Human Relationships Education:
A Study of Contrasting Expectations

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Abstract
Very few involved in the presentation, organisation or consumption of
programmes dealing with human relationships, family life, social education,
sex, moral or drug education deny the value or the need for such activity
in school situations. The stumbling blocks defying consensus however, are
those of the content and methodology of the programme. What should be
taught? How should it be taught? Who should teach it?
These questions arose once again during a study commissioned by the
Queensland State Department of Education designed to tap the reactions of
the school community to the creation of a new position, the Coordinator of
Human Relationships Education. While the purpose of the study was to
investigate the feasibility of appointing full time Human Relationships
Education Coordinators to all Queensland High Schools, the intent of this

paper is to explore the differences in expectations on the programme expressed by the major stakeholder groups participating in the project. In so doing, the difficulties of operationalising the ideal of school community participation in educational decision making is brought sharply into focus at the same time as a very strong point is made for increasing the level of such community participation in order to guarantee an educational product that is both relevant and appropriate for those who participate in it. This study raises for analysis the question of the greater social responsibility expected of school communities in curriculum deliberations during the 1990's.

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Introduction
Struggling to understand the adult world has always been part of the essence of growing up. Reacting to the views and actions of significant others, and interpreting the meaning and the values that underlie such actions often depend upon the quality of guidance and direction available to children at significant times throughout childhood. Once the sole source of input into these matters, parental values now compete with mass media, the variable orientations of teachers and schooling, increasingly more intrusive political forces, and information and knowledge sources that are both expanding rapidly and more easily accessible than at any other time in history. Neil Postman (1982) has suggested that the increasing influence of these forces, particularly the media, has shattered the isolation and, as a result, the innocence of childhood.
Evolving social values, the redefinition of gender roles, the changing role of the church and an awareness of a proliferation of morally and culturally divergent world views have prepared the way for a program of human relationships education designed to supplement the functions previously the province of the family, the church, the elders or the wise of a social group. In previous decades, this need has produced various school based educational programmes dealing separately with sex education, moral education, ethics or family life education. Other programmes have provided guidance in independent living, parenting skills or remediation based around behaviour problems or social disorders. Regardless of the orientation of these programmes, however, difficulties arise when the content and methodology of the programme are being considered. What should be taught, how should it be taught and who should teach it?
These questions arose once again during a study focussing upon an analysis of the evolving role of the only full time Human Relationships Education (HRE) coordinator appointed in a state secondary school in Queensland. Commissioned by the Queensland Department of Education in 1991, this study was designed to tap the reactions of the school community to this newly created position and to the Human Relationships Education programme.
Purpose of the Research
It was the intent of the commissioning body to conduct an independent

investigation of the feasibility of appointing full time Human Relationship Education Coordinators to all Queensland State high schools. A case study approach was adopted in order to determine the following:
● the school community's perceptions of the place of Human Relationships Education in a secondary school;
● the role developed by a full time coordinator of HRE in a large secondary school;
● the perceptions of staff of the role of a full time coordinator of HRE as it exists and as they believe it should be;
● the location of the role within the administrative structure of high school organisation; and
● the most appropriate qualifications required for such a position.

Methodology / Sample

The case study was conducted over the period June 1990 to May 1991. The study involved the collection of interview data from significant stakeholders from the school community. All teachers and administrators, and a sample of students, parents and community members were involved in this process. In addition, questionnaire data were gathered from teachers, administrators and parents at the school, self reporting techniques provided input from the trial coordinator, document surveys on material from the Department of Education were conducted and interviews of departmental officials involved in the coordination of Human Relationships Education in the State of Queensland combined to produce an overall picture of the educational environment and stakeholder attitudes existing at the trial site.

The procedure governing the organisation of the study relied upon a time exposure approach. For example, interviews of teachers were conducted in late 1990 and the same sample was asked to complete a questionnaire some

six months later, to gauge any shift in response to the work of the coordinator. In addition, each data collection device sought stakeholder reaction to the concept of Human Relationships Education and to the idea of a school based, full time Coordinator of Human Relationships Education. The total sample of the study included the following: all seventy members of the school teaching staff were interviewed; questionnaires were distributed to all teaching staff and fifty eight teacher surveys were returned; questionnaires were distributed to all members of the school community and 446 questionnaires were returned; twenty parents/community members having involvement in the programme were selected at random for interviews; twenty students were selected at random for interviews; ten departmental officials were interviewed.

