

AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

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Title: Delineation of an Operational Definition of "Sexuality  
Comfort" Utilizing a Semi-Structured Interview Guide

Abstract Approved: Signature redacted for privacy.  
0 Margaret M. Smith

The literature asserts that sexuality educators should be comfortable with sexuality. In fact, some authors suggest that comfort with sexuality is a major criterion for qualification as a sexuality educator. Yet, the literature is vague and assuming and what the concept of comfort with sexuality means to teachers. Thus, the primary purpose of this study was to delineate an operational definition of the psychological construct, "sexuality comfort." An operational definition was noted to be one which tells *what to do* to experience the thing defined.

A semi-structured interview guide was developed with input from a panel of experts. Data were collected through personal interviews with a select group of 32 Oregon sexuality educators. Twenty-three subjects comprised a subsample of high school health teachers who teach sexuality as part of health education. Nine subjects formed a subsample of college sexuality educators who are the "teachers of the teachers."

Non-parametric statistics were used to analyze the data. The Mann-Whitney U was chosen for research question 2 and chi square was

chosen for research question 3. Research questions 1, 4 and 5 were not addressed statistically.

Subjects acknowledged throughout the interviews that sexuality comfort is extremely important to sexuality educators. Major concerns about its importance were that (a) it influences teaching effectiveness (primarily through an effect on the ability to communicate) and (b) it influences students' feelings and attitudes toward sexuality.

Subjects were asked to define sexuality comfort -- both personally and as an educator. A significant difference ( $p \leq .05$ ) occurred between the subsamples in their definitions of *personal* sexuality comfort. Definitions from high school subjects emphasized more "the ability to communicate" whereas definitions from college subjects emphasized more "respect for others' sexual values." There was no significant difference ( $p \leq .05$ ) between college and high school subjects' definitions of sexuality comfort -- as an educator (*general* sexuality comfort).

Statistical analysis detected a significant difference ( $p \leq .05$ ) between the subsamples in terms of ranks they ascribed to five characteristics important to sexuality educators, including sexuality comfort. "The ability to communicate about sexuality honestly, sensitively, clearly" was the characteristic responsible for this difference. Again, high school subjects emphasized this quality more than college subjects.

Data provided the basis for a two-part operational definition of sexuality comfort. Part one of the definition provides evidences of sexuality comfort in sexuality educators. Part two defines sexuality

comfort as a developmental task which may be accomplished by making opportunities for specific experiences which enhance it.

Major recommendations were directed toward teacher preparation programs and how they might appropriately address the issue of teacher sexuality comfort. Recommendations for future research were also presented.

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DELINEATION OF AN OPERATIONAL DEFINITION  
OF "SEXUALITY COMFORT" UTILIZING A  
SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW GUIDE

by

Cheryl A. Graham

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I was always taught to save the best for last! But in so doing, I resolve that I cannot adequately express my appreciation for three stalwart, loving friends who clearly shared "the agony and the ecstasy" of my graduate experience. Bonnie, Chris and Marilyn always gave me a reason to believe in myself and my project and thereby destroyed all possibility of failure. Through their constant support -- emotional, spiritual and material -- I internalized two essential realities. First, that life is meaningless without goals; and second, that accomplishment is the achievement of a goal while success means to be recognized by others for having achieved it. *Their recognition of this accomplishment is my success.*

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DELINEATION OF AN OPERATIONAL DEFINITION  
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SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW GUIDE

I. INTRODUCTION

Background of the Problem

Experts assert that the teacher is the key element in a sound school sexuality education program. "No matter how carefully planned the course, how sound the philosophy, how strong the community backing, the ill-prepared or fearful or embarrassed teacher can defeat the entire effort" (Haims, 1973, p. 52). Thus, teacher readiness to conduct classes in sexuality is of great concern, especially to personnel involved in teacher preparation.

Research on teacher readiness has focused on characteristics which identify the well-prepared sexuality educator (Carrera, 1970; Gross, 1975; Juhasz, 1973; Magee, 1973; Munson, 1976). Basic teaching skills and a solid grounding in the appropriate knowledge areas were characteristics identified. These can be easily assessed as qualities which prospective sexuality educators do or do not possess. However, other characteristics of well-prepared sexuality educators have been noted, many of which are affective in nature and cannot readily be recognized in potential sexuality educators.

This research was specifically directed toward the characteristic identified as "sexuality comfort" -- one which authorities judge to be of primary importance in the conduct of sexuality education. The concept of "sexuality comfort" appears to be identified in the literature with phrases such as "acceptance of," "resolution of conflicts

about" and "come to terms with" sexuality (Johnson and Belzer, 1973; Read and Munson, 1976; Schiller, 1977).

The concept of sexuality comfort is attributed to sexuality educators' feelings and attitudes toward sexuality (Eberst, 1977a; Juhasz, 1973; Hartman, Quinn and Young, 1981; Kent, Abernathy and Middour, 1971; Schiller, 1977). Some authorities suggest that sexuality comfort derives from or is influenced by various aspects of life such as the physiological, psychological, sociological and spiritual domains which combine with one's experience and knowledge to shape values and attitudes toward sexuality (Bruess and Greenberg, 1981).

Vines (1974) measured the intensity of behavioral expressions of sexuality comfort, but defined the concept only in vague behavioral terms. Eberst (1977a) developed a "Communication Comfort Questionnaire" to measure various components of comfort with verbal sexual communication, yet he proposed no definition of sexuality comfort. A 1977 study by Dieaseach assessed the comfort level of family life educators in a Canadian province. A quote from the report of this study suggests that the meaning of sexuality comfort seems to be taken for granted:

"The term 'comfortable' was not defined in the questionnaire, but one might assume that from the teacher's viewpoint, it means that the teacher would be happy to continue teaching family life" (p. 27).

#### Statement of the Problem

The problem focus derived from a review of literature which consistently indicates that sexuality educators need to "be comfortable"

with their own sexuality and with sexuality in general. Numerous sources assert that teacher sexuality comfort is one of the most important qualifications of sexuality educators (Bruess and Greenberg, 1981; Calderone, 1966; Johnson and Belzer, 1973; Schiller, 1977). However, as previously suggested, the concept of sexuality comfort has either been only partially defined or its meaning has been altogether taken for granted. Kirkendall and Libby (1969) state a need for development of definitions for "components of interpersonal competence." Indeed, when authorities designate subjective personal attributes as teacher qualifications, agreement as to what constitutes them is imperative. Agreement relative to the teacher qualification of sexuality comfort is unclear but may be facilitated by an operational definition.

#### Purpose of the Study

The primary purpose of this study was to collect definitive information from sexuality educators which would be useful in delineating an operational definition of sexuality comfort. In order to accomplish this, the following objectives were established:

- (1) to determine how subjects assess the importance of sexuality comfort as a characteristic of sexuality educators.
- (2) to determine whether significant differences exist between college and high school sexuality educators relative to the rank they ascribe to sexuality comfort in comparison to four other important characteristics of sexuality educators.
- (3) to determine whether college and high school sexuality educators differ significantly with respect to the meanings they assign to the construct, sexuality comfort.



- (4) to develop a semi-structured interview guide designed to elicit information from sexuality educators about the nature of sexuality comfort.
- (5) to propose an operational definition of sexuality comfort.

### Research Questions

In order to meet the objectives of this study, the following questions were posed:

- (1) How important is sexuality comfort as a characteristic of sexuality educators?
- (2) Do the subsamples differ significantly with respect to the rank they ascribe to sexuality comfort, in comparison to other important teacher characteristics?
- (3) Are there significant differences between the subsamples in the meanings they assign to sexuality comfort?
- (4) What is the nature of sexuality comfort according to selected Oregon sexuality educators?
- (5) Can sexuality comfort be defined operationally?

### Justification of the Study

Gordon (1973), Carrera (1970) and Kent et. al. (1971) state a need for research on teacher readiness to conduct classes in sexuality education. Authorities have long believed that sexuality comfort is an integral part of teacher readiness to conduct sexuality education. Experts suggest that effective communication about sexuality may be impaired when the teacher has unresolved conflicts about sexuality and that unhealthy attitudes may be transferred to students (Broderick and Bernard, 1969; Calderone, 1966; Hartman, Quinn and Young, 1981; Johnson and Belzer, 1973; Juhasz, 1973). In fact, Eberst (1977a)

discussed research which showed a direct relationship between anxiety and discomfort in an educational setting and decreased functional intelligence. Eberst (1977a) found that discomfort communicating about sexuality is positively correlated with anxiety. Thus, one may conclude that teacher sexuality comfort is vitally important to effective communication about sexuality.

Fiske (1971) points out that precise terminology in science -- especially in personology -- is imperative. Without a clear definition of the construct, states Fiske (1971), psychometric evaluation of it cannot occur. Furthermore,

"Such conceptual pictures are rarely if ever available. If the reader questions that statement, he should select any personality variable and look for a comprehensive delineation of it...the researcher must formulate his own conceptualization of his target variable" (p. 91).

Hudson (1981) agrees with Fiske, stating that a definitive study of sexuality comfort is sound preliminary work for studies involving psychometric evaluation of the construct. Additionally, Libby and Mazur (1981) stated in recent written communication that a definitive study of sexuality comfort would make a significant contribution to the literature. Finally, an operational definition is a practical approach to dealing with the issue of sexuality comfort since the definition would provide both understanding of it as a psychological construct as well as provide direction for sexuality educators to develop their own sexuality comfort.

### Definition of Terminology

For purposes of this study, the following terms were defined as:

*Attitudes:* Affective responses (relative to sexuality) which are other-directed.

*Feelings:* Affective responses (relative to sexuality) which are self-directed.

*Lexicography:* The principles and practices of dictionary-making (Woolf, 1975).

*Operational definition:* A definition which tells *what to do* to experience the thing defined (Rapoport, 1953).

*Semi-structured interview:* An interview design which permits both limited as well as more explanatory and individual responses.

*Sexuality:* The end result of sexualization -- the process of becoming a male or a female person, including all sex-related thoughts, fantasies, information, self-images, feelings, behaviors and experiences (adapted from Calderone, 1976 and National PTA, 1981). Although many sources cited herein refer to "sex," the author prefers to use the broader term, "sexuality."

*Sexuality comfort:* The dependent variable under investigation.

*Sexuality education:* Instructional measures or experiences which focus on sexuality and which prepare people to deal with life problems or issues that have a sexual origin (adapted from Vennewitz, 1974).

*Sexuality educator:* An individual assigned the responsibility of conducting formal instruction about sexuality.

*Teacher readiness:* That point at which a sexuality educator is at least minimally prepared academically and with respect to skills and attitudes, to conduct formal classes in sexuality.

## II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

### Introduction

This chapter discusses professional literature in three broad areas related to the concept of sexuality comfort: Sexuality Comfort as a Psychological Construct, Sexuality Comfort and Language and Sexuality Comfort and Teacher Readiness.

### Sexuality Comfort as a Psychological Construct

"People are raised to be uncomfortable with their bodies -- especially their sexuality" (Vennewitz, 1982).

The literature contains very limited research describing the psychology of sexuality comfort (Eberst, 1977a; Friedman, 1971; Vines, 1974). However, a profusion of articles and manuals expounding on its importance in sexuality educators is found dating from 1950 (Kirkendall) to the present (Bruess and Greenberg, 1981; Hartman, Quinn and Young, 1981). Despite the dearth of research on this topic, the literature shows remarkable consensus about the origins of sexuality comfort, factors which enhance or retard the development of sexuality comfort, the manner in which sexuality comfort is expressed in individuals and the impact of this expression on others.

Hartman, Quinn and Young (1981) state that sexuality comfort develops on two levels: comfort with one's own sexuality and comfort in dealing with issues about sexuality. Reference to the development of sexuality comfort at two levels is not accidental -- one is dependent upon the other. The success that a person experiences in helping

others to deal with sexuality depends on the extent to which one is comfortable with his or her own sexuality (Calderone, 1966; Chilman, 1969; Hartman, Quinn and Young, 1981; Read and Munson, 1976; Schiller, 1977; Vines, 1974).

Development of comfort with one's own sexuality is influenced by many complex factors. A review of literature reveals that sexuality comfort is a broad psychological construct involving behaviors, knowledge, attitudes and feelings directed toward sexuality. These in turn are determined by the messages one receives about sexuality throughout life and conclusions one draws from sexual experiences (Bruess and Greenberg, 1981; Calderone and Johnson, 1981; Eberst, 1977a; Hartman, Quinn and Young, 1981; Vennewitz, 1982). Indices involved in identification and quantification of sexuality comfort focus on the absence of anxiety or conflicts about sexuality, a positive self-concept as a sexual person and one's security in the knowledge he or she has about sexuality (Eberst, 1977a; Kent et. al., 1971; Friedman, 1971; Ryan and Dunn, 1979; Vines, 1974).

Kent, Abernathy and Middour (1971) designed an inventory to examine teachers' patterns of learning about sexuality and the emergence of feelings and attitudes toward sexuality. Teachers were asked to assess their understanding of reproduction and indicate their degree of willingness to teach it. The investigators found a highly significant correlation between willingness to teach and understanding of reproduction. Ratings of 156 teachers' sexuality learning experiences and recalled emotional responses were also significantly related to willingness to teach sexuality. Although the authors caution readers

not to confuse willingness with readiness, the assumption is that knowledge contributed to the teachers' willingness to teach. Personal communication with the senior author (Kent, 1981) revealed that she, in fact, believed these correlations to be indicators of teacher sexuality comfort.

A sample of 102 prospective health education teachers were surveyed (Ryan and Dunn, 1979) to determine their perceptions of their knowledge and feelings about sexuality education. Although the sample considered their knowledge of human sexuality to be average or better, 70 percent of the sample said they would teach sexuality education only if required to do so. Fear of community response and fear of having to answer embarrassing questions were primary reasons for this unwillingness. The investigators concluded that knowledge alone does not cause one to feel comfortable teaching about sexuality.

Eberst (1977a) conducted a study of 192 senior or graduate students in health education who were randomly assigned to one of three experimental groups or one of three control groups. The purpose of his study was to determine the relationship between (1) a verbal satiation technique and the intensity of meaning attached to sex words; (2) the change in this intensity of meaning over time; (3) the intensity of meaning and an individual's anxiety level; and (4) a verbal satiation technique and the degree of comfort an individual feels when verbally exposed to sex words.

The instruments used were Osgood's Semantic Differential for intensity of meaning attached to sex words; the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory to measure anxiety level; and the investigator's own

Communication Comfort Questionnaire to determine comfort level with verbal communication about sexuality.

Eberst's data showed a significant relationship between both the reduction of intensity of meaning and comfort with sex word communication, and comfort with sex word communication and reduction in anxiety. He concluded that a verbal satiation technique called flooding is a reliable method for assisting people in reducing anxiety about sex word communication and thereby developing that aspect of sexuality comfort. Finally, flooding may increase a person's comfort in dealing with other life experiences related to sexuality since it reduces the intensity of meaning attached to sex words.

Friedman (1971) conducted a study to determine the effects of the counselor-educator approach to family life education on teachers' sex knowledge and comfort in discussing matters of sexuality. The McHugh Sex Knowledge Inventory (Revised Form X) was administered to 33 teachers before and after a workshop presented by a counselor-educator duo. Pre- and post-test audio and video recordings of subjects were rated for comfort.

Friedman found that the experimental group showed a significant increase in both knowledge and comfort discussing matters pertaining to sexuality, while the control group did not. This study thus implicates the importance of knowledge as a component of sexuality comfort.

A 1974 study by Vines described the relationship between a medical counselor's understanding of factual information about sexuality and the quality of response in terms of comfort level, to patients with sexual problems. Comfort level was studied as a function of two different educational procedures.



Thirty-seven third-year medical students were randomly assigned to two experimental and one control group. One experimental group participated in a spaced-learning module spread over five, three-hour sessions. The other experimental group participated in a massed-learning module consisting of 15 hours spread over two days. Both groups were exposed to identical course content incorporating erotic film while the control group received no formal education.

All subjects were administered the Sex Knowledge and Attitude Test (SKAT) within two weeks after the educational procedures. They were also videotaped and rated for comfort in a simulated interview with a patient who had a sexual problem. The rating scale for comfort was developed by the investigator and included ratings for body communication, verbal communication and global comfort. Vines defined comfort as "the extent to which one appears relaxed, at ease with or disturbed by the subject matter" (p. 38).

Results indicated controls were significantly less comfortable on all components of the scale than massed-learning subjects. The massed-learners were also significantly more comfortable than spaced-learners on the verbal component of the scale, but there was no significant difference on the other components. Attitudes did not differ across experimental or control groups. Spaced- and massed-learners were both significantly more knowledgeable than controls. The data indicated no significant correlation between SKAT scores and "comfort."

### Sexuality Comfort and Language

Language is the medium through which meaning is conveyed. The task of defining a concept operationally must necessarily discuss the "study of meaning" -- semantics. This discussion will focus on a specific branch of semantics known as general semantics, which is "a comparative study of the kinds of responses people make to the symbols and signs around them" (Hayakawa, 1963, p. 10). Furthermore, because people respond to language as though it *is* the thing it describes (Chase, 1938; Hayakawa, 1948 - 64; Korzybski, 1933; Rapoport, 1953a), language is a powerful influence on the experience of sexuality comfort (Eberst, 1977a). This section is limited to a specific discussion of verbal language, but recognizes that nonverbal forms -- such as body language -- are fundamentally involved in the experience of sexuality comfort (Eberst, 1977a; Hartman, Quinn and Young, 1981; Vines, 1974).

#### General Semantics and the Operational Definition

"The search for the meaning of words does not begin and end by looking them up in a dictionary" (Hayakawa, 1958, p. 72).

General semantics is based on the premise that meaning is determined not by what one says about a concept, but by what one does with it (Chase, 1954). General semantics, then, is based on an operational approach to meaning which Chase (1954) explains

"Makes knowledge about nature no longer absolute, but relative. The operation is performed relative to some standard, say a meter stick; and concepts emerge which are definite and verifiable" (p. 119).

Rapoport (1953) describes the operational approach as one which

"...inquires into the relation between thinking and doing and thus asks how the framework in which people think influences what they do" (p. 3).

In essence, the operational approach assumes that the meaning of concepts is not in the words which label them, but in the experiences to which they are related. Rapoport (1953) clarifies the function of operational definitions:

"...they tell what to do and what to observe in order to bring the thing defined or its (invariant) effects within the range of one's experience. The invariants pointed out in operational definitions are not assumed to be 'there' to begin with, but rather our attention is called to the relative invariants which emerge *as a result of operations*. In this way, the thing or quality defined is not assumed to exist *a priori*. Rather its existence or reality flows from operations performed and resides in the invariants observed" (p.29).

The operational approach distinguishes between intentional and extensional meaning. The use of words to define words is an example of intentional meaning. Intentional meaning is "that which is suggested (connotated) inside one's head" (Hayakawa, 1948, p. 47). Conversely, extensional meaning cannot be expressed in words because "it *is* that which words stand for" (Hayakawa, 1959, p. 16). Thus, the world we know through experience constitutes our extensional world. Hayakawa (1948) states that extensional meaning frees up discussion and permits consensus.

#### Deriving Definitions

Rapoport (1953) states that "anything can be formally defined whether it exists or not" (p. 9). In fact, the process of making a

word usable *is* definition. It is important to understand the inherent problems involved in defining tangible objects versus those involved in defining words or concepts. Rapoport elaborates:

"For example, in defining 'what is X,' if X stands for an object we can point to so as to learn its name, X refers to the word which is missing. But if X *is* a word, it is the experience (meaning) which is missing. Untangible things (words) are not easily defined -- that is, to relate the word to the experience of the questioner" (p. 15).

Alfred Korzybski founded general semantics as a genuine science of communication (Chase, 1938). His book, Science and Sanity, (1933), was an attempt to discover why meaning is so often confused. He proposed three principles of meaning which address the definitional problems that Rapoport described.

*Principle One: A map is not the territory.* This statement suggests that words are not the things they represent. Hayakawa (1948) points out that although we are intellectually aware of this fact, we are not continuously aware of the independence of symbols from their referents. For example, the origin of "word magic" is when a word symbolizing an object is capable of producing the same reaction as the object itself. "The word and the object are perceived as one and the same thing because they arouse the same feelings" (Hayakawa, 1948, p. 105).

*Principle Two: A map does not represent all of the territory.* This principle refers to the inability of any word to say everything about anything. Because extensional meaning differs from person-to-person, no word can comprehensively define or explain anything.

*Principle Three: A map is self-reflexive.* This statement reveals the inadequacy of traditional dictionaries to convey meaning. In the sense that an ideal map should include a "map of the map of the map," dictionaries must define words with more words which must also be defined. The principle also suggests the possibility that we can "react to our reactions to our reactions..." (Hayakawa, 1954, p. 27).

Thus, general semantics views definitions as guides rather than as something by which we must be bound because new experiences and feelings compel us to use old words in new ways. Many words must be redefined each time they are used, or at least "used in such a way and with sufficient illustrative examples, that their specific meaning in any given discourse emerges from their context" (Hayakawa, 1959, p. 105).

Chase (1938) states that meaning is confused when we use labels (words) for essences and qualities for which there are no tangible referents<sup>1</sup>. He states that "the goal of semantics might be stated as 'find the referent'" and asserts that until people generally agree on referents for the labels they use, these labels will "liberate plenty of emotion but no real meaning" (Chase, 1938, pp. 9-10).

Accurate evaluation of meaning involves not only generally agreed-upon referents, but also a consideration of differences among communicators. Because experience is the determinant of meaning, people inevitably assign meanings to words and concepts which are

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<sup>1</sup>A referent is the real-world object or situation to which a label refers.

based upon their variable experience. We each have different experiences, memories and preferences which cause us to perceive and define words differently (Hayakawa, 1963). Thus, clear communication requires one to consider the other person's frame of reference.

Korzybski (1933) recognized humans as having the unique ability to change language as experience changes meaning. He labeled this unique quality *time-binding*, which is the ability to organize communication -- to systematize information so that it can be recorded. Specifically, time-binding refers to the human ability to create language which can withstand the passage of time. Bois (1966) explains time-binding as the capacity to summarize, digest and appropriate the labors and experiences of the past" (p. x). Meaning is established within a context and no two contexts can ever be identical. Mature thinking involves an awareness that everything in our world is in process, changing constantly. Failure to recognize change which occurs over time results in imprecise and inaccurate communication (Hayakawa, 1963).

Although general semantics finds meaning in operations or experience, Hayakawa (1963) points out that experience does not tell us *what* we are experiencing:

"...if we do not know *what to look for* in our experiences, they often have no significance to us whatever" (p. 199).

Korzybski recognized that experience is fallible in providing meaning in all situations (Chase, 1938; Hayakawa, 1948 - 64). He described two parallel concepts which address this problem and lend precision to language -- abstracting and indexing.

## Abstracting is

"...imaginative selection of some one characteristic of a complex situation so that it may be attended to in isolation...abstraction is, in short, the perception of similarity"  
(Hayakawa, 1963, p. 10).

Thus, abstracting is essentially the process of categorizing referents. Chase (1938) explains that labels have three categories, each which involves a successively higher level of abstraction: Labels for common objects such as dog, car or pencil are the lowest order of abstraction; labels for clusters and collections of things such as the courts, people or the United States; labels for essences and qualities such as the sublime, individualism -- or sexuality comfort, which are abstractions of the highest order and represent terms for which there are no tangible referents. Chase (1938) states that "when the tendency to identify expands from dogs to higher abstractions such as 'liberty,' 'justice,' 'the eternal' and imputes living, breathing entity to them, almost nobody knows what anything means" (p. 9). Also regarding the use of abstracting, Hayakawa (1948) states that:

"The more advanced civilization becomes, the more conscious we must be that our nervous systems automatically leave out characteristics of events before us. If we are not aware of the characteristics left out, if we are not conscious of the process of abstracting, we make seeing and believing a single process" (p. 105).

The second concept Korzybski proposed is indexing. This involves the use of index numbers on referents within a given classification as a reminder that they are not identical. Whereas abstracting assigns a referent to a category, indexing distinguishes it as unique from other

members. A classical rule in general semantics to illustrate this is that "cow<sub>1</sub> ≠ cow<sub>2</sub>" (Chase, 1938; Hayakawa, 1948 - 64, Clarke, 1975).

Indexing not only helps us to see differences among similar referents, it also enables us to recognize that a referent is not necessarily excluded from a category merely because it possesses some unique characteristics. For example, Clarke (1975) states that experts who know everything there is to know about Cs (a hypothetical referent) determine that all Cs possess a range of ten characteristics. Two of these characteristics are definitional while eight are expository. Provided that the referent possesses the two definitional characteristics, it is a C regardless of the number or combination of the remaining eight characteristics it possesses. Thus, abstracting (omitting characteristics) may lend us meaning personally, but distinctions made in indexing provide for more precise and accurate communication.

#### Etymology of "Comfort"

The word comfort derives from the old French, *conforter* and from the late Latin, *confortare*, both transitive verbs which mean "to strengthen greatly." In one of six entries as a noun (Webster), comfort is defined as a "state or feeling of relief or encouragement." The adjective, comfortable, "applies to anything that encourages serenity, well-being or complacency." A synonym, easy, "implies relief or absence of anything likely to cause physical or mental discomfort or constraint."



## Language as a Problem in Sexuality Education

"Even though language finds its primary function in thought conveyance, its most important impact is usually as a stumbling block in the development of healthy attitudes about sex...Language is so powerful that it can create sexuality in otherwise non-sexual behavior" (Eberst, 1977a; pp. 13, 14).

Effective communication is at the heart of healthy sexuality (Hayakawa, 1968). But effective communication about sexuality is often thwarted by the profound emotional impact that sex vocabulary often carries (Eberst, 1977a and b; Fulton, 1977; Hartman, Quinn and Young, 1981; Johnson and Belzer, 1973; Kirkendall, 1966 and 1968). Practically all words -- especially sex words -- are surrounded by feelings which may prevent effective communication (Eberst, 1977a). In fact, many sex words are negative verbal stimuli without intellectual content (Johnson and Belzer, 1973).

Language is a complex intrapsychic process capable of producing physical and mental changes (Eberst, 1977a). Studies have demonstrated that language may produce measurable physiological upset in addition to anxiety for the speaker or listener (Eberst, 1977a; Johnson and Belzer, 1973). Eberst (1977a) discusses several studies which indicate that anxiety actually lowers functional intelligence. These studies report that verbal behavior and academic achievement of high-anxiety children was inferior to that of low-anxiety children. Eberst (1977a) presents additional evidence that sex-related language elicits more anxiety than nonsex language. He concludes that "sex language can be one of the most influential, indirect affectors of classroom performance."

Anxiety in communicating about sexuality is a severe limitation in sexuality educators. Anxiety may lower functional intelligence which further reduces ability to communicate effectively. Not only is effective communication diminished, but the educator may transfer these feelings and attitudes to students (Eberst, 1977a; Johnson and Belzer, 1973; Hartman, Quinn and Young, 1981).

Much of the difficulty in communicating about sexuality stems from taboos about sexuality which were created largely by religion (Kirkendall, 1981). Taboos and inaccurate information about sexuality have contributed to unhealthy attitudes which are perpetuated from generation-to-generation (Masters and Johnson, 1973). These unhealthy attitudes may be so pervasive in an individual that sex language takes on the characteristic of "word magic" -- the sex words and behaviors become synonymous in the communicator's mind (Johnson, 1968 and 1969; Johnson and Belzer, 1973). Eberst (1977a) states that this inhibited communication creates problems in sexual development, difficulties in sexual expression, obstacles in clinical treatment and problems in many educational encounters.

