



PivotPoint
Practical Tools
for Changing Times

developed and presented by

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Social Skillfulness, Sexuality, & Disability

*Becoming Askable:
A Brief Exploration*

&

F.L.A.S.H.

*(Family Life & Sexual Health)
A Curriculum Overview*

Agenda:

Ground Rules, Housekeeping

Social Skillfulness, Sexuality, & Disability

- Birds & Bees
- Because
- Social Skillfulness
- Taking a Stand: Ambiguous Questionnaire
- Vocabulary
- Questions & Strategies

F.L.A.S.H.

- Overview & Background
- Class Structure
- Assessment
- Content
- Resources

Q&A

BIRDS & BEES

How do people learn about the birds and the bees?

How did I learn?

What feelings did you experience as a result of the way you learned about the B & B's?

How do many people learn?

Challenges faced by people with disabilities in learning about sexuality in typical ways.

COAT OF VALUES

Our values and attitudes about sexuality are influenced by 6 things:

1. sexual instinct or drive
2. cultural or religious environment - influenced our ancestors and are passed on to us
3. personality development - quality of understanding and tenderness we experienced as a child - or guilt and shame
4. Immediate environment of family or peers - How do family members express affection? How do they verbalize feelings? How do they view their male/female roles?
5. Direct education - the manner in which we learn about sex influences the way we respond. If much of what we learn is misinformation, we may act based on that
6. Highly charged sexual experiences of a traumatic nature - rape, incest, repeated harsh punishment for masturbation or innocent experimentation

BECAUSE: 9 Reasons Why Sex Education is Important

Why is it important to include a social skills/sexuality component in the overall education plan for people with disabilities? There are many reasons, nine of which are discussed in this section. And as a special educator committed to a quality educational experience, you probably have your own personal reasons, in addition to those mentioned here.

The primary reason though, has to do with dancing.....

Dancing

"I'm sitting in 'Still Life in Fremont', a coffeeshop at 4:02 p.m. on a Wednesday, watching people and thinking thoughts. It suddenly strikes me that most of the people in this coffeeshop already know how to interact appropriately in public. They order, pay, collect their coffee, find a clean empty table, sit, remove coats and hats, settle in.... relax.....talk to their companions if they have one, most read or write, or just look around. In fact, people look up all the time, look around to "check things out", to decide if everything is still OK, go back to their thoughts. When they're through with their coffee or their conversation or their time, they clear their table, put on their coats, pack up and go. The population changes every few minutes. The subtleties of interactions changes too. Things are not constant.

And so it goes. It's kind of like a social dance, that I think we take for granted, assuming that the wit, the grace, the skill with which we handle our casual interactions comes easily to everyone, staring and puzzling when it seems hard. Why is it so easy? Because we've practiced. More importantly, because we've had an opportunity to risk, to blow it, to pick ourselves up, analyze what went wrong, vow never to let that happen again, and then to move on with our lives, dancing our dance.

A few obvious observations.

People who use wheelchairs dance differently, but they still dance. People who don't see the subtleties of our culture, who don't pick up as easily on cues, who learn with more difficulty, also dance - albeit with different steps.

AND.....why are we in special services? Why are we spending this section of our lives helping people who dance differently to dance? Is it for the money? Who are we kidding! Is it for the satisfaction of helping others? Maybe. But I think that fundamentally, we do what we do because we believe that ALL people can dance, have a right to dance. And we share a vision of a world where the dance steps don't really matter, just the dancing."

Here are nine more reasons why this is important:

•BECAUSE everyone has a right to know about and understand the workings of their own bodies. A young woman thought that she was bleeding to death, dying, on the occasion of her first menstrual period. She was terrified and traumatized by the experience, largely due to lack of knowledge about the basic biological workings of her own body. A young man was extremely concerned when he began to develop hair in his genital area and have erections. He didn't know who to talk to about it, or what to say. It was just plain scary. These normal body changes during puberty shouldn't be scary. It would not have been difficult to prevent this fear. All it takes is a willingness to teach and be "askable".

•BECAUSE adolescence can be a very confusing time. Do you remember the emotional roller coaster ride, the intensity of your feelings as you alternately celebrated and endured puberty and all the changes that went with it? Do you remember asserting your independence? Do you remember how hard it was sometimes to understand what was happening to you as you grew up? It's no different for people with special needs - except that they often have fewer naturally occurring resources available for support in understanding the confusion of adolescence.

•BECAUSE people with learning challenges often don't have access to typical ways of learning about their sexuality. How did you learn about the birds and the bees? When this question comes up, people often giggle. The most common responses include: a memorable class, maybe in school, maybe in church, a memorable movie, book or magazine article, friends telling stories and jokes, sharing hearsay in locker rooms, on church retreats, at camp and at

slumber parties, some "sexy" magazines, maybe from observing life cycles on a farm or with a family pet, and sometimes from parents. Often there were as many myths as there were facts in our learning. This learning may have been quite colored with feelings of embarrassment, shame or guilt.....

