

A Short Uncensored History of Sex Ed

By Samuel L. Blumenfeld

The dictum that ideas have consequences is nowhere better demonstrated than in the ideas that have led to the introduction of sex education in American schools. The first idea of consequence was Sigmund Freud's notion that sexual repression causes neurosis. If sexual repression makes you ill or creates dysfunction, then the remedy, of course, is free sexual expression. That was not the cure that Freud recommended, but Freud's idea so strongly influenced American culture that clothes for women went from the trussed up sexually repressed fashions of 1900 to the loose liberating flapper skirts of the roaring twenties—in only twenty years!

The second idea came from Margaret Sanger, founder of Planned Parenthood, who launched a campaign in 1916 to promote contraception and abortion in order to free women from the burdens of unwanted pregnancy. Sanger later adopted the views of the eugenicists who promoted the idea that the fit should be encouraged to have children and the unfit to not. Sex education became an indispensable part of Sanger's birth control movement. As a result, Planned Parenthood has been one of the pioneer advocates of comprehensive sex education in the schools. In 1953, Planned Parenthood staffer Lena Levine wrote: "[Our goal] is to be ready as educators and parents to help young people obtain sex satisfaction before marriage. By sanctioning sex before marriage, we will prevent fear and guilt...we must be ready to provide young boys and girls with the best contraception measures available so they will have the necessary means to achieve sexual satisfaction without having to risk possible pregnancy."

The third idea came from sexologist Alfred C. Kinsey, head of the Institute for Sex Research at Indiana University, subsidized by the Rockefeller Foundation. Dr. Kinsey's best-selling report, *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male*, published in 1958, promulgated the idea that human beings are sexual from birth. The data on 317 infants and young boys was supposedly the source of that idea. This controversial data was obtained from a pedophile who had actually masturbated infants and boys and kept records of his experiments. All of this was exposed years later by Dr. Judith Reisman, who accused Kinsey of complicity in the sexual abuse of young children. Her book, *Kinsey: Crimes & Consequences* (1998), provides all the sordid details.

The fourth idea came from Dr. Mary Calderone, past Medical Director of Planned Parenthood. She and her colleagues launched SIECUS, the Sex Information and Education Council of the United States, at the Kinsey Institute, specifically to teach Kinseyan sexual ideology as sex education. Dr. Calderone transformed sex education into sexuality education, presently taught in American schools. SIECUS has provided the public schools with a wide variety of sex education materials: films, slides, books, and pamphlets.

The fifth idea came from the *Humanist Manifesto* of 1973, which challenged the views of orthodox religion on sexual behavior and proclaimed total sexual freedom among consenting adults as the new moral standard for sexual behavior. The *Manifesto* was signed by many academicians, including Dr. Lester A. Kirkendall, a director of SIECUS, as well as by Dr. Alan C. Guttmacher, president of Planned Parenthood.

In 1976, Dr. Kirkendall published *A New Bill of Sexual Rights and Responsibilities*, signed by 37 leading sexologists and authors. The book states: "Humanists have had an important role in the sexual revolution. Although Humanist Manifesto II contains a brief section on sexuality, we thought a more detailed statement would be useful."

Out of this interlocking directorate of humanist sex education organizations came the ideas that have formed the ideology of the sexual revolution and the curriculum of sex education in American schools. The results have seen dramatic changes in teen sexual behavior with its tragic consequences: more pre-marital sex experimentation, more teen pregnancies, more teen abortions, more teen venereal disease, more teen emotional unhappiness leading to an increase in drug addiction. Inevitably, pre-marital sex leads to abusive jealousy among teens as they change sex partners. This has resulted in physical abuse and even murders.

There is little doubt that pre-marital sex is the cause of more social problems than any other activity in America today. Yet, pre-marital, recreational sex is heavily promoted by music, television sitcoms, movies, books, and other products of popular culture. All of this is legitimized by the so-called liberating ideas of Freud, Sanger, Kinsey, Calderone, and others, while attempts to return to the moral standards based on religion are rejected as reactionary, repressive, outmoded, and authoritarian.

Meanwhile, the sexual revolution changed America's views on sex as reflected in actions by government and the courts. In 1965, the U.S. Supreme Court, in the case of *Griswold v. Connecticut*, ruled that Connecticut's law prohibiting the use of contraceptives by married couples violated a newly defined right of marital privacy. As a result, ten states liberalized their family planning laws and began to provide family planning services with tax funds.

In 1970, Congress enacted Title X of the Public Health Services Act, which provided support and funding for family planning services and educational programs, and for biomedical and behavioral research in reproduction and contraceptive development. Title

X also authorized funding for a Center for Population Research within the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD).

In 1970, New York state enacted the most progressive abortion law in the nation, and Planned Parenthood of Syracuse, New York, became the first affiliate to offer abortion services.

In 1973, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in *Roe v. Wade* that the constitutional right of privacy extended to a woman's decision to have an abortion, thereby legalizing abortion throughout the United States. In 1976, the U.S. Supreme Court, in *Planned Parenthood of Central Missouri v. Danforth*, struck down state requirements for parental and spousal consent for abortion and set aside a state prohibition against saline abortions.