Purpose of this Article

The final research report, Human Relationships Education: A Case Study of a Full Time Coordinator in a Queensland State High School (Austin, Gibson, Hodgkinson and Randall, 1991) containing the complete findings of the study can be found in the library of the Queensland Department of Education. The purpose of this article, however, is to further explore those differences in expectations concerning HRE. By contrasting the views of students, parents and teachers, it is the intent of the authors to focus the

spotlight of attention upon the collaboration necessary in clarifying the purpose of HRE programmes, the role of school communities and their increasing responsibility in school based curriculum decision making processes. Such expectations for collaboration are in evidence in the processes recommended for the formulation of Human Relationships Education programmes in Queensland and are generally seen in the literature to be an example of the legitimate increase of community participation in the educational process.

Human Relations education is... a social matter, not a personal one ... more careful thinking through by school systems (is required)... (Edgar,1980).

Literature Review

It is not the intent of this review of literature to recreate the debate concerning the controversial aspects of human relationships education, to review the historical background of human relations education, or to create a complete review of the literature informing the question. Neither is it designed to rationalise the existence of such a programme or comment upon the intent of the programme in general or theoretical terms. This has been done repeatedly and adequately elsewhere (Logan, 1980; Laird, 1981; Reiger, 1984; Sheek, 1984). Rather, the literature dealing specifically with the attitudes and expectations of parents, students and teachers concerning HRE will be reviewed in order to lay a foundation for the presentation of information derived from the stakeholder groups in this current study.

Human Relationships Education

In her study on Human Relations Education in Australian Schools, Wolcott (1987) included a table listing subject areas in which selected HRE topics might be taught in Australian schools. The topics revealed in this national analysis were: Peer Relationships; Communication; Skills; Values and Decision Making; Self esteem; Stress management / conflict resolution; Family types and functions; Gender roles and Stereotypes; Parenting; Marriage; Divorce / Remarriage; Community and family; Ageing and Death; Growth and Development in males / females; Human Reproduction; Attitudes / Values about sexuality; Contraception; Sexually Transmitted Diseases; Money Management; and Consumer Education.

Other documents from across the country include the following topics: sex and family life, ourselves and others, use and abuse of drugs, consumer health, mental and emotional health, disease and disability, food, rest and activity, environmental health, safety, work and leisure (Royal Comission on Human Relationships, 1977; Logan, 1980; McCarthy, 1983; McCarthy and Gordon, 1984, NTDE, 1983a and 1983 b). The vast majority of these documents include a rider that states an adherance to non prescriptive guidelines and an emphasis upon the necessity of community involvement in decision making regarding the orientation of the local programme.

The interim policy and guidelines statement, Human Relationships Education for Queensland State Schools, distributed by the Queensland Department of

Education in 1988 contains repeated reference to the same expectations of community involvement and decisionmaking, responsiveness to the particular

needs of each school and community and adherance to the belief that human relationships education is a "...commitment to develop in young people the ability to understand themselves and their relationships with others... (to help) young people participate effectively in our society... (and to) consult with parents and members of the community, as well as with teachers in schools." (QDE, 1988)

Reference to these documents provides a view of the processes described as a matter of course, a step by step approach in a cooperative effort to mold a critical aspect of student education. The reality experienced in school communities is quite different however. In study after study the conflict, controversy and dispute revolving around these 'straightforward' programmes is documented (Bakalars and Petrich, 1984; Laird, 1981; Yarber, 1979; Herold, Kopf and De Carlo, 1974). Agreement concerning the precise definition of human relationship education programmes is difficult to document. Even among those responsible for teacher education programmes on HRE, variable orientations and expectations are the norm rather than the exception (Gibson, 1991).

The Commonwealth School Commission Report for the Triennium 1982-84 (1981) suggests that schools should shed assumptions about the normal Australian family in favour of a more flexible definition that reflects the reality of the students' lives. Woolcott (1987) provides a focal point for the variety of influences processed by the youth of today;

More than ever before young people require opportunities to develop decision making skills and the ability to discriminate between conflicting and divergent viewpoints to which they are inevitably exposed. (Wolcott, 1987)

Expectations for Human Relationships Education Programmes

Parents / Community Members

Parent and community concerns coalesce around the sex education, values and family life components of health or human relations courses. It is here that personal values and the moral beliefs of each individual community intersect and may conflict with the objectives, content or teaching strategies schools adopt in implementing human relations courses (Wolcott, 1987, P.16).

