>Apr 90</p> | <p>Created survey questionnaires for teens and parents through an iterative process with stakeholder reps.</p> <p>Summarized the efforts with stakeholders and the information received from them to this point in research design course paper entitled "Because We Care"</p>  |  | <p>Stakeholders give feedback in developing survey questions for teens and parents. This helps make sure they have questions of importance to them addressed, and also helps them to "listen" and learn about one another's questions in a non-threatening way.</p> <p>Teen and parent volunteers pilot questionnaire and suggest improvements.</p> |  |

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| <p><b>May 90</b></p> | <p>University courses in program evaluation provided an introduction to other literature on program evaluation, and an opportunity to discuss the evaluation process with others and gain insight from the experiences in evaluation which they were having.</p> <p>Administered questionnaires and conducted interviews with adult and teen program participants.</p> <p>Entered and analyzed questionnaire data.</p> <p>Analyzed documents collected to date to clarify and compare intentions.</p> <p>Created guide for interviewing program participants</p> <p>Interviews and followup with program participants.</p> | <p>Survey questionnaires distributed through schools.</p> <p>Teachers and administrators participate in interviews.</p> <p>(5-9) Junior high classes conduct their units in sexuality education. Teachers note an increase in the quality and quantity of participation and interest among those students who participated in the COOL workshop.</p> <p>12-18 students view the video series presented by the Jesus First Club.</p> | <p>Stakeholders participate in refining questions for questionnaires and interviews.</p> <p>PCSS and Health Unit reps interview teens for COOL leadership positions. Six are selected.</p> <p>Jesus First Club parents present video series to students at school during lunch hours.</p> |  |
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| <p>June 90</p> | <p>Attended COOL program for teens in a neighboring community.</p> <p>Conducting and analyzing interviews with religious leaders, teachers, parents.</p> <p>Made an oral presentation of findings to stakeholder representatives.</p> <p>Gathered stakeholder reps' views on recommendations and implications.</p> <p>Refining formats for final report to community and thesis</p> <p>Drafting thesis chapters on literature review and description of the program</p> | <p>(5-9) teachers met in group interview to discuss issues of sexuality education from school perspective, and to describe the effects of the COOL program from their perspectives.</p> | <p>Stakeholder reps meet for oral presentation and discussion of the COOL program evaluation findings. Those who could not attend receive a written summary of findings. All have opportunity to give recommendations and implications.</p> | <p>Another community holds a COOL workshop which the Brackton teen and adult leaders attend as a leadership training experience.</p> |
| <p>July 90</p> | <p>University course in educational governance provides insight into governance-related sexuality education and evaluation issues.</p> <p>Drafting thesis chapter on findings.</p> <p>Created written draft of "CPEP: A Final Report" to summarize findings, recommendations, and implications for stakeholders, and circulated it to encourage further reflection, feedback, checking from them.</p>   |   | <p>PCSS begins to plan for training weekend for teens and parents in coming fall.</p>   |  |

## **Appendix 5.1: Experiences Influencing the Researcher and the Study in Year #2**

By late September of 1990, I had completed all work associated with the COOL program evaluation and the Master's degree. Changes in Bruckton, which had occurred and were continuing as a result of the COOL program and evaluation, set the scene for new initiatives with peer instructors, teachers and school programs, and more meaningful involvement for SE stakeholders. With the invitations to continue to work with Bruckton teachers, teens, and parents, I began considering possibilities for coordinating my involvement with the Ph.D. program and research. The text below includes a description of the influences on me during Year #2 of the study. It includes a description of the university experiences and points associated with reconceptualizing the study -- one that would focus on the dynamics of development, yet provide for substantial contribution to improvement in SE. The influence of expert informants and documents created is also summarized.

### **University Experiences: September to December, 1990**

The background I had obtained in sexuality education, educational change and leadership, and organizational dynamics during my Master's program (Year #1, described in Chapter IV) provided some of the research base for creating my initial proposal. Courses and texts encountered during the fall of 1990 also contributed. These were as follows:

- issues in research design (Phillips, 1987),
- policy analysis (Dunn, 1981),
- administrative behavior.

The fall courses stimulated thoughts on group dynamics, perceptions of others, organizational culture, leadership and decision making, power and politics, and conflict. I was exposed to numerous other doctoral dissertations, several of which influenced my thoughts on community education and dynamics (Grainger, 1984; Maynes, 1990; Quarshie, 1989). Reading and discussions also provided me with a broader policy perspective on the educational issues emerging in Bruckton. Among other useful works, I encountered Mitroff's (1983) approaches to uncovering elusive stakeholders and techniques of sorting through complex and unclear situations, such as the assumptional analysis of Mitroff and Emahoff (1979). I explored a variety of research issues and encountered pressures to situate this work in one of the "paradigm" categories (e.g., positivism, neo-positivism, interpretivistic, critical social science). My synthesis at the time was that I needed to remain sensitive to the needs of both the people in Bruckton and the academic community, take a flexible approach to the paradigm issues, and use an eclectic mix of research strategies, which could change as situations changed.

## Reconceptualizing the Study

As I discussed possibilities with stakeholders in the fall of 1990, they saw many benefits and few problems with simultaneously studying and contributing to SE in Bruckton. The major question for me, however, was "How might I function effectively in this "parallel existence" as researcher and contributor?" The potential for contribution extended beyond that typical of participant observer studies I had encountered or the participant role I had taken during the program evaluation study. I was not aware of other situations where the depth of contribution I saw as being possible was achieved, yet it seemed to be a most useful approach to take in research. Early questions I had were:

- Are there major development challenges in the community that I didn't yet know about?
- Are they addressable?
- Are the people (especially teachers and religious leaders) open to having me work with them?
- Is a combined research / development project be possible from the stakeholders' perspectives?
- Would such a project be practical for me to undertake given my constraints (particularly time)?

The summary of my response in my journal at the time was as follows:

*It seems possible, but much of the information will not be known until we are actually into the project. To truly work in a community development mode I would have to accept uncertainty and be willing to hand over most of the control to those I'd be working with. That seems risky, but it also seems worth it. I feel fortunate in that I have many capable people who are willing to discuss plans and problems.*

The discussions with stakeholders in the fall of 1990 increased my confidence that I could work in this mode, with these people, under the conditions and constraints present. Six areas of need were identified through the interviews:

- training teen and adult instructors who would instruct in the COOL workshops, interact informally with peers, and work with school classes and parent groups,
- working with teachers in their professional development,
- bringing stakeholders to work together more closely,
- assisting community organizations and churches to develop their programs,
- designing and implementing a monitoring system,
- investigating options for a coordinating body for the overall project in the community.

## Expert Informants

As the proposal and plans in Bruckton were coming together during the fall of 1990, I sought informal advice from several "expert informants" -- individuals with extensive experience in related fields who would view my "research and development" proposal from a variety of perspectives and provide feedback. Each individual confirmed the need for such work and agreed with the general approach. Examples of reviewers and their contributions are described below:

- A researcher, author, and professor in SE and family communication critiqued the proposal.

- A person with experience in SE at the provincial level and currently conducting evaluation research in SE provided feedback on monitoring. She encouraged an emphasis on self-esteem.
- A psychologist with experience in using and developing self-esteem "inventory" questionnaires provided guidance in that area.
- A secondary school principal with experience in curriculum research, self-esteem and sexuality education offered insights on the theme of sexuality and spirituality.
- An individual working with SE at the provincial level provided information on the challenges perceived by Alberta Education with respect to the curriculum and teacher training in SE. She also provided me with useful direction for resources for working with teachers.
- Individuals working with sexual health at the provincial level, including those involved with the provincial initiative on AIDS, confirmed the need for the research and the validity of the approach (i.e., community based, multi-factorial) and provided helpful references to others.

At the beginning of Year #2, it appeared as though the study might have a major emphasis on monitoring. The following parameters emerged from the early discussions with stakeholders and expert informants:

- Collect information directly useful to contributors as well as to a coordinative body.
- Be practical and recognize the limited time which would be available in the current project, and for other communities who might attempt similar projects.
- A variety of approaches are necessary to account for the complexity and the variety of interacting factors and interests. Both qualitative and quantitative methods should be used.
- The monitoring should begin before programs are implemented (i.e., immediately) in order to gather baseline data .
- The general plan and each component should be allowed to evolve as the project evolves.

### University Experiences: January to June, 1991

During this period, I continued to develop the proposal for the study and make decisions about the nature of my involvement in Bruckton. Among the influential courses and texts in the second half of the year were the following:

- issues in research design,
- organizational analysis (Morgan, 1986),
- theory and practice in professional development (a self-directed course),
- facilitating the empowerment of others through research (Carr and Kemmis, 1986).

