

APPRAISAL: SYNTHESIS

Title : Health & Family Life Education, Infusion Guide, Grade 6, Draft for limited use (to accompany curriculum guide)

Type of documents : Material for teacher

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“Health and Family Life Education, Infusion Guide, Grade 6, Draft for limited use (to accompany Curriculum Guide)” is a document edited by the Ministry of Education of Guyana in collaboration with UNICEF in 2005. It is made to assist teachers as they start the process of delivering life skills based Health and Family Life Education (HFLE) by infusion. The guide contains 3 Units: (i) Me, Myself and I, (ii) What is There to Know, and (iii) Launching Out. Each unit is divided into 5 topics developed in relation to the Units subject: (i) Education, (ii) Family, (iii) Health, (iv) Human Rights, and (v) Human Sexuality. This document is part of a set of manuals to provide teachers with an integrated and consistent approach to the application of values education, and to develop a Life Skills, Health and Family Life Education, Guidance and Citizenship curriculum using the five themes of: Education, Family, Health, Human Right and Human Sexuality. Also see documents 605a - 605h2 (according to the grade). This Infusion Guide (to accompany curriculum guide) should be used jointly with its Curriculum Guide (Life Skills, Health & Family Life and Citizenship Education, Curriculum Guide, Grade 6, Draft) which is unfortunately not available.

Note

This document is part of a set of manuals to provide teachers with an integrated and consistent approach to the application of values education, and to develop a Life Skills,

Health and Family Life Education, Guidance and Citizenship curriculum using the five themes of: Education, Family, Health, Human Rights and Human Sexuality.

Strengths

1) The aim of this Life Skills, Health & Family Life Education and Citizenship Curriculum Guide is to provide teachers with an integrated and consistent approach to the application of values education. The document has an official endorsement because it is developed by the Ministry of Education in collaboration with the Ministry of Health, the CARICOM multi-Agency and UNICEF.

2) The material promotes clearly cultural identity of Guyana so that examples and subjects are adapted to the cultural and community context. It suggests lessons focusing on the fact that there are many ethnic groups in Guyana society, that each came from a different continent and contributed to the development of their country, their community. It also provides courses where creolese is promoted and compared to English.

3) Human Right is a specific theme in the HFLE curriculum in Guyana and it is developed in each unit of the document. Unit 1 addresses the topic “Child Labour”, Unit 2 is about “Non Discrimination” and Unit 3 addresses the “Prejudice” problem.

4) The question of drugs is addressed twice in the topic “Not ready for sex” and “Substance use and abuse”. It focuses on drugs use and abuse, ill effect of controlled substances when used when it’s not prescribed, effect of illegal drugs and its implications for society and presents briefly on the most popular drugs (marijuana, heroin and cocaine).

5) Good points are the description of Life Skills at the beginning of the document and the promotion of creative work in class.

Weakness / aspects to be improved

1) HIV and AIDS education is addressed but very briefly and as a subject amongst others (not as an important topics relating to human sexuality or health. The choice to include the subject into the science discipline is not really appropriate. Indeed HIV and AIDS education

is included discreetly and in a very restrictive way covering the topic “Prejudice” inside the theme Human Rights.

Suggestions for improvement

→ If HIV and AIDS education has indeed, a scientific part, it is not the most and certainly not the only point to discuss concerning this problematic. It should have been useful to also add HIV and AIDS in the theme Human Sexuality or Health and don't provide an only scientific vision of the subject but include it in a broad dimension, with the other academic disciplines. The lesson named “Facts of Aids” is divided into 3 points: the first explains that the HIV cannot be contracted through casual contact, the second focuses on the fact that HIV cannot be contracted through sexual contact neither but only refers in example to violent and unwanted sexual intercourse (rape, sodomy or incest). It should have been useful to recall that HIV and AIDS can be contracted also with a consenting partner that we are in love with. Finally, the last point emphasizes on the need to recognize that not everyone who develops AIDS is at fault, to make pupils able to empathize with the victims. Sex is addressed in the topics “Not ready for sex” and “Prejudice”, jointly to the drugs problem. The components “Abstinence-Behaviour faithful-Condom use” approach is not explained, sexuality is described in a negative way so abstinence is the only solution suggested. The material should also provide the tools to support the learning to identify myths and misconceptions related to STIs, HIV & AIDS, sexual and reproductive health and rights and to analyse common community practices and beliefs. This will help to challenge beliefs and practices that have a negative impact, and strengthen those that have a positive impact on sexual and reproductive health and the prevention of HIV. A balance should be found between what crucial skills and knowledge for young people living in a world with HIV are and what is acceptable to the community

2) The material does not provide specific allocated time for each lesson. It neither includes means to assess learners before the programme but only contains ideas of evaluation after completing the programme.