Difficulty in sex communication also derives from terms and concepts in the area of sexuality which lack precise meaning and result in confusion (Brown and Lynn, 1973). Kirkendall (1968) emphasizes a need for refinement of our sex vocabulary. For example, confusion often arises because we have few words which describe the degree or quality of sexual behavior (Kirkendall, 1966).

### Sexuality Comfort and Teacher Readiness

"Perhaps the most crucial element of a sound sex education program is the teacher" (Bender, 1981, p. 78).

#### Identification of Sexuality Educator Qualifications

Although concern about the qualifications of sexuality educators has been voiced since the turn of the century (Carrera, 1971), no discernible research on the topic was conducted until the late 1960s. Carrera's (1970) study identifying qualifications of sexuality educators is perhaps the most cited study on this topic. He asked a jury of 50 experts to determine the characteristics deemed essential for high school sexuality educators. Their choices came from a checklist which Carrera developed from a review of literature and high school sexuality curricula.

The characteristics Carrera identified were divided into personal and experiential categories. The jury gave high essential ratings to skill in leading group discussions; knowledge of the language of sexuality; knowledge of methods and materials used in communication; knowledge of dating, courtship and mate selection; knowledge of adolescent psychology; knowledge of sex as it relates to marriage and family living; knowledge of reproductive anatomy and physiology. Experts did not believe that age, sex, religion or marital status were important criteria for sexuality educators. They gave mild support to prior teaching experience.

Carrera's instrument did not provide experts the option of rating sexuality comfort. However, he did include categories which the

literature indicates influences the experience of sexuality comfort -- knowledge of the subject matter, for example. The instrument did ask experts to rate the importance of sensitivity training for gaining awareness of one's own feelings toward sexuality, which experts did not rate very highly. However, Munson (1976) points out that at the time Carrera conducted his study, sensitivity training was regarded as faddish and vulnerable to exploitation by charlatans; it has since then gained some respectability.

Adams (1970) found evidence that teaching experience may not be as important for sexuality educators as previously believed. He found no significant difference between scores of experienced versus inexperienced teachers on a sex knowledge and attitude inventory and on self-ratings for feelings of adequacy in handling four potential family life problems in a counseling situation. Adams suggests that the inexperienced teachers, who rated higher on feelings of adequacy in a counseling situation, may not be apprised of the difficulty of such situations because they have not had the experience of being confronted.

Administrators of 12 family life and sexuality education programs were asked to list in order of importance, the six qualities they considered most essential to effective sexuality educators (Juhasz, 1973). Six broad categories emerged, which were: acceptance of one's own and others' sexuality; ability to communicate honestly, sensitively and clearly; high degree of empathy; respect for youth; knowledge of specific factual information; effective teaching skills. Acceptance of sexuality received the overall highest ranking.

## Characteristics of Sexuality Educators

"Acceptance of one's own sexuality and that of others' must come before any kind of sex education can be accomplished" (Calderone, 1966, p. 23).

Rubin and Adams (1972) compared responses of 188 female sexuality educators and 43 female non-sexuality educators on three scales: Reiss' Premarital Permissiveness Scale, Faith in People Scale and Dogmatism Scale.

Data did not support the expectation that sexuality educators would be more permissive of premarital sexual activity. The non-sexuality educators indicated greater permissiveness, but the authors explained this as being due to the religion variable which was also studied. Results showed that permissiveness increased as church attendance decreased; the sample of non-sexuality educators attended church proportionately less often than sexuality educators.

Frequency of church attendance defined religiosity (degree of devoutness) in Rubin and Adam's (1972) study. They discussed correlations between (a) religiosity and dogmatism and (b) between dogmatism and sexual values or attitudes. Although Rubin and Adams (1972) did not demonstrate that sexuality educators are *less* dogmatic than non-sexuality educators as they had hypothesized, their data did indicate a higher frequency of church attendance among the sexuality educators than among the non-sexuality educators. This finding suggests, then, that religiosity as measured by frequency of church attendance may be a better predictor of dogmatism than is occupation.

A study of ten fellows enrolled in the graduate Sex Education Program for Elementary Teachers at New York University indicated that sexuality educators are a diverse group which cannot be typified according to personality (Battista, 1972). The fellows completed the Sixteen Personality Factors Questionnaire and were found as a group to possess varying degrees of the entire range of personality traits. For example, most of the fellows were outgoing, warmhearted and participating. All of them were bright, calm and mature; they all possessed average emotional stability.

### Sexuality Comfort as a Teacher Qualification

The literature is replete with statements about the importance of sexuality educators' feelings and attitudes toward sexuality. These statements range from broad concerns about teachers being *comfortable* (Broderick and Bernard, 1969) and *accepting of* sexuality (Calderone, 1966); to more specific concerns that teachers *come to terms with* (Gordon, 1978; Schiller, 1977) and *resolve conflicts about* sexuality (Read and Munson, 1976). Previous discussion of research on comfort with sexuality (Eberst, 1977a; Friedman, 1971; Vines, 1974) indicates that all of these expressions represent aspects of the broad psychological construct, sexuality comfort.

Experts in human sexuality have emphasized the significance of teacher sexuality comfort by comparing its importance to other identified teacher qualifications such as knowledge of subject matter and teaching skills. While many authors assert that sexuality comfort is the most important teacher qualification (Calderone, 1966; Johnson and Belzer, 1973; Juhasz, 1973; Kirkendall, 1950; Read and Munson, 1976);

others believe it is *at least* basic and equal to knowledge (Broderick and Bernard, 1969; Bruess and Greenberg, 1981). Thus, it is clear from a review of literature that sexuality comfort deserves serious and immediate consideration in the selection of sexuality educators.

Emphasis on teacher sexuality comfort stems from two basic concerns: (1) that teachers' attitudes and feelings about sexuality influence effective communication; and (2) teachers' feelings and attitudes about sexuality may be assimilated by students. Hartman, Quinn and Young (1981) state that anxieties and conflicts about the subject matter being taught drains the teacher of psychic energy required to communicate effectively. Read and Munson (1976) add that

"...along with facts and information, attitudes are also taught, and this includes the attitudes of the teachers about their own sexuality and about human sexuality in general" (p. 31).

Finally, Hartman, Quinn and Young (1981) assert that knowledge and skill are not adequate for competence as sexuality educators:

"Personal comfort must be integrated if you intend to be an effective helper, for discomfort can be sensed very quickly...Comfort has to develop on a thinking, feeling and performing level. As comfort is expanded, your effectiveness also increases because an area of feelings becomes available to you for exploration, interpretation and behavior change...Personal comfort then, allows for an exploration of heretofore avoided sexual issues" (p. 11, 98).

Several techniques have been suggested for teacher training programs to fulfill this responsibility to prospective teachers.

*Sensitivity training* is a means of identifying specific feelings and

attitudes teachers have toward sexuality (Read, 1976; Schulz and Williams, 1969). *Desensitization* not only assists teachers in identifying feelings and attitudes, but creates them in a situation where they can be explored and dealt with (Calderwood, 1981; Hartman, Quinn and Young, 1981; Valentich and Gripton, 1975; Vines, 1974). *Verbal satiation* is a form of desensitization which deals specifically with the teacher's feelings about sex communication (Eberst, 1977a). *De-briefing* is an adjunct to desensitization which gives persons the opportunity to discuss their responses to sexual stimuli in an atmosphere of trust (Hartman, Quinn and Young, 1981).

Additionally, teachers' sexuality comfort may be greatly enhanced if they are given the opportunity to practice (i.e., role-play, case studies) dealing with potential student concerns; student-teacher interaction problems; modes of sexual expression widely disparate from one's own and parental/community reaction to the sexuality education program (Berry and Howe, 1980; Read and Munson, 1976; Schulz and Williams, 1969). Finally, personal growth of prospective sexuality educators may be particularly enhanced by being able to observe a "model of sexuality comfort" (McCary, 1975). Thus, the teacher educator plays a critical role in the further development of prospective teachers' sexuality comfort.

#### Sexuality Comfort as a Goal in Teacher Training

"...if the schools' developments in family life education are to move ahead along sound lines, teachers and their feelings deserve deliberation and attention" (Kent et. al., 1971, p. 586).



Wayne (1982) conducted a study in which 233 Indiana school principals were asked to rate 20 guidelines for developing and implementing sexuality education programs, according to the guidelines' acceptability and potential for implementation. A high degree of acceptability was assigned to the guideline which provides for competent, confident sexuality educators. However, this same guideline was given low implementation potential. In addition, the guideline providing for professional training of sexuality educators was rated highly acceptable but as having only average implementation potential. These findings suggest that although the principals believed that quality sexuality education programs require capable, confident teachers, not every teacher could be made a confident, competent sexuality educator (Wayne, 1982).

Hartman, Quinn and Young (1981) state that the goal of mature sexuality educators is to become comfortable with sexuality. Further, sexuality educators must know their feelings and understand how they affect others. Schulz and Williams (1969) relegate heavy responsibility to teacher training programs for helping prospective teachers examine and deal with their own feelings about sexuality.

Although it has been demonstrated that knowledge of the subject matter is a primary component of teacher sexuality comfort, it is clearly not enough (Kent et. al., 1971; Ryan and Dunn, 1979). Experts believe that sexuality education for teachers requires separate and deliberate attention to teacher sexuality comfort (Bruess and Greenberg, 1981; Calderwood, 1981; Hartman, Quinn and Young, 1981).

### Summary

This chapter presented evidence that various feelings and attitudes, knowledge and behaviors related to sexuality constitute a broad psychological construct known as sexuality comfort. Because an objective of this study was to determine whether the construct sexuality comfort can be defined operationally, a review of general semantics was presented. Verbal sex communication was shown to be a powerful influence on the experience of sexuality comfort. Teacher sexuality comfort was discussed in terms of its significance for an effective sexuality education program.

Sexuality comfort has been identified as (at least) one of the major prerequisites for sexuality educators. An operational definition of sexuality comfort would benefit sexuality educators in several ways.

- (1) An operational definition would lead to an acceptable and concise label for a referent which experts already recognize as descriptive of complex and divergent responses to sexuality.
- (2) An operational definition would give direction to teacher educators in providing appropriate and meaningful experiences toward development of sexuality comfort in prospective sexuality educators.
- (3) An operational definition would safeguard against the assumption that a training program similar to that for teachers in other disciplines is adequate for teachers' development of sexuality comfort.

### III. METHODS AND PROCEDURES

This chapter considers issues related to the sample and development of the interview guide. Collection and treatment of the data are also discussed.

#### Population

Since this study was directed toward an operational definition of sexuality comfort for sexuality educators, data was collected from a sample of 32 sexuality educators. Two subgroups of sexuality educators comprised the sample. These were:

- (1) the "teachers of the teachers" -- instructors of sexuality education courses at teacher preparation institutions in the Oregon Willamette Valley.
- (2) instructors of sexuality, as part of health education, at public high schools in the Oregon Willamette Valley.

Sexuality educators in the Oregon Willamette Valley represented what Borg and Gall (1979) refer to as the accessible population. This area provided an adequate sample size within reasonable travel distance. It is defined as that portion of Oregon bordered by the Cascade Mountains on the east, the Coast Range on the west and extending north to south from Portland to Cottage Grove. Only the four counties in this area which contain teacher preparation institutions offering health education certification were included: Benton, Lane, Multnomah and Polk. Figure 1 (p. 31) shows a map of the study area.

# STATE OF OREGON

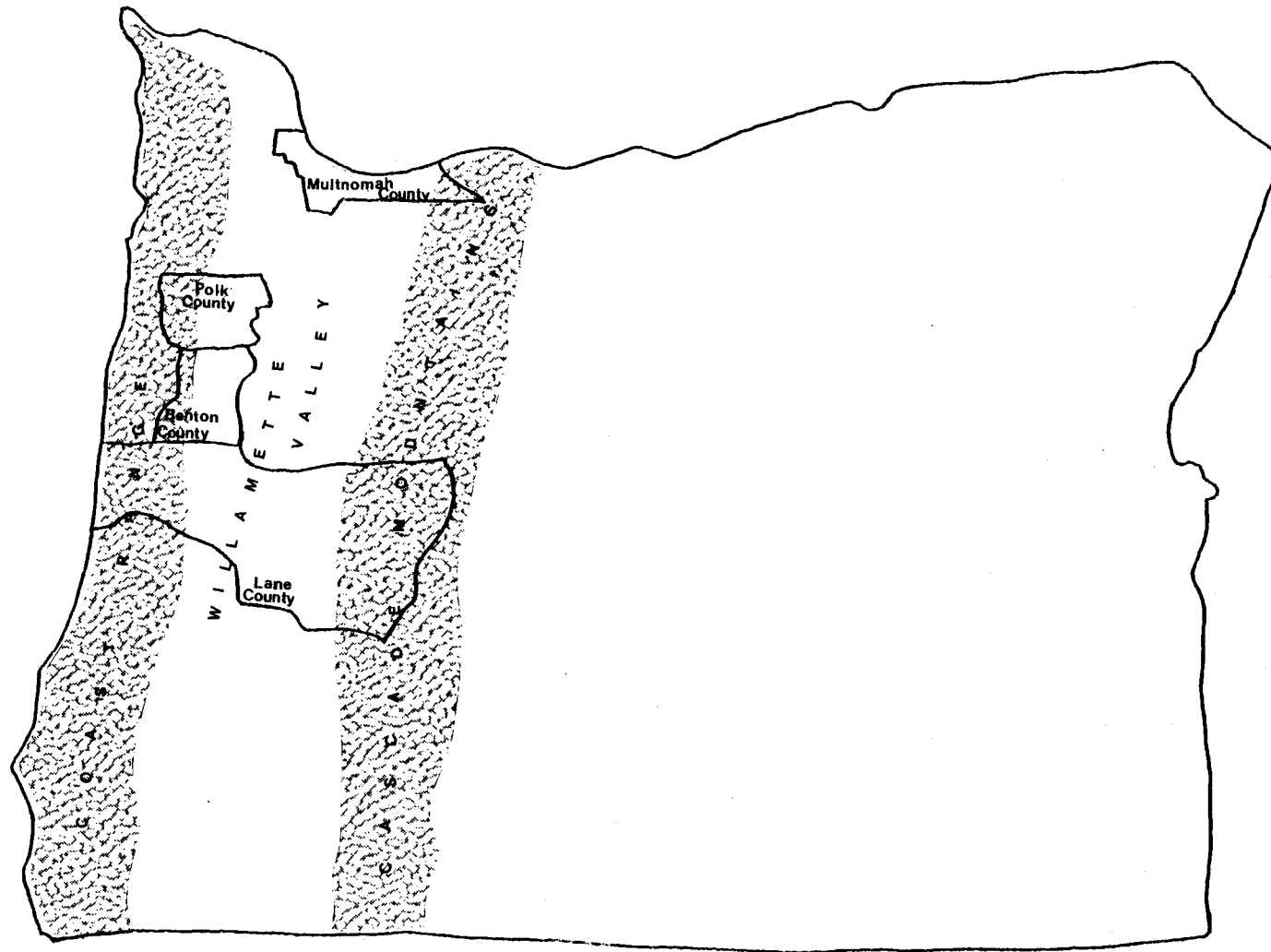


Figure 1. Four Oregon Willamette Valley counties which comprise the study area.

### Selection of Subjects

A list of Oregon high school health education teachers was obtained from the Oregon Department of Education. A separate list of college sexuality educators at teacher preparation institutions in the study area was compiled by contacting health departments at those institutions. A random sample of 23 high school sexuality educators (50% of 46 health teachers) was selected by drawing names. A separate random sample was drawn of nine college sexuality educators (50% of 18 college sexuality educators). Half of the remaining 50 percent from each subsample was selected as alternates.

Participation was requested from potential subjects by means of a notice (Appendix A, p. 142) mailed to their schools or departments, and announcing their opportunity to participate in research addressing preparation of sexuality educators. The notice indicated that recipients would receive a phone call within a few days. It was considered important strategy to contact subjects soon after their receipt of the notice and to secure an interview appointment within a few days following personal contact. In order to do this, only four notices were mailed at one time and no more were mailed until interviews had been successfully scheduled with recipients of previously mailed notices.

During the phone call to potential subjects, details of the study were explained more fully. Participation was requested and an interview was arranged at a time and location of the subject's choice. Subjects' anonymity and confidentiality were guaranteed at this time.

### Data Collection

The semi-structured interview method was chosen for data collection. Semi-structured interviews contain both open- and close-ended questions. Borg and Gall (1979) support this choice on the premise that a semi-structured interview has the advantage of:

"providing a desirable combination of objectivity and depth and often permits gathering valuable data that could not successfully be obtained by any other approach" (p. 312).

Open-ended questions are appropriate when the objective is

"to learn something of the respondent's frame of reference or the process by which he has arrived at a particular point of view" (Kahn and Cannell, 1957, p. 132).

In recent written communication addressing the issue of sexuality comfort, Libby and Mazur (1981) state that open-ended questions would be the ideal method for obtaining sexuality educators' viewpoint about sexuality comfort.

In many respects, a parallel exists between the design of this study and the methodology used in writing a dictionary. The *context* of each word is gathered by trained readers who regularly peruse vast amounts of literature of the period covered or on the subject involved. Each word is placed on a card along with sentences exemplifying its use. The editor may also interview people so as to determine additional ways in which the words being defined are used (Guralnik, 1981; Hayakawa, 1948).

### Development of the Interview Guide

The interview guide permitted collection of data required to meet specific objectives of this study. Development of the interview guide began with a series of focused discussions with eight sexuality educators. Six focused discussants were randomly selected from a list of high school health education teachers supplied by the Oregon Department of Education. Two focused discussants were randomly selected from the list of college sexuality educators compiled through contact with the six teacher preparation institutions in the study area. All eight focused discussants were from Benton and Linn counties and none of their names was returned to the pool of names used for selection of the sample.

Questions for the focused discussions were developed over several weeks of undirected discussions with students, faculty and clinical personnel about the meaning of sexuality comfort. Many questions emanated from a brainstorming session on "sexuality comfort is..." with students in the Sex Education (H 461) course for health education teachers at Oregon State University. The focused discussion guide appears in Appendix C (p. 153).

From these discussions and a review of pertinent literature, questions for the interview guide were developed which would likely elicit information about sexuality comfort. Because the interview guide was not transformed into a quantitative instrument, empirical measures of validity and reliability were inappropriate. Thus, an expert panel was recruited to determine its content validity (Berelson, 1952; Krippendorff, 1980) and the issue of reliability was

addressed through use of multiple coders to establish intercoder reliability (Berelson, 1952; Bodenroeder, 1982; Budd, 1967; Krippendorff, 1980). Intercoder reliability is discussed on p. 44.

### Expert Contribution

The preliminary interview guide which evolved from the focused discussions was evaluated by seven experts in order to insure its content validity and improve it overall. A list of potential experts was compiled through the literature reviewed for this study and through contact with research organizations. A random sample was drawn of seven people who met at least two of the following criteria. The expert:

- (1) was referred by a recognized organization dealing with sexuality education or semantics/ communication;
- (2) is a member of a professional organization which addresses issues of sexuality education or semantics/ communication;
- (3) has published in recognized journals on issues of sexuality education or semantics/communication;
- (4) has directed research or related activities in sexuality education or semantics/communication.

Two semanticists and five sexuality education experts were committed to this project. Materials for expert evaluation were sent by certified mail with a cover letter requesting that they be returned within two weeks. Self-addressed, stamped envelopes were provided.



Appendix B (p. 145) contains samples of communications with experts and Appendix C (P. 152) contains materials sent to experts for evaluation.

### Expert Task One

In the initial evaluation, experts were asked to rate each item in the preliminary interview guide according to its relevance to and potential for eliciting the desired information about sexuality comfort. Space was provided for comments or suggestions for overall improvement of the interview guide.

The criterion for eliminating or retaining specific items was based on the weighted means of collective scores for each item, where 1.0 was "definitely relevant" and 5.0 was "definitely irrelevant." Questions were deleted if their weighted means exceeded 2.25. Weighted means for each item appear in Table 33 (p. 158). If two or more experts suggested the addition of an item, a question was added. Questions were reworded for clarity if one or more experts suggested this. Table 1 (p. 37) summarizes changes made to the interview guide as a result of the experts' initial evaluation.

### Expert Task Two

Because expert evaluation of the first draft elicited few concerns, Task Two involved only refinement of the items. Experts were asked to:

- (1) delete any items they believed to be irrelevant or inappropriate;
- (2) suggest additional items which had been omitted;
- (3) reword unclear questions; and
- (4) judge the appropriateness of question order.

Open comments about the overall interview guide were also solicited. Table 2 (p. 38) summarizes changes made to the interview guide as a result of the experts' final evaluation.

TABLE 1  
CHANGES MADE ON THE INTERVIEW GUIDE  
AS A RESULT OF THE EXPERTS' FIRST EVALUATION<sup>a</sup>

Items Reworded <sup>b</sup>	Items Deleted <sup>b</sup>	Items Combined <sup>b</sup>	Items Separated <sup>b</sup>
16 (16/17)	6 <sup>c</sup>	10/11 (13)	16 (16/17)
1 (10)	7 <sup>c</sup>	12/13 ( 4)	
2 (11)	8 <sup>c</sup>	17/18 ( 5)	
5 (14)	9 <sup>c</sup>		
14 ( 2)			
19 ( 6)			
23 (18)			
27 (20)			

<sup>a</sup>Table 34, Appendix C, p. 162 details these changes.

<sup>b</sup>Numbers without parentheses refer to items on the first draft of the interview guide; numbers within parentheses identify the revised item on the second draft of the interview guide.

<sup>c</sup>Two experts suggested that these items may constitute invasion of privacy. Therefore, because they were not imperative to meet objectives of the study, they were omitted even though their weighted means did not exceed the 2.25 criterion for omission.

TABLE 2  
CHANGES MADE ON THE INTERVIEW GUIDE  
AS A RESULT OF THE EXPERTS' FINAL EVALUATION<sup>a</sup>

Items Reworded <sup>b</sup>	Items Deleted <sup>b</sup>	Items Added <sup>b</sup>	Items Combined <sup>b</sup>
1 ( 1)	10	(17)	7/8 (5)
2 ( 2)			
4 ( 4)			
5 ( 6)			
6 ( 7)			
11 ( 9)			
13 (11)			
16 (12)			
17 (13)			
18 (14)			
20 (15)			
21 (19)			

<sup>a</sup> Table 35, Appendix C, p. 166 details these changes.

<sup>b</sup> Numbers without parentheses refer to items on the second draft of the interview guide; numbers within parentheses identify the revised item on the final draft of the interview guide.

### Testing the Interview Guide

The usefulness of the interview guide as a tool for delineating an operational definition of sexuality comfort was tested by conducting interviews with the sample and analyzing the data. Details of the interviewing process follow.

### Conducting the interviews

Data were collected through personal interviews using the interview guide which appears in Appendix D (p. 168). Before any information was requested from subjects, the purpose of the research was explained and subjects were given the opportunity to ask questions. Subjects were also reminded that their responses would remain anonymous. In order to insure anonymity, a code number was placed on the interview guide and spoken into the tape recorder prior to taping the interview. A further means of insuring subject anonymity was to not run the tape recorder until after demographic information was requested and recorded on the interview guide. Care was taken not to speak the subjects' name during recorded portions of the interview.

The 32 interviews were conducted over a five-week period. Interviews were arranged by telephone one to two days after anticipated receipt of the research notice by the subject. After three unsuccessful attempts to contact a subject, a message was left with the secretary requesting that the subject return the phone call (collect) during specified hours. An interview appointment form appears in Appendix A (p. 145).

Of 32 interviews, 24 occurred in the subject's office or classroom. Six high school subjects requested that the interviews be conducted in the school's faculty room or cafeteria. One interview took place in the subject's home.

Interviews varied in length, ranging from 25 minutes to one hour, 57 minutes, with an overall average of 42 minutes. Interview length was largely dependent upon the extent to which subjects were willing

to ponder and elaborate on the questions, or on how much time he/she had allowed for the interview (most high school subjects requested that the interview be scheduled during all or part of a preparation period).

### Treatment of the Data

Data obtained from the interviews were transcribed from tape directly onto a copy of the interview guide. Individual responses were separated as they were typed for duplication and transferred for coding onto three sets of color-coded 3x5 cards. All response cards for each question comprised a single data deck. Categories were labeled and data were independently coded by three coders (see Selection and Training of Coders, p. 42). Coded questions were then tallied by hand and put into tabular format for analysis.

Because non-parametric statistics do not assume that the sample is normally distributed (Siegel, 1956), they were considered appropriate for data analysis. The following statistical tests were selected after verification by a statistical consultant from the OSU Department of Statistics (Thomas, 1982).

- (1) The Mann-Whitney U statistic for research question 2 (p. 4). This is a non-parametric test used to determine significant differences between two independent rankings and is appropriately applied to small samples of unequal sizes (Siegel, 1956).
- (2) Chi square statistic for research question 3 (p. 4). Chi square is a non-parametric test used to compare independent groups of nominal data (Phillips, 1977).

Research questions 2 and 3 (p. 4) were transformed into a null hypothesis for application of the statistical tests using the .05 level of significance for a two-tailed test. The hypotheses thus predicted that no significant differences existed between the high school and college subsamples. The null hypothesis for research question 2 was retained if the Mann-Whitney U score was equal to or less than the table value,  $p \leq .05$  (Sharp, 1979). The null hypothesis for research question 3 was retained if chi square was equal to or greater than the table value,  $p \leq .05$  (Sharp, 1979).

Statistical analyses were not appropriate for addressing research questions 1, 4 and 5 (p. 4). Question 1 was answered by computing the arithmetic mean for each subsample on question 9 of the interview guide (Appendix D, p. 171), which asked, "how important is it for sexuality educators to have sexuality comfort while teaching human sexuality?" Overall qualitative importance of sexuality comfort was determined according to the same Likert scale from which subjects responded, where 1.0 was "very important" and 5.0 was "very unimportant."

Research questions 4 and 5 (p. 4) were addressed according to semantic principles discussed in Chapter II (pp. 15 - 19), utilizing guidelines set forth in the field of lexicography. Guralnik (1981) states that although lexicography follows exact methodology,

"the lexicographer neither can or would wish to claim that his pursuit is a science. Many decisions must be made on the basis of linguistic sensitivity and tact, or on the basis of infirm predictions about the immediate future of the language" (p. 86).

Although no statistical analysis was conducted for these questions, tabulated data obtained through the interviews nonetheless proved

useful in addressing them. In fact, Guralnik (1981) indicates that the number of citations required to qualify a new term for entry into a dictionary is not determined statistically. However, in defining a term, it is helpful to establish the relative frequency with which it is encountered. Furthermore, Krippendorff (1980) states that in qualitative research, the frequent occurrence of a thought or thought process is indicative of its importance to the concept. Moreover, it is helpful to consider the usefulness of the term for its intended audience (Guralnik, 1980). Finally, the validity of a definition is not determined by scientific method, rather, by the validity of the data gathered to define it:

"The authority of a good dictionary rests upon its accuracy in recording the language as used in various ambiances, not upon its adherence to some ideal 'pure' state of the language" (Guralnik, 1981, p. 86).

### The Coding Procedure

Data decks for each question included individual cards for category labels which were clipped to appropriate sorting pockets. The top card in the data deck contained the question verbatim as it appeared in the interview guide. Upon completion of a question, coders recited the reference numbers of the responses in each category while the researcher recorded them on a coding form (Appendix F, p. 179). The coders then discussed and attempted to resolve errors in their work (Bodenroeder, 1982; Nemanich and O'Rourke, 1975).