The discussions and reading assisted me in examining issues pertaining to the organizations involved with SE in Bruckton, including the budding stakeholders' network. The technique of analysis using various metaphors to examine an organization -- machine, organism, brain, culture, political system, psychic prison, entity of flux or transformation, or instrument of domination --

proved to be especially useful to me and to stakeholder representatives in Bruckton. Another course provided a forum to discuss the research findings and theoretical concepts of professional development and relate these to the experiences I was having with Bruckton's teachers. I exposed myself to the range of what various writers labelled as phenomenology, ethnography, action research, participatory research, participant-observer studies, feminist research, and case studies and began to compare these categories of research activity. I encountered action research literature and began to articulate the major principles under which I operated during the study.

Reflective journals were kept in association with three of the courses. One of these grew into the composite record of the Year #2 professional development efforts. Another provided a means of structuring my thoughts on the problems I encountered as we planned for and began the stakeholder's network. The third included reflections on my beliefs about learning and teaching, the manifestation of these in the study, and issues associated with epistemology and ethics.

### **Documents and Presentations**

On several occasions documents and presentations associated with academic activities provided useful catalysts for focusing data collection and synthesizing the findings. These were produced with the input of stakeholder representatives and, to varying degrees, influenced their understanding of dynamics in Bruckton as well.

One of the documents I produced during this period was entitled *School Jurisdiction Policy on Sexuality Education* (Krupa, 1990). It included discussion of the following:

- the written and unwritten policy which guided administrators and teachers in their actions,
- an initial assessment of the policy environment as it pertained to SE, including knowledge of situations, knowledge of social strategies, and political will of major stakeholders,
- information gathered from stakeholders and key informants on issues and problems they perceived as important, assumptions they were making, and strategies they were suggesting,
- tentative propositions to assist in structuring problems and setting future directions for SE,
- initial recommendations for policy in regard to resource people, professional development, and contraceptive vending,
- a proposal for a program of research in the area of SE policy,
- an annotated bibliography of resources which seemed especially useful to consider.

An individual project on motivation enabled me to gain exposure to research in that area while other work on stress enabled me to better understand the constraints and opportunities the teachers were experiencing as I entered professional development work with them in Bruckton.

Another document, *Bridges: An Application of Morgan's Images to a New Organization*, was created to analyze the actions and language of stakeholders prior to, and in the early stages of, the community network organization's formation. This paper also captured the implications I saw



for thinking about the network from the perspectives of a variety of metaphors. I summarized the state of the network as seen at the time and suggested possibilities for future development.

Two documents, *Action Research: A Process of Empowerment* and *Bridges: A Report on Preliminary Research Activities*, were particularly important in summarizing the development of the study during Year #2. In these papers, I summarized my thoughts on research issues, synthesized my emerging concepts of action research, and documented my activities with peer instructors, teachers, and stakeholders between September, 1990, and June, 1991.

Finally, two documents were prepared for publication in journals. *Responsive Evaluation: Problems and Promises*, an outgrowth of my Master's study, was submitted but was not accepted. It was useful, however, in creating Chapter IV. *Making a Difference in Sexuality Education* was the condensed story of the professional development initiative during Year #2. It was produced through a process which involved the teachers at a very high level, and was accepted for publication. This had a positive effect in Bruckton and elsewhere.

### **Documents and Information Summaries Relating to Year #2**

*Responsive Evaluation: Problems and Promises*

*School Jurisdiction Policy on Sexuality Education*

*Sexuality Education: A Community Perspective* (draft of research proposal)

*Bridges: A report on preliminary research activities*

Journal associated with *Organizational Analysis*

*Bridges: An application of Morgan's images to a new organization*

Journal and record of documents associated with professional development in Year #2

Journal associated with *Facilitating the Empowerment of Others Through Research*

*Action Research: A Process of Empowerment*

*Making a Difference in Sexuality Education*

Record of community and external contacts and documents in Year #2

Record of activities and documents associated with the COOL program and peer instructors

*Reflections on the Adventures in Sexuality Education* (May, 1992)

## Appendix 5.2: Stakeholders According to Mitroff's (1983) Categories

| Approach                | Kinds Identified  | Stakeholders  |
|-------------------------|---|---|
| 1. Imperative           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- those who feel so strongly about a policy that they are prepared to act</li> <li>- can be located by tracing sources for slogans, catchwords, and acts of defiance or dissatisfaction</li> <li>- misses the silent people who may have a strong opinion</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- conservative religious groups</li> <li>- fundamentalist protestants</li> <li>- catholics</li> <li>- parents who have withdrawn their children from SE</li> <li>- those who have made representation to school or community officials</li> <li>A</li> <li>B</li> <li>C</li> </ul>   |
| 2. Positional           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- those in formal positions in the policy-making structure</li> <li>- misses those not formally involved but having a capacity for impact</li> </ul>   | <p>Jurisdiction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Superintendent</li> <li>Curriculum Coordinator</li> <li>Board Members (especially R)</li> <li>legal advisors</li> </ul> <p>School:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Administrators</li> <li>Parent Advisory Committee</li> <li>SE Teachers (elem., jr. high, and sr. high)</li> <li>Community School Coordinator</li> </ul> <p>Community and External:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PCSS</li> <li>Health Unit</li> <li>family school liaison workers</li> </ul> |
| 3. Reputational         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- those suggested by key people</li> <li>- misses the less "important" or less empowered</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- D (past involvement with health unit and church groups).</li> <li>-counsellor at 5-9 School (past involvement with SE program development)</li> <li>- E, F (Social Services)</li> <li>- G (community leader)</li> </ul>  |
| 4. Social-Participation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- those who participate in activities related to the issue</li> <li>- should also include those who would participate in the future or have participated in the recent past</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Planned Parenthood</li> <li>- CPLOC</li> <li>- peer support team teens</li> <li>- peer support teacher leaders</li> <li>- teachers active in SE in the past or potentially active in the future</li> <li>- teachers involved with QUEST</li> <li>- COOL program lay leaders</li> <li>- parents who attend or have been active in the past</li> </ul>   |
| 5. Opinion-Leadership   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- those would tend to influence others</li> <li>- tends to miss those who have less, but still significant, influence</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Pastors of local churches</li> <li>H, I, J, K, L, M</li> <li>- N</li> <li>- O</li> <li>- P</li> </ul>   |
| 6. Demographic          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- locate by age, sex, race, religion, origin, occupation, education, etc.</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- parents of younger children</li> <li>- parents specifically opposed to SE in schools (as in #1)</li> </ul>   |
| 7. Focal Organization   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- those who have important relationships with the organization. (e.g., supplier, employee, clients, ally, etc.)</li> <li>- misses opinion leaders and other key stakeholders</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Alberta Education (supplies curriculum)</li> <li>-Health (supplies some resources)</li> <li>-Lions Club (sponsors QUEST)</li> <li>-parents and their children</li> <li>-taxpayers in general</li> </ul>   |

### **Appendix 5.3: Personal Reflections on the Project**

By April, 1991, I had worked closely with FCSS, the Community School Coordinator, adult and teen peer instructors, Junior High teachers, school and district administration, the Health Unit, and the LLLLC. I had initial contacts with the pastors, the social services liason workers, elementary teachers, QUEST organizers, school counsellors, a local theater group, and two very conservative religious individuals. With few exceptions, I felt very comfortable with the commitment and contributions of each of the groups and individuals. This excerpt from *Bridges: A report on preliminary research activities* (April, 1991) summarized my thoughts at the time.

#### **Will the research will be possible and practical?**

*The criteria of context suitability, researcher suitability, and adequacy of time and financial resources appeared to have been met (although there is still much uncertainty). My experiences in the preliminary work gave me confidence that the individual components of the research would be both possible and practical, as long as adjustments are made along the way. I am getting used to living with uncertainty, going as far as I can with the resources I have and finding help when I need it. I sometimes feel uncertain about what to do in a particular situation, but then I discover that no one else knows either. I try to think carefully and creatively, and act collaboratively. My efforts are generally welcomed and on track, according to the feedback from the stakeholders.*

#### **Are there any special technologies or techniques required?**

*The purchase of a FAX machine significantly reduced travel, postage, delays, and ambiguity. The research and operational techniques are under control. The journalling and records of documents and contacts are in place.*

#### **What concerns remain?**

- 1. Time. The work takes much longer than I plan for it. This is often because I am working in collaborative relationships with others and it takes time to come to a common understanding of a situation. I consistently underestimate the time required for reflection on and journaling my experiences, and creating original plans or presentations. In training instructors, the process of mutual adaptation of curriculum and personnel is a lengthy one.*
- 2. Politics and Interactions. I am sometimes anxious about possible attempts to sabotage the overall project or components of it. I am still somewhat uneasy about the involvement of one agency and one of the more radical churches. This may be unnecessary. I have tried to identify and cover the vulnerable spots and have others looking for possible problems as well.*
- 3. Record Keeping. I have kept everything and made as many notes as I could, but with so many fronts moving so fast, it is difficult to decide where and how some items should be recorded. I have made notes on all major phone calls, but some quick ones to check, clarify, or encouraged were noted only in my appointment book.*

*Is it all worthwhile?*

*Nearly everyone I have encountered thus far has assured me that it is. Many have gone on and on about how worthwhile and significant this research is. I am encouraged.*

As the new organization began, I continued to wrestle with questions relating to the establishment of the new organization and the metaphors and language issues that I was just becoming sensitive to. To what degree should I attempt to contribute to the design of it? I knew that there must be special sensitivity and responsiveness to the environment and an ability to plan for change (Morgan's [1986] "organism" and "flux and transformation" metaphors). Connectivity and self-organization (the "brain"), an ability to be honest in issues of fairness, justice, and empowerment (the politics and domination metaphors) were also essential and needed be cultivated from the outset. Groups such as parents were not given equal recognition and power under the systems which existed in the past. Finally, culture is important, but I concluded that it must evolve naturally and that would take time. Even the name could become significant in how the organization is perceived by the members and by those outside. What images might be most helpful? Would it matter whether the body was called the Bridges "Project Group," or "Steering Committee," or "Team?" Or is there an even more meaningful name that will be suggested at the first meeting?