In 1976, the Alan Guttmacher Institute, named after Planned Parenthood's president, published *11 Million Teenagers*, which focussed attention on the problem of teen pregnancy and childbearing in the United States.

In 1979, the U.S. Supreme Court found the Massachusetts statute, restricting minors' access to abortion, unconstitutional. It ruled that if states required minors to obtain parental consent for an abortion, they must also give minors the alternative of obtaining the consent of a judge, in confidential proceedings and without first notifying their parents.

In 1979, the California State Department of Education published a draft of its new sex education curriculum, *Education for Human Sexuality: A Resource Book and Instructional Guide to Sex Education for Kindergarten Through Grade Twelve*. The new program was developed with partial funding from the U.S. Office of Education. It called for explicit instruction in human sexual intercourse, alternative sexual life styles, abortion, masturbation and other issues involving sexuality.

Beginning in preschool or kindergarten with mixed-group visits to restrooms, these visits are followed by a description of male and female genitalia. The children read two pamphlets from Planned Parenthood which tell them that "masturbation is a perfectly acceptable, useful, comforting thing to do with sexual feelings" and "masturbation cannot hurt you and it will make you feel more relaxed."

At age nine, children begin their study of methods of birth control, including "all the contraceptive methods and services available." At age 12, children "visit a local drug store to check the availability of contraceptive products." They study the law regarding emancipated minors who are "making their own decisions." They learn that "pregnancy prevention services are available to young people without parental consent." They take a field trip to a "family planning clinic" and they go through it "from beginning to end" and fill out a patient's form for such a clinic.

Also at age 12, boys and girls study "unplanned pregnancy" and discuss whether it is best to have the baby, offer it for adoption, or have an abortion. They discuss the "support

system” that is available to them and they listen to a guest speaker from Planned Parenthood. They learn that the decision for an abortion is theirs alone to make requiring no consultation with their parents.

The curriculum recommends ten days of sex instruction in each school year from pre-school through the 12th grade. The program calls for the development of “decision-making skills” through exercises in “values clarification.” It should be noted that this program in sexuality has been implemented throughout the United States in many school districts.

In 1981, the Alan Guttmacher Institute published *Teenage Pregnancy: The Problem that Hasn't Gone Away*, an analysis of teen sexuality, contraceptive knowledge and use, and pregnancy experience. It emphasized the need for making confidential contraceptive services accessible to sexually active teens.

In 1982, Planned Parenthood published “Sexuality Alphabet,” a tool for sex education. George Grant, author of *Grand Illusions*, writes of this publication: “Planned Parenthood’s sex education programs and materials are brazenly perverse. They are frequently accentuated with crudely obscene four-letter words and illustrated by explicitly ribald nudity. They openly endorse aberrant behavior—homosexuality, masturbation, fornication, incest, and even bestiality—and then they describe that behavior in excruciating detail.”

In 1983, the National Education Association included the following resolution in its Handbook under the title of Family Life Education:

The National Education Association believes that the developing child’s sexuality is continually and inevitably influenced by daily contacts, including experiences in the school environment. The Association recognizes that sensitive sex education can be a positive force in promoting physical, mental, and social health and that the public school must assume an increasingly important role in providing the instruction. Teachers must be qualified to teach in this area and must be legally protected from censorship and lawsuits. ...

The Association urges its affiliates and members to support appropriately established sex education programs, including information on birth control and family planning, parenting skills, sexually transmitted diseases, incest and sexual abuse, the effects of substance abuse during pregnancy, and problems associated with and resulting from preteen and teenage pregnancies.

In 1993 it added “information on sexual abstinence, diversity of sexual orientation, prenatal care, and sexual harassment” to its list of sex education programs. In other words, the scope of sex education keeps getting larger and larger. For example, information on homosexuality has developed into a course of its own within the sexuality curriculum.

In 1985, the Alan Guttmacher Institute published its report on Teen Pregnancy in Industrialized Countries, indicating that the U.S. teen pregnancy rate of 96 per 1,000 was the highest in the developed world. A two-year study by the National Academy of Sciences agreed with the AGI study and concluded that “prevention of adolescent pregnancy should have the highest priority,” and “making contraceptive methods available and accessible to those who are sexually active and encouraging them to diligently use these methods is the surest major strategy for pregnancy prevention.”

In 1970, less than half of the nation’s school districts offered sex education curricula and only one had school-based birth control clinics. In 1998, more than seventy-five percent of the districts teach sex education and there are more than one hundred clinics in operation. Yet the percentage of illegitimate births has only increased during that time, from only fifteen percent to a mind-boggling fifty-one percent. In California, where public schools have had sex education for more than thirty years, the rate of teen pregnancy is the highest in the nation. (Grant, p. 128)

Meanwhile, the AIDS epidemic in the United States, which began with eleven cases in 1979, had grown to 24,000 cases in 1986, to 339,250 cases in 1993, to 665,357 cases in 1998. The National Education Association has recommended that AIDS education become an integral part of the school curriculum. “AIDS education must include education about all means of transmission, including sex and intravenous (IV) drug use. Information on prevention options must include abstinence and medically accepted protective devices. Instruction in decision-making skills to assist students in correlating health information and personal behavior is essential.”