### Selection and Training of Coders

After an initial, unsuccessful attempt to locate suitable coders through the OSU Financial Aid Office, an advertisement (Appendix A)

was placed on a bulletin board in the Graduate School. The ad requested assistance from three graduate students for approximately 15 hours to code research data. Graduate students were specified because initial attempts at coding using undergraduates yielded unsatisfactory results. It was felt that graduate students would be more empathetic toward the needs of a researcher and would therefore be more willing to work conscientiously.

Three potential coders responded to the ad. They were asked to take a brief "test" designed to determine their suitability for the task. The "test" was a set of 50 phrases excerpted from a mental health inventory which had been categorized by its developer (Sorochnan, 1981). The phrases were removed from their categories and potential coders were instructed to sort them back into their appropriate categories. The criterion for coder suitability was set at 85 percent accuracy (Martuza, 1977). All potential coders surpassed the 85 percent criterion and their services were enlisted. Table 3 (p. 43) briefly summarizes coder characteristics.

TABLE 3  
CODER CHARACTERISTICS

Coder	Sex	Age	Degree Program	Major	Criterion Test Score
A	F	28	PhD	Education	47 (94%)
B	F	27	MS	Botany	46 (92%)
C	M	30	MS	Counseling	48 (96%)

Coder training involved a brief summary of the nature and purpose of the research. The coding system and procedure was explained



in detail. Written instructions and groundrules for coder interaction (Appendix F, p. 178) were read aloud while coders followed a written copy. A "Data Dictionary" (Appendix F. p. 178) which defined possibly unfamiliar words or phrases from the data was provided for each coder. Coding began after coders had the opportunity to ask questions about the study and their task. Coding was completed in three, three-hour sessions and one 4½-hour session.

### Intercoder Reliability

Bodenroeder (1982) and Nemanich and O'Rourke (1975) argue that one should attempt to reach 100 percent agreement through discussion of discrepancies in the coding. Discussion may reveal that a particular coder introduced his or her own bias into the question. Moreover, it may reveal that dissenting coders simply erred by misreading a response or by inadvertently placing a card into the wrong category pocket. Coder discourse would rectify these errors (Bodenroeder, 1982). However, Krippendorff (1981) cautions that this approach may cause the data to appear more reliable than it is.

It was believed that a suitable compromise was to discuss discrepancies only to identify errors, rather than to achieve 100 percent agreement by changing coders' minds. Therefore, discrepancies identified through coder interaction as errors (0.5%) were corrected and considered to be original decisions, while genuine dissenting votes were not altered. Thus, intercoder reliability was calculated on the basis of coders' original work and the values obtained were believed to reflect true intercoder reliability.

Two methods were used to calculate intercoder reliability (Table 4, p. 45). First, chi square was computed to determine whether there was a significant difference between coder responses (Budd, 1967). Percentage of agreement between coders was also calculated. Both methods revealed a high degree of intercoder agreement. Chi square showed a small, but insignificant difference ( $p \leq .01$ ) and the percentage of agreement (97.2%) surpassed the 85 percent suggested to be acceptable (Martuza, 1977).

TABLE 4  
CHI SQUARE ANALYSIS OF INTERCODER AGREEMENT  
AND PERCENTAGE AGREEMENT AMONG CODERS

	Coder Agreement	Coder Disagreement	df	Chi Square	Table Value	Percent Agreement
A	842	22	2	.604	5.99	97.2 <sup>a</sup>
B	842	23				
C	842	27				
	<u>2526</u>	<u>72</u>				

<sup>a</sup>Percentage agreement =  $\frac{\text{Total agreement}}{\text{Total responses}}$  (2526/2598).

### Summary

This chapter described methods and procedures followed to achieve the objectives (p. 3) and to address research questions posed (p. 4) in Chapter I. These methods and procedures were established for the recruitment of subjects, development of a semi-structured interview guide and treatment of data.

Subjects from the high school subsample were selected randomly from a list of Oregon high school health educators supplied by the Oregon Department of Education. Subjects from the college subsample were selected randomly from a list of college sexuality educators compiled through contact with health education departments at the six teacher preparation institutions in the study area.

Methods used to code the open questions, select and train coders and analyze the data were also discussed. Non-parametric statistics were used to analyze the data.

#### IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Personal interviews with 32 Oregon sexuality educators were the source of data for this study. Following a description of the sample, this chapter presents an analysis and interpretation of the data as a foundation for discussion and recommendations which appear in Chapter V.

##### Description of the Sample

The sample for this study is described in terms of eight demographic variables. Table 5 (p. 48) summarizes selected characteristics of the 32 sexuality educators interviewed. Table 36 (Appendix G, p. 181) provides supplementary demographic information.

Of the 32 subjects, 23 represented a subsample of high school health educators who teach sexuality as part of the regular health education curriculum. The remaining nine subjects comprised a subsample of college or university sexuality educators who are the "teachers of the teachers." Among the high school subsample, seven (30.5%) were women and 16 (69.5%) were men. Three women (33.3%) and six men (66.7%) made up the college subsample.

The entire sample was relatively young, with little age variation in either subsample. The 35 - 44 age group was most highly represented, with 10 (43.5%) and six (66.7%) for high school and college, respectively.

Given their reports of church attendance (Table 5, p. 48), the sample of sexuality educators appears to possess a considerable degree of religiosity (Rubin and Adams, 1972). Ten (42.5%) high school and

TABLE 5  
SELECTED DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SAMPLE

Variable	High School				College				Total for Sample	
	Men	Women	<u>N</u>	Total (%)	Men	Women	<u>N</u>	Total (%)	<u>N</u>	(%)
<u>Sex</u>	16	7	23	100.0	6	3	9	100.0	32	100.0
<u>Age</u>										
25 - 34	5	3	8	34.7	1	1	2	22.2	10	31.3
35 - 44	9	1	10	43.5	4	2	6	66.7	16	50.0
45 - 54	2	1	3	13.0	1	0	1	11.1	4	12.5
55 - 64	0	2	2	8.7	0	0	0	0.0	2	6.3
<u>Church Attendance</u>										
Never	2	0	2	8.7	1	1	2	22.2	4	12.5
Once per month	1	1	2	8.7	1	0	1	11.1	3	9.4
2 - 4 per month	5	5	10	43.5	2	0	2	22.2	12	37.5
Special occasions	7	1	8	34.7	1	1	2	22.2	10	31.3
Other	1	0	1	4.3	1	1	2	22.2	3	9.4

two (22.2%) college subjects reported attending church services two to four times per month, while two (8.7%) high school and one (11.1%) college subjects reported attending once per month. Only two (8.7%) high school and two (22.2%) college subjects indicated that they never attend church. One (4.3%) high school and two (22.2%) college subjects responded "other" when asked about frequency of church attendance. Two of these three indicated that they attend church or church-related activities two or more times per week.

The response category of "special occasions" was selected by eight (34.7%) high school and two (22.2%) college subjects. Although "special occasions" might be interpreted to refer to events such as weddings and funerals which most people feel obligated to attend from time to time regardless of their religiosity, this interpretation was not provided by eight of the ten subjects representing this category. Seven high school and one college subject indicated, when asked, that special occasions referred to Christmas, Easter or other religious holidays. This finding might indicate at least a discernible degree of religiosity which would not have been indicated had the former interpretation been more common among these ten subjects.

Table 6 (p. 50) summarizes the sample's preparation for and experience as sexuality educators. Three subjects (13.0%) were in their first year's experience as sexuality educators at the time of the interview. Fifteen (65.3%) high school and three (33.3%) college subjects had less than five years of experience teaching sexuality. The college group was more experienced, with five (55.6%) subjects having five to 14 years of experience, compared to seven (30.4%) of the high

TABLE 6  
SUMMARY OF THE SAMPLE'S PREPARATION FOR AND EXPERIENCE AS SEXUALITY EDUCATORS

Variable	High School				College				Total for Sample	
	Men	Women	Total		Men	Women	Total		N	(%)
			N	(%)			N	(%)		
<u>How Long a Sexuality Educator</u>										
≤ 1 year	2	1	3	13.0	0	0	0	0.0	3	9.4
2 - 4 years	8	4	12	52.1	2	1	3	33.3	15	46.9
5 - 9 years	3	0	3	13.0	0	1	1	11.1	4	12.5
10 - 14 years	2	2	4	17.4	3	1	4	44.4	8	25.0
15 - 19 years	1	0	1	4.3	0	0	0	0.0	1	3.1
≥ 20 years	0	0	0	0.0	1	0	1	11.1	1	3.1
<u>Has Had a Methods or Content Course</u>										
currently	1	0	1	4.3	0	0	0	0.0	1	3.1
in last year	0	1	1	4.3	1	0	1	11.1	2	6.3
in last 5 years	5	2	7	30.4	0	0	0	0.0	7	21.9
in last 10 years	2	2	4	17.4	1	1	2	22.2	6	18.8
in last 15 years	2	9	2	8.7	0	0	0	0.0	2	6.3
never <sup>a</sup>	6	2	8	34.7	4	2	6	66.7	14	43.8

TABLE 6, CONTINUED

Variable	High School				College				Total for Sample	
	Men	Women	Total		Men	Women	Total		N	(%)
			<u>N</u>	(%)			<u>N</u>	(%)		
<u>Has Had Workshops or Inservices</u>										
in last year	5	5	10	43.4	4	1	5	55.6	15	46.9
in last 5 years	5	2	7	30.4	1	2	3	33.3	10	31.2
in last 10 years	1	0	1	4.3	0	0	0	0.0	1	3.1
never	5	0	5	21.7	1	0	1	11.1	6	18.8

<sup>a</sup>Of the 14 who never had a formal sexuality education course, all have had a workshop or inservice.



school subsample. One (4.3%) high school subject had taught sexuality for 15 - 19 years and one (11.1%) college subject had done so for more than 20 years.

Eight (34.7%) high school and six (66.7%) college educators had never had a college course in sexuality (content) or sexuality education (methods). All of these 14 subjects had attended workshops or inservices devoted to this topic.

Of the 15 high school subjects who had some classwork to prepare them for their roles as sexuality educators, nine (60%) had only a content course. Of the three college subjects in this category, two (66.7%) had only a content course. Upon further questioning, all 11 subjects who had only a content course indicated that while they thought it had been necessary and helpful, they felt that a methods course would have been even more helpful.

The time frame of subjects' preparatory coursework ranged from within the last year (4.3% high school; 11.1% college) to within the last 15 years (8.7% high school). Most coursework occurred in the last five years (30.4% high school), while 17.4 percent of high school and 22.2 percent of college subjects had taken their courses in the last ten years. One high school subject was enrolled in a methods course at the time of the interview.

All but six subjects (5, 21.7% high school; 1, 11.1% college) had attended workshops or inservice training in sexuality education. However, all of these subjects had taken preparatory work in college. A common complaint among these six subjects (and two others) was that when opportunities for these experiences occurred, they were scheduled at inconvenient times or at distant locations.

Two questions related to subjects' own sexuality comfort provided additional descriptive data about the sample. Question 16 of the interview guide (Appendix D, p. 171) asked whether the subject was comfortable with his or her own sexuality. It was reasoned that comfortable subjects might provide more or different information than uncomfortable subjects. However, this determination could not be made since subjects could not be expected to openly admit to being uncomfortable in the context of an interview during which they had clearly discussed this as being important. Indeed, all 32 subjects answered "yes" to the question, "are you comfortable with your own sexuality?"

Because sexuality educators were the focus of this study, it was considered appropriate to ask subjects *how* comfortable they were *in their roles as sexuality educators* (Question 17 of the interview guide, Appendix D, p. 171). It was believed that these ratings would provide a general frame of reference for understanding subjects' descriptions of the concept, sexuality comfort. Subjects rated comfort in their roles as sexuality educators using a five-point Likert scale where 1.0 was "very comfortable" and 5.0 was "very uncomfortable." The high school mean score was 1.35 compared to the college mean score of 1.78 and an overall mean of 1.47. Scores of both groups ranged from 1.0 to 2.0, with a standard deviation for the high school subsample of .49, .67 for the college subsample and .57 overall.

### Presentation of Results

The complexity of sexuality comfort is perhaps best appreciated through an overview of data as it was applied to the research

questions (Figure 2, p. 54). The fact that 10 interview items supplied data which was applicable to more than one research question, suggests that sexuality comfort is a general construct involving numerous complex interrelationships among its components. These relationships are identified and described in this section.

Research Question	Interview Guide Item
(1) How important is sexuality comfort as a characteristic of sexuality educators?	1, 9, 10, 19
(2) Do the subsamples differ with respect to the rank they ascribe to sexuality comfort, in comparison to other important teacher characteristics?	10
(3) Are there significant differences among the subsamples in the meanings they assign to sexuality comfort?	1
(4) What is the nature of sexuality comfort according to sexuality educators?	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 19
(5) Can sexuality comfort be defined operationally?	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19

Figure 2. Application of data from interview items to specific research questions.

### Comparison of the Subsamples

The two subsamples (high school and college) were compared with respect to (a) the importance they ascribe to sexuality comfort as a characteristic of sexuality educators (research questions 1 and 2, p. 4) and (b) the meanings they assigned to the psychological construct, sexuality comfort (research question 3, p. 4). This section presents data obtained relative to these questions, along with results of the statistical analyses.

#### Importance of Sexuality Comfort to Subjects

Research question 1 (p. 4) asked subjects how important sexuality comfort is as a characteristic of sexuality educators. Response modes ranged from "very important" (1.0) to "very unimportant" (5.0). Mean scores and standard deviations were calculated for each subsample and for the entire sample. No statistical analysis was conducted to determine whether the scores differed significantly.

The high school mean score for the importance of teacher sexuality comfort was 1.22 compared to the college score of 1.33, with an overall sample mean of 1.25. Scores in the high school subsample ranged from 1.0 to 2.0; the range for college subjects was 1.0 to 3.0. Standard deviations for the high school group was .42, with .71 for the college group and .57 overall. All seven subjects who assigned scores to the importance of sexuality comfort higher than 1.0, indicated that while they believed that teacher sexuality comfort is very important, it cannot be achieved apart from other qualities such as knowledge about sexuality or communication skills.

Research question 2 (p. 4) inquired further into the importance of teacher sexuality comfort. It sought to determine how important teacher sexuality comfort is *relative to* four other characteristics identified to be important for sexuality educators (Juhasz, 1973). Question 10 of the interview guide (Appendix D, p. 171) requested subjects to rank order the five characteristics in terms of their importance for sexuality educators. Table 7 (p. 56) indicates how the sample ranked these five characteristics.

TABLE 7  
SUBJECTS' RANKING OF THE IMPORTANCE OF FIVE  
TEACHER CHARACTERISTICS, INCLUDING SEXUALITY COMFORT<sup>a</sup>

Characteristic <sup>b</sup>	High School	College	Overall
(A) Ability to communicate about sexuality honestly, sensitively, clearly	1	4.5 <sup>c</sup>	1
(B) Sexuality comfort	2	1	2
(C) High degree of empathy	3	2	3
(D) Knowledge of specific factual information	4	3	4
(E) Effective teaching skills	5	4.5 <sup>c</sup>	5

<sup>a</sup>Data are from question 10 of the interview guide which asked subjects to rank order the five characteristics of sexuality educators.

<sup>b</sup>Characteristics are rated from 1, most important to 5, least important.

<sup>c</sup>College subjects ranked characteristics (A) and (E) equally.

Of the 31 subjects who prioritized the teacher characteristics, 28 justified their rankings with explanations that they do not ascribe more importance to one quality over the other. Rather, the rankings reflected their belief that a given quality is a prerequisite to achieving another. Only three subjects indicated that their rankings reflected the importance of each characteristic to the teaching situation.

It should be noted that 65.6 percent (21) of the entire sample were openly frustrated by the request to rank the characteristics. While many of these subjects simply made statements about the difficulty of the task, 13 stated specifically that all of the characteristics are so important that they preferred not to make any of them appear unimportant by comparing them. In fact, the college subject who declined to rank the characteristics stated that, "sexuality comfort is a multi-dimensional concept and *in the context* of these other qualities, I'm unsure of what it means. However, I do see them all as equally important and a teacher who lacked any of them would give presentations which have a distorted impact."

The Mann-Whitney U test performed on the sample's ranks, revealed significant differences between high school and college subjects with respect to one characteristic -- the ability to communicate about sexuality honestly, sensitively, clearly. Table 8 (p. 58) displays scores for computations relative to all five characteristics.

TABLE 8  
MANN-WHITNEY U SCORES, Z-SCORES AND  
PROBABILITIES FOR SUBJECTS' RANKINGS OF TEACHER CHARACTERISTICS<sup>a</sup>

Characteristic	U <sub>1</sub>	U <sub>2</sub>	z <sup>b</sup>	Decision
(A) Ability to communicate about sexuality honestly, sensitively, clearly	160.0	24.0	2.97	p = .0022 Reject H <sub>0</sub>
(B) Sexuality comfort	103.0	81.0	.4883	p = .5824 Retain H <sub>0</sub>
(C) High degree of empathy	73.5	110.5	.8061	p = .3954 Retain H <sub>0</sub>
(D) Knowledge of specific factual information	76.0	108.0	.6986	p = .4532 Retain H <sub>0</sub>
(E) Effective teaching skills	59.5	124.5	1.44	p = .1470 Retain H <sub>0</sub>

p ≤ .05

<sup>a</sup>Data are from question 10 of the interview guide (Appendix D, p. 171) which asked subjects to rank the five characteristics according to their importance for sexuality educators.

<sup>b</sup>A continuity correction was performed on the U score in order to account for extensive ties among individual observations for each characteristic and for the large size (>20) of the high school subsample. The null hypothesis was rejected when probability for the resulting z-score was less than or equal to .05, the predetermined level of significance (Sharp, 1979; Thomas, 1982).

Additional evidence of the importance that sexuality educators ascribe to teacher sexuality comfort can be found in a thematic analysis of complete sentences which subjects were asked to develop, using the term, sexuality comfort (Table 9, p. 59). Of the 32 sentences generated, 14 (43.8%) specifically indicated that sexuality

comfort is important to sexuality educators. Ten (71.4%) of these 14 sentences mentioned that it is important because teacher sexuality comfort influences his or her effectiveness as a sexuality educator. The remaining four of the 14 were general statements about the importance of sexuality comfort. Three of five "other" statements stressed that the concept of sexuality comfort merits further research. Finally, nine of the definitional sentences in the "sexuality comfort is..." category suggested the importance of sexuality comfort to sexuality educators -- personally and in the classroom.

TABLE 9  
THEMATIC ANALYSIS OF SENTENCES  
USING THE TERM, "SEXUALITY COMFORT"<sup>a</sup>

Sentence Theme	High School	College	<u>N</u>	Total (%)
Sexuality comfort is...	8	2	10	31.3
Sexuality comfort: its importance	12	2	14	43.8
Sexuality comfort: its contribution to quality of life	2	1	3	9.4
Other	<u>1</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>15.5</u>
TOTAL	23	9	32	100.0

<sup>a</sup>Data are from question 19 of the interview guide (Appendix D, p. 170).



### The Meaning of Sexuality Comfort

Research question 3 (p. 4) asked whether the subsamples differed significantly in terms of the meanings they assigned to the psychological construct, sexuality comfort. Chi square analysis was performed on the data from questions 1a and 1b of the interview guide (Appendix D, p. 170), which asked subjects what it means to be comfortable with sexuality -- both personally (1a) -- and as an educator (1b). Due to the dual nature of the question, separate chi square analyses were conducted for each part of the question (Tables 10 and 12, pp. 61 and 63). However, in order to determine whether the groups differed significantly in their meanings of the *overall* concept of sexuality comfort, data for both parts of the question were combined and chi square computed (Table 13, p. 64).

Chi square was computed using percent of total responses rather than absolute frequencies. This procedure reduced the number of cells containing less than five observations, thereby increasing accuracy of the result (Thomas, 1982). In fact, Thomas (1982) suggests that especially for small samples, it may be more meaningful to consider the proportion of observations in the cells rather than the number.

The null hypothesis was rejected when chi square analysis revealed a significant difference ( $p \leq .05$ ) between the subsamples regarding meanings they assigned to *personal* sexuality comfort (Table 10, p. 61). Additional chi square analysis on data from interview question 1a was performed in order to ascertain what accounted for the significant differences (Table 11, p. 62). The additional analysis indicated that differences occurred in response categories B (the

TABLE 10  
CHI SQUARE ANALYSIS OF SUBJECT RESPONSES TO INTERVIEW QUESTION 1a:  
WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE COMFORTABLE WITH SEXUALITY -- PERSONALLY?

(Personally) SC Means...	High School <sup>a</sup>	College <sup>a</sup>	Total <sup>b</sup>	df	Chi Square	Table Value	Decision
(A) to understand/accept one's own sexuality	28 (43.8)	9 (14.1)	37 (57.9)	3	15.10	7.82	Reject H <sub>0</sub>
(B) the ability to communicate about sexuality	15 (23.4)	2 ( 3.1)	17 (26.5)				
(C) to recognize and deal with sexual problems	3 ( 4.7)	2 ( 3.1)	5 ( 7.8)				
(D) to accept others' sexual values	1 ( 1.5)	4 ( 6.3)	5 ( 7.8)				

$p \leq .05$

<sup>a</sup>The values inside parentheses are percentage of total responses for the sample; chi square was computed on the basis of these values.

<sup>b</sup>Frequency totals exceed the sample size (32) because of multiple responses.

TABLE 11  
CHI SQUARE ANALYSIS OF INDIVIDUAL CATEGORIES IN INTERVIEW QUESTION 1a<sup>a</sup>  
(TABLE 10) INDICATING WHERE SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES OCCURRED

Category	High School <sup>b</sup>	College <sup>b</sup>	Total	Chi Square	df	Table Value	Significant?
(A) to understand/accept one's own sexuality							
Percent Included	59.6	52.9	112.5	.91	1	3.84	No
Percent Not Included	40.4	47.1	87.5				
(B) the ability to communicate about sexuality							
Percent Included	31.9	11.8	43.7	11.83	1	3.84	Yes
Percent Not Included	68.1	88.2	156.3				
(C) to recognize and deal with sexual problems							
Percent Included	6.4	11.8	18.2	1.76	1	3.84	No
Percent Not Included	93.6	88.2	181.8				
(D) to accept others sexual values							
Percent Included	2.1	23.5	25.6	16.62	1	3.84	Yes
Percent Not Included	97.2	76.5	174.4				

$p \leq .05$

<sup>a</sup>"What does it mean to be comfortable with sexuality -- personally?"

<sup>b</sup>Numbers represent percentage of responses for this subsample.

TABLE 12  
CHI SQUARE ANALYSIS OF SUBJECT RESPONSES TO INTERVIEW QUESTION 1b:  
WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE COMFORTABLE WITH SEXUALITY -- AS AN EDUCATOR?

(As an Educator), SC Means...	High School <sup>a</sup>	College <sup>a</sup>	Total <sup>b</sup>	df	Chi Square	Table Value	Decision
(A) the ability to communicate about sexuality	16 (24.6)	6 ( 9.2)	22 (33.8)	3	3.44	7.82	Retain H <sub>0</sub>
(B) it's synonymous with personal sexuality comfort	17 (26.2)	7 (10.8)	24 (36.9)				
(C) confidence in one's knowledge and teaching skills	6 ( 9.2)	6 ( 9.2)	12 (18.5)				
(D) to accept others' sexual values	4 ( 6.2)	3 ( 4.6)	7 (10.8)				

$p \leq .05$

<sup>a</sup>The values inside parentheses are percentage of total responses for the sample; chi square was computed on the basis of these values.

<sup>b</sup>Frequency totals exceed the sample size (32) because of multiple responses.

TABLE 13  
CHI SQUARE ANALYSIS OF SUBJECT RESPONSES TO INTERVIEW QUESTIONS 1a AND 1b:  
WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE COMFORTABLE WITH SEXUALITY -- PERSONALLY AND AS AN EDUCATOR?<sup>a</sup>

SC Means...	High School <sup>a</sup>	College <sup>b</sup>	Total <sup>c</sup>	df	Chi Square	Table Value	Decision
(A) the ability to communicate about sexuality	31 (29.5)	8 ( 7.6)	39 (37.1)	4	8.76	9.49	Retain H <sub>0</sub>
(B) to understand and accept one's own sexuality	28 (26.6)	9 ( 8.6)	37 (35.2)				
(C) to accept others' sexual values	5 ( 4.7)	7 ( 6.7)	12 (11.4)				
(D) confidence in one's knowledge and teaching skills	6 ( 5.7)	6 ( 5.7)	12 (11.4)				
(E) to recognize and deal with sexual problems	3 ( 2.9)	2 ( 1.9)	5 ( 4.8)				

$p \leq .05$

<sup>a</sup>Data in this table are combined from that in Tables 10 and 12, pp. 61 and 63, respectively. Responses in Category B of Table 12 are not included, since they would have been considered nonresponses to the general question, "what does it mean to be comfortable with sexuality?"

<sup>b</sup>The values inside parentheses are percentage of total responses for the sample; chi square was computed on the basis of these values.

<sup>c</sup>Frequency totals exceed the sample size (32) because of multiple responses.

ability to communicate about sexuality) and D (to accept others' sexual values). A significantly greater percentage (31.9%) of high school responses emphasized Category B (the ability to communicate about sexuality) than did college responses (11.8%); while a significantly greater percentage of college responses (23.5%) emphasized Category D (to accept others' sexual values) than did high school responses (2.1%).

Twenty-five percent of the cells for question 1a (Table 10, p. 61) contained fewer than five observations -- a situation which warrants using caution interpreting the result (Sharp, 1979). However, Thomas (1982) indicates that in situations such as this where chi square and the critical values are not close ( $\chi^2 = 15.1$ ;  $T = 7.82$ ), then the decision to reject the null hypothesis can be trusted.

No significant differences were found between the two groups relative to their definitions of sexuality comfort as an educator (Table 12, p. 63). Thus, differences identified between the subsample's definitions of personal sexuality comfort did not carry over into the classroom. Furthermore, these differences were not large enough to effect a significant difference among the subsamples in the combined data (Table 13, p. 64) for the overall meaning of sexuality comfort. However, since there was only a small difference between chi square and the critical value for the combined data ( $\chi^2 = 8.76$ ;  $T = 9.49$ ) with 40 percent of the cells containing fewer than five observations, the decision to retain the null hypothesis may be questioned.

## The Psychological Nature of Sexuality Comfort

The remainder of this chapter reports data which addresses research questions 4 and 5 (p. 4 ). These questions sought information which might be appropriately applied toward an operational definition of the psychological construct, sexuality comfort. The development of definitions was previously discussed (pp. 12 - 18; 41 - 42) as a subjective thought process requiring application of semantic principles to a collection of data. Therefore, data in this section are not reported statistically.

### Sexuality Comfort as a Psychological Construct

Literature reviewed for this study (pp. 12 - 18) provided a basis for the assumption that sexuality comfort is a psychological construct. This assumption was further substantiated through subjects' inability to discuss sexuality comfort apart from references to feelings, attitudes and behaviors.

### Personal Versus General Sexuality Comfort

A major question in the interview guide (Appendix D, p. 170) considered whether subjects believed that sexuality comfort occurs on two "planes" or levels as indicated by Hartman, Quinn and Young (1981). Subjects were asked whether they thought *personal* sexuality comfort was the same as or different than, comfort with general topics and issues about sexuality (*general* sexuality comfort). Table 14 (p. 67) summarizes responses to this question, with explanations.