## Appendix 5.4: Summary of Activities and Developments in Year #2

| Time    | Facilitator   | School   | Community   | External   |
|---------|---|--|---|--|
| Aug 90  | <p>Preparing final report on COOL program evaluation for submission to FCSS and stakeholder representatives.</p> <p>Drafting master's thesis chapter on implications and recommendations.</p>   |  | <p>Lions and FCSS sponsor the teacher training for the QUEST program.</p>   |  |
| Sept 90 | <p>Drafting master's thesis chapters on personal reflections of the study.</p> <p>Meet with school jurisdiction curriculum coordinator to discuss possibilities and plan for my involvement in professional development as it relates to SE (see external column).</p> <p>Meet with FCSS rep. to discuss possibilities and plan for my continuing participation.</p> <p>Meet with Bruckton's school administrators to discuss possibilities and plan for my continuing participation.</p> <p>Beginning university courses (now in Ph.D. program):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research Design</li> <li>• Policy Analysis</li> <li>• Administrative Behavior</li> </ul> | <p>Programs in 5-9 school continue as before. Some improvement in situation because of</p> <p>QUEST is implemented for the first time in the K-4 Community School (sponsored by Lions and FCSS organizations).</p> | <p>FCSS prints final report of COOL program evaluation and distributes in Bruckton.</p> <p>Re-selection of teen peer instructors by FCSS rep.</p> <p>FCSS applies for funding for training teen and adult peer instructors.</p> | <p>Final report of COOL Program Evaluation is distributed to other FCSS and Health Unit offices in the province.</p> <p>School jurisdiction curriculum coordinator agrees to contact teachers to determine interest, especially in Bruckton and two schools in a neighboring community. We create a model for PD for next two years.</p> |
| Oct 90  | <p>Master's thesis revisions and final oral exam.</p> <p>Expanding view of stakeholders using Micruff's (1983) seven perspectives.</p> <p>Small amount of participation in planning with FCSS for COOL leaders workshop.</p>  |  | <p>Discussing early ideas about a community networking organization and the possibility of an association with the community school and its committees.</p>   | <p>COOL designer/facilitator incorporates nearly all of the recommendations for program design. The revised program is implemented in other communities in Alberta.</p>  |

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| Nov 90 | <p>Holding discussions with teachers (see school).</p> <p>Attending leadership training workshop with teen and adult peer instructors for COOL, and beginning to function as coordinator of the team.</p> <p>Creating document on school jurisdiction policy in regard to sexuality education, focusing on enlarging concept of stakeholders and their values and interests, and analysis of assumptions.</p> <p>Further interviews with stakeholders reps., including parents, teens, and Health Unit staff.</p> <p>Analysis of common values and beliefs presented by stakeholders.</p> | <p>Conversations between K-4 and 5-9 school staff and me about possibilities for improvement in approaches and communication among stakeholders.</p> <p>QUEST program training for parents and teachers at K-4 Community School.</p> | <p>Teen and adult "peer instructors" along with similar teams from two other communities participate in a training workshop. Results in improvement in knowledge of SE area, skills in leadership and presentation, and attitudes in regard to sexuality.</p> | <p>Training workshop held outside and facilitated by those who created COOL and led the 1989 program in Bruckton. Teams from three communities participated.</p> <p>Health Unit staff indicate shift in policy and priorities (from surrogate teacher to consultant, toward those who have less resources or are at earlier stages of development)</p> |
| Dec 90 | <p>Refining possibilities for contribution to and study of SE in Bruckton, including concept of bringing stakeholders together and building a collaborative plan of action.</p> <p>Completed first draft of dissertation research proposal.</p>   |  |   |  |

