

Health education has always been a subject which has lent itself well to being incorporated within other disciplines, and indeed the National Curriculum guidelines (*National Curriculum Guidance 5*) describes it as one of its cross-curricular themes.

The *Guidance 5* document suggests a framework for a health education curriculum between the ages of 5 and 16. This framework is based upon current health concerns, but can alter over time in order to meet different circumstances and changing health concerns.

It consists of nine components: substance use and misuse; sex education; family life education; safety; health-related exercise; nutrition; personal hygiene; environmental aspects of health education; psychological aspects of health education.

The document stresses that close attention should be paid both to progression within and links between these components when planning the curriculum.

Practical

However, deciding on a theoretical framework for curriculum design and turning it into a practical series of classroom topics are two different things. Each of the nine components potentially incorporates many individual topics, some of which may in turn overlap two or more of the components.

These are the nine health education curriculum components identified in the National Curriculum document Guidance 5:

Substance use and abuse

Sex education

Family life education

Safety

Health-related exercise

Nutrition

Personal hygiene

Environmental aspects of health education

Psychological aspects of health education

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Mapping health education topics in the NC

School staff and governors must therefore (a) identify topics that relate to the overall health education curriculum, (b) select the most appropriate, and (c) assemble them into a coherent practical curriculum.

When the NC *Guidance 5* document was published, we noted the many similarities between its philosophical approach and that of *Just A Tick*.

Just A Tick is a curriculum-planning exercise containing a checklist of 44 topics, generated by teachers and headteachers with differing specialisms across many cross-curricular disciplines. Therefore it reflects the needs of many subject areas across the curriculum.

Common ground

We discovered much common ground between the nine components in the NC framework and the 44 *Just A Tick* topics. To explore these links in more detail we designed the grid shown opposite and carried out a small survey among professional colleagues, inviting them to place a tick where a *Just A Tick* topic was seen as relevant to an NC curriculum component.

The result of this exercise, for the first 22 topics, is presented. As can be seen from the table, many connections can be made, and the topics list

strongly supports the nine components of the NC.

This diagram does two things:

1. It shows that the *Just A Tick* topics are directly relevant to the NC guide-lines.

2. It shows how these components can be expressed in the curriculum through appropriate selection of those topics that already have an educational status.

In addition, the use of the *Just A Tick* survey in a school reveals which of these topics are most likely to win the interest or approval of pupils, staff, and parents.

The final outcome of the whole exercise will be that the school can implement the NC health education recommendations from a position of knowledge and strength.

There are probably many ways of translating this exercise into practice. The following strategy is offered as an example.

1. Each member of staff of a school, as well as the governors, can be invited to examine the topics list and tick the NC components with which they feel it is linked.

2. The completed sheets could subsequently be analysed, and the results presented at a meeting. Alternatively the completion and analysis could take place at the same meeting. However it is done, an arena for de-

Which topics are relevant to 'Food and nutrition'?

According to the respondents in the survey presented on page 70, they are as follows:

How my body works

Staying well

Illness and recovery

Care of hair, teeth, skin

Food and health

Physical fitness

*Differences in growth and development

*Caring for pets

*Conservation

*These topics appear on the second side of the checklist.

bate will therefore be created and a consensus reached. Every school will have its own unique scattering of ticks to work with.

3. This in itself is a valuable staffroom exercise, as through discussion many views can be aired and the beginnings of a structure established.

4. This discussion will inevitably lead to a more structured approach where the strongest topic links are identified with the nine NC components, indicating which of the 44 topics can be related to each of the components.

5. An in-depth study of each component may then be undertaken to establish its curriculum content in reference to the *Just A Tick* topics.

'Food and nutrition'

For example, if we take the NC component 'Food and nutrition' and examine the topic links recorded in the grid, we find that nine topics (see upper box) are seen to be relevant.

Consideration may also be given to the survey results for these particular nine *Just A Tick* topics. Where do they come in order of priority for teachers, parents, and governors? What about the pupils?

Armed with this additional knowledge, a school can decide which of these topics should form the major curriculum input, and which

might receive less time or even be omitted. The following list shows the order of priority of the nine 'Food and nutrition' topics in the Unit's nationwide survey of junior/middle school teachers carried out in 1985:

1. Care of hair, teeth, skin
2. Food and health
3. How my body works
4. Conservation
5. Staying well
6. Physical fitness
7. Caring for pets
8. Differences in growth and development
9. Illness and recovery

This order will be different for other groups of adults or for pupils, and of course for different schools.

Topics in Science

As has already been established, health education does lend itself well to being incorporated within other subject areas, and this holds true for the core and foundation subjects of the National Curriculum.

If we take Science as an example, we find many areas which deal either directly or indirectly with health education topics. Closer inspection shows that many of the *Just A Tick* topics form a part of the Science Attainment Targets.

These topics will be found at various levels of the Attainment Targets covering the infant, junior, and secondary stages, although many are concentrated at the primary level. The adjacent box identifies them.

If we take this analysis a stage further into the planning of the 'Food and nutrition' component of the NC guidelines, we find that having identified the *Just A Tick* to-

pics concerned with this component, they can now be related to particular Attainment Targets, as follows:

AT 2: *Conservation*

AT 3: *How my body works; Illness and recovery; Care of hair, teeth, skin; Food and health; Physical fitness*

AT 5: *Conservation (again)*

AT 13: *Food and health (again)*

Summary

I have tried to show how it is possible to work logically from the rather abstract NC health education guidelines towards the planning of real topics in a real curriculum that not only fulfils statutory requirements but also takes into account the tastes and opinions of those who will be affected by the work.

I am well aware that no planning involving people can ever be totally logical, but this is no reason for not trying to establish a firm foundation.

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How 'Just A Tick' topics relate to the Science Attainment Targets

AT 2	Differences in growth and development Caring for pets Conservation
AT 3	How my body works Immunisation (injections and drops) Illness and recovery Care of hair, teeth, skin Care of eyes Care of feet How a baby is made (human reproduction) Food and health Drinking alcohol Illegal drugs and glue-sniffing Smoking Physical fitness Safety at home Safety in traffic Water safety
AT 4	How boys and girls behave Differences in growth and development
AT 5	Pollution Conservation
AT13	Food and health