TABLE 14  
HOW THE SAMPLE DISTINGUISHED BETWEEN  
PERSONAL AND GENERAL SEXUALITY COMFORT<sup>a</sup>

Personal and General SC are...Because...	High School	College	<u>N</u>	Total <sup>b</sup> (%)
<u>PSC &amp; GSC are Different<sup>c</sup></u>				
One is emotional/other is intellectual	4	6	10	30.3
One is a prerequisite <sup>d</sup> for the other	8	2	10	30.3
<u>PSC &amp; GSC are the Same<sup>c</sup></u>				
One is a prerequisite <sup>d</sup> for the other	12	1	13	39.4

<sup>a</sup>Data are from question 2 of the interview guide (Appendix D, p. 170) which asked, "Is comfort with one's own sexuality the same as or different than comfort with general topics and issues about sexuality?"

<sup>b</sup>Frequency totals exceed the sample size (32) because of multiple responses.

<sup>c</sup>PSC = personal sexuality comfort; GSC = general sexuality comfort.

<sup>d</sup>See p. 68 for explanation of identical responses in different categories.

Twenty subjects (60.6%) of the sample felt that personal and general sexuality comfort are different concepts. Support for this position was evenly divided into two categories: (a) that one (personal sexuality comfort) is emotional in nature while the other (general sexuality comfort) is intellectual in nature; (b) that one (usually personal sexuality comfort) is a prerequisite for the other. Two subjects who thought that personal and general sexuality comfort differ specifically stated that general sexuality comfort is a

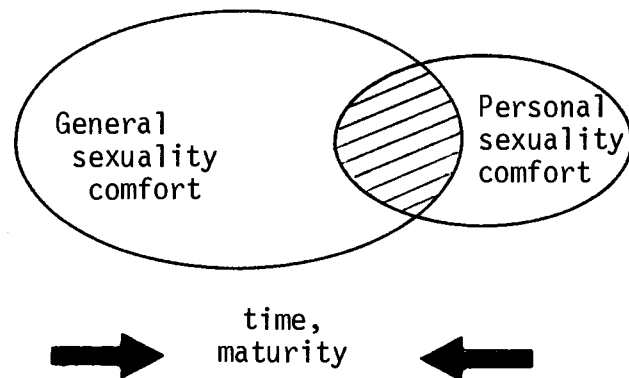


prerequisite to achieve personal sexuality comfort. They explained that the opportunity to discuss sexuality in a general, detached manner was the key to eventual comfort with their own sexuality.

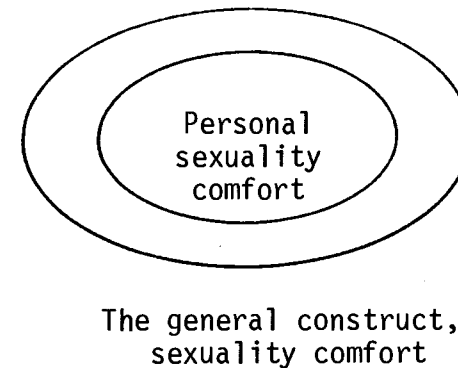
All subjects who answered "same" to question 2 (39.4%) provided identical explanations to 30.3 percent who answered, "different" -- that "one is a prerequisite for the other." These subjects were asked to explain how this made the two concepts the same or different. In 11 cases, the follow-up question yielded reasonable support for *both* positions.

Subjects who indicated "different," essentially said that if one is a prerequisite for the other, then one must occur in time before the other. Consequently, they must be different or they would occur concurrently. These subjects also indicated that the mere ability to discuss the two individually made them different concepts.

Four subjects who believed that general and personal sexuality comfort are the same, stated that *initially*, they are different. However, as people develop more comfort with their own sexuality, they also become more comfortable with general topics and issues about sexuality. Thus, over time, the two constructs merge until they are eventually integrated as one. Maturity and personal development are primary factors which affect this integration (Figure 3, p. 69).



- (a) In this model, time and maturity bring the ellipses together, causing the overlap to become greater and resulting in fewer identifiable differences between the two concepts.



- (b) In this model, merge is complete. Personal sexuality comfort is identified as an entity of its own ("different"), yet as part of the larger concept, general sexuality comfort ("same").

Figure 3. Mergence of *personal* and *general* sexuality comfort.

An extension of this thinking results in a conceptual model (Figure 3b, p. 69) which appears to be consistent with the entire sample's emphasis on the close relationship between general and personal sexuality comfort. Moreover, the model takes into account the thinking of 20 subjects (62.5%) who believed that the concept is different, as well as the 12 (37.5%) who believed them to be the same. In fact, the overall data supports the proposition that personal sexuality comfort is merely *part* of a whole, larger concept, general sexuality comfort.

#### Personal Awareness of Sexuality Comfort

Only nine of the 32 subjects believed that teachers generally are *not* aware of their sexuality comfort status (one was uncertain). Of these nine subjects, one thought that although teachers aren't aware of their sexuality comfort status, they are nonetheless able to recognize its impact on students. This subject stated, however, that teachers may not attribute what they recognize in students to their sexuality comfort status. Two subjects thought that most teachers are either unwilling or unable to evaluate their sexuality comfort status. Four subjects believed that teachers are generally unaware of their sexuality comfort status because they rarely think about it. They thought that comfortable sexuality educators have little need to address this issue.

All subjects were asked to indicate what makes, or would make, teachers aware of their sexuality comfort status (Question 5 of the interview guide, Appendix D, p. 170). Table 15, (p. 71) summarizes

these responses. Because all categories were applicable to responses of those who believed that teachers are aware as well as those who believed otherwise, the table does not distinguish between these two groups.

TABLE 15  
HOW TEACHERS BECOME AWARE  
OF THEIR SEXUALITY COMFORT STATUS  
WHILE TEACHING SEXUALITY<sup>a</sup>

What Causes Awareness of "SC Status"	High School	College	<u>N</u>	Total <sup>b</sup> (%)
Personal feelings/ stress responses	29	10	39	51.3
Student feedback	15	2	17	22.4
Communication behaviors	10	1	11	14.5
Other	6	3	9	11.8

<sup>a</sup>Data are from question 5 of the interview guide (Appendix D, p. 170) which asked, "Are teachers generally aware of their 'SC status' while teaching, and its impact on students? What makes (or would make) them aware?"

<sup>b</sup>Frequency totals exceed sample size (32) because of multiple responses.

Over 51 percent of responses to question 5 indicated that personal feelings and stress responses cause awareness of "SC status." One hundred percent of the sample gave either specific or general examples of these which included anxiety, fear, defensiveness, sweating, flushing, shaking or other physiological stress reactions.

Student feedback was mentioned by 22.4 percent of the sample as a possible factor in causing teacher awareness of their sexuality

comfort status. Many subjects prefaced this example with the statement that student feedback will cause the awareness only for teachers who are interested in knowing about their sexuality comfort status. In other words, student feedback is always present, but it is up to the teacher to attribute the nature of it to the appropriate cause. According to these subjects, student feedback may be direct or indirect and may include written evaluations, direct comments, "body language," or even behavior problems. The most common form of student feedback recorded was participation in class discussions. Nine subjects believed that there would be little or no student participation in classrooms where the teacher is uncomfortable with sexuality.

Communication behaviors, representing 14.5 percent of responses, included: choice of teaching method or materials and general mannerisms involved in presentation. The "other" category (11.8%) represented examples such as peer review of teaching and deliberate personal evaluation of one's feelings and attitudes about sexuality.

#### Quantifying Sexuality Comfort

In defining a concept, it is helpful to know whether people are able to think of it and describe it in terms of quantity. Subjects were therefore asked whether they believed that sexuality comfort could be described quantitatively (question 3 of the interview guide, Appendix D, p. 170). Table 16 (p. 73) provides a summary of subject responses to this question.

Only three subjects (9.4%) thought that sexuality comfort is not measurable, while two (6.3%) were uncertain. All "no/uncertain" subjects understood "quantifying" to refer only to evaluation with a

TABLE 16  
SUBJECT RESPONSES, WITH REASONS, WHY  
THEY BELIEVED SC COULD OR COULD NOT BE QUANTIFIED<sup>a</sup>

Can SC be Quantified?/ with Explanation	High School	College	<u>N</u>	Total (%)
<u>Yes</u>				
If its individual components are considered	1	7	8	25.0
The ability to describe one's own SC using words of quantity	12	1	13	40.6
Evaluation of one's own SC over time	6	0	6	18.8
<u>No/Uncertain<sup>b</sup></u>	4	1	5	15.6

<sup>a</sup>Data are from question 3 of the interview guide (Appendix D, p. 170) which asked, "Can sexuality comfort be described quantitatively?"

<sup>b</sup>Three negative and two uncertain responses were registered.

testing instrument. Uncertain subjects felt unqualified to make such a judgment. The "no" subjects thought that measuring sexuality comfort is impossible, because it would be too difficult to establish norms, accuracy and make it meaningful for everyone due to the subjective nature of the construct. However, all subjects in this category believed that sexuality comfort could be described *individually* using relative, quantitative terms such as those used on an example card ("very comfortable," "very uncomfortable"). Thus, all of the sample was able to think about sexuality comfort in some terms of quantity.

Three general explanations for their belief that sexuality comfort is quantifiable came from 84.4 percent of the sample. Referring to Table 16 (p. 73), a striking difference can be seen between the subsamples in explanations provided. Only 4.3 percent of high school, compared to 77.8 percent of college subjects indicated that sexuality comfort could be measured (psychometrically) if the various components of it were carefully considered. These subjects expressed the belief that sexuality comfort is a broad, complex construct involving numerous dimensions such as language and sexual experience -- and cannot be evaluated overall without examining its various dimensions. This group used research-oriented language in their responses to this questions, which suggests the likelihood that college subjects were more knowledgeable than high school subjects about psychometrics.

Overall, high school responses to this question were more simplistic and tended to be drawn from personal experience than were the college responses. The most common reason supporting the validity of quantifying sexuality comfort was that the subject was able to use words of quantity such as "more," "less," or "very" to describe their own sexuality comfort. While many of these subjects stated that these words are only relative rather than exact, they believed that the words nonetheless provided a quality of measurability to sexuality comfort.

A similar group of responses were from six high school subjects who said that in evaluating their own sexuality comfort over time, they could readily detect changes in comfort "levels." Thus, thinking of sexuality comfort as having levels suggested to these subjects that it can be measured.

Conditions Required to  
Experience Sexuality Comfort

The sample unanimously agreed that certain conditions are required in order to experience sexuality comfort. Subjects were asked to identify some of these conditions and their responses are presented in Table 17 below. It should be noted that these responses specify conditions required for teachers to experience sexuality comfort in an educational setting (general sexuality comfort).

TABLE 17  
CONDITIONS REQUIRED TO EXPERIENCE SEXUALITY COMFORT<sup>a</sup>

Condition <sup>b</sup>	High School	College	<u>N</u>	Total <sup>c</sup> (%)
Personal feelings/attitudes about sexuality	25	5	30	31.6
Community/administrative support	15	4	19	20.0
Audience composition	14	5	19	20.0
Confidence in knowledge and teaching skills	12	4	16	16.8
Rapport with students	9	2	11	11.6

<sup>a</sup>Data are from question 4 of the interview guide (Appendix D, p. 170) which asked, "Is sexuality comfort dependent upon certain conditions being met? If so, which ones?"

<sup>b</sup>All subjects believed that sexuality comfort is dependent upon certain conditions being met.

<sup>c</sup>Frequency totals exceed the sample size (32) because of multiple responses.



Twenty-nine subjects (90.6%) believed that general sexuality comfort could not be achieved apart from personal sexuality comfort. The remaining three subjects (9.4%) indicated that personal sexuality comfort is not a prerequisite for the teacher to experience general sexuality comfort, although it is certainly an asset which contributes to it. Therefore, it should be kept in mind that in suggesting conditions necessary for teacher sexuality comfort (general sexuality comfort) subjects presumed that a reasonable degree of personal sexuality comfort is preexisting.

Greatest emphasis (31.6%) in question 4 was placed on the condition of teachers' feelings, values and attitudes about sexuality. It is significant to note that five (55.6%) college subjects and 23 (100%) high school subjects had at least one response which could be generalized to this category. Thus, the teacher's feelings and attitudes about sexuality are seen to be very important contributing factors in the experience of sexuality comfort.

The "feelings/attitudes" category is of further interest because it suggests conditions that might be more appropriately applied to the achievement of personal sexuality comfort (e.g., attitude toward non-marital coitus). Thus, responses in this category serve to demonstrate again, the close relationship between the two concepts of general and personal sexuality comfort. Additional examples of conditions in this category are: belief in the validity of sexuality as an academic subject; realistic perspective of students' sexuality and a feeling for the importance of the subject to students.

High school subjects expressed the need for community or administrative support for the sexuality education program in order to be

comfortable conducting it. Only one (11.1%) college subject personally felt the need to have support for the sexuality education course from the administration and community. Three college responses were registered from teacher educators who specified this need for sexuality educators in the public schools, but not necessarily for college sexuality educators. One college and one high school subject suggested that it is important for colleagues to be supportive of sexuality education as well. Five subjects indicated that even without active support for sexuality education, teachers can still teach it comfortably provided there is no open opposition.

Sixteen percent (12) of high school responses emphasized the importance of confidence in one's knowledge about sexuality and skills to teach it, compared to 20 percent (4) of the college subsample who mentioned this. An important point made by 13 of the 16 respondents in this category, was that *having* the knowledge and being *confident* in one's ability to teach it to others are quite different concepts. Eight subjects felt that teachers could get factual information on their own, but a methods course for sexuality educators would assist them in developing inter- and intrapersonal skills required to achieve the confidence they require to teach sexuality. Some of these skills were the ability to recognize and deal with one's own sexual nature and the ability to initiate and perpetuate meaningful group discussion about sexual topics. A further point made by these eight subjects is that not only are methods which are applicable to the teaching of most academic subjects often not effective teaching sexuality, but those which are effective teaching sexuality are often not acquired through general teacher education courses.

Audience composition was an important condition (question 4) for both college (25.0%) and high school subjects (18.7%). Specific responses in this category referred to age of the group, emphasizing that it is important for teachers to feel that they relate well to people of the age group involved. Sex ratio of the audience may influence some teacher's sexuality comfort. Although none of the sample stated a preference for teaching single sex courses in sexuality, 12 respondents felt that it is helpful to have a fairly even number of males and females.

Rapport with students is a response category (question 4) which overlapped audience composition. It included specific conditions about how the teacher gets along with students. Six subjects indicated that teachers may be uncomfortable discussing sexuality if there is even one student in the class with whom he or she does not get along well. Others mentioned that a hostile or judgmental audience would render a discussion of sexuality uncomfortable for most any teacher.

#### The Meaning of Sexuality Comfort to Teachers

In response to question 1 of the interview guide (Appendix D, p. 170), subjects provided their own definitions of sexuality comfort -- personally (1a) and as an educator (1b). Earlier in this chapter (pp. 60 - 65), results were presented of a statistical analysis conducted to detect whether significant differences existed between the subsamples relative to these definitions. This section presents a summary of the substantive content of the sample's definitions.

The Personal Meaning of  
Sexuality Comfort

Question 1a of the interview guide (Appendix D, p. 170) asked subjects to define the personal meaning of sexuality comfort. Table 18 below summarizes collective responses to this question.

TABLE 18  
WHAT IT MEANS PERSONALLY  
TO BE COMFORTABLE WITH SEXUALITY<sup>a</sup>

Personally, SC means...	High School	College	<u>N</u>	Total (%)
to understand/accept one's own sexuality	28	9	37	57.8
the ability to communi- cate about sexuality	15	2	17	26.6
to recognize and deal with sexual problems	3	2	5	7.8
to accept others' sexual values	1	4	5	7.8

<sup>a</sup>Data are from question 1a of the interview guide (Appendix D, p. 170) which asked, "What does it mean to be comfortable with sexuality -- personally?"

<sup>b</sup>Frequency totals exceed the sample size (32) because of multiple responses.

Greatest emphasis (57.8%) was placed on personal sexuality comfort involving understanding and acceptance of one's own sexuality. In fact, 100 percent of the sample had at least one contribution to this category. Five high school subjects contributed two responses which were different enough to be counted as separate answers, yet similar enough to be placed into the same category. Specific

meanings provided by subjects in this category included: acknowledging one's own sexual nature; being proud of and satisfied with one's sexual self; feeling good about being a sexual person; accepting of the roles one's sexuality may dictate; evaluating one's sexual value system and having self-satisfying support for them.

The ability to communicate about sexuality was a large part (31.9%) of the high school group's definition of personal sexuality comfort (question 1a). This is consistent with the greater emphasis this group placed on the ability to communicate in ranking teacher characteristics (Table 7, p. 56). The college group contributed 11.8 percent of the responses to this category.

Subjects emphasized that for personal sexuality comfort (question 1a), the ability to communicate about sexuality specifically referred to communication on a personal level -- with a partner, a friend or a doctor, for example. However, according to eight subjects providing this response, some of the ability to communicate about sexuality on a personal level should spill over into the educational setting. That is, the teacher should be able to acknowledge to students that he or she is a sexual person.

Nevertheless, six of these eight subjects believed that teachers who get "too personal" -- to the extent of discussing their own sexual activities -- may actually be uncomfortable with their sexuality. Classroom discussion of the teacher's sexual behavior may be an attempt on the part of the teacher to deny or cover-up conflicts about his or her own sexuality. Subjects concluded that the key to teachers' openness about their own sexuality being indicative of sexuality comfort is *appropriateness* to the situation. Fourteen subjects stated

during their response to this question that a methods course for sexuality educators may be the only way that some teachers ever learn what is or is not appropriate in the classroom relative to the topic of sexuality.

Part of personal sexuality comfort involves the ability to recognize and deal with sexual problems (question 1a). Subjects offering responses in this category (5) were emphatic that being comfortable with sexuality does not mean "having it together" sexually -- or even being free from sexual problems all of the time. Rather, a sexually comfortable person would be one who is able to recognize that he or she has a problem and mobilize resources to deal with it. Three subjects stated that people who believe they are free of sexual problems all of the time, are likely denying them.

Subjects believed that sexuality comfort also involves acceptance of other people's sexual values (question 1a). Five subjects who provided this response believed that people who are threatened by divergent sexual values or behaviors are probably uncomfortable with their own sexuality. These respondents felt that people who are comfortable with themselves as sexual people, recognize divergent (but non-exploitive) sexual behavior as good and normal for those people. In fact, these subjects expressed the thought that people who are comfortable with their own sexuality are unlikely to ever exploit others sexually or to be exploited sexually.

#### The General Meaning of Sexuality Comfort

In defining what it means as an educator to be comfortable with sexuality (question 1b), 22.6 percent of the sample said that it

means the same thing as personal sexuality comfort (question 1a), *in addition to* specific other meanings. These additional connotations fell into three general categories which are displayed in Table 19 below.

TABLE 19  
WHAT IT MEANS AS AN EDUCATOR  
TO BE COMFORTABLE WITH SEXUALITY<sup>a</sup>

As an Educator, SC means...	High School	College	<u>N</u>	Total <sup>b</sup> (%)
the ability to communi- cate about sexuality	16	6	22	41.5
synonymous with personal sexuality comfort	9	3	12	22.6
confidence in one's know- ledge and teaching skills	6	6	12	22.6
to accept others' sexual values	4	3	7	13.2

<sup>a</sup>Data are from question 1b of the interview guide (Appendix D, p. 170) which asked, "What does it mean to be comfortable with sexuality -- as an educator?"

<sup>b</sup>Frequency totals exceed sample size (32) because of multiple responses.

The ability to communicate about sexuality to others -- individually as well as to groups -- received 41.5 percent of the responses to question 1b. Subjects believed that teachers who could not communicate about sexuality openly, honestly and with clarity, could not be comfortable in general -- nor could they make effective sexuality educators. The comfortable sexuality educator, according to these subjects, is one who discusses sexual topics frankly, without undue

embarrassment. Specific examples which were provided in this category were of teachers who openly confront issues brought up by students, who use appropriate support resources as needed and who in fact, *create* an atmosphere of comfort surrounding the topic so that students recognize this (comfort) as good and appropriate.

Confidence in one's knowledge about sexuality and ability to teach it was discussed previously as a condition to achieve general sexuality comfort. Not only did subjects think of this quality as a *condition* of sexuality comfort (question 4), but also as a *definition* of it (question 1b). Comfortable teachers, according to these subjects, know what they are talking about and are willing to admit it if they don't know something -- or if they are wrong. Having the knowledge and teaching skills, according to 22.6 percent of the sample, provided a foundation of general sexuality comfort. They said that confidence is achieved over a period of time during which teaching experience proves (and improves) the teacher's ability to teach sexuality. Seven subjects emphasized that a methods course which provides a preview of what may occur "in the real world" would help prepare teachers at least minimally with the confidence they need to be an effective sexuality educator.

#### The Operational Nature of Sexuality Comfort

Chapter II (pp. 15 - 19) discussed some basic principles of general semantics -- the science of meaning. General semantics is founded upon operational philosophy, which proposes that real meaning is unachievable apart from *experience*. Results are presented in this



section from that part of the interview directed toward discerning the operational -- experiential -- nature of sexuality comfort.

### Indicators of Sexuality Comfort

Literature discussed in Chapter II (pp. 8-12) clearly attributed the concept of sexuality comfort to the domains of feelings, attitudes and behaviors. However, the literature is not at all clear about what those feelings, attitudes and behaviors are. Subjects were therefore asked to contribute to the definitional process by suggesting specific feelings, attitudes and behaviors which may be indicative of teacher sexuality comfort (question 6 of the interview guide, Appendix D, p. 170). This information is useful for describing the operational nature of sexuality comfort as well as for helping people evaluate their own sexuality comfort status. In other words, the *positive* indicators (Table 20 pp. 85-89) tell us *what* sexuality educators experience when they experience the condition they identified as sexuality comfort.

It should be noted that if sexuality comfort was placed on a continuum ranging from very comfortable to very uncomfortable, a large number of subject responses for indicators of sexuality comfort (question 6) would fall at the negative end of the continuum. In fact, most subjects had difficulty identifying positive indicators without continuous reminders to think in terms of sexuality *comfort*. Nine subjects were able to provide only negative indicators while all subjects provided some negative indicators. Therefore, Table 20 is divided into two sections: "negative" and "positive" indicators -- and they are referred to as indicators of sexuality comfort status.

TABLE 20  
INDICATORS OF "SEXUALITY COMFORT STATUS"<sup>a</sup>

Negative	Positive
<u>Feelings</u>	
Anxious	Able to communicate
Annoyed	At peace with one's sexuality
Bored	Confident in ability to deal with issues spontaneously
Disgusted	Congruent
Doubtful	Eager to teach sexuality
Dreadful	Ease in discussing sexual topics
Embarrassed	Enjoyment discussing sexual topics
Fearful	Enjoyment teaching sexuality
Frustrated with frank questions	Enthusiastic anticipation
Guilty	Feeling good about own sexual standards/behaviors
"Haunting" after-thoughts	Feeling that students are interested
Hesitant	Freedom from embarrassment
Hostile	
Ignorant	"I'm understood" -- feeling able to make a point
Inadequate	"I'm normal" -- feeling one meets general expectations
Inexperienced	Integrated
Insecure	
Physiological feelings of nervousness:	Knowledgeable (feeling of be- ing so)
dry mouth	
muscle tension	Lack of frustration
nausea	
nervous stomach	My own sexuality is good and normal
tension headache	
Self-effacing	Open (re personal experiences)
"Stressed out"	
Unconfident	Rapport with students
Unprepared	Relaxed (feeling of being so)

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TABLE 20, CONTINUED

Negative	Positive
<u>Feelings, Cont.</u>	
	Secure in own beliefs/behavior Sharing of self is O.K.
	Unthreatened by different values
	Urgency to explore rather than avoid issues
<u>Attitudes</u>	
Absolute sexual values	Accepting of varying sexuali- ties
Authoritarian	Acknowledges some student dis- comfort is O.K.
Biased	Affirming of others' sexuality
Closed-minded	Approving
Condescending	Believes sex/sexuality is good and beautiful
Defensive	Caring
Disapproving	Concerned
Dogmatic	Considerate of others' needs
Feeling something is "wrong" with those who don't explore sexually	Empathetic
Guarded	Flexible
Hypocritical	Has foundation of support for own values, knowledge, etc.
Judgmental	Honest
Looks down to, rather than at, students	Inquisitive
Prejudiced	Intellectually cohesive (sees subject as part of a larger whole)
Rigid	Liberalness
Sexist	Love for students
Unable to recognize poten- tial (valid) humor	Nonjudgmental

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TABLE 20, CONTINUED

Negative	Positive
<u>Attitudes, cont.</u>	
Unrealistic about students' sexuality	Objective Open (re varying value systems)
	Positive toward students sexuality
	Respectful of others
	Recognizes diverse sexual expression as valid/normal
	Recognizes issues of sexuality as important to students
	Recognizes sexuality as an integral part of personality
	Recognizes that change (in values, teaching approach) is valid and good
	Recognizes that students are not all in the same place re sexual development/experience
	Receptive to educational needs of students
	Sensitive to students' feelings
	Sexuality is a normal topic for discussion
	Sexuality is a valid academic topic
	Speaks against sexual exploitation
	Tolerant
	Trust (toward students)
	Willing to admit one doesn't know
	Willing to admit there may be another (valid) side
	Willing to be spontaneous
	Willing to take (appropriate) risks, i.e., to agree or to disagree

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TABLE 20, CONTINUED

Negative	Positive
<u>Observable Behaviors</u>	
Abrupt	Able to stand corrected if wrong
Anything out-of-character	Able to initiate/maintain discussions
Appearance of being "up-tight"	Able to be matter-of-fact
Avoidance of topics/issues/questions	Adequate volume
Back toward audience	Appropriate use of humor
Changing topics	Available for individual discussion with students
Clowning around	Balance of student/teacher participation
Cutting people off	Clarity in verbalizing concepts
Excessive teacher control	Covers all sides of issues
Fading out vocally	Depth of coverage
Formal conduct of class	Ease articulating responses
Inappropriate use of street language	Encourages discussion from students
Inappropriate use of humor	Eye contact
Inarticulate responses	Exhibits normal range of "teaching behaviors" -- full discussion, demonstration, questioning
Inhibition toward touching/bonding with students	Frank
Involving only students who agree	Good judgment/discretion
Imposing own values on others	Informal conduct of class
Joking inappropriately	Limited structure to class
Lack of discretion	Poised
Lack of eye contact	Reinforces student participation (especially minority views)
Limiting opportunity for discussion	Relaxed (appearance of)
Maintaining physical distance from students	
Making "obvious" statements in awkward situations	
Manipulating class	
Mumbling	

CONTINUED NEXT PAGE

TABLE 20, CONTINUED

Negative	Positive
<u>Observable Behaviors, cont.</u>	
Nervous habits (doodling, pacing, playing w/hands)	Specific discussion and responses to questions
Noncommunicative	
Not recognizing certain students	Tactful
	Treats both sexes equally
One-way communication (teacher to students)	Use of explicit learning props
Over-compensating for awkward silence	Use of methods like role-playing which demand SC
Over-reacting	Use of specific demonstration methods
Painful facial expressions	
Physiological stress:	
blushing	
fidgeting	
shaking	
stuttering	
sweating	
Poor enunciation	
Posture closed	
Posture rigid	
Rushed	
Searching for words	
Shallow coverage of topic	
Struggle to articulate	
Teacher-controlled discussion	
Too low vocal tone	
Use of diversionary tactics	
Use of vague learning props/language	
Vague discussion -- skirt-ing issues	

<sup>a</sup>Data are from Question 6 of the interview guide which asked subjects to identify indicators of sexuality comfort in three categories -- feelings, attitudes and behaviors.