Special Education students often don't have knowledgeable peers, and have fewer social times with them, at any rate. They may not understand or pick up on the subtle messages in a regular class. They may not initiate conversations or pursue leads or "teachable moments". And they may not read or have access to easily understood materials that would help them with the things they want/need to know. They may also be ill-equipped in their vocabulary, and not know how to ask the questions they have! There's no question about these issues being tough for parents to talk about.

So it becomes important for the special educator to create a functional opportunity for learning about this subject, one which supports family involvement and shows kids how to get their questions answered in the future.

•BECAUSE people's behaviors are often labelled as "sexual" or "exploitive" or "deviant" when the reality of the situation is that the behaviors are very normal and appropriate - they're just occurring in the wrong place at the wrong time with the wrong people. If someone doesn't understand the difference between public and private, then "normal" behaviors like masturbation, scratching of genitals, dressing, or grooming may occur in the "wrong" place - according to our cultural rules. Similarly, if someone doesn't understand that there are different ways of greeting different people - depending upon your relationship with them, and that it is considered inappropriate to kiss a stranger, but usually okay to kiss a parent, then their behavior may be seen as "bad" or "wrong" or "deviant".

If someone is chronologically 15, but emotionally and socially more like a typical 4 year old, what might be typical, (and under other circumstances normal and healthy) sex play with a 4 year old neighbor will be totally inappropriate and possibly illegal. The good news, however, is that these subtle social distinctions can be taught, with social skills and social skillfulness as the happy result.

•BECAUSE people who don't easily read subtle social cues and messages become vulnerable to abuse and exploitation, especially when they are living more frequently in community settings. Years ago, people with disabilities were often segregated and kept apart from other people. Their environments and their days were often highly structured "for their own safety and protection". There was, at least, an illusion of protection...though, in reality, many were exploited in these institutional settings. Then time passed and "normalization" became a desired goal, with integration into community settings, educational mainstreaming and a much more visible public profile. While many people have been taught to use transportation and money, to order in a restaurant, and to handle many daily living skills - often there has been a gap in their education. They are still not always taught self-protection skills. A lack of awareness of safe and unsafe circumstances, an inability to read "between the lines" of many social messages, and a lack of decision-making and assertiveness skills has gotten many people into unfortunate situations. Again, however, the good news is that these skills can be taught.

•BECAUSE self-protection skills will not be used if a person is so lonely, so eager for friendship and intimacy that even a bad relationship looks better than none. People who haven't had opportunities to practice friendship and dating skills (and to get hurt and learn from it in a relatively safe setting), can find themselves living independently in loneliness and isolation. They may choose not to use the self-protection skills they've been taught. It is vital that they learn not only how to say "No" to exploitive relationships, but also how to initiate, recognize and cultivate (say "yes" to) healthy relationships.

•BECAUSE AIDS is a very real threat to all of us, and knowledge is the weapon available for prevention. People need to know and understand what AIDS is, what AIDS does, how you get AIDS and how you avoid getting AIDS. Until there's a cure, there's education.

•BECAUSE sometimes, people with special needs are not seen by others as being sexual. It is a fact that all humans grow and develop. That we all go through puberty,

experience body changes and develop sexually. That our hormones go through growth spurts, as well, prompting desires and other strong feelings. Many people with special needs learn at a different pace from typical students. But in most cases, their hormones, their physiological functions mature at about the same time as everyone else. They experience the same hormone surges, strong feelings and desires. They are indeed sexual people. It is critical to provide them with an opportunity to understand and manage their emerging sexuality.

•BECAUSE full, rich lives include healthy choices and an acceptance of who we are as a male or a female, an acceptance of our sexuality as part of our total personhood. The primary goal of any sex education program is to assist people to develop a clear understanding of their sexuality, one that directly contributes to positive self-esteem. With this self-esteem comes confidence and strength. The importance of feeling good about who you are as a person cannot be overstated, for this sense of well-being leads to better choices in all aspects of life.

***NOTE:** This is an excerpt from the introduction to Special Education FLASH: Secondary, 1991, written by Jane Stangle. This comprehensive sexuality and social skills curriculum for teenagers and young adults with disabilities is available for \$35 (plus 15% postage), from: Seattle-King County Department of Public Health, Family Planning Publications, 110 Prefontaine Avenue South, Suite 300, Seattle Wa., 98104. For more information, training or consultation contact Jane Mackay, at 250-505-5019.*

My thoughts about this...

Social Skillfulness

•excerpt from *Special Education FLASH: Secondary*, by Jane Stangle.

Loneliness and isolation are critical issues in the lives of people with disabilities. This loneliness is frequently the result of inadequate social skills and non-existent social support networks. As teachers (and parents) of adolescents with disabilities, you have an opportunity to impact this by increasing your focus on social skillfulness, and your support for the development of socialization networks which will last beyond school years.