McCarthy and Gordon (1984) refer to community groups in opposition to HRE programmes who protest the erosion of traditional views of marriage, family life and sexuality. Community groups such as the Society To Outlaw Pornography (STOP) and Campaign Against Regressive Education (CARE), in addition to the action of recalling educational programmes such as Man: A Course of Study (MACOS) and the Social Education Materials Project (SEMP) are indicators of the effects of community pressure able to be harnessed and applied to issues considered critical to the maintenance of community values.

Other community action groups support the establishment of HRE programmes. For example, teaching and technical unions and federation groups, the Womens Electoral Lobby and the Queensland Council of State School Organisations have all shown support for the introduction of such programmes into schools. A survey of Gallup polls from 1935 to 1971 (Gallup, 1972) have indicated this position as acceptable to the broader community. Certainly, the central role of community representation in

determining the local definition of HRE progammes is reinforced by such actions.

Students

Studies describing student reactions to various aspects of their 'social education' abound. Fawns and Teese (1980), in a study of students' attitudes towards their schooling, report that students express a need for guidance in forming health and life patterns and in determining social and sex role expectations through the acquisition of skills in decision making and problem solving. The Commonwealth School Commission Report (1980), Schooling for 15-16 year olds, concludes that young people require skills for coping with the changing meaning and patterns of work and the demands of constantly changing family roles that incorporate dual careers and shared parenting. Mason (1979) details student needs in the areas of money management and family living.

Other studies describe strong student support for the introduction of sex education into schools (Szriom, 1983). Goldman and Goldman(1984) report that 90% of the Australian teenagers studied agreed that lessons on topics related to sex should be included in schools. A study in the Australian Capital Territory(Kaye, 1981) reported that students preferred school based programmes as the main source of information on sex related topics and that such progammes provided greater coverage and objectivity on the topics. In preparation for proposed initiatives in the area, a report from the Victorian Ministry of Education suggested that 'children want information about themselves, their health, their sexuality, about drugs, about family relations and peer relations before they leave primary school.' (Ellis, 1984, p.145).

Teachers

Teacher attitudes regarding this area of endeavour do not always coincide. The combined array of topics seen by teachers to be appropriate for such courses of study is quite extensive. Extracted from a series of case studies included in Wolcott (1987), the following topics have been included in HRE programmes conducted by individual teachers in their own time. Pastoral care, self esteem, social skills, positive peer and family relationships, human sexuality, use of recreation and leisure time, values clarification, physical development, and health education.

Research Findings

The findings of the current study reflect a similar diversity of orientation between each of the stakeholder groups involved. The data presented in the following sections was collected by use of both questionnaire and interview and describes perceptions of HRE and its place in the school environment. The respondents all indicated an awareness of human relationships education.

The sections that follow have been organised to contrast the perceptions of the three major stakeholder groups, parent/community members, students and teachers, to several central concepts.

Perceptions of the Aim of HRE Programmes

Parents / Community Members

The data in Table 1 describes parent perceptions of the aims of HRE in a secondary school. While parental responses varied somewhat according to the appropriateness of these topics at each grade level, these data suggest generally strong parental support for the topics listed. Topics which are less highly supported are those of Human Sexuality and Body Changes in Male and Female (puberty).

Table 1 - Parent/Community perceptions
of the aims of an HRE Programme

Topic	%
Personal Development	92
Personal Safety	91
Assertion Skills	90
Dealing with Stress	89
Relationships	88
Sexually Transmitted Deseases	87
Health and Body Care	82
Human Sexuality	78
Body Changes in Male & Female	73

The sole issue specifically identified, by a minority of parents, for exclusion from the programme was that of homosexuality. A selection of parental comments on this issue, presented below, indicates the level of emotion that often accompanies deliberations regarding the inclusion of controversial issues in HRE programmes:

.   I wish all these discussions to be purely on a heterosexual line. I do not wish my child to have excess knowledge on the sick people of our society;

.   (I) would strenuously oppose involvement of homosexual (male and female) counsellors/lecturers or family planning organizations which exclude issues of morality. My opposition to human sexuality education is a result of my observation of humanistic bias in this area;

.   Homosexuality should not be portrayed in positive terms.