Out of the necessity to use words (concepts) to summarize the response to question 6 of the interview guide, Table 20 (pp. 85 - 89) repeats many of the items. This accounts for the fact that words mean different things to people and that specific words may provide more meaning to some than to others. Thus, whenever an indicator was mentioned by subjects in a manner not previously recorded, it was repeated in the table.

Question 7 of the interview guide (Appendix D, p. 170) was developed in recognition of an established rule of general semantics, that  $cow_1 \neq cow_2 \neq cow_3$  (pp. 18 - 19). The question asked whether the sexuality comfort indicators that subjects identified might also be demonstrative of something *other than* sexuality comfort. The question takes into account, on the one hand, that a given teacher's experience of sexuality comfort will not be the same as another's. On the other hand, the question considers that even *specific* indicators -- negative or positive -- cannot, *in isolation*, be applied to conclusions about a person's sexuality comfort status (Clarke, 1975; Sanders, 1982).

Nine subjects believed that it doesn't matter what else the indicators *might* demonstrate, since observers would draw conclusions about the teacher's sexuality comfort status anyway. These subjects referred specifically to negative indicators (signs of sexuality discomfort), which if seen in teachers of some subject other than sexuality, would cause observers to draw conclusions about that teacher's "teaching comfort." For example, they might attribute them to a temporary problem such as illness. However, the same indicators

demonstrated by sexuality educators would cause observers to conclude that the teacher is uncomfortable with sexuality.

Nevertheless, subjects provided a a sizable list of conditions other than sexuality comfort, which the indicators might demonstrate. Table 21 below summarizes their responses.

TABLE 21  
CONDITIONS OTHER THAN SEXUALITY COMFORT  
WHICH SEXUALITY COMFORT INDICATORS MIGHT DEMONSTRATE<sup>a</sup>

Other Conditions SC Indicators May Show	High School	College	<u>N</u>	Total <sup>b</sup> (%)
Knowledge base/teaching competencies	16	7	23	29.9
Personal identities <sup>c</sup>	10	4	14	18.1
Amount of teaching experience	9	4	13	16.9
Sexual values/attitudes	11	1	12	15.6
Feelings toward students	6	3	9	11.7
Other	5	1	6	7.8

<sup>a</sup>Data are from question 7 of the interview guide (Appendix D, p. 170) which asked, "What else might these indicators demonstrate other than sexuality comfort?"

<sup>b</sup>Frequency totals exceed sample size (32) because of multiple responses.

<sup>c</sup>"Personal identities" refer to how one appraises him or herself.

Two observations from the data in Table 21 are noteworthy: (a) while subjects were rather specific about sexuality comfort indicators (Table 20, pp. 85 - 89), they were general or vague about what other experiences the indicators might demonstrate. In fact, with few



exceptions, the categories listed in Table 21 *are* the subjects' responses to question 7; (b) 100 percent of individual responses to this question -- whether general or specific -- were directly applicable to the categories developed for question 4 (Table 17, p. 75), which identified conditions required to experience sexuality comfort. This suggests a circular pattern in the experience of sexuality comfort, whereby conditions required to achieve it are also indicators of whether one is experiencing it. Such an observation suggests that there is a complex interrelationship between experience and one's sexuality comfort status (see Figure 4 below).

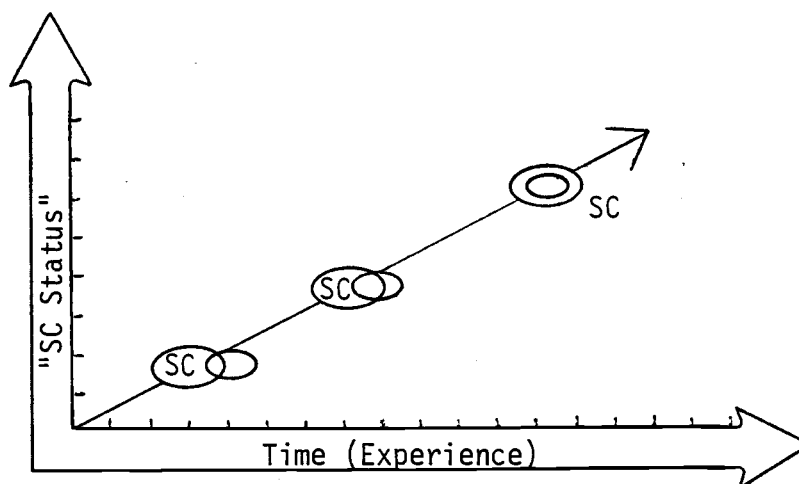


Figure 4. The relationship between time (experience) and "SC status." Experience includes any broad category such as physiological/psychological health, social, religious, sexual, educational or teaching.

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In recognizing the relatedness between experience and sexuality comfort status, all subjects indicated at one point or another during

the interview that it is important to consider *all* experience, not just experience represented by categories for questions 4 (Table 17, p. 75) and 7 (Table 21, p. 91). For example, experiences which influence a person's self-esteem are, according to the sample, as important in determining sexuality comfort status as are those experiences which improve competency as a sexuality educator. Figure 4, p. 92, conceptualizes this concept. Additionally, Figure 4 combines the concepts developed in Figures 3a and 3b (p. 69), whereby time (during which experience occurs) influences the integration of personal and general sexuality comfort. Although the model (Figure 4, p. 92) conceptualizes *positive* experiences which *enhance* sexuality comfort, one might easily substitute the effect of *negative* or *neutral* experiences which may cause sexuality comfort status to *decline* or *stabilize*. Thus, sexuality comfort status is not static because of perpetual experience which influences it.

#### Developing Sexuality Comfort

Since *process* would be the essence of an operational definition of sexuality comfort, it was deemed essential to ask subjects how sexuality comfort can be developed. However, it was also considered important not to presume that subjects would believe it can be developed. Therefore, interview question 8 (Appendix D, p. 171) asked, "Can a person develop or increase his or her own sexuality comfort? If so, how?" A summary of strategies suggested for developing or increasing sexuality comfort appears in Table 22, p. 94. Data from this question parallel data from question 4 (Table 17, p. 75) -- thereby substantiating the link between experience and sexuality comfort

TABLE 22  
HOW SEXUALITY COMFORT  
CAN BE DEVELOPED OR INCREASED<sup>a</sup>

How SC is Developed <sup>b</sup>	High School	College	<u>N</u>	Total <sup>c</sup> (%)
By improving teaching competencies	24	13	37	33.9
By self-analysis/ personal improvement	17	8	25	22.9
By experience: teaching or sexual	16	3	19	17.4
Peer-sharing (methods, class experiences, etc.)	8	5	13	11.9
Other	8	7	15	13.9

<sup>a</sup>Data are from question 8 of the interview guide (Appendix D, p. 171) which asked, "Can a person develop or increase his or her own sexuality comfort? If so, how?"

<sup>b</sup>Only one subject indicated that sexuality comfort cannot be developed or increased.

<sup>c</sup>Frequency totals exceed sample size (32) because of multiple responses.

status. This parallel also substantiates the logical assumption that sexuality comfort is developed by fulfilling the conditions which are required to achieve it.

Data for question 8 again demonstrate that subjects recognized a complex interrelatedness of the concepts, general and personal sexuality comfort: even though subjects understood that they were to answer the question in terms of comfort in the classroom, they repeatedly emphasized strategies directed toward improving comfort with one's own sexuality as critical for sexuality educators.

It is significant that 69.5 percent of high school and 88.9 percent of college subjects contributed to the self-analysis/self-improvement category, representing 23 percent of all responses to this question. Specific responses included (predominantly) evaluation of one's own sexual values and attitudes or identification and resolution of conflicts about one's sexual nature. Another strategy in this category was that of developing interpersonal communication skills.

Improving one's competency as an educator was emphasized in 33.9 percent of responses to question 8. Most responses in this category were very general -- referring to any activity which would improve teaching competency. Specific responses were provided, however, and included increasing one's knowledge base about sexuality; keeping up-to-date in the field; staying current with resources that are available; developing group process skills. Four subjects emphasized the need to learn from a variety of sources so that one has both depth and breadth of knowledge. Subjects felt that the ability to discuss a wide variety of topics from several perspectives was very beneficial in helping sexuality educators develop sexuality comfort.

The "experience" category (17.4% of responses) largely referred to the need for repeated experience teaching sexuality. Subjects essentially thought of teaching experience as a sort of desensitization process whereby the more people teach sexuality, the more sensitivities surrounding the topic are lost. Thus, time is an important issue in developing sexuality comfort, as demonstrated in Figure 4 (p. 92).

Three respondents to question 8 felt that positive sexual experience with a partner is important for teachers developing sexuality

comfort. Although none of these three subjects believed that sexual experience was essential to be an effective sexuality educator, they felt that it at least helped them to develop a "sexual identity," and thus, perhaps to resolve sexual conflicts. These subjects also stated, however, that it is possible that sexual experience may cause conflicts as well as resolve them.

Nearly 12 percent of responses to question 8 emphasized the importance of sharing with other sexuality educators about methods, teaching strategies and classroom experiences. These activities help educators to keep current and they provide a support system which subjects felt is more critical for sexuality educators than for teachers in other disciplines. Two ways suggested for making opportunity to share with colleagues were through workshops or seminars for sexuality educators and by going individually to one's colleagues.

One (high school) subject expressed the belief that adults who are not comfortable with sexuality -- personally or generally -- cannot develop sexuality comfort. She felt that such a person likely grew up with negative experiences and messages about sexuality which are too deeply ingrained to be overcome.

### The Role of Teacher Educators

Many strategies sexuality educators can follow to develop or increase their sexuality comfort have direct application in teacher preparation programs. In response to question 14 of the interview guide (Appendix D, p. 171), subjects offered seven categories of suggestions for experiences teacher educators can provide to help sexuality educators develop sexuality comfort (Table 23, p. 97).

TABLE 23  
EXPERIENCES TEACHER EDUCATORS SHOULD PROVIDE TO  
HELP SEXUALITY EDUCATORS DEVELOP SEXUALITY COMFORT<sup>a</sup>

Experiences	High School	College	<u>N</u>	Total <sup>b</sup> (%)
Improve communication skills	20	11	31	25.8
Acquire various teaching <sup>c</sup> strategies	20	6	26	21.7
Help them explore their own sexual values/attitudes	16	8	24	20.0
Be a role model of SC	12	4	16	13.3
Acquire adequate knowledge base	12	0	12	10.0
Be willing to share personal experiences	4	0	4	3.4
Other	5	2	7	5.8

<sup>a</sup>Data are from question 14 of the interview guide (Appendix D, p. 171) which asked, "What experiences should teacher educators provide to help their teachers-in-training develop sexuality comfort?"

<sup>b</sup>Frequency totals exceed sample size (32) because of multiple responses.

<sup>c</sup>Of the 26 respondents representing this category, 21 specifically indicated that a sexuality education course should be mandatory for health education teachers.

The largest response category for question 14 was "improve communication skills," with 25.8 percent of the responses. This result is consistent with the importance subjects placed on the ability to communicate both as a teacher characteristic and in the experience of sexuality comfort. Specific experiences relegated to this category

include group discussion which offers the opportunity to verbalize one's own viewpoints. Others are developing acute listening skills and critical thinking processes so as to improve interpersonal communication.

Over 21 percent of subjects emphasized the value of acquiring skills with various teaching strategies (question 14) which are known to be effective in teaching sexuality. Of the 26 respondents in this category, 21 were emphatic that a sexuality education (methods) course is critical for sexuality educators. The teachers emphasized that a sexuality education course designed for sexuality educators provides a forum to discuss critical issues for which they would not otherwise have opportunity to resolve for themselves. Moreover, "just" a sexuality education course is inadequate according to 13.3 percent of the sample. These subjects felt that such a course would be meaningless if not conducted by someone who was a "role model" of sexuality comfort. Teacher educators can play an important role in helping their students achieve sexuality comfort by providing an example of it. Four subjects suggested that this example could be provided by teacher educators who are willing to share (appropriate) personal experiences -- especially those experiences which were key factors in their own development of sexuality comfort.

Twenty percent of the sample stressed the importance of teacher educators encouraging their students to explore and understand their own sexual values, attitudes and feelings. Furthermore, sexuality educators should learn during teacher preparation programs, how to mobilize inter- and intrapersonal problem-solving skills if they are

to be effective in teaching their students how to do so. Furthermore, six subjects believed that teacher educators are *obligated* to identify those prospective sexuality educators who are not comfortable with sexuality, and direct them toward strategies which would help them to develop it.

High school subjects (13.5%) stressed that teacher educators should insure that their students acquire an adequate knowledge base about sexuality. These data reflect the great importance that high school subjects placed on knowledge -- not necessarily as a characteristic for sexuality educators -- but as a necessary and critical condition for achieving sexuality comfort.

It is important to note that in response to question 14, none of the college subsample suggested that teacher educators should insure that their students acquire an adequate knowledge base about sexuality. College responses to question 4 (Table 17, p. 75) and 1b (Table 19, p. 82) clearly refute the conclusion that college subjects believe knowledge to be unimportant in developing sexuality comfort. Thus, what can be learned from their responses to question 14 is that this subsample does not consider it to be *their* sole responsibility to provide this knowledge. It should be recognized that the college subjects *are* the teacher educators. They felt responsible to address sexuality educators' teaching skills and personal feelings or attitudes about sexuality. They believed these to be critical components of sexuality comfort which teachers are less likely or able than knowledge about sexuality, to develop on their own. Thus, the college subsample's responses to question 14 reflect their ranking of teacher



characteristics (Table 7, p. 56), which placed primary importance on sexuality comfort.

Four "other" responses (question 14) stressed the value of counseling or psychotherapy if indicated to achieve sexuality comfort. In fact, these subjects felt that teachers who have conflicts about any aspect of their own or sexuality in general, need to seek these therapies if they are unable to resolve them alone.

Table 24 (p. 100) presents general categories representing responses to interview Question 15 (Appendix D, p. 171). This question asked subjects' opinions about whether an "inventory of sexuality comfort" would help teachers identify or evaluate their sexuality comfort status. This is an important issue which the sample repeatedly emphasized.

TABLE 24  
WOULD AN "INVENTORY OF SEXUALITY COMFORT"  
BE USEFUL FOR SEXUALITY EDUCATORS?<sup>a</sup>

Yes/No... with Explanation	High School	College	Total N	(%)
<u>Yes</u>				
(Because) self-awareness is so important	7	3	10	31.3
Follow-up is encouraged	3	2	5	15.6
It considers specific dimensions of SC	1	3	4	12.5
Support statements (general)	10	0	10	31.3
<u>No</u>				
Other	1	2	3	9.3

<sup>a</sup>Data are from question 15 of the interview guide (Appendix D, p. 171) which asked, "If one was available, would an inventory of sexuality comfort be useful in helping teachers identify areas of SC?"

Only three subjects thought that an inventory would not be useful to teachers. Each of these three suggested different reasons: (a) teachers would not use the inventory; (b) most teachers are already aware of this personal information and those who aren't, don't want to know; (c) an inventory (of anything) could not possibly account for individual differences in people.

The remaining 29 subjects (question 15) were supportive of the development of a sexuality comfort inventory. Four subjects said that an inventory would be useful if it considers the individual dimensions of sexuality comfort such as comfort with language, comfort with sexual experience and comfort with the sexual nature of one's own body. Not only should it be specific, however, it must be realistic to the educational setting if it is to be useful to sexuality educators. Five subjects thought that an inventory would be helpful as long as the teacher is provided opportunity and encouragement to improve those areas identified to be lacking in comfort. Ten subjects stated that an inventory would be valuable because it would be a means toward self-exploration which subjects repeatedly identified as important in the experience of teacher sexuality comfort. Five subjects thought that teacher educators should offer the inventory to student teachers only on the condition that they provide an avenue for the privacy they would require in order to be honest on it. Another ten subjects simply made generally supportive statements about the value of a sexuality comfort inventory.

Teacher Sexuality Comfort:  
It's Effect in the Classroom

Questions 11 through 13 and 18 of the interview guide (Appendix D (p. 171) addressed the primary concern of general semantics -- the *effect of meaning* on people. Data are reported in Tables 25 through 28 (pp. 103 - 108).

Question 11 asked subjects to indicate how the teacher's effectiveness is influenced by his or her sexuality comfort. Question 18 was a complementary one which asked subjects how *their own* sexuality comfort affected *their* teaching of sexuality. Thus, a major difference between the data for the two questions (Tables 25 and 26, pp. 103 and 104), is that Table 25 indicates how teacher sexuality comfort *might* influence teaching, while Table 28 indicates how it *does* influence teaching in the experience of the sample. Another difference is that, although the response categories are largely the same, data representing categories in Table 26 were more specific than data representing categories in Table 25. This likely reflects the teachers' ability to be more specific about their own experience than about the experience of their colleagues in general.

Table 25 (question 11; p. 103) shows that 22.1 percent of responses from 60 percent of the sample center around how the teacher's sexuality comfort determines whether students participate in class. Table 26 (question 18; p. 104) indicates that 39.3 percent of responses from 75 percent of the sample emphasized this effect. The raw data revealed that 100 percent of the sample stated at one point or another during the interview that students learn considerably more -- quantitatively and qualitatively -- when they participate in class.

TABLE 25  
HOW TEACHING EFFECTIVENESS IS  
INFLUENCED BY TEACHER SEXUALITY COMFORT<sup>a</sup>

Teacher SC:	High School	College	<u>N</u>	Total <sup>b</sup> (%)
Determines whether students participate	11	8	19	22.1
Establishes teachers' credibility	14	3	17	19.8
Influences ability to communicate about sexuality	13	3	16	18.6
Determines students' comfort	9	3	12	13.9
Determines course content/teaching methods used	8	3	11	12.8
Influences students' ability to learn	3	4	7	8.1
Other	3	1	4	4.7

<sup>a</sup>Data are from question 11 of the interview guide (Appendix D, p. 171) which asked, "How is the teacher's effectiveness influenced by his or her own sexuality comfort?"

<sup>b</sup>Frequency totals exceed sample size (32) because of multiple responses.

Teachers offering this response believed that student participation decreases proportionately as teacher sexuality comfort decreases.

The category, "establishes teacher's credibility" occurred 19.8 percent of the time in the data for question 11 (Table 25, p. 103), but not at all in the data for question 18 (Table 26, p. 104). This might suggest that the sample doesn't believe that students see them as credible sources for information about sexuality. However, it is more likely that subjects simply did not think of this factor a second

TABLE 26  
HOW SUBJECTS' SEXUALITY COMFORT  
INFLUENCED THEIR TEACHING EFFECTIVENESS<sup>a</sup>

Teacher SC	High School	College	<u>N</u>	Total <sup>b</sup> (%)
Determines whether students participate	19	5	24	39.3
Determines students' comfort	7	3	10	16.4
Determines course content/ methods used	5	4	9	14.8
Influences ability to communi- cate about sexuality	4	1	5	8.2
Determines teacher/student enjoyment of the course	4	1	5	8.2
Determines whether students confide in teacher	4	1	5	8.2
Other	2	1	3	4.9

<sup>a</sup>Data are from question 18 of the interview guide (Appendix D, p. 171) which asked, "How does thi (comfort)(discomfort) affect your ability to teach sexuality?"

<sup>b</sup>Frequency totals exceed sample size (32) because of multiple responses.

time. Such an interpretation is supported by the category in Table 26 (p. 103), "determines whether students will confide in teacher." It can be assumed that teachers know their students have faith in them as a resource if their students confide in them about personal sexual dilemmas. It should be noted that the five subjects who referred to students confiding in them did not consider it particularly important for students to do so. Rather, they felt that the fact that

students do confide in them is a significant indicator of their own sexuality comfort as an educator.

The importance of the ability to communicate -- both as a characteristic of sexuality educators and as a condition of their sexuality comfort -- has already been substantiated. The importance that the sample attached to it is seen again in Tables 25 (question 11) and 26 (question 18), pp. 103 - 104. Over 18 percent of responses in Table 25 and over eight percent in Table 26 emphasized the ability to communicate. The teachers' concern with this issue was that people who are uncomfortable tend to communicate less effectively, which in turn, serves to decrease the teacher's sexuality comfort. It is significant that one half of the sample emphasized this effect for teachers in general (Table 25, p. 103), while only 15.6 percent emphasized it as an effect of *their own* sexuality comfort (Table 26, p. 104). It may be, again, that subjects merely did not think of this item for the second question.

The category, "determines students' comfort" in Tables 25 and 26 (pp. 103 and 104) poses an interpretation problem. Question arises as to whether respondents referred to an effect of teacher sexuality comfort on students' *sexuality* comfort or on students' *comfort with the teacher*. Reevaluation of the raw data revealed that seven subjects used only the word, "comfort;" ten specifically said, "sexuality comfort."

An accurate interpretation of this data still cannot be made, since those who said only "comfort," may have used the word as an abbreviated form of the new phrase presented to them. Conversely,

the novelty of the phrase, "sexuality comfort," could have been what caused ten subjects to use that phrase while having no bearing on their intentional meaning. What can be concluded, however, is that regardless of what the teachers meant specifically, they were saying generally that teachers' feelings and behaviors in the classroom have a direct effect on students' feelings and behavior in the classroom.

About 20 percent of the combined responses to questions 11 and 18 (Tables 25 and 26, pp. 103 - 104) emphasized that the teacher's sexuality comfort determines (*not* influences) what topics the sexuality educator addresses, and/or the methods and resources used to present them. This issue is addressed further on pp. 107 - 108 with presentation of data from questions 12 and 13 of the interview guide.

Table 26 (question 18; p. 104) includes a category that did not appear in data for question 11 (Table 25, p. 103). Five subjects felt it was significant that their own sexuality comfort determined whether they -- and thus their students -- enjoyed their study of sexuality. These subjects stated that they would certainly not enjoy it if they had negative feelings about teaching it. Furthermore, they believed that teachers aren't effective if they don't enjoy what they are teaching. Thus, it is significant that 14 of the sample subjects (all high school) said extraneously that sexuality is their favorite unit, one to which they always look forward and from which they continue to learn.

Tables 27 and 28 (pp. 107- 108) present data from two interview questions which asked subjects about the possibility that uncomfortable sexuality educators could present a comprehensive (question 12) or neutral (question 13) viewpoint. Because responses to both questions

TABLE 27  
CAN UNCOMFORTABLE TEACHERS PRESENT A COMPLETE VIEWPOINT?<sup>a</sup>

Yes/no... Explanation	High School	College	<u>N</u>	Total <sup>b</sup> (%)
<u>Yes</u>				
But topic avoidance is more likely	9	7	16	43.2
But it's difficult	7	2	9	24.3
Other	0	4	4	10.8
<u>No</u>				
Topic avoidance is certain	7	1	8	21.6

<sup>a</sup>Data are from question 12 of the interview guide (Appendix D, p. 171) which asked, "Is it possible for a sexuality educator to be uncomfortable about a topic and still present a comprehensive (complete) viewpoint to students? Explain."

<sup>b</sup>Frequency totals exceed sample size (32) because of multiple responses.

were similar, they are discussed concurrently in this section.

Although the sample largely believed that it is *possible* for uncomfortable teachers to be comprehensive (78.3%) and neutral (62.1%), 69.2 percent of affirmative responses to both questions were accompanied by expressions of doubt that teachers *would be*. Explanations centered around the belief that people tend to avoid anything that causes discomfort. In fact, six subjects believed that neutrality (unbiased presentation) would not even be an issue for many teachers because they would avoid uncomfortable topics altogether.



TABLE 28  
CAN UNCOMFORTABLE TEACHERS PRESENT A NEUTRAL VIEWPOINT?<sup>a</sup>

Yes/No... Explanation	High School	College	<u>N</u>	Total <sup>b</sup> (%)
<u>Yes</u>				
But presentation will be factual only	5	2	7	18.9
But topic avoidance is more likely	5	1	6	16.2
If teacher acknowledges discomfort to students	3	1	4	10.9
But it's difficult	1	2	3	8.1
Unqualified/other	2	1	3	8.1
<u>No</u>				
Bias is apparent	5	3	8	21.6
<u>Depends</u>				
Upon nature of discomfort	4	2	6	16.2

<sup>a</sup>Data are from question 13 of the interview guide (Appendix D, p. 171) which asked, "Is it possible for a teacher to be uncomfortable about a topic and still present a neutral viewpoint to students?"

<sup>b</sup>Frequency totals exceed sample size (32) because of multiple responses.

Those who were more positive about the likelihood of uncomfortable teachers' completeness (31%) and neutrality (13%); thought that being so is nevertheless difficult. In fact, five subjects indicated that uncomfortable teachers sacrifice some quality in their work, even if they are complete and neutral.

Eight (21.6%) subjects emphatically stated that uncomfortable teachers cannot be complete because topic avoidance is certain. Eight

(21.6%) subjects also believed that uncomfortable teachers cannot be neutral because they are very dogmatic and have the need to impose their viewpoints onto others.

Six subjects (16.2%) felt that whether or not a teacher can be unbiased in presenting an uncomfortable topic depends upon the nature of the discomfort. For example, if the discomfort is minor, the teacher could work to overcome it and never have the need to impose a viewpoint onto students. However, if the discomfort is major, the teacher may be unable to be neutral even though he or she may wish to be.

#### Additional Findings

Eight potential subjects out of 40 contacted declined to participate, for an overall rejection rate of 20 percent. Only one contact failure occurred out of 41 attempts to contact subjects, for a noninterview rate of 21.9 percent (Table 29, p. 110).

Differences among the subsamples in the nature of rejections are worthy of consideration. Rejections from potential female high school subjects (4) were abrupt and unaccompanied by explanation, while rejections from potential male subjects (4, both subsamples) were apologetic and accompanied by detailed accounts of inflexible schedules.

All but one male who declined to participate showed interest in the study despite their nonparticipation and requested an abstract of results. Additionally, contacting female rejectors was extremely difficult, since they did not respond to requests to return phone calls. Contact was finally made after two to four attempts each. On the other hand, three of four male rejectors readily returned phone calls

TABLE 29  
REJECTION AND NONINTERVIEW RATE, BY SUB-SAMPLE AND SEX

Sub-Sample	No. Rejections	No. Contacts	Percent Rejection	No. Contact Failures	No. Contact Attempts <sup>a</sup>	Noninterview Rate <sup>b</sup>
<u>High School</u>						
Women	4	11	36.3	0	11	36.3
Men	3	19	15.8	0	19	15.8
Total	7	30	23.3	0	30	23.3
<u>College</u>						
Women	0	3	0.0	1	4	25.0
Men	1	7	14.3	0	7	14.3
Total	1	10	10.0	1	11	9.1
<u>Overall</u>	8	40	20.0	1	41	21.9

<sup>a</sup>The number of actual subject contacts; does not reflect number of repeat calls required to contact potential subjects.

<sup>b</sup>No. of rejections + No. contact failures  
Contact attempts

as requested. Thus, it may be concluded that male rejection occurred largely because of lack of time, while female rejection occurred because of unwillingness to participate, perhaps due to a lack of interest.