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| <p>Jan 91</p> | <p>Meeting with LLLLC (committee of the community school) and introduction to other likely stakeholder reps. (Social Services, Family / School liason, foster parents association, etc.)</p> <p>Beginning university courses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research Design (further development of proposal and research related issues)</li> <li>• Organization Analysis (related directly to development of BRIDGES network of stakeholders).</li> <li>• Professional Development among teachers (related directly to PD part of project)</li> </ul> <p>Reviewing literature in professional development and change.</p> <p>Suggestion of the journeying metaphors and the image of "Bridges."</p> <p>Planning for and meeting with teen and adult peer instructors (#1 and #2) to facilitate training and further development of the COOL program.</p> |  | <p>LLLLC meets for the first time to discuss issues relating to SE, and possibilities for the committee's involvement in facilitating collaborative approaches in the community.</p> <p>LIFE SKILLS program is implemented for the first time. Jointly sponsored by community school, PCSS, and Social Services.</p> | <p>Alberta Health and Alberta Education conduct evaluation of HIV/AIDS education in schools "to assess the relative effectiveness of instructional strategies and resources being used in HIV/AIDS education in Grades 9 and 11" (Doherty-Poirier &amp; munro, 1991).</p> |
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| <p>Feb 91</p> | <p>Meeting with regional Health Unit personnel to review situation to this point (results from program evaluation and plans for next two years in Bruckton).</p> <p>Presentation to LLLLC on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• my early assessment.</li> <li>• my early recommendations.</li> <li>• what I am currently doing and would like to do in terms of contribution and study.</li> <li>• what possibilities LLLLC might consider. (see community column).</li> </ul> <p>Meeting with teachers to identify professional development needs and possibilities (see school column).</p> <p>Planning for and meeting with teen and adult peer instructors to facilitate training and further development of the COOL program.</p> <p>Promote COOL at school with teens.</p> | <p>Teachers from Bruckton and two schools in neighboring community meet to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• learn the background and rationale behind this movement and me.</li> <li>• identify their professional development needs, discuss possibilities for format, and review constraints of SE and in Health program in general.</li> <li>• discuss format options such as three 1/2 day workshops, individual consultation, peer networking, conference calls, new resources, and developing resource bank.</li> <li>• make plans and set dates for workshops in April and May.</li> </ul> <p>Facilitates promotion of COOL program</p> | <p>LLLLC, comprising many of the stakeholder reps., meet to consider possibilities for development of SE in Bruckton, and possibilities for the committee's involvement in that process (see facilitator column).</p> <p>COOL teens promote the program at school.</p> <p>FCSS handles administrative tasks and registration for COOL program.</p> <p>Parents phone parents re COOL.</p> | <p>New person comes to be SE coordinator with regional Health Unit.</p> <p>Regional Health Unit personnel review situation to this point with me (results from program evaluation and plans for next two years in Bruckton). They are invited and welcomed to give feedback and participate as they feel is appropriate.</p> <p>Alberta Health SE personnel suggest possible funding and information sources, other research of possible interest.</p> |
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| Mar 91 | <p>Planning for PD with teachers in conjunction with course in PD.</p> <p>Creating package of readings for teachers to prepare for discussions at the PD day in April. See School column.</p> <p>Contacting potential stakeholders identified including religious leaders, community club leaders, parents, teens, to inform and ask for feedback re situation with SE and possibilities for networking and collaborative action.</p> <p>Creating document entitled <i>BRIDGES: An Application of Morgan's "Images" to a New Organization</i> (see appendix ) It summarized observations and possibilities for initiation and development of a stakeholders' network organization for SE in Bruckton.</p> <p>Facilitating further training of teen and adult peer instructors and development of COOL program.</p> <p>Revising "Community Survey on Relationships" for parents and teens (see appendix) to be distributed by LLLC.</p> | <p>SE teachers from Bruckton and schools in two neighboring communities prepare for PD day and read "package:"</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• information shared at LLLC meeting in February.</li> <li>• condensed literature review on effective SE and considerations.</li> <li>• outline of the COOL program and summary of findings and recommendations.</li> </ul> | <p>Stakeholders including religious leaders, community club leaders, parents, teens are contacted, informed about what is happening with SE and development so far in Bruckton. They are asked for feedback and to suggest possibilities for networking and collaborative action.</p> <p>Consensus that a coordinating or networking body like BRIDGES might best be operated as separate from LLLC and community school and tie in with school staff in 5-9 school more.</p> <p>Consensus to have network meet in conjunction with teachers' professional development workshops.</p> <p>Teen and adult peer instructors meet for training and COOL program development.</p> | <p>Teen instructors help to facilitate workshops in another community</p> |
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| <p>Apr 91</p> | <p>Report on preliminary research activities.</p> <p>Learning about QUEST and possibilities for connections with development of SE.</p> <p>Team leader with COOL workshop</p> <p>Facilitating the two professional development workshops with teachers.</p> <p>Facilitating the two meetings of the BRIDGES network of stakeholders</p> <p>Summarizing and reporting back to teachers and stakeholders following meetings (see appendices ).</p> | <p>Teachers participate in first professional development workshop, as well as in meeting of stakeholders.</p> <p>Teachers participate in second professional development workshop, including meeting again with other stakeholders in network. (See Community column) The planning checklist is presented and discussed. Rapport and confidence grows between teachers and other stakeholder reps.</p> | <p>LLLLC administers "Community Survey on Relationships" to Grades 8 and 9 students and their parents (see appendix ).</p> <p>COOL workshop weekend for 25 teens and 24 adults -- nearly all from Bruckton. The newly trained local team of adults and teens facilitates.</p> <p>BRIDGES network of stakeholders meets (in association with teachers' PD meeting). Round table on interests in SE, problems and struggles in meeting needs.</p> <p>BRIDGES network of stakeholders meets again (and again in association with teachers' PD meetings). Presentation on sexually transmitted disease and the case for young teens postponing. Discussion on QUEST, self-esteem, teachers' planning checklist, peer pressure. Rapport and confidence grows between teachers and other stakeholder reps.</p> | <p>Noble's article entitled <i>There is no "Safe Sex"</i> appears in Newsweek magazine.</p> <p>COOL workshops offered in schools in another Health Unit region.</p> |
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| May 91 | <p>University course on participative "empowering" research strategies, including "participatory" and "action" research. My literature review in this area begins and I create a document and presentation entitled <i>Action Research: A Process of Empowerment</i> in which I describe this study as a case of action research (<i>appendix</i> ).</p> <p>Seeking and reviewing print and video resources for use in schools.</p> <p>Meeting with Health Unit personnel in attempt to refine concepts of community development in SE and possibilities for Health Unit involvement.</p> <p>Interview with High School Peer Support leader re possible personnel and connections for training and peer instruction in junior highs.</p> <p>Interviews with school trustee and local parents re situation with SE and suggestions for future.</p> <p>Attempts to act as liaison between stakeholder reps. in conflict.</p> <p>Accompanied teens to instruct classes in neighboring schools.</p> <p>Updating list of stakeholders.</p> | <p>Most junior high classes work through the SE unit (Theme 5). Teachers vary considerably in their actual approaches and emphases, as was anticipated and encouraged.</p> <p>Four classes in Bruckton receive instruction from teens trained through the COOL program. Topics include male and female anatomy and physiology. How to say "no" gracefully, assertiveness, peer pressure, media and societal influences.</p> <p>K-4 Community School creates "Charter Yearbook." Included are references to the QUEST program, the L.L.L.C. and the COOL program. Also included are numerous references to the close working relationship with PCSS.</p> | <p>Teens facilitate COOL workshops in a neighboring community.</p> <p>Teens instruct classes in neighboring schools.</p> <p>Follow-up meeting for COOL participants but no one comes (due to late notice).</p> | <p>Health Unit personnel further articulate role in SE as consultants to teachers and community leaders, supplying stats and some print and video resources, assisting people in quest for healthy lifestyles. Plans to meet with school jurisdiction to plan regional PD day for teachers. Questioning value of network and its purpose. Developing resource binder for teachers to help address issue of rapid turnover.</p> <p>Minister of Education establishes committee to investigate sexuality education in the province and make recommendations.</p> |
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| June 91 | <p>Literature review in participative research strategies.</p> <p>Assembling results of "Community Survey on Relationships."</p> <p>Meet with teachers and stakeholders in wrap-up supper meeting (see school and community columns and appendix ).</p> <p>Meet with representative from native community to discuss collaborative "community development" work in healthy sexuality and relationships</p> | <p>Teachers meet for last time. Discussion on encouraging critical thinking, evaluation of PD experience, difficulties associated with implementation, and recommendations for the future (see appendix )</p> | <p>BRIDGES reps. meet with teachers for supper and discussion (see School column). "They began to take ownership." They showed appreciation for one another, planned for the following year, planned to create a statement of purpose for September, discussed direction and role of COOL and made recommendations.</p> <p>FCSS agrees to continue to provide admin support. There is strong agreement on the general principles on which SE in Bruckton should be based.</p> | <p>Teen instructors facilitate classes in a school in an adjacent community.</p> <p>Relationship with native community begins. We meet to discuss community development strategies and SE and COOL as a catalyst.</p>  |
| July 91 | <p>Review literature in community development.</p> <p>Working on collaborative article for ATA Magazine.</p> <p>Drafting final report on PD experience to curriculum coordinator.</p> <p>Contacting stakeholders and updating list.</p> <p>Preparing submission to "Minister's Committee on Sexuality Education."</p>  |   | <p>Teen peer instructor chosen as "Junior citizen of the year"</p> <p>Teen and adult peer instructors gather to socialize and plan for a fall workshop in native community.</p> <p>FCSS and peer instructors agree on selection criteria for recruitment and selection of new people, and do paperwork to form a society which can qualify for funding.</p>   | <p>Minister's Committee on SE begins to receive submission.</p> <p>Meeting of representatives from various groups in province who use the COOL program. The Health Unit that originally sponsored its development gives permission to make modifications. Work has also been done to adjust the program to a school context. Information on this will finally be available the following fall.</p> |

## **Appendix 6.1: Experiences Influencing the Facilitator and the Study in Year #2**

In addition to university experiences, the study and I were significantly affected by work with various documents, presentations and other communities.

### **University Experiences**

During Year #3, I continued reading and reflection on community development literature as well as on issues uncovered during the course on "empowering strategies." I also participated in courses where action research, teacher education, and collaboration were the focal points. Through these, I gained a sense of the range of experiences which people labelled as community development, participative research, action research, collaboration, and reflected on differences and similarities with this study. During this time, I began to work seriously with concepts of capacity building, levels of participation, sustainability, specific ethics of change, peer review and critical friendship, collaboration and empowerment. The literature and discussions enabled me to go beyond the boundaries of the critical social science conceptualization of action research, as depicted by Carr and Kemmis (1986), to include various philosophies of research (e.g., positivism, post-positivism, interpretivism, critical social scientism, post-modernism).

I also began to appreciate the need for making the "development of the researcher / facilitator" a part of the study. Through a self-reflective process, I tried to learn more about what I was bringing to the study, how the project was affecting me, and how I could bring about improvement in my own understandings, practices and situations. One result was a deeper understanding of listening and appreciation of its value and importance (Levin, 1989). Subsequently, I made efforts to become the most sensitive listener that I could be. I believe I was able to develop a deeper understanding of others, encourage their coming forward, and encourage them to value listening in their relationships with one another. In a similar way, from considering options for support and accountability in my work, I developed a more effective network of accountable, collaborative "critical friendships," as explained in Chapter III and analyzed in Chapter X. This provided a model for leaders in Bruckton as well as a direct positive influence in my personal life.

With the course in action research, my journal entries changed to a four part format -- experience, reflection, perspective of "the other," and dialogue (with another). At the same time, I experimented with trying to focus on the relationships and what was going on between people, rather than solely my own perspective. An analysis of language was also added, focusing on the metaphors and images participants were using (Chapter IX).

## Documents and Presentations

Two documents coordinated with course work in Year #3. *Action Research in Sexuality Education: Listening to Those From Bruckton* outlined the current state of affairs, or the "problem position." It summarized the key questions and dynamics of the study at that time, and outlined possibilities for action. The second paper, entitled *Bruckton's Journey: Adventures in Sexuality Education and Action Research* (April, 1992) was an updated position statement and served to focus many of the themes which I reported to the stakeholders soon afterward. Finally, I reworked my research proposal to account for what I had learned in Bruckton, at the university, and elsewhere, and presented this proposal in March.

Preparing presentations for conferences gave me other opportunities to analyze findings, interact with academics, and interact with practitioners of varying value orientations. For a conference for health care professionals, I was invited to oppose or balance the views of a school jurisdiction health ed consultant and a birth control counsellor. The plan was to have me present the view that a lifestyle of abstinence or postponing sexual involvement was viable for teens and that educational approaches to encourage this lifestyle were viable as well. My presentation, entitled *Community Action in Sexuality Education: Tools and Tactics*, summarized the work with stakeholders, key SE curriculum and instructional considerations, and our efforts in communicating and reinforcing these concepts. Some findings challenged their assumptions about the sexual behavior of teens, and some of our experiences with community development approaches expanded possibilities for participants.

Another presentation, entitled *Stakeholder Participation in Research and Development*, was delivered to an audience interested in concepts associated with Educational Administration. I discussed the nature of participation in the program evaluation and the *BRIDGES* movement, and processes that appeared to be useful in enhancing participation.