Respondents were requested to list additional topics which they would consider for inclusion in an H.R.E. programme. Such 'parent added' topics covered a range of areas including academic skills, interpersonal skills (communication skills, study skills and decision making skills), social issues, social values, social knowledge and self respect. The variety of these topics suggest that many parents support the offering of a wide ranging H.R.E. programme.

A number of respondents commented on the essential nature of the programme: "It should be taught to all staff and students", while others saw it as a means of filling perceived gaps in the moral education of children.

It is apparent from this information, that the major focus, as far as parents and community members were concerned, was on the development of appropriate skills and understandings concerning relationships with others. It is interesting to note the relatively small number of responses that

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related to aspects of human sexuality as an aim of the program. 12% of the sample expressed the specific opinion that sex education should not be a part of the program.

Students

While the responses from students to this question have been classified into seven specific categories, the large majority of responses (75%) directly refer to the development of better relationships between the student and others as the purpose of the H.R.E. program. When one adds the responses related to self-awareness and self-esteem to this category, it appears that the student perception of the purposes of the H.R.E. program in the secondary school is almost totally (91%) that of the development of the capacity to relate to others. Illustrative comments here are: "It provides us with different ways to handle situations", and "[H.R.E.] helps adolescents talk between males and females".

Table 2 - Student perceptions
of the aims of an HRE Programme

Topics		% of Total		
Relationships		75		
(a) student-parent	16		(b) student-others	11
(c) with self	11		(d) student-student	9	(e)
student-teacher	9	(f) boy-girl	7	(g)
student-friend	7	(h) student-school	2	(i)
student-employer	2			
Self-awareness/esteem		9		
Preparation for other experiences		7		
Guidance		2		
Introduction to secondary school - Year 8		2		
Coping with child abuse		2		
Sex education		2		

Of interest is the very low level of importance placed upon the "sex education" component of the programme. While seen as a necessary inclusion, students seem to relegate this topic to a level of factual understanding rather than recognising it as a central and controversial focus of the programme.

Teachers

Teachers saw contributions to the development of student skill in the areas of relating to others (87%); conflict resolution (85%); decision making (85%); attitude analysis (85%); small group participation (84%); communication (84%) and problem solving (83%) as a desirable result of H.R.E. programme activities. Responses dealing with the development of certain knowledge and skill in students revealed that the majority of teachers agreed that students were informed in the areas of sexual issues (85%); social issues (85%); moral issues (79%); health issues (77%); drug issues (75%) and safety issues (69%) through the activities of an H.R.E. programme. Only thirty-nine percent of the respondents agreed that

development in student academic performance should result from participation in the programme. Only thirty-three percent of staff specifically suggested a sexuality component, as opposed to eleven percent who specifically opposed the inclusion of such a topic.

More specifically, teachers clearly saw the programme focussing upon interpersonal relationships between student and student (95%), between parent and student (86%), and between teacher and student (86%). Twenty four respondents (41%) agreed that H.R.E. should focus upon the interpersonal relationships between parents and teachers while thirty-four respondents (58%) disagreed with that prospect.

Teachers saw H.R.E. contributing substantially to the development of student self esteem, the ability to make social decisions, the development of a personal value system and appropriate attitudes to life in students participating in the programme. Sixty eight percent of the respondents indicated that they did not agree that H.R.E. programmes should contribute to the development of stable Christian values. It was generally agreed, however, that H.R.E. contributed to the development of a positive school climate (75%) and to positive school community relationships (71%).

A unique reaction of teachers is represented by responses typifying the benefits acruing to teachers. Comments such as "It's to develop teacher morale" and "It's about staff communication skills" were typical of this category. Respondents believed that H.R.E. had as much to offer teachers as it did students. Four respondents indicated that they believed the program should also enable teachers to come to understand themselves and their relationships with their students better, thereby "humanising" them: "...teachers have to value themselves for H.R.E. to work" and "It should get teachers to do more of what they should have been doing all along".