Often, the number of phone calls required to finally reach a potential high school subject depended upon how willing or interested the secretary was to take accurate messages or give accurate information about the potential subject's class schedule. Several high schools had no public address system with which to page teachers to the phone. Thus, arrangements had to be made through the secretary to either assure that the teacher would be near the phone for a pre-arranged phone call, or that the potential subject would receive an accurate message to return the phone call (collect) during specified hours. Therefore, the utmost in tactfulness and patience with office personnel was often the factor which determined whether subject contact was made.

College subjects were very eager to participate in comparison to high school subjects, perhaps due to a greater understanding of the needs of a researcher. College subjects were also more likely than high school subjects to be unprotective of their free time. High school subjects (91.3%) indicated upon contact that they did not have time to participate in the study, until it was suggested that the investigator would come to their school during their preparation period. Six high school subjects were willing to give up only half (25 - 30 minutes) of a preparation period. College subjects were more willing to offer evening or weekend hours to participate if a suitable weekday time was not available within a short time after contact.

It is reasonable to believe, then, that the high school rejection rate would have been considerably higher if it had not been possible to schedule interviews during subjects' working hours. However, the college rejection rate would have been zero had the one nonparticipant not been scheduled to be out-of-state during the weeks interviews were conducted. Therefore, it may be concluded that potential high school and college subjects declined to participate for very different reasons.

### Summary

This chapter presented data obtained from personal interviews with 32 sexuality educators. Results of the statistical analyses were presented and interpreted.

The sample of 23 high school and nine college sexuality educators was described in terms of eight demographic variables. Two general questions about the sample's own sexuality comfort were also posed. These questions asked (a) whether the subject was comfortable with his or her own sexuality and (b) how comfortable the subject was in his or her role as sexuality educator.

A Mann-Whitney U test determined that the subsamples differed significantly with respect to the ranks they ascribed to five characteristics of sexuality educators, including sexuality comfort. The difference was noted to occur with their ranking of the characteristic, "the ability to communicate about sexuality honestly, sensitively, clearly." High school subjects considered this characteristic to be more important than did the college subjects. The characteristic of

sexuality comfort was ranked "1" (most important) and "2" by high school and college subjects, respectively.

Chi square analysis revealed that a significant difference existed among the groups regarding the meanings they assigned to the subconstruct, *personal* sexuality comfort. Again, "the ability to communicate about sexuality" was one factor responsible for the difference identified -- emphasized more by high school subjects. A second factor responsible for this difference was emphasized more by college subjects, "to accept others' sexual values."

Major findings about the nature of sexuality comfort provided the basis for an operational definition. Results support the contention herein that sexuality comfort is a psychological construct which involves sexual feelings, attitudes and behaviors. Various experiences contribute to the development of sexuality comfort. Individuals can influence this development by focusing on experiences which tend to enhance it.

*General* and *personal* sexuality comfort were determined to be separate, but intricately related concepts. In fact, as the development of sexuality comfort progresses, integration of the two occurs such that personal sexuality comfort becomes identified as part of a larger construct, general sexuality comfort. Therefore, from this point forward in the thesis, general references to sexuality comfort should be understood to include personal sexuality comfort unless otherwise noted.

The sample contributed a sizable list of indicators of sexuality comfort. It was noted that overall, subjects had considerable

difficulty thinking in terms of *comfort*. Much of the collective response to item 6 of the interview guide referred to *negative* indicators -- signs of sexuality *discomfort*.

The importance of sexuality comfort to sexuality educators was acknowledged by subjects throughout the interviews. Primary concerns about its importance were that it influences both teaching effectiveness (primarily through an effect on the ability to communicate) and that there is an impact on students. Overall, high school subjects believed that their sexuality comfort status significantly influences their students' sexual feelings, attitudes and behaviors.

In view of the importance that subjects attach to teacher sexuality comfort, they were emphatic that teacher preparation programs have the responsibility to address this concern through a mandatory methods course for sexuality educators. Five questions (items, h, 4, 8, 9, 14) elicited consistent recommendations for mandatory sexuality education methods courses. In fact, every subject stated at least once -- many repeatedly -- that a methods course is a critical experience in their development of sexuality comfort and thus, in their adequate preparation as sexuality educators.

Finally, several additional findings were presented. These related to rejection and noninterview rates and subject contact.

Chapter V follows with discussion, conclusions and recommendations. A two-part operational definition of sexuality comfort is also proposed.

## V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In fulfillment of the primary objective of the study, this chapter proposes an operational definition of the psychological construct, sexuality comfort. Recommendations follow a brief discussion of major conclusions.

### Discussion and Conclusions

The ensuing discussion forms the basis for the recommendations which conclude this chapter. The discussion follows five general categories which are presented under appropriate subheadings: The Nature of Sexuality Comfort; The Ability to Communicate About Sexuality; Indicators of Sexuality Comfort; The Importance of Sexuality Comfort; The Influence of Teacher Sexuality Comfort on Students and Teaching Effectiveness.

#### The Nature of Sexuality Comfort

Figure 5 (p. 116) contains a conceptual model which illustrates that sexuality comfort is a complex psychological construct involving sexual feelings, attitudes and behaviors. Achievement of sexuality comfort is a developmental task which is influenced by individual experience in numerous domains: physiological; psychological; sociological; spiritual or religious; educational; and sexual. The specific nature, extent and combination of experience operates to influence the individual's sexuality comfort status. In fact, the free form of the model suggests that at any given point in time, the various domains of experience contribute uniquely to sexuality comfort status.



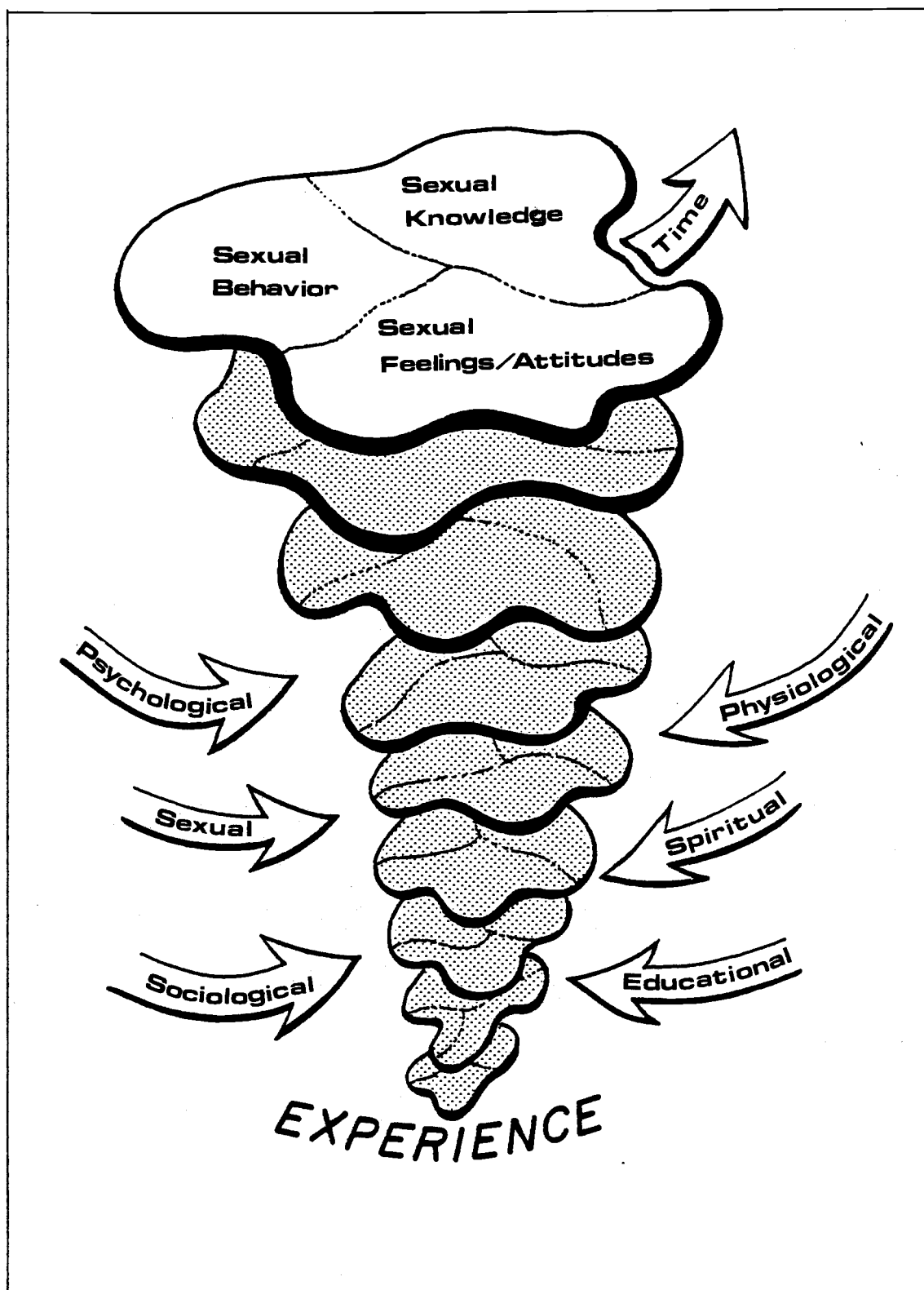


Figure 5. Conceptual model of sexuality comfort.

Although the model suggests growth (development) over time, the potential for sexuality comfort status to decline or stabilize is acknowledged. This acknowledgement derives from the recognition that people typically perceive experience as being negative, positive or neutral.

As noted in Chapter I (p. 6), an operational definition is one which *tells what to do* to experience the thing defined. An operational definition of sexuality comfort is presented in two parts on pp. 118 and 119. It is founded on the preceding conceptualization and encompasses affective, cognitive and behavioral responses to one's own sexuality and to sexuality in general.

TABLE 30  
 OPERATIONAL DEFINITION, PART I:  
 EVIDENCES OF SEXUALITY COMFORT IN SEXUALITY EDUCATORS

Sexuality educators who are comfortable with sexuality...	Example of Behavioral Expression
...feel satisfaction with and pride in their own sexuality.	react candidly to matters in- volving biological/physical aspects of their sexual natures
...feel secure about their own sexual natures.	respond openly and confidently when their sexual values are challenged
...communicate effectively about sexuality.	use sexual vocabulary which is appropriate to the situation, in well-articulated thoughts
...express respect and toler- ance for others' sexual values.	challenge individuals who ex- press enmity toward divergent sexualities
...are sensitive to and re- spectful of others' feelings and anxieties	support students who have diffi- culty using sexual vocabulary
...encourage others to explore sexual issues and their own sexual values.	use values clarification exer- cises
...make opportunity for experi- ences which enhance their own sexuality comfort.	confront sexual problems as they occur and mobilize resources to deal with them
...are concerned about how they influence others.	seek evaluative feedback from students
...are confident in their teach- ing skills and knowledge about sexuality.	appear poised in the classroom
...use methods which are effect- ive in teaching sexuality	roleplay/sociodrama
...are discrete.	use humor in appropriate situa- tions
...acknowledge that sexuality is an important topic to people and is therefore a legitimate topic for intellectual inquiry.	actively support school sexuality education programs

TABLE 31  
OPERATIONAL DEFINITION, PART II:  
SEXUALITY COMFORT AS A DEVELOPMENTAL TASK

Experiences which improve sexuality comfort are those which...	Example
...improve self-understanding.	analysis of one's own sexual values; counseling
...desensitize.	teaching experience; verbal satiation
...improve understanding/toler- ance of divergent sexualities.	discussion groups with peers; reading
...improve communication skills.	practice group process; analyze communication competencies
...improve teaching competencies.	learn new teaching strategies; improve (through practice) skill with "tried and true" strategies
...increase one's knowledge base about sexuality.	reading; conferences; other educational experiences
...involve exposure to a role model of sexuality comfort.	take college coursework or in- service training from an ex- perienced sexuality educator

### The Ability to Communicate About Sexuality

The ability to communicate about sexuality was identified as factors in two study findings: (a) it was responsible for a significant difference between the subsamples in their ranking of five characteristics important to sexuality educators; (b) it was responsible for a significant difference identified between the subsamples in meanings they assigned to *personal* sexuality comfort. In both cases, high school subjects emphasized this more than college subjects.

These findings may be explained by differences in the subjects themselves. A major observation about the interviews was that college subjects were noticeably more articulate and precise than high school subjects. Although the mean age of the subsamples was nearly identical (38.6 and 38.4 for high school and college, respectively), college subjects likely had more experiences than high school subjects which developed their ability to communicate. Therefore, this may have been a more important issue to the high school subjects -- both in development of personal sexuality comfort and in teaching sexuality -- because it was a skill they had not developed as extensively as the college subsample. Indeed, college subjects were not preoccupied with the ability to communicate because they had no need to be.

However, a less speculative explanation may exist in considering who are the subjects' students. High school sexuality educators were more concerned about their communication skills because of the controversial nature of public school sexuality education programs. Public school teachers are ultimately responsible to the parents of their minor students and therefore must be concerned about being understood. Conversely, college sexuality educators address students who are responsible for themselves and make their own decisions. Moreover, college sexuality methods courses are typically taken by senior or graduate students whose own communication skills more closely approximate their instructor's.

The latter explanation for the frequent mention of communication skills is consistent with two other findings. First, high school subjects consistently indicated a need for community and administrative

support of school sexuality education programs as a condition of teacher sexuality comfort. Teachers communicate more effectively in a supportive educational environment where anxieties about parental reaction do not interfere. Second, high school subjects were overall very convinced that they are a significant influence on their students in sexuality courses, whereas college subjects only speculated about their influence on students. Those who feel that students' feelings, attitudes and behaviors about sexuality are influenced significantly by what teachers say and do in the classroom, would naturally be concerned about their ability to communicate.

#### Indicators of Sexuality Comfort

It is significant that in a study about sexuality comfort, subjects required frequent reminders to provide indicators of *comfort* rather than of *discomfort*. Two important conclusions emanate from this finding. First, that the *absence* of sexuality comfort is more discernible -- more concrete -- than is its presence. Second, that with respect to sexuality, our society emphasizes the negative over the positive. In light of these conclusions, an operational definition of sexuality comfort is even more valuable than believed at the outset of this study. In addition to the original benefits anticipated (Chapter II, p. 29), the definition acknowledges *tangible* and *positive* signs of sexuality comfort expression.

## The Importance of Sexuality Comfort

The issue of teacher sexuality comfort is a serious concern to sexuality educators and must be addressed through teacher preparation programs. A major factor identified in teacher sexuality comfort was confidence in teaching skills. The subject of sexuality is often addressed ineffectively through methods that are applicable to nearly every other academic subject. In fact, teaching sexuality requires use of skills and strategies which are not likely to be acquired through general teacher education courses. Therefore, adequate preparation of sexuality educators requires separate and deliberate emphasis in college curricula.

Exploration and evaluation of one's own sexual feelings and attitudes is a critical process in developing sexuality comfort. Teacher educators are in an excellent position to encourage this most important activity as well as to provide opportunity for it. This does not mean that teacher preparation programs should arm sexuality educators with a particular "sexual philosophy." But it does mean that sexuality educators should develop an acute awareness of their own sexual philosophies so that in light of divergent sexual norms, they are not caught up in conflict about their own sexual natures. Moreover, it is vital that sexuality educators know why they subscribe to a particular sexual philosophy so they need not feel threatened when they are challenged.

Finally, effective learning about sexuality cannot occur from a hostile, judgmental or intolerant (uncomfortable) sexuality educator. Therefore, as part of the developmental task to achieve sexuality

comfort, sexuality educators should attempt to maximize their respect and tolerance for divergent sexualities.

### The Influence of Teacher Sexuality Comfort on Students and Teaching Effectiveness

Sexuality educators believe that sexuality comfort status influences their teaching effectiveness. In fact, the clear implication is that absence of sexuality comfort impairs teaching effectiveness *at least* minimally, perhaps severely. Because little research has addressed this concern, the exact nature and extent of impairment is speculative. Indeed, the question arises as to whether this effect is genuine or perceived. Is it probable that impairment is actually *created* through a teacher's belief that his or her low sexuality comfort status has negative impacts on teaching effectiveness?

Literature reviewed for this study states or suggests that the teacher's sexuality comfort status directly influences students' feelings and attitudes about sexuality. This belief prevailed among much of the sample, yet no research was identified which substantiates -- or even addresses -- this claim. Indeed, if the claim can be substantiated, then teacher sexuality comfort is even far more important than this study has purported. However, if it cannot be supported through research, then sexuality educators should be purged of the burden which this belief fosters.



## Recommendations

### Teacher Preparation

(1) A sexuality education (methods) course should be *mandatory* in teacher preparation programs for health educators.

(2) Sexuality education (methods) courses should focus heavily on students' own sexual feelings and values. Prospective sexuality educators should be compelled to explore and evaluate those factors which contribute to their own sexuality comfort.

(3) Teacher educators should attempt to identify potential sexuality educators who are not comfortable with sexuality and direct them toward strategies which enhance sexuality comfort. Suggestions to obtain counseling, if appropriate, should not be avoided.

(4) Sexuality education (methods) courses should emphasize respect and tolerance for others' (non-exploitive) sexual philosophies.

(5) Teacher education curricula should address prospective sexuality educators' ability to communicate. Acquiring comfort with the language of sexuality is appropriately addressed through a mandatory methods course for sexuality educators. Overall communication skills might be improved through any appropriate course or experience as necessary.

### The Interview Guide

Minor alterations to the interview guide are recommended before additional research with it is conducted. Experience in actual

interviews showed that changes on items 2, 5, 11 and 18 (Appendix D, D, pp. 170 - 171) would be helpful.

Although subjects understood item 2 as worded on the interview guide, the complex nature of the question was sufficiently challenging that many of them requested reinterpretation to obtain a different perspective. Therefore, future use of the interview guide might include preparation of several different wordings or interpretation of this question.

As currently written, item 5 asks two different questions: (a) whether teachers are generally aware of their sexuality comfort status and (b) whether teachers recognize the impact that their sexuality comfort status has on students. It is recommended that this item be divided into two questions.

Questions 11 and 18 elicited consistent responses about the teacher's sexuality comfort having influence on students' comfort. A follow-up question should be developed in anticipation of this response. It should inquire whether subjects refer specifically to an effect of teacher sexuality comfort on students' *sexuality* comfort or to an effect on students' *comfort with the teacher*.

#### Future Research

Further research on the subject of teacher sexuality comfort would make a significant contribution to the fields of teacher education and sexuality education. Relevant questions which emerged from this study are:

- (1) How can teacher sexuality comfort be assessed quantitatively?

A sexuality comfort assessment tool for sexuality educators should be developed using appropriate methodology. An assessment tool would be useful in sexuality education (methods) courses to help instructors evaluate the educational needs of their students. Such an instrument would also be valuable to sexuality educators in working toward greater self-understanding and developing sexuality comfort. Moreover, an instrument which measures teacher sexuality comfort may be applied to other important research questions, such as:

- (2) How does teacher sexuality comfort influence teaching effectiveness?
- (3) At what "level" of sexuality comfort is communication skill optimal (or, at what "level" of sexuality *dis-*comfort is communication significantly impaired)?
- (4) What is the nature and extent of the impact which teacher sexuality comfort status has on students' feelings and attitudes about sexuality?

### Epilogue

This study demonstrated that sexuality comfort is a serious concern to sexuality educators -- one which demands attention both in teacher preparation programs and in research. They may not call it "sexuality comfort," but it is clear that sexuality educators have an urgent need to think about their sexual feelings, attitudes and behaviors as these relate to their roles teaching sexuality. Furthermore, they need direction evaluating and developing their own sexuality comfort.

The operational definition of sexuality comfort posed herein is a stepping stone. For "teachers of the teachers," it is a guideline for meeting the educational needs of their students. For sexuality educators, it provides a framework from which to assess their own sexuality comfort status. In the general field of sexuality education, it provides tangible and positive indicators of sexuality comfort. And for researchers, it lays a foundation for action research which has the potential to solve significant problems in sexuality education.

"When I use a word, Humpty Dumpty said, in rather a scornful tone, "it means what I choose it to mean -- neither more nor less."

"The question is," said Alice, "whether you *can* make words mean so many different things."

"The question is," said Humpty Dumpty, "which is to be master -- that's all."

--Lewis Carroll  
*Through the Looking Glass*

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APPENDIX A  
SELECTION OF  
SUBJECTS, EXPERTS AND CODERS

## LETTER TO POTENTIAL FOCUSED DISCUSSANTS

December 19, 1981

Dear :

The professional literature consistently states that sexuality educators should "be comfortable" with their own sexuality and with sexuality in general. Although experts assert that "comfort with sexuality" is one of the most important qualifications of sexuality educators, a definition of the concept has never been proposed. I am an OSU master's candidate conducting thesis research which will hopefully lead to an operational definition of the construct, sexuality comfort.

In order to accomplish this, I need selected sexuality educators to participate with me in a focused discussion for approximately one hour. Participants' input will be useful in development of a semi-structured interview guide which will be used with a sample of high school and college sexuality educators in Oregon.

Would you be willing to participate in this preliminary investigation of sexuality comfort? The discussion WILL NOT involve inquiry into any aspect of your own sexuality. All results will be reported statistically so that no individual responses may be identified; confidentiality will be strictly maintained.

I have enclosed a self-addressed, stamped envelope and a reply form for your response. Would you kindly return it at your earliest convenience? If you have questions, please feel free to call me (collect) after 6:00 p.m. at 754-8286. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Cheryl A. Graham  
M.S. Candidate

Encl.





# REPLY FORM FOR POTENTIAL FOCUSED DISCUSSANTS

REPLY FORM

## PART A: WILLINGNESS TO PARTICIPATE

- ☐ Yes, I am willing to participate in a one-hour focused discussion about sexuality comfort (please fill out both Parts B and C).
- ☐ No, I prefer not to participate in a focused discussion on sexuality comfort (please indicate your name only in Part C so that you will not be contacted a second time for a reply).

## PART B: PREFERRED DISCUSSION TIMES

	<u>Sunday</u>	<u>Monday</u>	<u>Tuesday</u>	<u>Wednesday</u>	<u>Thursday</u>	<u>Friday</u>	<u>Saturday</u>
	<u>12/27</u>	<u>12/28</u>	<u>12/29</u>	<u>12/30</u>	<u>12/31</u>	<u>1/1</u>	<u>1/2</u>
Suggested Times 	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>
	<u>1/3</u>	<u>1/4</u>	<u>1/5</u>	<u>1/6</u>	<u>1/7</u>	<u>1/8</u>	<u>1/9</u>
Suggested Times 	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>
	<u>1/10</u>	<u>1/11</u>	<u>1/12</u>	<u>1/13</u>	<u>1/14</u>	<u>1/15</u>	<u>1/16</u>
Suggested Times 	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>
	<u>1/17</u>	<u>1/18</u>	<u>1/19</u>	<u>1/20</u>	<u>1/21</u>	<u>1/22</u>	<u>1/23</u>
Suggested Times 	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>

## PART C: PERSONAL CONTACT

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

THANK-YOU LETTER  
TO FOCUSED DISCUSSANTS

Dear :

Thank you for the time you took from your schedule to discuss the concept of sexuality comfort with me. I hope you feel that you have made a valuable contribution to the improvement of education for sexuality educators.

Sincerely,

Cheryl A. Graham  
M.S. Candidate

## SUPPORT LETTER TO POTENTIAL EXPERTS

January 4, 1982

Dear :

Attached is a letter from Cheryl Graham requesting your assistance in conducting research applicable to her master's thesis. You were selected from a pool of professionals who were felt to be able to offer her specialized assistance.

Ms. Graham's topic is, I believe, sorely needed and quite unique -- a delineation of the frequently discussed construct, sexuality comfort. As you well know, this is frequently suggested as the number one criteria for sexuality educators.

Although we realize that your professional duties are many, we would hope you could take the time to assist in this research. Her "demands" on you will be few, brief and much appreciated. I encourage you to take a few minutes of your time to assist.

Many Thanks,

Margaret M. Smith, Ed.D.  
Major Professor

MMS/vc

Encl.



## REQUEST FOR EXPERT PARTICIPATION

January 4, 1982

Dear :

I am a graduate student at Oregon State University in the process of developing a semi-structured interview guide for use with sexuality educators in Oregon to delineate an operational definition of the construct, "sexuality comfort." (Rapoport defines an operational definition as one which tells what to do to experience the thing being defined.)

Development of the interview guide involves use of professionals with expertise in the area of human sexuality, sexuality education and/or semantics or communication who will provide input regarding guide content and categorize open responses which will be obtained from the interviews. Each review session should not require an excessive amount of time and the entire process should be completed during February and March 1982.

Although the literature dating from 1950 to the present consistently states that sexuality educators' comfort with sexuality is a primary qualification, no definition of the construct has ever been proposed. An operational definition of sexuality comfort should provide both a foundation for further research and direction for those involved in preparation of sexuality educators.

A list of potential panel members was compiled on the basis of official recommendations from various professional organizations or from individuals associated with them. Your name was randomly drawn from this list. Would you be willing to serve on this panel of experts? I have enclosed a self-addressed, stamped envelope and reply form which I would appreciate receiving from you at your earliest convenience. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Cheryl A. Graham  
M.S. Candidate

Encl.

## EXPERT REPLY FORM

Please complete and return this form in the stamped envelope provided. Promptness is appreciated. Thank you!

- ☐ \*Yes, I am willing to serve on the expert panel.
- ☐ No, I choose not to serve on the expert panel.

FROM: Dr. Patricia C. Dunn  
Department of Health Education  
East Carolina State University  
Greenville, NC 27834

Please make corrections above if necessary or provide an alternate address if you desire.

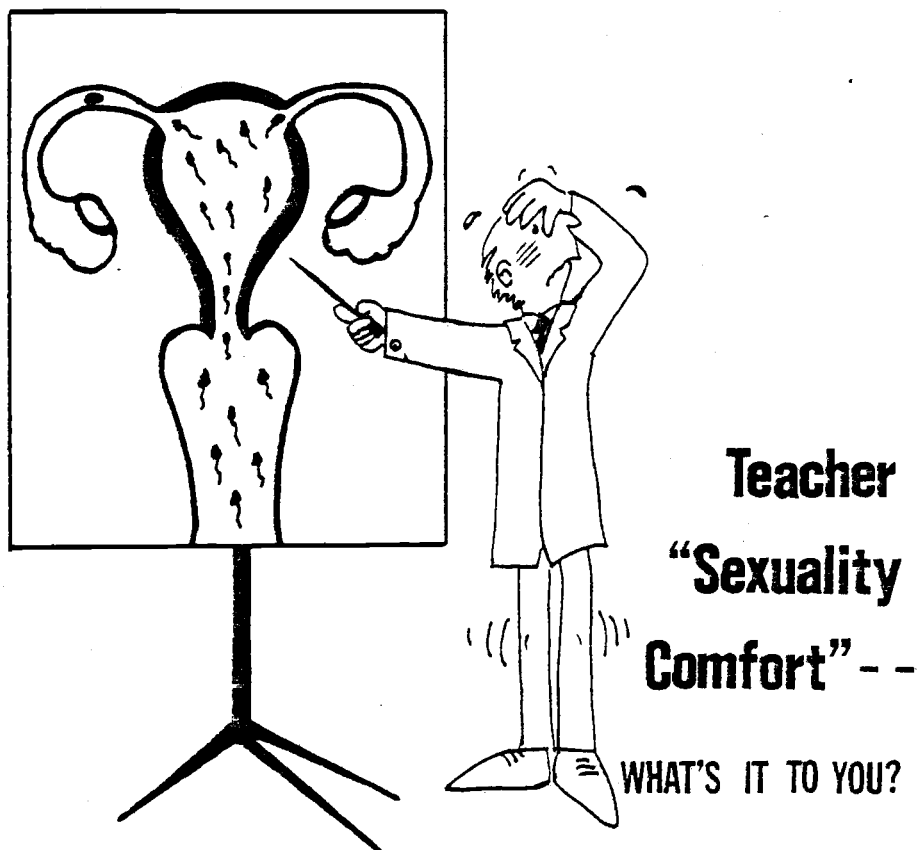
\*Please indicate below your title and a brief description of applicable background as you prefer it to appear in the thesis.