The third presentation was with a regional group of educational, health care, social service, and law enforcement agency representatives. I had been invited to talk about the process we had gone through in implementing the COOL program and working with teen and adult peer instructors. This led to several invitations to introduce the COOL program and leadership training in neighboring communities. The presentation also exposed one of several "political" tensions. One group had not wanted me to make a presentation, fearing that I would undermine sexuality educators and their work, and that I was using the COOL program to promote a radical concept of sexuality education. Some of the rumors, erroneous assumptions, organizational tensions and interpersonal factors behind this perception are discussed in this chapter and in Chapters IX and X.

Overall, each of the presentations was received well and helped me to connect with people working throughout the province. Several individuals continue to be in contact, some used the approaches I presented, and a few continued to provide helpful critique.

The final project was designing a video learning package on sexual decision making.

### **Experience With Other Communities**

As Year #3 progressed I had several opportunities to work in a "community development" mode with other interesting communities. These experiences enabled me to test concepts and techniques used in Bruckton, and see how these needed to be modified in other cultural settings. We were able to use what we had learned to benefit others and, at the same time, learn from experiences with them.

In one case, I worked with leaders in a native community as they sought to address issues relating to family relationships, sexual behavior of teens, substance abuse, and violence in dating. I employed techniques used in working with stakeholders and developing leaders and organizations. Bruckton's COOL team travelled with me to facilitate a workshop on the reserve, and many teens and adults from the native community took part in our leader training meetings. Further details are discussed later in the chapter.

Program planning work with another group stimulated me to explore some very useful Gandhian concepts of truth, community, conflict resolution and unity among people with diverse perspectives and strongly held values. I found stories and quotes from Gandhi to be useful in illustrating such concepts with individuals in Bruckton.

A third CD project involved a church community seeking to articulate tensions and resolve conflicts. These processes and the subsequent work to rebuild trusting, respectful relationships between members ran parallel to work with individuals and organizations in Bruckton who were also trying to overcome interpersonal tensions, listen better, and build collaborative relationships.

A fourth project involved planning work with a Christian organization seeking to improve approaches in sexuality education, including promoting abstinence/postponing as a viable lifestyle for young teens. This group ultimately formed a sub-unit called *Y Wait (Straight Talk)*. They wished to reach teens and parents (in churches and in schools) with well grounded instruction in sexual decision making. They also planned to provide supportive counselling for teens who wanted to leave exploitative relationships, including those focused on sexual intercourse.

## Appendix 6.2: Summary of Activities and Developments in Year #3

| Month | Facilitator   | School  | Community   | External   |
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| Aug   | <p>Assembled much of the text for collaborative article on professional development experience with teachers (for ATA Magazine).</p> <p>Prepared and submitted a report for school personnel (local and jurisdiction) which included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• summary of June 5th meeting</li> <li>• summary of teachers' evaluations</li> <li>• summary of implementation of planning checklist items</li> <li>• draft of article for ATA magazine</li> <li>• major recommendations for the coming year, and a proposal for my services.</li> </ul> <p>Planning for COOL and BRIDGES network with FCSS.</p> <p>Son Timothy is born.</p> | <p>Teachers contribute to collaborative article on PD for ATA Magazine.</p> <p>Plans for PD in SE to expand to include the other schools in the jurisdiction.</p> <p>To teachers at the 5-9 School receive training to facilitate the QUEST program with Grade 5 students.</p> <p>All teachers at the K-4 School who had not yet received training for QUEST were trained and began to incorporate the principles and practices in their classes.</p> | <p>FCSS plans for BRIDGES Network.</p> <p>FCSS plans for COOL program, including funding capability and formation of a board to provide administrative support.</p> <p>FCSS/Community School plan programs to meet related needs (e.g., Life Skills, Nobody's Perfect, Family Violence Prevention).</p> | <p>School jurisdiction curriculum coordinator receives my report which included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• summary of June 5th meeting</li> <li>• summary of teachers' evaluations</li> <li>• summary of implementation of planning checklist items</li> <li>• draft of article for ATA magazine</li> <li>• major recommendations for the coming year, and a proposal for my services.</li> </ul> |



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| <p><b>Sept</b></p>    | <p><b>Beginning university courses:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Action Research</li> <li>• Curriculum Development</li> <li>• Teacher Education.</li> </ul> <p>Preparing materials for BRIDGES Network Meeting.</p> <p>Meeting with BRIDGES group (see community)</p> <p>Planning (with jurisdiction curriculum coordinator and teachers from Bruckton) for second phase of PD program - to involve teachers from all seven schools in the jurisdiction.</p> <p>Beginning CD work with church group in another community.</p> <p>Conference presentation.</p> <p>Beginning search for improved video resources.</p> | <p>Teachers and administrators receive report on</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• summary of June 5th meeting</li> <li>• summary of teachers' evaluations</li> <li>• summary of implementation of planning checklist items</li> <li>• draft of article for ATA magazine</li> <li>• major recommendations for the coming year.</li> </ul> <p>QUEST is implemented on a school-wide basis in the K-4 school.</p> <p>QUEST and INNERCHANGE programs (emphasizing communication, self-esteem, relationships with others) begin on a pilot-test basis in the 5-9 school.</p>        | <p>BRIDGES network meets to discuss:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• statement of purpose.</li> <li>• self-sustaining structure, including rotating chair</li> <li>• needs of various groups, including parents of younger children</li> <li>• plan for COOL</li> <li>• inservice training of various groups</li> <li>• one another's roles and programs</li> </ul> | <p>Jurisdiction curriculum coordinator plans and sets parameters (with me) for second phase of PD program to involve teachers from all seven schools in the jurisdiction.</p>    |
| <p><b>October</b></p> | <p>Literature review in community development.</p> <p>Redrafting proposal for Ph. D. research.</p> <p>Facilitated first Year #3 PD workshop for teachers: (see school)</p> <p>First meeting in native community with AADAC and local teens and adults about "healthy relationships and sexuality" project.</p> <p>Conference presentation.</p>  | <p>Two teachers from Bruckton help facilitate workshop open to all teachers in the school jurisdiction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• nature and intent of curriculum</li> <li>• issues and outcomes from previous year</li> <li>• community concerns</li> <li>• principles and resources for successful instruction</li> <li>• integrating SE throughout health curriculum</li> <li>• support planned and available</li> <li>• survey of needs and interest in SE and for future PD in Year #3</li> <li>• beginning collegial networking on jurisdiction level.</li> </ul> | <p>BRIDGES committee meets to formalize statement of purpose.</p> <p>Negotiation about timing and format of COOL workshop.</p> <p>PCSS facilitates formation of a society and funding applications.</p>  | <p>Health Unit holds workshop on "How to be an effective sexuality educator."</p> <p>School jurisdiction workshop for those teaching SE. Curriculum coordinator also attends</p> |

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| Nov | <p>Assembled first edition of <i>SHaRE Notes</i> newsletter for instructors in Health and SE (see school)</p> <p>Investigating approaches for helping parents communicate with younger children about relationships and sexuality.</p> <p>Conference presentation.</p> <p>Beginning work with <i>Straight Talk</i> organization.</p> <p>Begin work with group designing and producing interactive laser disc on sexual decision making.</p> | <p>Teachers receive first edition of <i>SHaRE Notes</i> newsletter:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• summary of key points from October workshop</li> <li>• update on COOL program</li> <li>• invitation and outline of February PD workshop</li> <li>• invitation to send in good ideas</li> </ul> | <p>BRIDGES Network meets:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• contacting all done locally</li> <li>• rotating chairmanship begins</li> <li>• finalize statement of purpose</li> <li>• brainstorm goals</li> <li>• discussion of survey</li> <li>• showcase QUEST</li> <li>• support for children of divorced parents</li> </ul> <p>A parent who has suffered the loss of a loved one due to AIDS becomes involved with the Network. She also helps to facilitate AIDS education programs outside of the community.</p> <p>FAMILY VIOLENCE PREVENTION (You Deserve Better) program is implemented. Strong emphasis on healthy relationships and assertiveness</p> <p>COOL team meets to learn and plan workshop.</p> | <p>School jurisdiction prints and distributes newsletter and other materials to principals and SE teachers.</p> <p>AIDS education programs offered in neighboring community.</p> <p>Provincial Home and School Association develops program "Talking With Children About AIDS"</p> |
| Dec | <p>Creating document on action research and current position.</p> <p>Consulting with SE teachers in Brackton and in other schools in jurisdiction.</p> <p>Redesigning information, promotion, and recognition materials for COOL program.</p> <p>Redesign survey to accommodate changes in questions and to make it machine scorable with locally available technology.</p> <p>Reviewing video resources.</p>                               | <p>Three teachers have begun instruction in SE. Wide variation in the degree of integration with other themes in Health and with other subject curricula.</p>   |  | <p>Health Unit independently surveys teachers re needs and interests in PD.</p> <p>Completion of the provincial "HIV/AIDS Education in Schools Evaluation" (Doherty-Poirier &amp; Munro, 1991)</p>   |