Dorothy Griffiths speaks to the need for teaching so that social skills become social skillfulness. Griffiths says:

"Skillfulness in a given social interaction depends not only upon the individual's being able to perform a particular social skills behavior but also knowing when, where, with whom, and why that behavior should be used in that context either to bring about a social reward or to avoid social punishment. Thus, social skillfulness is both a process of learning social skills and learning to apply those skills in a socially skilled way, which is why social skills must be taught in a context."

In order to really learn about friendships, students must have opportunities to practice their newly developing skills. In order to be able to discriminate between strangers, acquaintances, and friends, students must be exposed to many different people, and have many interactions. We must provide students with opportunities to learn about social skillfulness in both school and non-school settings.

Socialization Networks

In order for students to understand what it means to be a friend, they must have opportunities to meet people and develop friendships. Often, for people with disabilities, these socialization opportunities are few and far between. They may be so closely supervised and structured that spontaneous interactions are inadvertently discouraged. This is why it is critical to build socialization networks, both formal and informal, for your students.

Many socialization networks already exist in the lives of your students. Many students participate in clubs or activities like Special Olympics or People First (a self-advocacy organization with local chapters). Others have friends at school in both special and regular education.

Your role as teacher is to assist your students to identify socialization opportunities that already exist, to encourage and support their participation, to inject enthusiasm when interest lags, and to create opportunities for people who are without them. Additionally, your students need to know;

- A.** how to enter groups appropriately, so they will not be rejected immediately because of a social skills "faux pas",
- B.** how to initiate and conduct themselves in interactions,
- C.** how to leave situations, and
- D.** how to handle rejection.

Ambiguous Questionnaire

by Lynne Muccigrosso

Place "A" (Agree) "D" (Disagree) or "U" (Unsure) in front of each statement after the number.

1. ____ Parents are the best sex educators of their children.
2. ____ Withholding sexual knowledge from individuals will deter them from participating in sexual activity.
3. ____ We should never refuse to let people with disabilities hug us because that may be the only form of expressing emotion they can make.
4. ____ There is a connection between high self esteem and responsible sexual expression.
5. ____ Birth control should be readily available to people with disabilities.
6. ____ Teachable moments present themselves at unexpected times and are important to capitalize on.
7. ____ The most effective sex education is a formally delivered explanation.
8. ____ Most parents are too overprotective of their sons/daughters who are disabled.
9. ____ Sterilization is the best method of birth control for people with disabilities.
10. ____ I should teach sex education in a way that respects and supports students who are homosexual .
11. ____ The best way to protect a person with disabilities from sexual abuse is to supervise them closely at all times.
12. ____ When a person with disabilities flirts with a staff member, it is all right for the staff member to flirt back.
13. ____ Sex education needs to be presented very explicitly to people with disabilities.
14. ____ Each person should be allowed to express his or her sexuality in any way as long as it doesn't hurt another person.
15. ____ A teacher should teach his/her own values related to sexuality if they conform with the general consensus of those around them.
16. ____ People with disabilities can be taught to be less vulnerable to sexual abuse and exploitation.

The Language of Sexuality

Vocabulary Activity

There are 4 types of sexual language:

1. **The language of science** - "cervix, coitus", designed for precision
2. **Childhood language** - "weewee, number 2" designed to hide embarrassment and circumvent confrontation
3. **Street Language** - "fuck" or "cock" designed to describe vigorously and sometimes demeaningly.
4. **Common discourse** - words or phrases such as "making love" or "having sex" designed to communicate plainly

Using Language Effectively

Receive any language offered (hopefully without showing disapproval), correct by responding with appropriate medical terminology. Staff should agree on terminology and be consistent across the program. Consider developing a glossary.

Strategies

- Listen carefully to what the person says and also to the communicative intent of behaviors.
- Allow the person to define the problem/issue.
- Use simple language.
- Use many different approaches.
- Use repetition, review often.
- When watching TV, discuss relationships, behaviors, social skills of the characters.
- Don't correct until you know the source of the misinformation - you may set yourself up!
- Provide acceptable (for your environment) vocabulary to replace/augment slang or inappropriate language.
- Take full advantage of teachable moments.
- Be an askable person. Declare your askability!
- Make resources available
- Get support for yourself - network with other parents/care providers. Use the phone!
- Write social skills into the IEP or IHP or PSP or IPP or whatever the "plan" is called
- Congratulate yourself for caring!!

Question Answering Strategies

Handling Hard Questions

1. Receiving the Question

- affirm the asker - be sure the asker knows you appreciate the question ("That's a good question.")
- clarify the question - be sure you understand what is being asked. ("Are you asking me.....?")
- think about the communicative intent of behaviors - what is the question behind the action? Some people understand more than they are able to express, but can nod or shake their head to confirm your guesses - so check out your guess with the person. ("I wonder if you're asking me about.....?")
- think about the language used - does the person have the vocabulary needed to ask the question? ("Do you mean.....?")
- think about the situation where the question comes up. What else is going on in that person's world at that time. Remember that we live in context - not in sound bites!