TITLE: \_\_\_\_\_

BACKGROUND: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

# RESEARCH ANNOUNCEMENT TO POTENTIAL SUBJECTS



As a sexuality educator, you can contribute to a unique area of educational research. All this requires is about one hour of your time to participate in a one-to-one interview at a time and place of your choice. The research involves NO inquiries into any aspect of your own sexuality. All results will be reported statistically so that responses remain anonymous. CONFIDENTIALITY IS GUARANTEED.

Please consider the opportunity to contribute to our knowledge in the area of sexuality education. I will call you in a couple of days regarding your willingness to participate and to make interview arrangements with you if you are.

Sincerely yours,

Cheryl A. Graham  
M.S. Candidate

Department of Health



Corvallis, Oregon 97331 (503) 754-2666

## INTERVIEW APPOINTMENT

Subject's name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Prep time when free to come to phone (H.S. teachers) \_\_\_\_\_ am/pm

Interview date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_ am/pm

Location: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Directions: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## CODER RECRUITMENT ADVERTISEMENT

# **HEY YOU!!**

## **Got \$ problems? Me, to...**

## **Let's barter!**

HERE'S WHAT I NEED:

- Three conscientious graduate students to code research data
- About 15 hours of your time, in three-hour blocks

HERE'S WHAT I CAN DO IN EXCHANGE:

- Type 95-100 wpm accurately (extensive thesis experience)
- cook (not gourmet, but beats the M.U.)
- Pet or plant-sit (no snakes, please)
- Teach you fundamental concepts and techniques of deep massage (passed on to me by a bonafide physiotherapist)
- Write poetry or short stories (not for academic credit!)
- Drive you to visit Aunt Mabel
- Most anything else that is reasonable, moral, legal and in good taste

Give me a call, let's bargain. 754-8286, after 3 p.m.

Ask for Cheryl

NOTE: Sorry, but because of the highly verbal nature of the coding task, I must decline offers from foreign students unless they speak fluent English and are easily understood by others.

APPENDIX B  
COMMUNICATION WITH EXPERTS

## PANEL OF EXPERTS

- Dr. William Arnold  
Department of Communication  
Arizona State University  
Tempe, Arizona 85281
- Dr. Patricia C. Dunn  
Department of Health Education  
East Carolina State University  
Greenville, North Carolina  
27834
- Dr. Michael Beachley  
Department of Speech  
Communication  
Oregon State University  
Corvallis, Oregon 97331
- Dr. Lester A. Kirkendall  
12705 S.E. River Road #705-C  
Portland, Oregon 97222
- Dr. Clint E. Bruess  
Department of Health, Physical  
Education and Recreation  
University of Alabama  
Birmingham, Alabama 35294
- Dr. Patricia Schiller  
Department of Obstetrics-  
Gynecology  
College of Medicine  
Howard University  
2400 Sixth Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20059
- Dr. Deryck D. Calderwood  
Department of Health Education  
New York University  
South Building, Fifth Floor  
Washington Square  
New York, New York 10003

## BACKGROUND OF THE EXPERTS

*Dr. William Arnold* is professor and chair of the Department of Communication at Arizona State University. He has co-authored journal articles on the topic of interpersonal communication and sexuality.

*Dr. Michael Beachley* is professor of human communications at Oregon State University. He is a general semanticist who has published in Etc.: A Review of General Semantics and is a member of the International Society of General Semanticists.

*Dr. Clint E. Bruess* is professor and Department head of Health Education at the University of Alabama. He is co-author of a 1981 textbook for sexuality educators titled, Sex Education: Theory and Practice.

*Dr. Deryck D. Calderwood* is director of the Human Sexuality Program at New York University. He has been an education consultant for SIECUS for ten years and has been involved in preparation of sexuality educators with particular emphasis on the affective concerns. He has developed curricula, About Your Sexuality and Being Sexual, which are designed to facilitate comfort with sexuality.

*Dr. Patricia C. Dunn* is associate professor of Health Education at East Carolina State University. She is involved in preparation of sexuality educators and has co-authored a research article on prospective teachers' feelings about teaching sexuality.

*Dr. Lester A. Kirkendall* is professor emeritus of Family Life at Oregon State University where he was on the faculty from 1949 to 1969. He is a co-founder of SIECUS and has published extensively in the area of sexuality education.

*Dr. Patricia Schiller*, a clinical psychologist, is founder and past executive director of the American Association of Sex Educators, Counselors and Therapists. She is currently director of the Human Sexuality Program in the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at Howard University College of Medicine.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF EXPERTS'  
WILLINGNESS TO PARTICIPATE

Dear :

Thank you for agreeing to serve on my panel of experts. I appreciate your willingness to be involved in this project.

Again, the purpose of my research is to develop a semi-structured interview guide for use with Oregon sexuality educators to delineate an operational definition of the construct, sexuality comfort. Your contribution will involve input on the content of the interview guide.

I will send materials for the first task to you by certified mail on February 1, 1982. Thank you again for your contribution.

Sincerely,

Cheryl A. Graham  
M.S. Candidate

## COVER LETTER FOR TASK ONE

February 1, 1982

Dear :

I have enclosed instructions and materials for Task One in the development of a semi-structured interview guide on sexuality comfort. Your assistance and expert contribution are greatly appreciated. Please return the materials to me in the enclosed, stamped envelope on or before February 15, 1982. Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

Cheryl A. Graham  
M.S. Candidate

Encl.

## COVER LETTER FOR TASK TWO

February 24, 1982

Dear :

Thank you very much for your work on the first set of materials. Your input was very thorough and most helpful. Although some changes were suggested, collective judgments of the expert panel indicate that the interview guide is essentially in final form. Therefore, Task Two involves refinement of the interview questions for immediate use with Oregon sexuality educators. I am asking that you please return the materials to me in the enclosed stamped envelope on or before March 12, 1982.

Thank you again for your time and expertise.

Sincerely,

Cheryl A. Graham  
M.S. Candidate

Encl.

## THANK-YOU LETTER TO EXPERTS

March 18, 1982

Dear :

Many thanks again for your assistance in developing the interview guide for my research on "sexuality comfort." Your comments and suggestions were very helpful in completing what most of the experts indicated is a quality product.

I will begin immediately to interview 32 college and high school sexuality educators in Oregon's Willamette Valley. You will receive a copy of the abstract when the thesis is in final form.

Best wishes for a productive spring.

Sincerely,

Cheryl A. Graham  
M.S. Candidate

## APPENDIX C

EVOLUTION OF THE RESEARCH INSTRUMENT:  
FOCUSED DISCUSSION GUIDE THROUGH  
TO THE FINAL INTERVIEW GUIDE

# FOCUSED DISCUSSION GUIDE

Time: Begin \_\_\_\_\_ am/pm End \_\_\_\_\_ am/pm Subject Code No. \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for taking the time to discuss the concept of "sexuality comfort." The results of this discussion will help me to develop an interview guide which will be used with a sample of Oregon sexuality educators. Data from the sample interviews should enable me to delineate an operational definition of "sexuality comfort." Rapoport defines an operational definition as one which tells what to do to experience the thing being defined. An operational definition of sexuality comfort should provide a foundation for additional research and direction to personnel involved in the preparation of sexuality educators.

I will make no inquiries into any aspect of your own sexuality. Most of my questions are simply an inquiry into an area of teacher readiness which your own experience as a sexuality educator qualifies you to address. There are no "right" or "wrong" answers and in many cases, more than one response will be appropriate. You may decline to answer any question.

Results will be reported statistically so that no individuals may be identified. Your confidentiality and anonymity are guaranteed. Do you have any questions before we begin?

## Demographic Data

- (1) Sex: Male ☐ Female ☐
- (2) Age: 22 - 24 ☐  
25 - 34 ☐  
35 - 44 ☐  
45 - 54 ☐  
55 - 64 ☐  
65 - 74 ☐
- (3) Religious Affiliation: Catholic ☐  
Protestant ☐  
Jewish ☐  
Other ☐  
None ☐
- (4) How long a sexuality educator? less than 1 year ☐ 10 - 14 years ☐  
2 - 4 years ☐ 15 - 19 years ☐  
5 - 9 years ☐ > 20 years ☐
- (5) (Public school teachers only): Where did you receive your teacher training? \_\_\_\_\_

- (6) What do you perceive to be your major task(s) in the course you teach? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Why? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

The next three questions will help me determine what you think about "sexuality comfort" as a qualification for sexuality educators.

- (7) Is "being comfortable" with sexuality an important characteristic of sexuality educators?

Yes ☐ No ☐ Why or why not? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

- (8) (Hand subject 3x5 cards.) On each of these five cards is written one qualification which experts have determined that sexuality educators should possess. Please read them carefully, then prioritize them with the TOP (first) card being the MOST important and the BOTTOM (last) card being the LEAST important.

Rank order: \_\_\_\_\_

- (9) Is teacher effectiveness impacted in any way by his or her sexuality comfort?

Yes ☐ No ☐ Please explain: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Now I'd like your reaction to several statements from the professional literature, some of which you may have read before (hand subject 3x5 cards, one at a time).

- (10) What is the theme of Quote (A) From Calderone (1966)

Quote (B) From Broderick & Bernard (1969)

Quote (C) From Johnson and Belzer (1973)

Quote (D) From Read and Munson (1976)

Please explain how (or, if) any of these quotes are similar or different (other than in the words used).

---

---

Now I'd like to determine what your understanding is of the concept, "sexuality comfort." Please take all the time you need to formulate thoughtful and complete responses to the following questions.

- (11) Is "sexuality comfort" an "all or nothing" situation (i.e., is it something one either does or doesn't have?)

Yes ☐ No ☐ Please explain: \_\_\_\_\_

---

- (12) Are there levels of "sexuality comfort," i.e., might "sexuality comfort" occur on a continuum from very comfortable to very uncomfortable?

Yes ☐ No ☐ Please explain: \_\_\_\_\_

---

- (13) Can "sexuality comfort" possibly be measured, i.e., could one develop an objective, quantitative test for it?

Yes ☐ No ☐ Please explain: \_\_\_\_\_

---

- (14) Could a sexuality educator "be comfortable" about some aspects of sexuality and "uncomfortable" about others?

Yes ☐ No ☐ Please explain: \_\_\_\_\_

---

- (15) Is comfort with one's own sexuality the same as, or different, than comfort with sexuality in general?

Same ☐ Different ☐ Please explain: \_\_\_\_\_

---

- (16) Could a sexuality educator present a comprehensive and neutral viewpoint of a topic or issue in sexuality about which he/she is not comfortable?

Yes ☐ No ☐ Please explain: \_\_\_\_\_

---

- (17) Is "sexuality comfort" an emotion, an attitude -- or does it have components of both?

Emotion ☐ Attitude ☐ Both ☐ Please explain: \_\_\_\_\_

---

- (18) How can a person know if he/she is comfortable with sexuality?

---

---

- (19) Is "sexuality comfort" expressed as emotions or attitudes which only the individual can notice? Others?

---

---

- (20) Might these emotions/attitudes be indicative of something other than "sexuality comfort?"

Yes ☐ No ☐ If so, what? \_\_\_\_\_

---

- (21) How can others know if a person is comfortable with sexuality?

---

---

- (22) Is "sexuality comfort" expressed as observable behaviors?

Yes ☐ No ☐ If so, what? \_\_\_\_\_

---

(23) Might these observable behaviors be indicative of something other than "sexuality comfort?"

Yes ☐ No ☐ If so, what? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

(24) Can a person positively impact (i.e., develop) "sexuality comfort?"

Yes ☐ No ☐ Please explain: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

(25) What might those involved in preparation of sexuality educators do to positively impact the sexuality comfort of their teachers-in-training?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

(26) What does it mean to "be comfortable" with sexuality?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

(27) Based on your definition given above, please use the term, "sexuality comfort," in a complete sentence:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Finally, I'm interested in your thoughts about the interview itself. Your answers to the following questions will help me to finalize the interview guide which I will use with the sample of Oregon sexuality educators.

(A) Can you think of any questions you'd have asked that I haven't, if you were conducting this research?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

(B) Would you have preferred more time to think about any of the questions I've asked you?

Yes ☐ No ☐ If so, which ones? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

(C) Would you have been willing to spend additional time outlining responses to those questions in writing?

Yes ☐ No ☐

(D) If so, would you have preferred: ☐ (1) to receive the questions by mail prior to the interview and verbalize your written outline to the interviewer; or ☐ (2) to have them left with you after the interview so you could mail them to the interviewer in a postage-paid envelope?

(E) Do you have any questions relative to the interview or the research I'm conducting?

I am very grateful for your participation in this study and hope you feel that you have contributed to the improvement of professional education for sexuality educators. Thank you very much for your time.



TABLE 32  
CHANGES MADE ON THE FOCUSED DISCUSSION GUIDE  
AS A RESULT OF THE FOCUSED DISCUSSIONS

Focused Discussion Guide		First Preliminary Draft	
Item	Original Item	Item	Modification*
<u>Add</u>			
		5	Are you comfortable with your own sexuality?
		6	Are there certain student behaviors which make you uncomfortable in teaching? What?
		7	Are there any particular areas in sexuality which make you uncomfortable in teaching? What?
		8	Do students' questions about your own sexuality make you uncomfortable? Example?
		9	Is there anything you can do that makes you less uncomfortable with these topics? What?
		25	Would it be helpful in developing sexuality comfort if an "inventory of sexuality comfort" was available to help teachers identify areas which make them uncomfortable?
<u>Delete</u>			
11	What is the theme of Quote (A); Quote (B); Quote (C); Quote (D)? Please explain how (or, if) these quotes are similar or different.		
Alpha	All questions relative to the discussion guide itself.		
20	Is "sexuality comfort" expressed as emotions or attitudes which only the individual can notice? Others?	18	(a) Is sexuality comfort expressed as emotions, attitudes or observable behaviors? (b) Please identify some specific emotions, attitudes and observable behaviors which might indicate a teacher is comfortable with sexuality
23	Is "sexuality comfort" expressed as observable behaviors?		
21	Might these emotions or attitudes be indicative of something other than sexuality comfort? If so, what?	19	Might these emotions, attitudes or observable behaviors be indicative of something other than sexuality comfort? If so, what?
24	Might these behaviors be indicative of something other than sexuality comfort? If so, what?		
<u>Reword</u>			
8	Is "being comfortable" with sexuality an important characteristic of sexuality educators? Why or why not?	2*	Is it important for sexuality educators to "be comfortable" with sexuality? Why or why not?
9	(Hand subject cards.) On each of these five 3x5 cards is written one qualification which experts have determined that sexuality educators should possess. Please read them carefully, then prioritize them with the TOP (first) card being the MOST important and the BOTTOM (last) card being the LEAST important.	3*	(Hand subject cards.) On each of these five cards is written one qualification that research has identified as important for sexuality educators. Please (a) remove items that you don't agree are important; and (b) prioritize all remaining items with the most important one on top.
13	Are there levels of "sexuality comfort," i.e., might sexuality comfort occur on a continuum from very comfortable to very uncomfortable?	11*	Are there levels (degrees) of sexuality comfort -- does it occur on a continuum from very comfortable to very uncomfortable?

TABLE 32 CONTINUED

Focused Discussion Guide		First Preliminary Draft	
Item	Original Item	Item	Modification*
15	Could a sexuality educator "be comfortable" about some aspects of sexuality and "uncomfortable" about others? Please explain.	12*	Is it possible for a sexuality educator to be comfortable about some aspects of sexuality and uncomfortable about others? Please explain.
16	Is comfort with one's own sexuality the same as, or different than, comfort with sexuality in general? Please explain.	15*	Is comfort with one's own sexuality the same as or different than comfort with sexuality in general (are they the same issues)? Please explain.
20	Is "sexuality comfort" expressed as emotions or attitudes which only the individual can notice? Others?	Combine	
23	Is "sexuality comfort" expressed as observable behaviors?		
21	Might these emotions or attitudes be indicative of something other than sexuality comfort? If so, what?	18	(a) Is sexuality comfort expressed as emotions, attitudes or observable behaviors? (b) Please identify some specific emotions, attitudes and observable behaviors which might indicate a teacher is comfortable with sexuality
24	Might these behaviors be indicative of something other than sexuality comfort? If so, what?	19	Might these emotions, attitudes or observable behaviors be indicative of something other than sexuality comfort? If so, what?
18	Is "sexuality comfort" an emotion, an attitude -- or does it have components of both? Please explain.	17*	Is sexuality comfort an emotion, an attitude or both? Please explain.
19	How can a person know if he or she is comfortable with sexuality?	20*	Do teachers necessarily know they are comfortable with sexuality? If so, how do they know?
22	How can others know if a person is comfortable with sexuality?	21*	Do others necessarily know if a teacher is uncomfortable with sexuality? If so, how do they know?
26	What might those involved in preparation of sexuality educators do to positively impact the sexuality comfort of their teachers-in-training?	23*	What might faculty involved in preparation of sexuality educators do to help teachers-in-training develop sexuality comfort?
27	What does it mean to "be comfortable" with sexuality?	26*	What does it mean (to you) to be comfortable with sexuality?
28	Based on your definition given above, please use the term, "sexuality comfort" in a complete sentence.	27*	Based on this definition, please use the term, "sexuality comfort" in a complete sentence.

\* Indicates that the item was renumbered in addition to other changes.

TABLE 33  
WEIGHTED MEANS OF EXPERT RATINGS AND DECISIONS

Question	Expert							Weighted Mean	Decision <sup>a</sup>
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G		
1	3	1	2	1	2	2	2	1.86	retain
2	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	1.29	retain
3	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	1.57	retain
4	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1.00	retain
5	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1.00	retain
6	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1.14	retain
7	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1.14	retain
8	1	1	3	1	2	2	1	1.57	retain
9	4	1	1	1	3	1	1	1.71	retain
10	3	2	1	1	1	3	3	2.00	retain
11	1	2	1	1	1	2	1	1.29	retain
12	1	1	1	1	1	3	4	1.71	retain
13	1	3	1	1	3	1	3	1.86	retain
14	2	1	1	1	1	2	1	1.29	retain
15	2	1	1	1	1	2	1	1.29	retain
16	1	1	2	1	2	3	2	1.71	retain
17	5	3	1	1	1	3	2	2.29	delete
18	5	2	1	1	2	2	1	2.00	retain
19	5	1	1	1	3	1	1	1.86	retain
20	3	1	1	1	2	2	1	1.57	retain
21	2	1	2	1	2	3	1	1.71	retain
22	1	1	2	1	1	2	1	1.29	retain
23	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	1.29	retain
24	1	2	2	1	1	2	1	1.43	retain
25	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1.00	retain
26	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1.57	retain

<sup>a</sup>Criterion for deletion was a weighted mean of 2.25 or greater.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR TASK ONE  
(Mailed to Experts February 1, 1982)

Using the scale provided below, please encircle the number near each item which designates its *relevance* to the concept of sexuality comfort and its *potential* for eliciting information about sexuality comfort from sexuality educators.

- 1 = Definitely relevant
- 2 = Probably relevant
- 3 = Possibly relevant
- 4 = Probably irrelevant
- 5 = Definitely irrelevant

Space is provided near each item for comments or suggestions. Additional space is provided at the end for general comments and/or for the addition of any important items which may have been omitted. Comments regarding the *order* of the items should be reserved for Task Two.

NOTE

As you complete this task, please keep the following in mind:

(1) Objectives of the thesis are:

- (a) to determine how important sexuality comfort is to sample subjects as a characteristic of sexuality educators;
- (b) to determine whether significant differences exist between college and high school sexuality educators regarding the rank they ascribe to sexuality comfort in comparison to four other important characteristics of sexuality educators;
- (c) to determine whether college and high school sexuality educators differ significantly with respect to the meanings they assign to the psychological construct, sexuality comfort;
- (d) to obtain information which might lead to an operational definition of sexuality comfort for sexuality educators.

- (2) Unlike traditional dictionary definitions, an *operational* definition is one which tells which operations must be performed in order to *experience* the thing being defined.

Please return these materials to me in the enclosed stamped envelope *on or before* February 15, 1982.

THANK YOU!

EXPERT TASK ONE

Sexuality Comfort: Item Ratings

- |  |           |
|--|-----------|
| (1) What do you perceive to be your major task(s) in the human sexuality course(s) you teach?  | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| (2) Is it important that sexuality educators be "comfortable" with sexuality? Why or why not?  | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| (3) (Hand subject cards.) On each of these 3x5 cards is written one qualification that research has identified to be important for sexuality educators. Please (a) <i>remove</i> items that you don't agree are important; and (b) <i>prioritize</i> all remaining items with the most important one on top. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| (Experts: specific qualifications for subject rank ordering will be included in Task Two.)   |           |
| (4) Is the teacher's effectiveness impacted in any way by his or her sexuality comfort? How?   | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| (5) Are you comfortable with your own sexuality?   | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| (6) Are there any certain student behaviors which make you uncomfortable in teaching? What?  | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| (7) Are there any particular areas in sexuality which make you uncomfortable in teaching? What?  | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| (8) Do students' questions about your own sexuality make you uncomfortable? Example?   | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| (9) Is there anything you can do that makes you less uncomfortable with these topics? What?  | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| (10) Is sexuality comfort an "all or nothing" situation -- is it something that one either does or doesn't have?   | 1 2 3 4 5 |

- (11) Are there levels (degrees) of sexuality comfort -- does it occur on a continuum from very comfortable to very uncomfortable? 1 2 3 4 5
- (12) Is it possible for a sexuality educator to be comfortable about some aspects of sexuality and uncomfortable about others? Explain. 1 2 3 4 5
- (13) Is sexuality comfort situational and conditional? Explain. 1 2 3 4 5
- (14) Are there specific areas in sexuality which tend to make most people uncomfortable? What? 1 2 3 4 5
- (15) Is comfort with one's own sexuality the same as or different than, comfort with sexuality in general (are they the same issues?) Explain. 1 2 3 4 5
- (16) Is it possible for a sexuality educator to present a comprehensive and neutral viewpoint on a topic or issue in sexuality about which he or she is not comfortable? Explain. 1 2 3 4 5
- (17) Is sexuality comfort an emotion, an attitude or both? Explain. 1 2 3 4 5
- (18) (a) Is sexuality comfort expressed as emotions, attitudes or observable behaviors? (b) Please identify some specific emotions, attitudes or observable behaviors which might indicate a teacher is comfortable with sexuality. 1 2 3 4 5
- (19) Might these emotions, attitudes or observable behaviors be indicative of something other than sexuality comfort? What? 1 2 3 4 5
- (20) Do teachers necessarily know whether they are comfortable with sexuality? If so, how do they know? 1 2 3 4 5

- (21) Do others necessarily know if a teacher is comfortable with sexuality? How do they know? 1 2 3 4 5
- (22) Can a person develop sexuality comfort? How? 1 2 3 4 5
- (23) What might faculty involved in preparation of sexuality educators do to help teachers-in-training develop sexuality comfort? 1 2 3 4 5
- (24) Is sexuality comfort measurable -- can it be quantified? 1 2 3 4 5
- (25) Would it be helpful in developing sexuality comfort if an "inventory of sexuality comfort" was available to help teachers identify areas which may make them uncomfortable? 1 2 3 4 5
- (26) What does it mean (to you) to be "comfortable with sexuality?" 1 2 3 4 5
- (27) Based upon this definition, please use the term, "sexuality comfort" in a complete sentence. 1 2 3 4 5

#### Tentative Demographic Information

Please encircle any items below which you believe should not be asked of the sample.

Sex: Male Female

Age: 22-24 25-34 35-44 45-54 55-64 65-74

Marital Status: Married Single Widowed Divorced

Religious Affiliation: Catholic Protestant Jewish Other  
None

Religious Attendance: Weekly Monthly Special Occasions Never  
Other

How long teaching at this level: Less than one year 2-4 years  
5-9 years 10-14 years  
15-19 years More than 20 years

Have you ever had an actual course in sexuality education? When?  
Have you ever had inservice training/workshops in sexuality education? When?

General comments about the interview guide:

Additional items which should be included:

THANK YOU!

TABLE 34  
CHANGES MADE ON THE PRELIMINARY INTERVIEW GUIDE AS A  
RESULT OF THE EXPERTS' FIRST EVALUATION (DETAILED VERSION)

First Preliminary Interview Guide		Second Preliminary Interview Guide	
Item	Original Item	Item	Modification*
6	Are there any certain student behaviors which make you uncomfortable in teaching?		Delete <sup>a</sup>
7	Are there any particular areas in sexuality which make you uncomfortable teaching? What?		
8	Do students' questions about your own sexuality make you uncomfortable? Example?		
9	Is there anything you can do that makes you less uncomfortable with these topics? What?		
10	Is sexuality comfort an "all or nothing" situation -- is it something one either does or doesn't have?	3*	Combine Does sexuality comfort occur on a continuum from very comfortable to very uncomfortable (are there levels or degrees of sexuality comfort)?
11	Are there levels (degrees) of sexuality comfort -- does it occur on a continuum from very comfortable to very uncomfortable?		
12	Is it possible for a sexuality educator to be comfortable about some aspects of sexuality and uncomfortable about others?	4*	Is sexuality comfort conditional?
13	Is sexuality comfort situational and conditional?		
17	Is sexuality comfort an emotion, an attitude or both? Explain.	5*	Combine When people talk about sexuality comfort, they tend to refer to feelings, attitudes and observable behaviors. Would you please help me list some feelings, attitudes and observable behaviors which might be indicators of sexuality comfort?
18	(a) Is sexuality comfort expressed as emotions, attitudes or observable behaviors? (b) Please identify some specific emotions, attitudes and observable behaviors which might indicate a teacher is comfortable with sexuality.		
16	Is it possible for a sexuality educator to present a comprehensive and neutral viewpoint on a topic or issue in sexuality about which he/she is not comfortable? Explain.	16	Separate/Reword Is it possible for a sexuality educator to present a comprehensive viewpoint on a topic or issue in sexuality which makes him/her uncomfortable? Explain.
		17*	Is it possible for a sexuality educator to present a neutral viewpoint on a topic in sexuality which makes him/her uncomfortable? Explain.
1	What do you perceive to be your major task(s) in the human sexuality course(s) you teach?	10*	Reword What do you perceive to be your major objective(s) in the human sexuality course(s) you teach? Why?
2	Is it important that sexuality educators "be comfortable" with sexuality? Why or why not?	11*	Is sexuality comfort an important quality of sexuality educators? Why or why not?

TABLE 34 CONTINUED

First Preliminary Interview Guide		Second Preliminary Interview Guide	
Item	Original Item	Item	Modification*
			Reword
5	Are you comfortable with your own sexuality?	14*	Are you comfortable with your own sexuality? How does this (comfort)(discomfort) affect your teaching of human sexuality?
14	Is comfort with one's own sexuality the same as or different than comfort with sexuality in general? Explain.	2*	Is comfort with one's own sexuality the same concept as comfort with general topic or issues about sexuality?
19	Might these emotions, attitudes and observable behaviors be indicative of something other than sexuality comfort? What?	6*	Might these indicators be demonstrative of something other than sexuality comfort? What?
23	What might faculty involved in preparation of sexuality educators do to help teachers-in-training develop sexuality comfort?	18*	Are there any specific experiences which professional teacher educators might provide to help teachers-in-training develop sexuality comfort?
27	Based upon this definition, please use the term, "sexuality comfort," in a complete sentence.	20*	Based upon the various things we've discussed about sexuality comfort, would you please use the term, "sexuality comfort" in a complete sentence?