On September 15, 1985, the Chicago Sun-Times reported: “Free birth control pills and condoms are being dispensed to Du Sable High School students by a new clinic in the South Side school. A second clinic is scheduled to open Feb. 1 at Orr High School on the West Side for the same purpose. ... William Young, director of teen health for the Ounce of Prevention Fund, a member of a coalition of foundations financing the two clinics, said the opening of medical clinics in high schools is “part of a national trend.” Young said that cities with clinics in high schools included St. Paul, Minn., Dallas, New York, Kansas City, Cleveland and San Francisco. ... The Du Sable clinic’s operating costs are \$225,000 a year, Young said, all being provided by the coalition of foundations, which includes the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Princeton, N.J.; the Joyce Foundation of Chicago; Pittway Corp. Charitable Foundation of Northbrook; and the Commonwealth Fund of New York.”

It was inevitable that sexuality education would have to include same-sex behavior, or homosexuality, in a very open way. On February 10, 1992, Governor William F. Weld of Massachusetts, signed an executive order creating the nation’s first Governor’s Commission on Gay and Lesbian Youth. The Commission was formed in response to the epidemic of suicide by young gays, lesbians, and bisexuals as revealed in the 1989 federal report on youth suicide. That report concluded that gay youth represented “up to 30 percent of (the estimated 5,000) completed youth suicides annually.”

The Governor's Commission made five key recommendations for schools: (1) School systems should make public commitments to ensure that schools are safe places, free of discrimination, violence, and harassment for gay and lesbian students. (2) Teachers, guidance counselors, and all school staff should be trained to respond to the needs of gay and lesbian students. (3) Every high school in the Commonwealth should establish a support group where gay and straight students can meet each week and discuss gay and lesbian issues. (4) All school libraries should develop a collection of literature, books, films, and pamphlets for students seeking to learn more on gay and lesbian issues. (5) Gay and lesbian themes and issues should be integrated into all subject areas in the school curriculum.

In August 1994, the Governor's Commission produced a report on the "Prevention of Health Problems Among Gay and Lesbian Youth" and "Making Health and Human Services Accessible and Effective for Gay and Lesbian Youth."

It has become increasingly difficult to tell the difference between sex education and pornography, for sex education is not about education, it's about sex, and it's difficult to teach about sex explicitly without it becoming pornographic. For example, on March 25, 2000, the Massachusetts Department of Education, the Governor's Commission for Gay and Lesbian Youth, and the Gay and Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN) co-sponsored a statewide conference at Tufts University called "Teach Out." Teenagers and children as young as 12 were encouraged to come from around the state, and many were bussed in from their home districts. Homosexual activists came from across the country to take part in the conference.

According to audio tapes made at the conference, participants discussed oral sex, anal sex, vaginal sex, oral-vaginal sex, clitoral sex, and a homosexual practice called "fisting." Needless to say that when the public became aware of the substance of the Teach Out, it caused a scandal that made headlines and was vigorously discussed on radio talk shows.

In February 1999, SIECUS conducted a public poll on its Internet site asking readers "who had the greatest impact in bringing about a positive change in the way America understands and affirms sexuality. The top ten, chosen from a list of 100, were Judy Blume, Mary Calderone, Ellen DeGeneres, Joycelyn Elders, Hugh Hefner, Anita Hill, Magic Johnson, Madonna, Gloria Steinam, and Ruth Westheimer."

Obviously, there are many parents who do not share the views of the top ten. Judy Blume's novels have often been cited as too sexually explicit. But objection to sex education is nothing new. Various parent and religious groups have been critical of explicit sex education from the day it became known what was in the materials that Planned Parenthood and SIECUS were providing the schools.

Since neither parents nor religious groups have been able to stop the sexual revolution or the humanist sexuality juggernaut, they have called for greater emphasis on abstinence and less on contraception and condom distribution. They achieved a substantial victory when the Congress voted in favor of an \$88 million "Abstinence Only" program as part

of President Clinton's "National Strategy to Prevent Teen Pregnancy." Starting in the fall of the year 2000, abstinence-only programs began to receive automatic re-funding every year for the next five years during the federal government's appropriations process.

One would have thought that the sex educators would have been happy with a federal program funding "Abstinence Only." Instead, SIECUS has launched a no-holds-barred campaign against "Abstinence Only," claiming that it won't prevent teenage pregnancies or STDs. They call the program "fear-based." But what's wrong with being afraid of getting an unwanted pregnancy or getting AIDS? Fear prevents people from doing wrong things and foolish things. It is an important part of our self-protective instinct.

If "Abstinence Only" is fear-based, is sexuality education pleasure-based? These increasingly hot debates over sex education will continue for years to come as humanists and Christians struggle for control of what goes on in the public schools.