2. Considering Your Response

- Is the asker looking for a one-word answer or a long detailed lesson? There are many answers to the question "where did I come from?". Simple answers include: "the hallway", "home from work", "Toledo", "the hospital", "from inside your mother's body". A detailed explanation of sperm and egg and reproduction is not always wanted or needed.*
- You might include medically appropriate language as a substitute for any slang used in the question. Consider useful words that the person might add to their vocabulary.*
- Be sure you're answering private questions in private and respectful ways. You may want to arrange a different time to talk about some questions.*
- You don't have to know all the answers. There are resources available to help you. If you don't know, say so - don't bluff. Then go find out and return with the answer. You will both have learned something!*

3. Responding & Following Up

- Remember to check for understanding as you answer - sometimes a little misunderstood information can be **very** dangerous.
- After you've answered one question - be prepared for related questions - and if they don't come up, and it feels right - bring them up! This is using the teachable moment.
- Check back frequently, to be sure the asker still understands - look for behaviors that demonstrate understanding of the answer.

Strategies:

1. Give the person reinforcement for expressing the problem. eg: *"I'm glad you felt ok about telling me"*.
2. Sit as physically close to the person as is comfortable for **both** of you to encourage a confidential atmosphere.
3. Draw the person out... open ended questions work best.
4. Remember that most people come for permission.
5. Don't say *"what is your problem?"* This already labels the person's concern as a problem.
6. Use the person's language whenever necessary for communication.

Kinds of Questions

Questions about sexuality and social matters may seem to come from "out of the blue" It's helpful, therefore, to build a repertoire of response approaches so that you feel prepared to effectively handle hard questions as they arise. Keep in mind that there are basically five types of questions.

1. Requests for information
2. "Am I Normal" Question
3. Permission-seeking questions
4. Shock questions
5. Value question

(The following section was reprinted, with permission, from 7/8 FLASH & Beyond Reproduction: Tips and Techniques for Teaching Sensitive Family Life Education Issues, published by Network Publications, a division of ETR Associates, 1983, Santa Cruz, Ca.)

1. Requests For Information

If you know the answer, fine. If not, it's okay to say "I don't know," and then refer the student to the appropriate source. Are there some values issues within the context of the question? If yes, make sure various points of view are presented. Is the question, although informational, one which you consider inappropriate for group discussion? Problems can be avoided if you have established in the context of the ground rules, an agreement such as: "All questions are valid. However I will have to make the final decision about the appropriateness of each questions for total group discussion. If you ask a question which I choose not to answer, it is not because it is a bad question. I may feel that it is not of interest to everyone here or that I am not prepared to lead a discussion around that issue. Please see me later if this happens, so that I can try to answer your question privately."

2. "Am I Normal" Questions

These questions generally focus on concerns about people's bodies and the emotional and physical changes they are experiencing. Validate their concern, e.g., "Many young people worry that....." and provide information about what they can expect to happen during the adolescent years. Refer them to parents, clergy, family physician, community resources, school counselor for further discussion, if appropriate.

3. Permission-Seeking Questions

These come in two common forms, and may seek your permission to participate in a particular behavior, e.g., "Is it normal....?" or "Did you.....when you were growing up?" Avoid the use of the word "normal" when answering questions. Normal for some is morally unsanctionable for others. Present what is known

medically, legally, etc. (the facts) and discuss the moral, religious and emotional implications, making sure all points of view are covered. Refer students to parents, trusted adult or clergy for discussion of moral/religious questions. Establish in the context of class ground rules, an agreement related to discussion of personal behavior, such as: "No discussion of personal behavior during class." If and when you get a question about your personal behavior, you can remind participants of this ground rule and redirect the discussion to one of the pros and cons (religious, moral, medical, emotional, legal, interpersonal, etc.) of the particular behavior in question. Again, refer to parents and clergy for further discussion of religious/moral questions.

4. Shock Questions

Again remind participants of the ground rule related to appropriate questions for discussion. Sometimes the shock comes not from the content of the question, but the vocabulary used. You can reword the question to defuse it, especially if you have previously established in the context of class ground rules, a rule related to vocabulary, such as: "I will be trying to balance two conflicting goals; I want to communicate with you. Sometimes you may not know the correct word for something you have a question about. Use whatever word you know to ask that question and I will answer using the standard (medical) word."

5. Value Questions

Sometimes people ask directly about right and wrong (e.g. "How old should a person be to have a baby?") and other times they ask fact questions that have value components. In either case, we recommend this protocol for responding:

A. Affirm the Asker.

"Good question" "I'm glad you asked." "A lot of people wonder that." "That's an important question."

B. Identify it as a Belief Question.

"That's a belief question, not a fact question." or "That's partly a belief question."

C. Answer the Factual Part if There is One.

"You asked how old a person should be to have a baby. First let's look at the facts. The healthiest age, for mother and baby, is the 20's and early 30's."

D. Help the Group Describe the Range of Beliefs.

"Different people believe different things about when a person is ready to become a parent. What do you think some people believe?" NOTE: Make sure a variety of viewpoints are described. This may mean adding some the class doesn't think of.