\* Indicates that the item was renumbered in addition to other changes.

<sup>a</sup> Although the weighted mean for these items did not exceed the 2.25 criterion for deletion, it was omitted due to expert concern that it constituted invasion of privacy.



EXPERT TASK TWO  
(Mailed to Experts February 24, 1982)

THE INTENT OF THIS RESEARCH IS TO DELINEATE AN OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF THE TERM, "SEXUALITY COMFORT."

As you complete Task Two, please understand that:

- (1) The interview guide WILL NOT be used to identify or measure sexuality comfort in individuals. The purpose of the guide is for collection of qualitative information which may lead to an operational definition of sexuality comfort.
- (2) An operational definition identifies operations which must be performed in order to experience the thing being defined.
- (3) You are not being asked to answer the questions.

Please return the materials to me in the enclosed stamped envelope on or before March 12, 1982.

THANK YOU!

Sexuality Comfort Interview Guide

- (1) What does it mean (to you) to be "comfortable with sexuality?"
- (2) Is comfort with one's own sexuality the same concept as comfort with general topics and issues about sexuality? How are they similar or different?
- (3) Does sexuality comfort occur on a continuum from very comfortable to very uncomfortable (are there levels or degrees of sexuality comfort)?
- (4) Is sexuality comfort conditional?
- (5) When people talk about sexuality comfort, they tend to refer to feelings, attitudes and observable behaviors. Would you please help me list some feelings, attitudes and observable behaviors which might be indicators of sexuality comfort?

Feelings:

Attitudes:

Observable behaviors:

- (6) Might these indicators be demonstrative of something other than sexuality comfort? What?
- (7) Do teachers necessarily know whether they are comfortable with sexuality? If so, how do they know?
- (8) Do others necessarily know if a teacher is comfortable with sexuality? How do they know?
- (9) Can a person develop or increase their own sexuality comfort (i.e., are there things that people can do to become more comfortable with sexuality)?
- (10) What do you perceive to be your major objective(s) in the human sexuality course(s) you teach? Why?
- (11) Is sexuality comfort an important quality of sexuality educators? Why or why not?
- (12) (Hand subject cards.) On each of these five 3x5 cards is written one qualification that researchers have identified to be important for sexuality educators. Please (a) *remove* items that you don't agree are important and (b) *prioritize* all remaining items with the most important qualification on top.  
  
Ability to communicate about sexuality honestly, sensitively, clearly.  
  
Sexuality comfort  
  
High degree of empathy  
  
Knowledge of specific factual information  
  
Effective teaching skills
- (13) Is the teacher's effectiveness impacted in any way by his or her sexuality comfort? How?

- (14) Are you comfortable with your own sexuality?  
How does this (comfort)(discomfort) affect your teaching of human sexuality?
- (15) Are there certain topics in sexuality which tend to make most people uncomfortable? Which ones and why?
- (16) Is it possible for a sexuality educator to present a comprehensive viewpoint on a topic in sexuality which makes him/her uncomfortable? Explain.
- (17) Is it possible for a sexuality educator to present a neutral viewpoint on a topic in sexuality which makes him/her uncomfortable? Explain.
- (18) Are there any specific experiences which professional teacher educators might provide to help teachers-in-training develop sexuality comfort? What?
- (19) Can sexuality comfort be described quantitatively, e.g., using a Likert Scale?
- (20) Would it be helpful for teachers to be able to identify areas of comfort/discomfort if an inventory of sexuality comfort was available?
- (21) Based upon the various things we've discussed about sexuality comfort, would you please use the term, "sexuality comfort" in a complete sentence? (This need not be a "sexuality comfort is..." sentence.)

MANY THANKS FOR YOUR TIME AND EXPERTISE!

TABLE 35  
CHANGES MADE ON THE PRELIMINARY INTERVIEW GUIDE AS A  
RESULT OF THE EXPERTS' FINAL EVALUATION (DETAILED VERSION)

Second Preliminary Interview Guide		Final Interview Guide	
Item	Original Item	Item	Modification*
			Add
		17	How comfortable are you in your role as sexuality educator? (with a five-point Likert scale.)
			Delete
10	What do you perceive to be your major objective(s) in the human sexuality course(s) you teach? Why?		
15	Are there certain topics in sexuality which tend to make most people uncomfortable? Which ones and why?		
			Combine
7	Do teachers necessarily know whether they are comfortable with sexuality? If so, how do they know?	5*	Are teachers generally aware of their "sexuality comfort status" while teaching, and its impact on students? What makes (or would make) them aware?
8	Do others necessarily know whether a teacher is comfortable with sexuality? How do they know?		
			Reword
1	What does it mean (to you) to be comfortable with sexuality?	1*	What does it mean to be comfortable with sexuality -- (a) personally? (b) as an educator?
2	Is comfort with one's own sexuality the same concept as comfort with general topics and issues about sexuality? How are they similar or different?	2	Is comfort with one's own sexuality the same as or different than comfort with general topics and issues about sexuality? How are they (similar)(different)?
4	Is sexuality comfort conditional?	4	Is sexuality comfort dependent upon certain conditions being met? If so, which conditions?
5	When people talk about sexuality comfort, they tend to refer to feelings, attitudes and observable behaviors. Would you please help me list some feelings, attitudes and observable behaviors which might be indicative of sexuality comfort?	6*	When people talk about sexuality comfort, they tend to refer to feelings, attitudes and observable behaviors. I'd like you to help me list some of these indicators of sexuality comfort.
6	Might these indicators be demonstrative of something other than sexuality comfort? What?	7*	What else might these indicators demonstrate other than sexuality comfort?
11	Is sexuality comfort an important quality of sexuality educators? Why or why not?	9*	How important is it for sexuality educators to have sexuality comfort while teaching human sexuality? (five-point Likert scale.)
13	Is the teacher's effectiveness impacted in any way by his/her sexuality comfort? How?	11*	How is the teacher's effectiveness influenced by his or her sexuality comfort?

TABLE 35 CONTINUED

Second Preliminary Interview Guide		Final Interview Guide	
Item	Original Item	Item	Modification*
			Reword
16	Is it possible for a sexuality educator to present a comprehensive viewpoint on a topic in sexuality which makes him/her uncomfortable?	12*	Is it possible for a sexuality educator to be uncomfortable about a topic and still present a comprehensive (complete) viewpoint to students? Explain.
17	Is it possible for a sexuality educator to present a neutral viewpoint on a topic in sexuality which makes him/her uncomfortable?	13*	Is it possible for a sexuality educator to be uncomfortable about a topic and still present a neutral (unbiased) viewpoint to students? Explain.
18	Are there any specific experiences which professional teacher educators might provide to help teachers-in-training develop sexuality comfort?	14*	What experiences should teacher educators provide to help teachers-in-training develop sexuality comfort?
20	Would it be helpful for teachers to be able to identify areas of comfort if an inventory of sexuality comfort was available?	15*	If one was available, would an inventory of sexuality comfort be useful in helping teachers identify areas of sexuality comfort? Comment.
21	Based upon the various things we've discussed about sexuality comfort, would you please use the term, "sexuality comfort" in a complete sentence?	19*	Based upon our discussion, would you please use the term, "sexuality comfort" in a complete sentence?

\* Indicates that the item was renumbered in addition to other changes.

APPENDIX D  
SEXUALITY COMFORT INTERVIEW GUIDE

"SEXUALITY COMFORT"  
INTERVIEW GUIDE

Time: Begun \_\_\_\_\_ am/pm End \_\_\_\_\_ am/pm Subject Number \_\_\_\_\_

I appreciate your taking time to participate in my research. Before we begin, I'll briefly explain what this study is about.

The problem focus for this research comes from a review of literature in which experts on human sexuality have said that teachers of sexuality should "be comfortable" with their own and with sexuality in general before they attempt to teach. However, despite the fact that teacher sexuality comfort is even suggested to be a major qualification as a sexuality educator, the literature is vague or remiss about the meaning of the concept, "sexuality comfort." Therefore, through interviews with 32 sexuality educators, I am attempting to delineate an operational definition of sexuality comfort.

I will use a tape recorder so that I can be more attentive to you. However, you may ask me to stop the recorder at any time. I will not inquire about your own sexual feelings, values or behaviors. Nevertheless, you may decline to answer any question or you may withdraw from the interview at any time. All responses will be reported statistically so that individual answers remain anonymous. Your confidentiality is guaranteed.

Although there are no right or wrong answers, I may ask you to explain or elaborate on some responses. This is not to force you into a defensive position, merely to help me understand your frame of reference and perhaps shed additional insight onto your perception of sexuality comfort. Do you have any questions?

In order to describe the sample of sexuality educators, I will first request some demographic information.

(A) Sex: Female ☐ Male ☐      (B) Age: 22 - 24 ☐ 45 - 54 ☐  
25 - 34 ☐ 55 - 64 ☐  
35 - 44 ☐ 65 - 74 ☐

(C) Marital Status:

Never Married ☐  
 Married ☐  
 Divorced/separated ☐  
 Remarried ☐  
 Widowed ☐

(0) Religious Affiliation:

Protestant ☐  
(denomination) \_\_\_\_\_  
Catholic ☐  
Jewish ☐ Other ☐  
Eastern ☐ None ☐

(E) Frequency of Church Attendance:

Never ☐  
Once per month ☐  
2 - 4 times per month ☐  
Special occasions ☐ (which special occasions?) \_\_\_\_\_  
Other ☐

(F) How long a sexuality educator:

less than one year ☐  
 2 - 4 years ☐  
 5 - 9 years ☐  
 10 - 14 years ☐  
 15 - 19 years ☐  
 20 or more years ☐

(G) Did you have a sexuality education course in college:

currently enrolled ☐

never ☐

within the last year ☐

within the last 5 years ☐

within the last 10 years ☐

within the last 15 years ☐

within the last 20 years ☐

(H) Have you ever attended workshops/in services for sexuality educators:

never ☐

within the last year ☐

within the last 5 years ☐

within the last 10 years ☐

within the last 15 years ☐

within the last 20 years ☐

(1) What does it mean to be comfortable with sexuality?

(a) Personally \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

(b) As an educator \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

(2) Is comfort with one's own sexuality the same as or different than comfort with general topics and issues about sexuality?

Same ☐ Different ☐

How are they (the same) (different)? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

(3) Can sexuality comfort be described quantitatively, for example, using a Likert scale such as this (hand subject card with five-point Likert scale)?

Yes ☐ No ☐ What causes you to conclude this? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

(4) Is sexuality comfort dependent upon certain conditions being met?

Yes ☐ No ☐ If so, which conditions? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

(5) Are teachers generally aware of their "sexuality comfort status" while teaching, and its impact on students?

Yes ☐ No ☐ What makes them (or would make them) aware?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

(6) When people talk about sexuality comfort, they tend to refer to feelings, attitudes and observable behaviors. I'd like you to help me list some of these indicators of sexuality comfort.

Feelings: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Attitudes: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Observable behaviors: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Communication behaviors (if not identified above): \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

(7) What else might these indicators demonstrate other than sexuality comfort?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

- (8) Can a person develop or increase his or her own sexuality comfort? If so, how?

Yes ☐ No ☐ How? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

- (9) How important is it for sexuality educators to have sexuality comfort while teaching human sexuality?

1 2 3 4 5  
very somewhat  
important important unimportant unimportant

- (10) (Hand subject cards.) On each of these 3x5 cards is written one qualification which researchers have determined that sexuality educators should possess. Please (a) remove items that you don't agree are important and (b) prioritize all remaining items with the most important quality on top.

Subject's ranking of characteristics: \_\_\_\_\_

- (11) How is the teacher's effectiveness influenced by his or her sexuality comfort?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

- (12) Is it possible for a sexuality educator to be uncomfortable about a topic and still present a comprehensive (complete) viewpoint to students?

Yes ☐ No ☐ Please explain: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

- (13) Is it possible for a sexuality educator to be uncomfortable about a topic and still present a neutral (unbiased) viewpoint to students?

Yes ☐ No ☐ Please explain: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

- (14) What experiences should teacher educators provide to help teachers-in-training develop sexuality comfort?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

- (15) If one was available, would an inventory of sexuality comfort be useful in helping teachers identify areas of sexuality comfort?

Yes ☐ No ☐ Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

- (16) Are you comfortable with your own sexuality? Yes ☐ No ☐

- (17) How comfortable are you in your role as sexuality educator? (Hand subject card with five-point Likert scale.)

1 2 3 4 5  
very somewhat  
comfort- comfort-  
able able able  
un- very un-  
comfort- comfort-  
able able

- (18) How does this (comfort)(discomfort) affect your teaching of human sexuality?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



- (19) Based on our discussion, would you please use the term, "sexuality comfort" in a complete sentence (this need not be a definitional sentence such as "sexuality comfort is...")?

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APPENDIX E  
SAMPLE RESPONSES TO OPEN QUESTIONS

## SAMPLE RESPONSES TO OPEN QUESTIONS\*

QUESTION 1a: WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE COMFORTABLE WITH SEXUALITY -- PERSONALLY?

- (FH) Freedom to discuss one's own sexuality without apprehension.
- (MH) Having self-esteem -- being proud of your own sexuality.
- (MC) Being confident about your own sexual values and attitudes.
- (FH) Being able to easily communicate your satisfaction with your own sexuality.
- (FH) To deal with any sexual insecurities you may have, realizing you'll never be perfect.

QUESTION 1b: WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE COMFORTABLE WITH SEXUALITY -- AS AN EDUCATOR?

- (MH) Feeling competent with respect to knowledge and teaching ability.
- (MC) The ability to use the language of sexuality without embarrassment.
- (MC) To facilitate students' coming to some acceptable (to them) level of sexuality comfort.
- (MC) To integrate one's personal sexuality comfort -- to communicate yourself as a sexual person.
- (FH) To not transmit any of your own hang-ups or closed mindedness to students.

QUESTION 2: IS COMFORT WITH ONE'S OWN SEXUALITY THE SAME AS OR DIFFERENT THAN COMFORT WITH GENERAL TOPICS AND ISSUES ABOUT SEXUALITY?

- (FC) Different: comfort with one's own sexuality occurs on an emotional level while the other is largely cognitive or intellectual.
- (MH) Same: before you can answer questions about someone else's sexuality, you need to be resolved about your own sexuality.
- (FH) Different: you cannot be an adequate teacher of sexuality in general unless you're comfortable and accepting of your own sexuality.
- (MC) Conceptually they are the same but in practice they are different. Many people are able to speak about sexual matters clinically but have hang-ups about their own which they can't deal with.

QUESTION 3: CAN SEXUALITY COMFORT BE QUANTIFIED?

- (MH) Yes: experience teaching creates a discernible increase which suggests levels or degrees of sexuality comfort.

(FH) Yes: I can recognize a change in comfort over time in various situations.

(MC) No: it can be relatively quantified by an individual from one situation to another, but establishing norms across a population would be meaningless.

(MH) No: it seems that even if we talk about it in amounts, it probably wouldn't mean much since everyone's definition of sexuality comfort would be different.

(FC) Yes: I see it as being comprised of dimensions such as attitudes and emotions, which can then be subjected to some kind of quantification such as the semantic differential.

QUESTION 4: IS SEXUALITY COMFORT DEPENDENT UPON CERTAIN CONDITIONS BEING MET?

- (FH) Yes: attitudes learned while growing up.
- (FH) Yes: one's sexual experience.
- (MH) Yes: adequate knowledge is essential.
- (MC) Yes: it requires a person to analyze their feelings about sexuality so they are aware and can deal with them.
- (FH) Yes: support from administration and parents.

QUESTION 5: ARE TEACHERS GENERALLY AWARE OF THEIR "SEXUALITY COMFORT STATUS" WHILE TEACHING, AND ITS IMPACT ON STUDENTS? WHAT MAKES (OR WOULD MAKE) THEM AWARE?

- (FH) Yes: their physiological stress responses, such as sweating or blushing.
- (MH) Yes: their emotional reactions to classroom situations.
- (FH) Yes: students' participation may be a signal (it is less when the teacher is uncomfortable).
- (MC) Yes: people have an intuitive sense of how well they're communicating.
- (MC) No: I don't think most people think about it unless they're definitely uncomfortable.

QUESTION 7: WHAT ELSE MIGHT THESE INDICATORS DEMONSTRATE OTHER THAN SEXUALITY COMFORT?

- (MC) How much overall teaching experience one has had.
- (FH) It may indicate how the teacher feels about the students' sexuality.
- (MH) The teacher's own biases.

\*Abbreviations indicate that response was elicited from a female high school subject (FH); a male high school subject (MH); a female college subject (FC); or a male college subject (MC).

(MH) How the teacher feels about himself (or herself).

(MH) It might indicate how realistic the teacher is about teenage sexuality.

QUESTION 8: CAN A PERSON DEVELOP OR INCREASE HIS OR HER OWN SEXUALITY COMFORT? IF SO, HOW?

(FC) Yes: experience teaching.

(MH) Yes: share feelings and classroom experiences with other sexuality educators.

(MC) Yes: desensitization.

(FC) Yes: examining one's own values and attitudes about sexuality.

(MH) Yes: practicing communication skills.

QUESTION 11: HOW IS THE TEACHER'S EFFECTIVENESS INFLUENCED BY HIS OR HER SEXUALITY COMFORT?

(FC) Over time, student sexuality comfort increases.

(MH) It establishes the teacher's credibility.

(MC) Teacher sexuality comfort affects the amount and quality of information given out.

(MH) There is just total lack of communication.

(MH) Teacher sexuality comfort affects his ability to be objective.

QUESTION 12: IS IT POSSIBLE FOR A TEACHER TO BE UNCOMFORTABLE ABOUT A TOPIC AND STILL PRESENT A COMPREHENSIVE (COMPLETE) VIEWPOINT TO STUDENTS?

(FC) Yes: it's not easy and is probably even unlikely, but it is possible.

(MC) No: one may use experts or written materials, but total avoidance is probably what would happen.

(MC) Yes: the quality may not be as good but they can teach facts, or use outside sources.

(MH) Yes: if they are open and admit their discomfort, students usually respond with compassion and cooperation.

(MH) Yes: but his energies will be so caught-up in conflicts that his teaching will be ineffective; probably will hurry the presentation and leave out discussion.

QUESTION 13: IS IT POSSIBLE FOR A SEXUALITY EDUCATOR TO BE UNCOMFORTABLE ABOUT A TOPIC AND STILL PRESENT A NEUTRAL (UNBIASED) VIEWPOINT TO STUDENTS?

(MH) No: their viewpoint may be biased and this will show at least partially.

(MC) Yes: may be limited discussion or presentation, but one can still be neutral.

(MC) Yes: conscientious teachers will present all angles, even if parts make them uncomfortable.

(MH) This depends upon the type of discomfort. People with real conflicts would avoid topics altogether.

(FH) Yes: but they would more likely avoid it so they don't have to address both sides.

QUESTION 14: WHAT EXPERIENCES SHOULD TEACHER EDUCATORS PROVIDE TO HELP TEACHERS-IN-TRAINING DEVELOP SEXUALITY COMFORT?

(FH) Share strategies which increased their own sexuality comfort.

(MH) Mandatory practice teaching sexuality.

(MH) Require a sex education course.

(FH) Concentrate on the person's own feelings about his own and general sexuality.

(MH) Provide a variety of teaching methods, facts and resources.

QUESTION 15: IF ONE WAS AVAILABLE, WOULD AN "INVENTORY OF SEXUALITY COMFORT" BE USEFUL IN HELPING TEACHERS IDENTIFY AREAS OF SEXUALITY COMFORT? COMMENT.

(FC) Yes: as long as follow-up is assured to help a person improve where needed.

(MH) No: teachers are already aware of what makes them uncomfortable if they reflect enough -- which they should be made to do in teacher training.

(MC) Yes: it would need to be specific about issues or topics and pay special attention to validity/reliability.

(FH) Yes: as long as it was something one did privately so they'd be honest on it.

(MC) No: it would be meaningless because "comfort" differs in connotation person-to-person.

QUESTION 18: HOW DOES THIS (COMFORT)(DISCOMFORT) AFFECT YOUR TEACHING OF SEXUALITY?

(FC) Students pick up my comfort and show it in their own interactions in class.

(MH) I am better able to communicate than I could if I was hung-up about sexuality.

(MH) I think students feel good about their own sexuality.

(MC) We look more at implications of sexuality than the facts.

(MH) No one could learn if they were uncomfortable.

QUESTION 19: BASED ON OUR DISCUSSION, WOULD YOU PLEASE USE THE TERM, "SEXUALITY COMFORT" IN A COMPLETE SENTENCE?

(FC) Sexuality comfort needs to be researched more.

- (MC) In order to achieve optimal interpersonal relationships with the same or opposite sex, one should strive toward personal sexuality comfort and comfort with the sexuality that others express.
- (MH) Sexuality comfort is the ability to communicate, to be open and honest with a member of the opposite sex or the same sex -- with one person or many -- regarding your feelings about sexuality.
- (MH) Sexuality comfort is a prerequisite for teaching human sexuality; one's own sexuality comfort helps determine how that person teaches human sexuality.
- (FH) Sexuality comfort is extremely important to the success of a human sexuality unit -- both to the teacher and students.

APPENDIX F  
CODING MATERIALS

## CODING INSTRUCTIONS

Your task is two-fold: (1) to sort individual pieces of data into appropriate categories which have been pre-labeled; and (2) to critique category labels as you perform task #1 to assure that they are concise and representative of the data. Task #2 may involve your suggestion to add, delete or reword a category.

The ultimate goal for this procedure is to reach agreement between all three coders for each piece of data. However, 100 percent agreement may be unrealistic in some cases. Where 100 percent agreement is not possible, we will accept 67 percent agreement. In order to accomplish this agreement, we will discuss each response for which there is coder disagreement. Thus, you will be asked to justify your decision whenever coder disagreement occurs. Full attention to the task now will save us all time by eliminating discussion later.

### REPEAT INSTRUCTIONS FOR EACH QUESTION (DATA DECK).

- (1) Scan the "Data Dictionary" before beginning so that you are aware of its contents. If you are unfamiliar with any words or phrases in the data, or if you have difficulty understanding anything, please ask the researcher for clarification. DO NOT ask another coder for clarification of anything.
- (2) You will receive data for only one question at a time. Subsequent questions will be disbursed all at once so that special instructions need be given only once.
- (3) Each data deck contains a "question card" on top which you should clip to the top of your coding board for reference. The orange cards are category labels which you should clip to individual sorting pockets with the corresponding numbers.
- (4) Begin sorting your color-coded data cards into the appropriate pockets. Note that each card has been numbered for easy reference (the last digits after the semicolon (;) is the card number).
- (5) After you've sorted the entire data deck, inform the researcher. She will ask you to help her record your work by reading to her the card numbers in each category.
- (6) After the data has been recorded, please place data from each category into a separate envelope, making sure that the orange category card is on top. Fold the flap of the envelope inside.
- (7) Now bind all the envelopes for that data deck with a rubber band and place the question card under the rubber band outside the top envelope so that it can be read.
- (8) Return the completed data deck to the researcher and wait for another data deck to work on.

## Coding Suggestions

- (1) If you have difficulty deciding upon how to code a particular response, think about process -- what's happening in the subjects' response. This kind of extended thinking is especially helpful when the response is actually an example of the subject's intended answer to the question.
- (2) Inform the researcher whenever you think a category should be re-labeled, added or deleted. Excessive "Other" responses or an empty sorting pocket may be indicative of category reevaluation.
- (3) IF YOU GET TIRED, PLEASE TAKE A BREAK!
- (4) The researcher appreciates your full attention to the coding task. Many thanks for your conscientious work.

## DATA DICTIONARY

### Abbreviations

SC = sexuality comfort  
SE = sexuality education or sexuality educator(s)  
HS = human sexuality

Affective: Pertaining to feeling, emotion, mood or temperament.

Apperceptive Learning: The "learning" of qualities associated with the environment. For example, students who learn about human sexuality from an embarrassed teacher, may experience embarrassment whenever they think about or discuss human sexuality in the future.

Cognitive: Referring to awareness or knowledge -- includes perception, recognition, judgment and reasoning.

Congruent: Corresponding, harmonious.

Integrated: Largely synonymous with congruent. Refers to the conditions of an organism where all functions work harmoniously as a unit.

Pervasive: To be prevalent throughout.

## CODING FORM

QUESTION NO. 13

Coder *				Coder*			
#	A	B	C	#	A	B	C
1	2	2	2	33	7	7	7
2	4	5	5	34	7	7	7
3	3	3	3	35	7	7	7
4	3	3	3	36	3	3	3
5	6	6	6	37	6	6	6
6	2	2	2	38			
7	7	7	7	39			
8	2	2	2	40			
9	4	4	4	41			
10	1	1	1	42			
11	6	6	6	43			
12	1	1	4	44			
13	3	3	3	45			
14	6	6	6	46			
15	3	3	3	47			
16	5	5	5	48			
17	6	6	6	49			
18	4	4	4	50			
19	6	6	6	51			
20	1	1	1	52			
21	3	3	3	53			
22	7	7	7	54			
23	7	7	7	55			
24	3	3	3	56			
25	5	5	5	57			
26	2	5	5	58			
27	6	6	6	59			
28	4	4	4	60			
29	4	4	4	61			
30	4	4	4	62			
31	4	4	4	63			
32	6	6	6	64			

\*Numbers in the (#) column indicate the sequential order of responses as provided by subjects. Numbers under the alpha columns (A, B, C) indicate categories to which specific coders assigned individual responses.



APPENDIX G  
DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF  
THE SAMPLE AND THE FOCUSSED DISCUSSANTS

TABLE 36  
SUPPLEMENTARY DEMOGRAPHIC  
INFORMATION ABOUT THE SAMPLE

Variable	<u>High School</u>		<u>College</u>	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
<u>Marital Status</u>				
Never married	2	0	1	0
Married	12	6	4	2
Divorced/separated	2	1	1	1
Remarried	0	0	0	0
Widowed	0	0	0	0
<u>Religious Affiliation</u>				
Catholic	1	2	0	0
Protestant <sup>a</sup>	11	5	4	3
Other	1	0	1	0
None	3	0	1	0

<sup>a</sup>Subjects represented seven Protestant denominations, including Baptist, Church of Christ, Episcopalian, Lutheran, Methodist, Presbyterian and Unitarian. One Protestant subject indicated that she is "mixed," specifying that she does not associate faith in God with any particular denomination.

TABLE 37  
DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF FOCUSED DISCUSSANTS

Variable	Men	Women
College	1	1
High School	3	3
<u>Age</u>		
25 - 34	1	3
35 - 44	1	0
45 - 54	2	1
<u>Religious Affiliation</u>		
Catholic	1	0
Protestant	1	2
Other	0	1
None	2	1
<u>Religious Attendance</u>		
Weekly	1	0
Monthly	1	1
Special occasions	1	0
Never	1	1
Other	0	2
<u>Marital Status</u>		
Never Married	0	2
Married	6	0
<u>Years Experience as Sexuality Educator</u>		
2 - 4 years	1	1
5 - 9 years	0	1
10 - 14 years	2	2
15 - 19 years	1	0