There was a reasonably constant range of teacher responses indicating the belief that the following teaching skills would benefit from participation in H.R.E. programmes: attitude analysis (80%); showing respect for individual students (79%); conflict resolution (76%); problem solving (75%); conducting interpersonal relationships (75%); communication (74%); identifying individual student needs (70%); decision making (71%); small group participation (69%); In all cases, the majority of teachers responding in this way did so without expressing "strong" agreement to the proposals.

Many staff saw H.R.E. filling a socialising role ("Developing an understanding of their rights and responsibilities"; "...basically to engender some values of use to the kids"), as a consequence of which there would be benefits to the community and the school. Some staff saw H.R.E. as providing a support system for various sections of the school and community, interestingly, more saw it as supporting teachers than students. Sixteen respondents saw the role of H.R.E. as being one of filling the gaps left by the perceived failure of many parents to "give guidance". Many of these respondents say H.R.E. is "doing what parents should be doing". To others, H.R.E. presents models for students to follow, either to reinforce perceived community norms or to provide alternatives to an existing way-of-life. Typical comments were "Teachers must be living examples" and "We must provide children with different models in developing relationships with others".

It was very clear to the majority of respondents (89%) that students were intended to be the prime recipients of support offered by the H.R.E. programme, while only (69%) of respondents felt that parents and 65%, the school, should benefit from programme support. Fewer respondents felt that

the programme should provide support to the community (61%) or to teachers (51%).

In rank ordering their perceptions of H.R.E. in a summary fashion, teachers at this school clearly view the H.R.E. programme as being primarily responsible for focussing upon interpersonal relationships and contributing to the development of appropriate attitudes in students. Secondary importance in the goal structure of H.R.E. programmes is placed upon the development of a positive school climate, the development of certain skills in students, the enhancement of academic performance and the provision of information about specific social issues.

Appropriate Venue for Human Relationships Education

Parents / Community Members

While the large majority of parents and community members agreed that the H.R.E. program should be taught in schools, there was no unanimity on this point. 82 % were in favour of its being taught in the school, while 18 % opposed its inclusion. The main point of those in favour was that of the need for every child to be exposed to the program ("...otherwise there's a heap of students who don't have anything to go on to if they are getting little support in the home environment"). Modifying comments from those opposing its inclusion suggested that it should be restricted in some way, that it should be taught by parents, or by specialists in the area (e.g. doctors), or that it should be related to stable family structures and values, or taught within a Christian framework. Other respondents were not totally convinced of the need for the program to be taught by the school ("Perhaps it needs to be taught to some children, but not ours"). They felt that it should be an option for those who needed it ("Should be available and accessible to everyone voluntarily"). There was no indication as to who should decide on the necessity of the program for any particular child: the school, the parent or the child. Of those who opposed the teaching of H.R.E. in the school, the main point of objection related to the idea that it is the home, not the school, that is responsible for this type of teaching. Others found it difficult to accept that such a program should be compulsory for all students and were concerned that "H.R.E. should not replace other classes".

As indicated elsewhere, the support is less strong for topics relating to sexuality.

Students

There was unanimous student support for the inclusion of H.R.E. in the formal school program. Students' reasons for their responses ranged from the value of a change in the content of "school work" ("It's good to get away from school work") through the personal development outcomes ("Some kids can't relate") to a perception of the potential of the program to effect a real change ("...hope that a lot of this talk becomes action"). There was also no dissent from the proposition that H.R.E. should be

taught during school hours: "Definitely...It does everybody good",
although there were reservations expressed by some students about the
amount of time to be devoted to the program: "It must be done, but I hope
it doesn't take up too much time". Some students mentioned the need to
conduct some of the program in out-of-school hours " to allow for family
involvement". There was a belief expressed by some students that the
program was more important for inclusion in the formal school program for
younger students: "One class period per week for year 12, but more time for
year 8".

Teachers

Teachers were not unanimous in their support of the programme. Seventy
percent of teachers felt that HRE should be taught in schools.
Approximately half of these recommended specific classes while the other
half saw HRE integrated into existing subject areas. Twenty-five percent of
teachers felt strongly that HRE should not be taught at school while four
percent of teachers were unsure.