E. DISCRETIONARY: State Your Own Belief.....if it's a relatively universally held belief.

"As long as you asked my opinion, I don't think it would be fair or smart to have a baby at your age 12 or 13 years old."

F. Refer to Parents, Clergy and Other Trusted Adults.

"Why don't you check with your family (clergy, Trusted Adult friend) tonight. Find out what your folks believe about that, or what your church or synagogue, temple or mosque teaches, if you belong to one."

My thoughts on this:

FLASH <http://www.metrokc.gov/health/famplan/flash/>

<http://www.siecus.org/pubs/biblio/bibs0009.html>

Special Education: Secondary F.L.A.S.H. (Family Life and Sexual Health): A Curriculum for Grades 7—12*

Jane Stangle, M.Ed.

This comprehensive program is designed for adolescents in special education programs. It addresses the physical, emotional, and safety aspects of sexuality education; encourages parent and family involvement; and includes a section on preparing community-based sexuality education programs. Lesson plans cover relationships, communication, avoiding exploitation, anatomy, reproduction, sexually transmitted diseases, and AIDS. The curriculum includes resource lists, guidelines for answering students' questions, recommended audiovisuals, teacher preparation suggestions, and masters for all transparencies and student handouts. 1991; \$40; *Family Planning Publications*.

ED345414 EC301174

Special Education: Secondary F.L.A.S.H. Family Life and Sexual Health. A Curriculum for Grades 7-12. Stangle, Jane

Author Affiliation: Seattle-King County Dept. of Public Health, Seattle, WA.(BBB24152); Seattle Public Schools, WA.(ZBQ79200)

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Availability: Seattle-King County Department of Public Health, Family Planning Publications, 110 Prefontaine Ave., South, Suite 300, Seattle, WA 98104 (\$35.00 plus postage and handling).

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This curriculum guide covers family life and sexual health (FLASH) in 28 lesson plans and is intended for special education students in grades 7-12. The curriculum is an adaptation of one developed for nondisabled students. Introductory material for the teacher offers guidelines on such topics as knowing one's state and local guidelines, planning a sexuality unit, preparing administrators and parents, responding to questions, and including the program in the student's Individualized Education Program.

The lessons typically include specific objectives, materials needed, an agenda with several activities, sample communications to a "trusted adult," worksheets, and handouts.

Topics addressed by the lesson plans include the following: the difference between public and private; self esteem; gender identification; families; friendship and dating; helpers, acquaintances, and strangers; nonverbal communication; assertiveness; asking for what you want; hearing "no"; saying "no"; decision making; touching; exploitation and getting help; anatomy; puberty; sexual health and hygiene; reproduction; pregnancy; parenthood; sexual decision making; birth control; germs and risk; sexually transmitted diseases; and Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome; and resources. Seven appendices offer guidelines of Washington State, checklists, assessment tools, and resource lists.

Introduction

This curriculum is designed for use in special education and mainstreamed classrooms. It was written based on years of practical teaching experience in this subject area and provides functional teacher tools for students with diverse learning challenges. Special Education F.L.A.S.H.: Secondary has been piloted in a wide variety of classrooms. It is an adaptation of the 5/6, 7/8, and 9/10 F.L.A.S.H. (Family Life And Sexual Health) curriculums written by Beth Reis of the Seattle-King County Department of Public Health, Family Planning Program.

- **The goals of the curriculum are to assist in the education of persons:**

- who are knowledgeable about human development and reproduction,
- who respect and appreciate themselves, their families and all persons,
- who will neither exploit others nor allow themselves to be exploited.

- **A word about philosophy . . .**

No curriculum is neutral and objective. Education itself implies a certain philosophy (i.e., that knowledge is preferable to ignorance). Neutrality is not even the ideal. If education could be stripped of beliefs, the skeleton would be of little worth.

The schools DO, however, have an obligation to reflect community beliefs, and they must be honest about the particular premises of the curriculum. Where there is no general agreement on a particular issue in the community, the teacher's place is to point that out, to explain honestly the several conflicting viewpoints, and to encourage the students to discuss these at home.

- **The primary beliefs inherent in this curriculum supplement are these:**

- A person's unique qualities are to be celebrated.
- Everyone is entitled to talk and to be taken seriously.
- Everyone is entitled to "pass" (not share personal beliefs, feelings or information in class).
- The human body is precious and beautiful.
- Everyone needs to love and feel loved.
- No one is entitled to treat another person simply as a means of selfish gratification; coercion and manipulation are wrong.
- Premature sexual intimacy can hurt a person physically, emotionally and socially.
- Honest communication is fundamental in all relationships (parent/child, friend/friend, boyfriend/girlfriend, etc.)
- People have a responsibility to learn as much as possible about themselves and the people they care about. In order to meet this responsibility, they must have the opportunity to receive honest answers to honest questions.