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| <p>January</p> | <p>University course practicum in action research.</p> <p>Planning second PD workshop for teachers (see school)</p> <p>Working with teen and adult leaders to prepare for COOL workshop (see community)</p> <p>COOL promotion with teens in school classes, and with teachers in other schools.</p> <p>Meeting with peer support teams in Bruckton and at the regional high school.</p> <p>Research for, and assembly of, second edition of <i>SHaRE Notes</i> newsletter for instructors in Health and SE (see school).</p> <p>Discussions with religious leaders.</p> | <p>COOL promotion at school to Grade 8 and 9 classes</p> <p>Teachers send in their good ideas for <i>SHaRE Notes</i> newsletter.</p> <p>Teachers receive second edition of <i>SHaRE Notes</i> newsletter:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• table listing SE teaches in each school and for each grade level (to facilitate networking)</li> <li>• invitation to COOL program</li> <li>• introduction to February PD workshop</li> <li>• update on Minister's Committee:</li> <li>• annotated resource and activity ideas from teachers (games, videos, "dream" charts, posters, planning)</li> </ul> | <p>BRIDGES Network meets:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• few religious leaders due to late notice</li> <li>• concerns that parents don't know enough about what's happening at school</li> <li>• report on neighboring community's initiative in AIDS education</li> <li>• Home and School Association video</li> <li>• material coordinating COOL with School curricula.</li> <li>• update on COOL</li> <li>• results of survey of teens in neighboring community.</li> <li>• needs of parents of younger children</li> <li>• clarification of QUEST</li> <li>• discussion of "Nobody's Perfect" and "Life Skills" and their connections to SE and healthy relationships.</li> </ul> <p>COOL team meets three times to learn and plan workshop. New approaches are created and tested in group. Design PD and accessories like T-shirts and certificates. Modify flow of program and develop areas of weakness.</p> <p>COOL teens do promotional presentations for each of the Grade 8 and 9 classes.</p> <p>Society receives funding for building teen leadership in SE.</p> | <p>School jurisdiction prints and distributes newsletter and other materials to principals and SE teachers.</p> <p>COOL program advertised to students in other schools in school jurisdiction.</p> <p>COOL team facilitates workshop in neighboring community.</p> <p>Another school division coordinated the COOL curriculum with their school curriculum. We received a resource binder with the coordinated program.</p> |
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| <p>Feb</p> | <p>Facilitating COOL workshop along with local teens and parents</p> <p>Facilitating second school jurisdiction workshop in Year #3 (see school)</p> <p>Consulting with individual teachers.</p> <p>Organizing results of the survey and creating system for redesign in community in the future.</p> <p>Oral presentation to action research class on activities and questions.</p> <p>Acting as a listener and counsellor to help identify and resolve interpersonal and inter-organization conflicts.</p> | <p>Students in Grade 8 and 9 complete surveys.</p> <p>Two teachers from Bruckton attend jurisdiction level workshop on SE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• teachers sharing current successes and concerns</li> <li>• teachers sharing useful resources</li> <li>• Health Unit SE coordinator</li> <li>• resources and activities relating to encouraging wise sexual decision making and postponing sexual involvement.</li> <li>• binders for organizing information and resources</li> <li>• teen instructors in the classroom</li> <li>• effective parent meetings</li> <li>• plans for future development</li> </ul> <p>Teachers receive positive comments and recognition from school jurisdiction administrators and school trustees (in relation to article in ATA Magazine).</p> | <p>Local people administer survey and calculate results</p> <p>The third COOL workshop is held and 30 teens and their parents (all from Bruckton) participate. For the second time, is facilitated by the local team of teens and adults. Program is innovative and effective. Feedback is very positive. Many participants volunteering for future involvement. Teens and adults from native community attend and contribute.</p> <p>Issues of conflict and collaboration brought into the open.</p> | <p>Second school jurisdiction workshop for those teaching SE. Curriculum coordinator and Health Unit SE coordinator also attend and participate.</p> <p>Article on PD experience of Year #2 appears in ATA Magazine. Many positive comments and recognition for teachers from school jurisdiction administrators and school trustees.</p> <p>Community and Premier recognize local foster parents.</p> |
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| March | <p>Research for, and assembly of, third edition of <i>SHaRE Notes</i> newsletter for instructors in Health and SE (see school).</p> <p>Working with teachers and stakeholder representatives to identify appropriate individuals, especially teen males to invite to become involved in COOL team.</p> <p>Preparing for COOL workshop with native people.</p> <p>Working to resolve accusations against the COOL program and against me.</p>  | <p>Teachers receive third edition of <i>SHaRE Notes</i> newsletter.</p> <p>Majority of SE programs underway or integrated.</p> | <p>COOL teen leaders noticed acting in a variety of roles, supporting others and counselling re sexual decision making and healthy relationships.</p> <p>COOL team prepares for workshop with native community.</p> <p>Religious leaders orders video resources for review.</p> <p>Representatives meet to resolve inter-organization conflicts.</p>   | <p>School jurisdiction prints and distributes newsletter and other materials to principals and SE teachers.</p> <p>School jurisdiction committee of teachers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• one group reviews video resources, selects for jurisdiction acquisition and distribution</li> <li>• a second group creates resource binders for all SE teachers, working from the Health Units model and improving on it.</li> </ul> |
| April | <p>Creating and presenting document for class summarizing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• where we came from as a community</li> <li>• where we are currently</li> <li>• where we could go in the future.</li> </ul> <p>Facilitating workshop with COOL team in the native community.</p> <p>Interviews with stakeholder representatives.</p> <p>Discussions with religious leaders.</p> <p>Preparing final report</p> <p>Investigating possibilities for sharing video resources.</p> | <p>Majority of school SE programs are offered during April and May</p>   | <p>BRIDGES Network meets:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• preview / oral report / synthesis of findings to date.</li> <li>• discussion on results of survey</li> <li>• a parent's presentation on AIDS education</li> <li>• discussion on terms such as "Safe Sex"</li> <li>• proposal for an inter-church COOL program in a neighboring community</li> <li>• teachers share concerns. Still some shortage of resources and time but improving.</li> <li>• journeying metaphors clearly demonstrated</li> </ul> <p>COOL follow-up evening. No one comes due to communication breakdown.</p> | <p>Bruckton COOL team facilitates weekend workshop in native community and in a neighboring community. They learn a great deal about issues there as well.</p>  |

|            |   |  |  |   |
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| <p>May</p> | <p>Interviews with stakeholders</p> <p>Revisions to document for community which summarizes the above information, includes information and feedback received since creating the above document, etc.</p> <p>Investigating possibilities for coordinating COOL leader training and weekend workshops among several neighboring communities.</p> <p>Created follow-up letters for COOL workshop participants (teens and parents) suggesting ways to make a difference in various settings and informing them of other related events.</p> <p>Preparing final report.</p> |  | <p>Evaluation of QUEST in the K-4 Community School determines that the concepts relating to self-esteem building, assertiveness, respect for others, family communication, etc. are "infused" in the curriculum and in the culture of the school.</p> <p>Community celebrates volunteerism and volunteers.</p> <p>FCSS and Community School receive award for "Life Skills." Canadian Association for Community Education "Program of the Year."</p> | <p>Report of the Minister's Committee on Sexuality Education is released. Among other things it recommended that schools continue to offer the program, that parents continue to have the right to opt out, that programs "be designed to help young people acquire understanding of their growth and development, to be able to make mature, informed decisions about abstinence or postponement of sexual as the healthiest choice for young people, and to avoid sexually transmitted infections and the risk of pregnancy." It also encouraged open and clear communication from Alberta Ed. and from schools to enable parents to become fully familiar with classroom activities. Finally it encouraged boards to carefully select teachers and universities to provide for preservice training in health/sexuality. (see Appendix)</p> |
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| <p><b>June</b></p> | <p>Updating list of stakeholders and representatives for distribution to all.</p> <p>Follow-up meeting with COOL teen participants at school.</p> <p>Group interview with teens.</p> <p>Final report to members of BRIDGES Network (see community)</p> | <p>Bruckton Community School publishes "Charter Yearbook." References to our work are included in several sections.</p> | <p>BRIDGES Network meets to give feedback / reflections on the summary document.</p> <p>Network members also receive copies of the following documents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Home and School Association "Talking with Children About AIDS"</li> <li>• Catholic Bishops of Canada</li> <li>• Interfaith Committee on AIDS</li> <li>• evaluation of HIV/AIDS education in schools</li> <li>• Minister's Committee report on sexuality education</li> <li>• local media responses to report.</li> </ul> |  |
| <p><b>July</b></p> | <p>Summer course on collaboration</p> <p>Revised summary document according to feedback received from stakeholders and information from interviews.</p> <p>Beginning to mock up thesis chapters from documents.</p>                                    |   |   |  |

## Appendix 6.3: Examples of Controversial Views

### Excerpts from Mintz (1991)

- The epidemic appears to be in "middle age" with a plateau in the number of new cases each year in Canada. Worldwide, the epidemic is still gaining momentum.
- Predictions of growth were based on erroneous assumptions and were high by 500% in Canada. He estimated that 10-12,000 Canadians were HIV positive, not 100,000 as earlier predicted (by dividing the U.S. figure by ten and assuming no differences between the populations).
- The epidemic might be fought more effectively by spending the money on high-risk groups. The majority of HIV positive tests have occurred in homosexual/bisexual males, the percentage being relatively constant through time.
- Assumptions such as that the disease will spread as rapidly in heterosexual and homosexual populations are erroneous. "Transmission from woman to man appears so low that you could never transmit this disease from heterosexual to heterosexual in a way that could sustain an epidemic" (pp. 3-4).