Preferred Method of Presenting Human Relationship Education

Parents and Community

Two - thirds, of the parents responding believed that smaller groups (about
10 students) should be employed for dealing with H.R.E. issues. The
suggestion that the majority of parents do not believe that H.R.E. should
be integrated into existing subject areas is supported by this finding. In

addition, 65% of parents indicated that "certain sensitive lessons be
conducted in boys-only and girls-only groups." From a parent / community
perspective H.R.E. is regarded as a special subject requiring special
conditions. Of those who suggested the need for special classes, a number
believed that sexuality and related topics probably needed particular
presentation considerations - the use of videotape presentations and
specialist consultants were suggested.

With regard to the teaching of H.R.E., a small group of parents expressed
the view that H.R.E. should not be taught at all or that it should be
taught by specialists other than teachers.

Respondents were divided as to who should, ideally, teach the program. Some
respondents believed the program should be taught by teachers and indicated
that they should be volunteers, and preferably "gifted, open-minded
teachers" while others saw "problems with teachers teaching it in the
current system" but weren't specific as to the nature of these problems.
There was an expression of "concern over teacher input and control over the
program".

Students

Approximately 48% of students had an opinion as to the methodology to be
employed in teaching the H.R.E. program in the school, while 12 % believed
there was nothing "special" about H.R.E. to warrant the adoption of
idiosyncratic teaching methodologies. The other 40% of students had no
opinion on the topic. One student suggested the program could effectively
be taught in one period a week.

There was a request that whoever taught the program should "tell it
straight, as a matter of fact". The use of drama and role play were seen

as being very useful teaching and learning activities.
The most consistent type of response to the question of appropriate
teaching methodology was that of removing the control/focus of the lesson
from the teacher and placing it upon the student and her/his needs and
problems. Student comments included: " Make the lessons not as formal...
not teacher-dominated"; "Not lecture-style, more open forum type"; and
"Group sessions in a relaxed atmosphere". There was a preference for more
student-choice in the selection of content and issues to be covered: "Let
students have their say"; "There should be a lot of student choice and
options"; and "[Focus on] the problems we want discussed".

A "specialist H.R.E. teacher" should be responsible for the teaching of the
H.R.E. program in the school, according to 65% of student respondents.
Other possibilities for this role included the guidance officer (12%),
teachers (but with parent involvement) (7%), the year master (7%), and a
community member (7%).
Teachers
In a statement on the potential effectiveness of H.R.E. programmes,
respondents clearly indicated a preference for H.R.E. to be considered as a
programme that was to be integrated with other subjects (79%) or treated as
a teaching philosophy (75%) rather than being treated as a separate subject
(30%).
Those respondents who agreed that the H.R.E. program would be best taught
as a separate subject were in a minority, and many were aware of this: "It
should be taught as a separate subject, but nobody here ... would agree
with me". Six respondents believed that there were aspects of the H.R.E.
program that might best be treated as discrete areas within the total
school curriculum. Most of these respondents identified the human
sexuality component as being one such area.
A school climate supportive of H.R.E. was seen to be essential by ninety-
three percent of teachers. While generally supportive of the H.R.E.
concept, these teachers were not willing to reduce the resources or time
available to other subjects (95%).
These teachers agree that the programme should be supported by regional
consultants (80%) but that it should be organised at a school level (75%).
Very few teachers feel that H.R.E. is the responsibility of a guidance
officer (22%) or specialist teacher.
The implementation of the programme, however, was seen by the majority of
respondents, to be the role of the teaching staff (82%), more than the
school community (72%), with students being seen to be involved by fewer
respondents (67%). Many respondents saw the importance of providing
extensive information to staff about the content of the programme (99%) and
details about teaching strategies (96%) before the program was implemented.
Many also saw the importance of providing teacher support for the H.R.E.
programme (90%).
Two possible aspects of the programme that drew a moderately significant
amount of disagreement were the suggestions that only "care" teachers
should be involved in the programme (74%) and that Human Relationships