Suggestions for improvement

→ It would be interesting to develop an outcomes-based curriculum (to specify outcomes that learners are expected to achieve in specific subjects or areas by the end of a specific stage of schooling). Teachers have to check if pupils can accomplish several tasks or

understand new behaviours, skills, knowledge or attitudes. The process should be more elaborated for example integrating different assessment tools (close-ended questions, analysis, role play or simulations, learner projects.) It is very important to give feedback to learners and other teachers about learner's progress to be able to improve the efficacy of their work. In order to prepare the development of each lesson or unit and the assessment, teachers should follow this framework: develop learning objective/ outcome, assessment question, criteria (to determine and to know if the learner has acquired a certain level of knowledge, skills or adopted a specific attitude or behaviour) and possible assessment tools. If there is no specific allocation of time and no formal assessment of learning outcome, it would become easy to ignore and neglect the subject, especially when curricula are already over crowded.

3) Content, theme, method and are not always coherent. The manual covers a wide range of topics organized under 3 Units: "Me, Myself and I". "What is there to know" and "Launching Out". There is no preface and learning objectives are divided into topic, life skill and core subject tabs. The latter is divided according to the 4 different academic disciplines: language arts, mathematics, social studies and science. It looks like a very brief teaching program which is not always clear because the link between the topics and the different disciplines are difficult to find, in particular concerning mathematics.

Suggestions for improvement

→ It should be useful to improve logical and coherence between the topic, the theme and the discipline to facilitate the readability and the understanding of the documents. It should be useful to explain, maybe in a short introduction before each topic, the link between the Unit, the theme and the topic because it is not evident sometimes. Finally, it should be useful to add more details on the integration of life skills education and to explain how teachers have to proceed to integrate life skills into mathematics for example. The points are just presented as key words but the manual do not explain, develop or inform. It only suggests point to debate and thinking in classroom. Therefore it focuses a little bit too briefly on those issues.

4) The content of the material does not address gender issues even if some topics, like non-discrimination, could have easily included this problematic.

Suggestions for improvement

→ It is important to promote clearly equity between boys and girls and challenging stereotypes or gender-based cultural practice. It is essential for children to acquire and integrate early respect and equity between men and women. Teachers may, for example, suggest activities where learners have to know the difference between gender roles culturally determined and natural difference between men and women.

5) Human Right is a specific theme in the HFLE curriculum in Guyana and it is developed in each unit of the document. Unit 1 addresses the topic “child labour”, Unit 2 is about “non-discrimination” and Unit 3 addresses the “Prejudice” problematic. Maybe because those topics are very broad, they are treated in a very limited way.

Suggestions for improvement

→ The contents should be more precise on the fact that each person has rights and duties due to the simple fact that she/he is a human being. Teachers and learners should understand human rights and learn to respect his/her and others' rights. Also in the context of HIV and AIDS, a learner should know how to overcome stigma and discrimination, show empathy and respect, support families and communities affected by HIV & AIDS and contribute to their wellbeing. It is important to develop human right theme because it serves undoubtedly as a firm foundation to the learning process in general.

6) This module is very general and has to be used with other more precise documents about the specific issues (in this case HIV and AIDS in particular.) Indeed, it does not explain, develop or inform but it just suggests keys point to develop a lesson. It is based on the assumption that teacher and student already have basic knowledge on those issues (which is probably the case at this age) but nevertheless it would have been useful to recall the most important and basic points.

Suggestions for improvement

→ The range of pedagogical activities proposed in the curriculum is not explained. It should be useful to explain why using one activity can lead to a certain result and using another one can lead to a different one. Some important and basic points about specific issues have to

be recall in a more precise way when some topics or life skills introduce them. They could be add at the end of the module, in annex for example, or in references, to be sure that all teachers and learners have access to essential information and do not need do search them by themselves. For example, in each HIV and AIDS lessons, HIV transmission and protection, treatment, discrimination, VCT and myths should be briefly recall or/and accessible.

Internal consistency

The texts are very short and consist in an enumeration of different points in tabs. This might be confusing in particular when the document is not accompanied by a curriculum guide.

Transferability issues and more suggestions for adapting the manual

Some of the topics addressed in the document are specifically adapted to Guyana culture and societies. Therefore the material will need to be adapted if it has to be used in another context because it is currently designed specifically for learners in Guyana. In general, contents and presentation of the document really need to be improved.