### Excerpts from Douglass' Open Letter to Magic Johnson

- You are not a "national hero" because you quickly admitted to being HIV positive . . . it was simply the right thing to do.
- You must be embarrassed by being called a "role model" for our youth. Catching a venereal disease through sexual promiscuity is hardly the proper behavior for a good role model . . . Wilt Chamberlain brags that he has had sex with 20 ,000 women, and he says you were his role model.
- You have admitted to thousands of sexual encounters -- most of the time with no protection. Surely you have wondered if you have given AIDS to one or more of those adoring young females. And what if one of those women later infected one of your teammates or friends? A momentous human tragedy may soon unfold . . .
- Young girls are looking for guidance and only want to be told by someone with your stature that it's OK to say "no" to premarital sex . . . Boys must also be approached with the message of personal responsibility and morality. The "role model" you and Wilt Chamberlain established will certainly not encourage them to take pressure off the girls, but a personal message from their hero now could have a powerful effect.
- I would like to suggest you go to your former teammates and friends and say: "Guys, we've had plenty of fame and fortune, and in return, we've given our fans the the worst possible example of sexual conduct. That example may cost lots of those fans their lives. We may not be able to change the way a whole society thinks, but we can sure make it easier for people who want to make the tough choice -- the right choice -- by making it ourselves. Let's make the commitment ourselves, and tell our fans to do the same. (pp. 2-3)



## **Appendix 7.1: Experiences Influencing the "Former Facilitator"**

While working informally with individuals in Bruckton, the majority of my "Bruckton's Journey" time in Year #4 was devoted to writing this dissertation. I had created various summary documents over the years and proceeded to re-examine and re-analyze and summarize as required. Through this process, I discovered several inconsistencies and questions which I resolved with the individuals involved. At the same time, we refined the format and style of the dissertation so that it would meet the needs of academic readers, yet be readable and useful to those in Bruckton. While writing, it seemed reasonable to begin assembly of several articles for publication. These were designed for various audiences, including those interested in educational and participatory research, as well as practitioners in health education. I also made presentations to academic groups interested in the approach to research / development which I had taken.

My experiences in Bruckton had re-directed my attention to children, parents, and teachers in the elementary school years. I began to work with the teacher preparation program at the university. Several "co-laborers" from Bruckton made presentations in my classes and provided resources to my students. Several research projects grew out of my interest in health education, including a collaborative project on health education at the K-4 Community School, and a study of the multiple perspectives on elementary health education among academic and agency personnel.

Activities relating to sexuality education included facilitating several peer instructor training workshops, reviewing video resources for provincial approval, and advising a theater group as they developed a catalyst drama on teen relationships and sexual decision making. I also continued work with the *Y Wait* group (developing sexuality education curricula which acknowledged Christian values and beliefs, yet acknowledged research findings and incorporated sound instructional design). During Years #3 and #4, I was able to assist the group in setting their direction, gaining an appreciation for the complexity of sexual behavior, unifying theory and practice in instruction, and exploring the relationship between sexuality and spirituality. The group hosted a seminar on supporting those choosing abstinence and "secondary virginity," a need expressed by many who had attended COOL workshops in Bruckton and elsewhere.

Meanwhile, community development and conflict resolution work with a church group, a children's advocacy organization, and an arctic community continued to provide experience which helped me analyze issues and concepts in Bruckton (building trust, allowing time for people and structures to adapt to change, breakthroughs of truth, the threshold of weariness in conflict). Work with critical friends led to deeper understandings of their role in action research.

## Appendix 7.2: Summary of Activities and Developments in Year #4

|        | Facilitator  | School  | Community   | External  |
|--------|--|---|---|---|
| August | <p>Translating June survey results into user-friendly format</p> <p>Data reduction and contents of binders of contacts and documents, journals and logs of activities.</p> <p>Designing summary timelines for each chapter and locating initial information.</p> <p>Follow-up on issues raised in June document to stakeholders.</p>   | <p>Three teachers are trained in the Junior High version of QUEST (Skills for Adolescence).</p> <p>K-4 Community School hosts QUEST teacher training program.</p>                                       |   |   |
| Sept   | <p>September - December Teaching university courses (Health &amp; Science)</p> <p>Planning workshop for teen and adult leaders from Brackton and neighboring communities.</p> <p>Facilitated FCSS and Health professionals from several communities to work together on joint initiatives.</p> <p>Drafted article for "In Touch" faculty newsletter for teachers re this research.</p> <p>Exploring options to fill my role with COOL. Discussions with a teen leader, health unit, and a parent.</p> <p>Planned with COOL teen leaders for recruiting and contacting for leaders workshops, etc.</p> <p>We agree that I would not attend next network meeting and I write a letter to explain.</p> <p>Met with FCSS and parent regarding COOL to plan parent support board, admin timeline.</p> | <p>All four teaching the Health/SE program were trained in QUEST. Three of the four had participated in the PD initiative.</p> <p>Counsellor and teachers make recommendations on new teen leaders.</p> | <p>Brackton FCSS invited to apply for federal funds for piloting 3 year stay in school project.</p> <p>Community School phone team notifies everyone re BRIDGES Network meeting.</p> <p>FCSS distributes survey results and meeting agenda for BRIDGES, etc.</p> <p>BRIDGES Network meets (without me as we planned) and decides to unite with LLLLC, and become involved with the Better attendance and participation than ever.</p> <p>Teen leaders do all contacting for training workshop and recruiting new teen and adult leaders by phone and in person.</p> <p>COOL program and Network people integrated in important way</p> <p>Gene, FCSS, and parent meet regarding COOL to plan for parent support board, admin timeline, and role descriptions.</p> <p>Community program on PBS</p> | <p>Federal Gov't Dept. of Employment and Immigration invites Brackton FCSS to apply for \$250,000 to pilot a 3 year stay-in-school project "Self-Esteem of a Community."</p> <p>FCSS and AADAC from several communities continue plan a joint workshop for teens and adults. Our group is invited. I am invited to facilitate.</p> <p>Health Unit personnel continue to describe Gene and program in Brackton to others in 2 ways</p> <p>School division has ordered and received many videos, and will distribute these from central office. More being uncovered in schools. No plans for PD this year, but will be connecting with programs of others, and people are connected with each other.</p> <p>Health Unit invites me to meet to discuss SE in Brackton and surrounding area, and possible roles for the community health team.</p> |

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| <p>Oct</p> | <p>Met with community health workers re planning for sexuality education and COOL in Bruckton and neighboring communities and Health Unit Role. Also an opportunity for dispelling myths, PR, and bridging with them. (Why didn't we do this a long time ago? Side tracked by dealing with Sexual Health Coordinator who was too busy anyway.)</p> <p>Reconnect with CF . plans for joint article for International Journal of Collaborative Action Research.</p> <p>Editing Contents, Overview and Chapters 1-3</p> <p>Presented on Action Research and its application in my study at Ed Admin Conference. Initial organization of themes and issues associated with AR</p> <p>Facilitated workshop for COOL teen and adult instructors from 4 communities (see community)</p> <p>Updating info sheets and registration forms (must get this to computer in Bruckton).</p> <p>Lots of FAX work. I am thankful for it!</p> <p>Reviewing videos at Alberta Ed to recommend titles for use in Elementary and Junior High</p> | <p>COOL program promotion to teens organized and conducted solely by teen leaders.</p> <p>Community School organizes presentations on teen/parent communication</p> <p>Counsellor from the K-4 Community School comes to my university class to present on QUEST program and staff interaction.</p> | <p>First meetings of stakeholders in stay-in-school project - nearly the same group as was involved with BRIDGES.</p> <p>PCSS rep organizes and orients COOL parent board</p> <p>Teen Leaders put on workshop for junior high peer support members in urban community nearby (on wecknights)</p> <p>Teen leaders from high school promote COOL at Bruckton and in neighboring community.</p> | <p>One community decides not to be involved with COOL leader training. They have chosen another abstinence based curriculum (that we have actually incorporated). This makes room for native community to be involved in leader training workshop.</p> <p>Workshop for teens and adults with two other community groups. Inter-community connection with professionals and lay folk. School jurisdiction promotes COOL program to other schools.</p> <p>Alberta Ed gathers individuals to view videos and make recommendations.</p> |
|------------|---|---|--|---|