Education should carry assessment expectations similar to other school subjects (70%).
Teachers of HRE
Parents / Community Members
With regard to the personal characteristics of teachers who could be engaged in the teaching of an H.R.E. programme, the large majority of parents responded very positively to characteristics which could be regarded as being associated with "caring". These characteristics included trustworthiness and the ability and willingness to listen to students. Parents did not regard the need for a teacher of H.R.E. to teach other subjects as important. Those who added comments to this question indicated that the essential attributes of a person engaged in the H.R.E. programme would be the possession of high moral values and the living of an exemplary life style as a role model for students. This seems to support the conclusion that parental concerns for the characteristics of teachers involved in H.R.E. programmes related mainly to personality traits rather than academic qualifications.
Students
Regardless of who is to teach the program, students believed they should do so "willingly", "know what they are on about" and "relate well to students".
Teachers
Teachers also felt that they must feel comfortable in handling H.R.E. issues (95%), be volunteers (91%), or that experts capable of handling specific aspects of H.R.E. be made available (93%). They emphasised the importance of personal attributes before formal qualifications.
Parent / Community Involvement
Parents / Community Members

From Table 3 below it can be seen that a considerable group of parents/community members have indicated a willingness to participate in various activities associated with HRE. It should be noted that the strongest support is for participation in or observation of the actual H.R.E. lessons as they are presented.
Table 3
Parent/community Perception of Active Involvement in an H.R.E. Programme

Mode of Involvement	%Supporting Involvement
Attend HRE classes to observe lessons	42
Attend some classes with students	40
Attend evening classes designed for parents	34
As guest speakers.	28
Help teachers with classes	20

Additional comments from parents suggested that they should have the right to review content of H.R.E. sessions before presentation. A small number felt that this review should include the parental approval of teachers who

were to present the material. Five respondents indicated that parental involvement should be limited. Another 15 respondents indicated that H.R.E. should involve a cooperative effort between home and school. Additional comments suggested that parents should discuss HRE content wioth their children at home, that parents should be aware of teacher positions on contrioversial topics before they are presented, and that parental involvement should be confined to providing appropriate role models in the home.

Students

Some students appreciated the fact that it is not just the students themselves who are the potential beneficiaries of the H.R.E. program: "There's a big need for this....but parents and family need to be involved". Fifty percent of the respondents expressed the view that the program should be "student oriented" with teachers acting as guides in the development of the program (12%). The use of specialists was recognised as being important in this regard as well (25%), with very little involvement by community members (6%). Interestingly, no student indicated a role for parents to play in the program design.

Teachers

In considering the question of the development of successful H.R.E. programmes, teachers stressed the importance of involving the school community (87%), students (85%) and the teaching staff (84%) in the development of the programme.

Conclusions

Preparing for and maintaining curriculum innovations in a decision making context based upon school and community participation is an emerging reality in Queensland state schools. This article focuses upon the subtleties of such an endeavour by using data gathered from students, teachers and parents/community members who have recently undergone the process of collaboration on the development of a Human Relationships Education programme in a Queensland state high school.

By analysing the perceptions expressed by each of these stakeholder groups subtle differences in orientation and expectations for the programme have been revealed. Significant among these differences are the emphases placed upon the need for inclusion of particular content, the importance placed on that content and the method of presentation recommended for that content. However, notwithstanding the importance of the need to recognise the different perceptions of stakeholder groups to the ultimate success of the programme, what the Human Relationships Education experiment describes for the future of Queensland education is the advent of school community collaboration in curriculum decision making that has, prior to the nineties, been substantially the realm of educationalists. Increasing devolution of curriculum decision making to school communities, localised decision making, social justice, equity and accountability principles, and an increasing interest in the quality of school performance demands a

responsiveness to the changing contexts of schooling and the expectations of parents and students for the educational programme 'consumed' by them.

The reality described by this analysis of the Human Relationships Education programme in one Queensland State High School is simply that no one stakeholder group should 'own' the curriculum or the decision making process that leads to its development. What is strongly inferred by these results is the idea of collecting data from various stakeholder groups relating to their perceptions of intended curricula programmes prior to any curriculum development activity. There will always be minority group in school communities, and the need to take the wishes of these groups into consideration demands the recognition of a new set of parameters and the development of a new set of attitudes and skills for those responsible for the coordination, development and implementation of school based curriculum.

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Human Relationships Education: A Study of Contrasting Expectations

Table of Contents

Parent / Community Involvement in HRE
Conclusions
Bibliography
Ian W. Gibson, J. Austin, W.F.Hodgkinson