How to Use Special Education FLASH

A. Starting With The Student

Chances are, your students are already letting you know, through their behaviors that they are ready for this component of their education to be addressed. When we look beyond behaviors, to the communicative intent beneath, we see many questions and concerns..... "What's happening to me?" "Why do I feel like this?" "Where did I come from?" "Am I normal?" etc.

It may be tempting, as a teacher, to tackle the most obvious "problems" first. After all, they seem to be the most pressing. But if we focus only on the student's deficits and needs, we miss some very exciting positive aspects of this type of teaching. That's why it is so important for you, as the teacher to consider your student's strengths, and the positive goals of this unit first. Your teaching will address both needs and learning challenges, but your focus must remain firmly positive.

It may be hard to determine "how much is enough" for some of your students. The level of information you choose to provide will depend largely on your sense of your student's ability to understand the information. Keep in mind that if you teach at "too high a level", in most instances, your students will let you know through their behaviors, questions or by "tuning out" that you missed finding the appropriate level for your approach **this** time. Sometimes it takes more than one pass, before the plane finds the appropriate altitude in order to land.....and it may take more than one effort on your part to make the material understandable, learnable for your class.

Like the airplane, flying at too high an altitude to land will not do any harm, you'll just need to try again. Flying at too low an altitude can be more of a problem. Condescending does more damage in the long run than having unrealistically high expectations of student's sophistication level. But there are some tools that can help you gauge the appropriate level for your teaching on the first pass.

B. Assessment

Pretests and Postests provide useful information for teachers in all subject areas. Pretests identify gaps of knowledge, and postests can help to evaluate the effectiveness of the teaching and learning that occurs. Assessments also provide useful documentation for student files, and can be used as learning experiences in and of themselves.

The assessment tool included in Special Education FLASH (Appendix D) is a written test, designed for students used to expressing themselves on paper. It is easily modified to a verbal question and answer format, or may be administered using pictures from within the curriculum for more challenged or visual learners. It covers all of the class objectives and can be administered as both pre and post test.

Another assessment approach involves the use of anatomically correct dolls. Allow the student to explore the dolls and ask questions about the anatomy and functions of the various parts of the body. Use the dolls to roleplay and discuss social situations. Record your observations. Discuss your perspectives and conclusions with family members and other adults who know the student. Base your teaching plan on what you have learned about the student.

C. Getting Started

1. Class Structure

•It is helpful to establish a routine for each class to build familiarity and structure. The following routine has worked well in the past and is recommended, with the added consideration that each individual teacher must feel free to add to this structure per his/her own creativity or the circumstances of the day.

a. Warm-up exercise. This sets the mood or tone for the class, lends focus and calms everyone down. Some of the exercises suggested in "100 Ways to Enhance Self Concept" are marvelously suited (see Appendix F) or develop your own exercise.

b. Discuss the previous lesson's socialization experience. This may be a burning issue for some students and it will help to get it discussed and out of the way so that they can focus on new information.

c. Relaxation exercise. Preferably a relaxation skill that can be used in other parts of the day, but even just a simple group stretch will do - something to say "we're going to get serious now, folks".

d. Review the previous lesson's material. Be sure that you don't cover new ground that requires prior understanding until the students have a firm grasp of the previous material, otherwise you risk confusion and frustration for everyone.

e. Presentation of new materials. Only cover as much as you feel is being absorbed. If this means that you don't finish your lesson plan, that's okay. The important thing is to be flexible and student-oriented. Make a commitment personally to follow-up with anyone who appears confused about the material after class.

f. Questions & Discussion Time. This should be class oriented discussion and can reinforce the day's teaching. This is also the time to explore socialization options for the coming lesson. It's a good idea to emphasize (and re-emphasize) the rules for the first few week's lessons; a gentle reminder that discussion is private and confidential may prevent catastrophes and confusion.

g. A Cool Down Exercise. This can once again focus the class and send each individual out into their world with a positive perspective about themselves. Again, see "[100 ways to Enhance Self Concept](#)" or create your own.

2. Sample Self-Esteem Exercises

- Have students share with the class one success they have had this week.
- Ask each student to say one nice thing about the person sitting next to them.
- Have students complete the following sentences:
 1. My favorite color is.....
 2. My favorite time of year is.....
 3. My favorite holiday is.....

•For more ideas, a wonderful resource book by Jack Canfield and Harold Wells is called "[100 Ways To Enhance Self-Concept in the Classroom](#)". (see Bibliography)

3. Sample Relaxation Exercises

- Have students tense all the muscles in their hands to make a fist. Have them hold that fist tight for a count of ten. Then release. Repeat. Have students describe how their hand feels.
- Have students stick out their tongue as hard and as far as they can for a count of ten. Then relax. Repeat. Have them describe how their tongue and mouth feel.
- Have students sit in a circle, and set a timer for 3 minutes. Students will rub the shoulders of the person in front of them, while their shoulders are being rubbed at the same time.
- Have students pair up. Set a timer for 2 minutes. Students will give each other a hand massage. After the timer goes off, switch roles. Talk about how good it feels to give and to receive.
- Have students take a deep breath and then let it out. Have them sit with their hands relaxed in their laps. Have them put their head down trying to put their chins on their chests and just let them hang. Rock the head back as far as it goes easily, then let it hang back down again. Next have students put their ear to their shoulder, one at a time. Finally, have them lift their shoulders high, hold for a moment, and then let them drop and relax.