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| <p>Nov</p> | <p>Completed and submitted draft of prefatory pages, overview, and first three chapters of dissertation.</p> <p>Working on Chapters 4-7</p> <p>Drafting articles for HPEC "Runner" and the Journal of School Health.</p> <p>Co-facilitator in weekend workshop to train teen and adult leaders.</p> <p>Working with another community development project (church group) helps me to gain further insight into working with a critical friend, the phenomena "break-through of the truth". etc.</p> <p>Presentation to class on Action Research. My study as an example of action research, critical friendship, middle language concept</p> |  | <p>PCSS hosts Women's Conference Weekend</p> <p>COOL Parent Board takes responsibility for contacting parents to invite them to workshop and answer questions. Nothing for me to do there.</p> <p>Teen and adult leaders take over orientation of new team members, organize program, delegate parents, provide feedback, etc. Nothing for me to do there.</p> <p>COOL weekend workshop runs as planned</p> | <p>Straight Talk holds seminar on counselling those who wish to re-establish relationship without sexual intercourse.</p> |
| <p>Dec</p> | <p>Article on Critical Friendship with</p> <p>Working on Chapters 8-10</p> <p>Beginning investigation of multiple dimensions and practical aspects of accountability. This further informed concepts of critical friendship in CD and AR.</p>  |  |   |   |

|                   |  |  |   |  |
|-------------------|--|--|---|--|
| Jan               | <p>January - April.<br/>Teaching university course on ethics and professionalism in teaching.</p> <p>Consulting with writers of catalyst drama on teen sexuality</p> <p>Writing Chapter 4</p>  |  |   |  |
| Feb               | <p>Research Grant Applications for research in teacher education and in health education.</p> <p>Completing Chapter 4</p>  |  |   |  |
| March             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Chapter 5</li> <li>- Working on program ideas with Straight Talk group.</li> <li>- Facilitating workshop for COOL teen and adult leaders for programs in another neighboring community.</li> <li>- Consulting with theater group</li> <li>- Workshop on charity counselling.</li> </ul> |  | COOL leaders prepare to put on a "first workshop" for people in a nearby community. |  |
| April             | Completing Chapter 5   |  |   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Those responsible for COOL in three communities meet to discuss options for coordinating workshops and training for peer instructors.</li> <li>- COOL program offered in a neighboring community is described in Focus on the Family Magazine.</li> </ul> |
| May               | Holiday  |  |   |  |
| June              | Writing Chapters 6 and 7   |  | Stakeholders review draft of historical chapters (4-7)                              | Several other school jurisdictions in the province investigate options for abstinence-oriented curricula.  |
| July to September | Writing Chapters 8-10  |  | COOL team planning<br>Stakeholders review draft of chapters (8-10)                  |  |

## **Appendix 8.1: Planning Checklist (Year #4 revision)**

### **How can I assist students to . . .**

- o more critically analyze information they receive and develop a desire for truth?
- o look to the future and refine their concepts of their own possible personal futures?
- o understand sexuality as more than sex -- a healthy aspect of being human?
- o identify and debunk myths and misconceptions about sex and sexuality?
- o gain a deeper understanding of terms such as healthy relationship, love, and responsible decision?
- o identify their rights in a relationship?
- o identify unhealthy and exploitive relationships?
- o learn and practice assertiveness skills?
- o practice skills (e.g., by role playing in pairs or small groups)?
- o practice supporting one another in non-exploitive relationships?
- o obtain the information they require in anatomy and physiology?
- o generate the consequences of early sexual intercourse (physical, psychological, and other) and categorize them as positive and negative?
- o gain a concrete understanding of pregnancy and fetal development (consider visuals)?
- o obtain accurate information on STD, including the limitations of condoms in prevention?
- o understand the limitations of contraceptive technology and implications of failure?
- o recognize and analyze pressures toward sexual activity (media, peers, hormones, etc.)?
- o discover the need to set personal limits, and discuss the implications of various limits?
- o personally, privately set limits?
- o examine non-sexual reasons for intercourse and to generate more positive alternatives?
- o understand the many decisions that have to be made in order to make a responsible decision about having intercourse?
- o discuss values and evaluate the value of a value?
- o view abstinence in terms of the the freedoms it affords (rather than as a limitation)?
- o conceptualize abstinence (postponing, waiting, chastity) as the most desirable lifestyle (rather than as a birth and disease control measure)?
- o become sensitive to the language they are using (e.g., double standard, degrading)?
- o personalize and connect concepts to real-life situations and previous insights?
- o develop a sense of self-efficacy (I can-ness) with regard to postponing intercourse, avoiding exploitation in relationships, avoiding other "at-risk" behaviors?
- o become more wise and "reflective" rather than "reflexive" decision makers?

### **How can I as a teacher...**

- o reinforce universal values (equality, honesty, promise keeping, respect, responsibility, self-control, and social justice) as a foundation for healthy relationships?
- o involve students in planning the program?
- o welcome parents and other adults as allies?
- o best involve parents in planning and in presenting the program?
- o communicate important aspects of the program to parents and work with them to find ways they can participate?
- o secure maximum attendance at a meeting of parents (e.g., provide child care)?
- o use activities to facilitate teen / parent communication?
- o build in opportunities to develop self-esteem (especially in girls)?
- o reinforce those in healthy relationships and those practicing abstinence?
- o integrate concepts of sexuality and relationships with other themes in health?
- o integrate concepts of sexuality and relationships with learning in other subject areas (e.g., science, ethics, social studies, language learning)?
- o use health and well-being as an integrative theme?
- o present accurate information on contraceptives and prophylactics (e.g., including failure rates and side-effects for teens) and present this in a concrete way (e.g., dice)?
- o present "despairing" information (e.g., limitations on contraceptive effectiveness, possibility of breakup) in such a way that the chances of leading the student to despair are minimized?
- o be accurate but not excessive in discussion of negative consequences? (The truth is scary enough.)
- o inspire students to "make a difference" in the peer group?
- o employ more engaging and learner-centered strategies?
- o involve students as instructors? Which students?
- o make abstract concepts more concrete? Which images and analogies will be effective?
- o wisely and cautiously work with local resource people?
- o involve males in a positive way?
- o use groupings wisely (e.g., same sex groups under some circumstances)?

### **How can I avoid...**

- o statements and activities that may be seen as normalizing sexual activity among teens?
- o speaking as though students are sexually active?
- o instructing students about secretive practices that may erode the trust of parents?
- o creating an illusion that students have all the information necessary for responsible sexual decisions?

## Appendix 10.1: Courses, Nature of Journals and Significance

| <b>Year</b> | <b>Concurrent Course</b>                                   | <b>Nature of Journal</b>   | <b>Significance to Research</b>   |
|-------------|--|--|---|
| #1          | <b>Philosophy of Leadership and Administration</b>         | Reflections on topics emerging from discussion, text, and research. Dialogue with colleague and instructor.  | Illuminated and sensitized me to moral and ethical aspects of evaluation and leadership, particularly in educational change, and in the context of community development process.   |
|             | <b>Issues in Human Sexuality</b>                           | Reflections on issues emerging from readings, media, and research. Dialogue with self and instructor.  | Examination of controversial sexuality and SE issues which were or would be encountered in Bruckton. This enabled me to better understand stakeholders who had opposing perspectives and work more effectively with them. It also gave me an opportunity to critically examine and understand my own views and the strength with which I held them.   |
| #2          | <b>Organizational Analysis</b>                             | Reflections on organizational images and dynamics from text, past experiences, and research.   | Analysis of organizational dynamics and my interactions with people in Bruckton as they related to community development of the project, particularly the stakeholders' network. This analysis occurred before the network began and in the early stages its development. Key themes included analysis of language, using metaphors and images to look at organizations, and conflict at the interpersonal and organizational levels. |
|             | <b>Facilitating Empowerment of Others Through Research</b> | Description and analysis of "lived experiences" in learning, teaching, and researching. Experimentation with phenomenological writing.   | This journal experience led to an analysis of the major inquiry paradigms and a synthesis of the "eclectic approach" in this study. I also became more sensitive to issues of language, professional learning, and stakeholder participation in Bruckton.   |
| #3          | <b>Action Research (Theory)</b>                            | Four quadrant format emphasizing relationality:  | I used this journal to examine issues in Action Research, to better understand the theory/practice gaps, and synthesize the "problem position" in Bruckton as I saw it at that time. Key themes included analyzing conflicts, language, listening, leaving, and the relationship between action research and community development. I also took the opportunity to explore and test the relevance of "post-modernist" concepts.       |
|             | <b>and Action Research (Practicum)</b>                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• experience of the theory/practice gap</li> <li>• reflection and examination of influences</li> <li>• perspective of "the other"</li> <li>• interaction / dialogue with self, instructor and colleagues</li> </ul> Records and reflections of research activities. |   |
| #4          | <b>Not in conjunction with any courses.</b>                | Records and reflections of research activities and new data.   | I used the journal to record new information and reflections, including activities of developments that flowed from the study or might inform the analysis.   |





**END**

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**FIN**