For more ideas see Joseph R. Cautela and June Grodin's Book "[RELAXATION - a comprehensive manual for Adults, Children and Children With Special Needs](#)". (Appendix F)

D. Using F.L.A.S.H. in the Classroom

•[Special Education FLASH](#) offers a broad range of activities with suggestions for adaptations to fit specific learning styles and challenges of all students. The teacher as a facilitator of learning, is in the best position to select activities that will work to accomplish the learning objectives for each individual student. Working together with teaching assistants, other support staff members, families and other regular and special education FLASH implementers, will greatly add to the effectiveness of this teaching.

•Plan on teaching FLASH more than once to any group of students. Since repetition is key, the course (or portions of it) may need to be repeated annually or more frequently. Consider adding a regularly scheduled FLASH period throughout the year.

•Teaching can occur intensively (daily lessons with daily opportunities for practice across settings) or less rigorously (once or twice week spanning the whole year with opportunities for practice across settings occurring less frequently). Use the approach that works for your specific situation.

•We have found that the role of families and trusted adults in the teaching of social skills and sexuality education is critical. The ability to transfer skills learned in the classroom into skillfulness in community settings is key to social success for students in special education. Therefore, there are "trusted adult" letters and activities included in each lesson.

Overview

Topic	Learner Objectives "•" = the essential objectives
1. Introduction	1. say the name of the class/unit 2. identify ground rules for the class. 3. • identify one thing they like about themselves 4. identify one thing they might like to learn 5. • identify a trusted adult
2. Private & Public	1. explain the difference between public and private in his/her own words 2. • correctly label pictures or descriptions of places as public or private 3. • correctly label described behavior as public or private and identify places where the behavior might appropriately occur 4. • identify natural consequences of inappropriate behavior
Relationships	
3. Self-Esteem	1. • identify ways in which they "belong" 2. • identify ways in which they "can do things" 3. • identify ways they know they are "appreciated" 4. • identify one thing they like about themselves 5. • identify an appropriate response to a compliment
4. Gender Identification	1. • correctly label pictures of people as male or female, boy or girl, man or woman 2. • correctly identify themselves and their classmates as male or female 3. discuss advantages and disadvantages of being male or female 4. • indicate which restroom they should use in the community given two choices
5. Families	1. • describe his or her family in terms of: a) membership and b) roles of family members 2. discuss some differences among families 3. • explain one reason why families are important
6. Friendship & Dating	1. define friendship 2. • name two friends they have 4. appropriately introduce a friend 5. • model appropriate ways to greet a friend 6. • model appropriate ways to leave a friend 7. define dating 8. • name three things they might do with a friend, (or a date) taking into account the friend's (or date's) wishes 9. model appropriate dating etiquette
7. Helpers, Acquaintances Strangers	1. define the term helper 2. define the term acquaintance 3. define the term stranger 4. correctly label characters in a given situation as helper, acquaintance

	<p>or stranger</p> <p>5. •correctly label people in their own lives who are helpers or acquaintances</p> <p>6. •demonstrate appropriate safe behavior when approached by a stranger</p>
Communication	
8. Non-verbal Communication	<p>1. identify two types of communication (verbal and non-verbal).</p> <p>2. • using body language only, appropriately express a given emotion.</p> <p>3. define the term paraphrase and explain it's use.</p>
9. Assertiveness	<p>1. decide whether a given communication example is assertive or not assertive</p> <p>2. • demonstrate assertive body language</p> <p>3. • model assertiveness in a given situation</p>
10. Asking for what you want.	<p>1. • identify something they want</p> <p>2. state a fact or a feeling</p> <p>3. • ask straight for what they want</p>
11. Hearing "No"	<p>1. •determine a second choice if the first is rejected</p> <p>2. •clearly state their second choice</p> <p>3. •accept "No" gracefully</p>
12. Saying "No"	<p>1. say something caring</p> <p>2. • refuse - say "No"</p> <p>3. state their decision or suggest an alternative</p>
13. Decision-Making	<p>1. identify three different types of decisions</p> <p>2. •identify a preference when given two options</p> <p>3. identify four steps involved in a decision-making process.</p> <p>4. demonstrate the four step process as applied to a given situation.</p> <p>5. •identify their own decisions regarding relationships and touch; what is okay or not okay for them as individuals.</p>
Exploitation	
14. Touching	<p>1. • identify three different types of touch</p> <p>2. •correctly label different examples of types of touch</p> <p>3. •identify kinds of relationships in which touch is appropriate/okay</p> <p>4. •declare their right to decide how they want to be touched</p>
15. Exploitation & Getting Help	<p>1. define exploitation</p> <p>2. •correctly label situations as exploitive</p> <p>3. •identify personal rights</p> <p>4. •identify that they need help</p> <p>5. •say "NO" in a big voice</p> <p>6. •leave the situation</p> <p>7. •tell someone you trust</p>
Understanding the Body	
16. Anatomy	<p>1. •correctly label themselves as male or female.</p> <p>2. •identify private parts of the body (covered by clothing when in public situations).</p> <p>3. correctly label non-genital parts of the body using appropriate</p>

	<p>vocabulary.</p> <p>4. correctly label genital parts of the body using appropriate vocabulary.</p> <p>5. identify natural consequences of using inappropriate vocabulary when discussing anatomical parts in public.</p>
17. Puberty	<p>1. •correctly label pictures as boy/girl/man/woman</p> <p>2. •identify three body changes of puberty for females</p> <p>3. •identify three body changes of puberty for males</p> <p>4. identify two feelings that may change/emerge during puberty</p>
18. Sexual Health & Hygiene	<p>1. •identify three components of good hygiene</p> <p>2. •identify consequences of poor hygiene</p> <p>3. •understand that hygiene is a personal responsibility</p> <p>4. •label and identify five hygiene tools</p> <p>5. •explain how five hygiene tools are used and how frequently they should be used.</p>
Reproduction	
19. Reproduction	<p>1. • explain that all species reproduce, that humans come from other humans and that for humans to reproduce, both a male and a female are necessary.</p> <p>2. using appropriate vocabulary, the student will identify parts of the body involved in reproduction.</p> <p>3. explain the process of fertilization.</p>
20. Pregnancy	<p>1. • correctly label pictures of women as obviously pregnant or not pregnant</p> <p>2. define pregnancy as the period of time (nine months) when the baby grows inside the mother's uterus</p> <p>3. explain the relationship between the concepts of intercourse, fertilization, pregnancy and parenthood</p>
21. Parenthood	<p>1. •explain that pregnancy is the result of intercourse and conception, and that parenthood is the result of pregnancy and giving birth.</p> <p>2. identify pros and cons of being a parent</p> <p>3. •identify five responsibilities of parenthood</p>
22. Sexual Decision-Making	<p>1. identify at least three issues which must be considered when making a decision to have a sexual relationship</p> <p>2. •identify that decisions about sexual expression are personal and private</p> <p>3. •identify that sexual decision-making requires careful thought about feelings and beliefs</p> <p>4. •identify one person they could talk to about sexual decision-making</p>
23. Birth Control	<p>1. •explain that birth control is a way of preventing pregnancy</p> <p>2. identify three methods of birth control and explain how they work in terms of their impact on sperm and egg.</p> <p>3. identify use of birth control as a decision requiring more thought and careful consideration of feelings, beliefs and values</p> <p>4. identify one person they could talk to to get more information about birth control.</p>
STD's & AIDS	
24. Germs & Risk	<p>1. to understand that germs are invisible organisms that are all around us.</p>

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. •to understand that some germs cause illness. 3. •to understand that germs travel in different ways. 4. •to understand that we can stay healthy by taking simple precautions 5. •to be able to define risk. 6. to explain why people take risks.
25. STDs	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. •to define STDs as sexually transmitted diseases (diseases you catch by having sexual contact with an infected person) 2. •to understand how to avoid catching an STD 3. to identify some symptoms which might indicate STDs 4. •to identify people who are effected by STD diagnosis, and who should be contacted
26. AIDS	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. understand that AIDS is caused by a germ/virus (HIV). 2. understand that this germ is found in blood, semen and vaginal fluid. 3. •identify risky behaviors that can cause AIDS; having unprotected sex or sharing needles with an infected person. 4. •identify safe behaviors that won't cause AIDS 5. •identify AIDS as a fatal disease
Resources & Review	
27. Resources	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. model appropriate question asking 2. •identify 3 community resources 3. •identify 2 personal resources
28. Summary Session	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. discuss topics studied during the class 2. •identify topics for future study 3. identify how they feel about the class.

RESOURCES

- FLASH (Jane Mackay Stangle)
- Changing Inappropriate Sexual Behaviour (Dave Hingsburger, Dorothy Griffiths)
- I Contact, I to I (and other books by Dave Hingsburger)
- Circles (by Leslie Hirsch Walker and Marklyn Champagne)
- Life Horizons (Winifred Kempton)
- Socialization & Sexuality: A Comprehensive Training Guide (Winifred Kempton)
- LifeFacts: Sexuality, Abuse Prevention, AIDS Prevention, others (Jim Stanfield)

Many other materials available through KSCL Library. Read everything Dave wrote, also Winifred Kempton, Sol Gordon, Lynne Mucigrosso Stiggal, Jean Edwards.

Most Practical materials - a picture file or scrapbook album with collages, watching TV in useful ways, connecting with an individual to learn about what they want and need to know and their learning style. Then explore resources and determine a starting point for your approach.

Other Resources I have seen...