

**Book Reviews: Elementary School Health Instruction; By Marion B. Pollock and Kathleen Middleton. St. Louis: Times Mirror/Mosby College Publishing, 1984, 595 pp.**

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**Article:**

The importance of comprehensive, systematically applied and quality elementary health education programming is obvious to most health educators. The genesis of many health lifestyle behaviors are deeply rooted in the early childhood experiences. Elementary school health education programming has been accepted as one technique to help shape positive health lifestyle behaviors of the young. To this end, Pollock and Middleton have prepared a fine text to assist the professional educator in the planning, implementation and evaluation of quality elementary health education programming.

When reviewing any book of this kind, comments can be of a relative and comparative nature. Initially, relative qualities and the basic organization of this book will be discussed.

The manuscript is divided into three distinct but interrelated parts. Part One provides a theoretical framework of health education with special application to the elementary setting. Chapter 1 highlights the use of popular definitions of health education to clearly delineate philosophically sound and practical goals of health education. This philosophical framework is consistently woven throughout the remainder of the text. The balance of Part One includes chapters on the comprehensive school health program and techniques to design and evaluate elementary school health education Programs. Part One also included a chapter on how to effectively deal with controversial health education topic areas, such as sex education.

Part Two provides a scope and sequence for an elementary health education program. Sample teaching plans and activities are provided for primary, intermediate and junior high levels. The activities are conceptually sound, practical and articulate well with the stated philosophical goals of health education.

Part Three provides a thorough and useful presentation of resources for the elementary educator related to health. The presentation style of information in this section yields a thorough and functional resource guide. For a book of this magnitude, a virtually endless list of benefits and deficits could be identified. Listed below are three of each to provide a flavor of the impressions of one health educator:

**Benefits**

1. The text provides a philosophically sound discussion of elementary health education. This is vitally important because most elementary educators complete but one course in health education.
2. The text provides an excellent discussion of techniques to effectively approach controversial health topic areas.
3. The lesson plans and sample activities are practical. All too often activities in a text of this nature do not transfer well into the elementary classroom.

## Deficits

1. There are no distinct chapters on sex education, but, this content area is included with family living. The importance of sex education should mandate separate and equal treatment.
2. Similarly, discussion in the area of death education, aging and dealing with loss and grief is given limited exposure. Enhanced information and activities in these areas seem warranted.
3. The text includes chapters on general education concepts, such as educational program planning, writing instruction objectives, and developing learning plans. Since much of this information is redundant for preprofessional elementary educators, these areas should be de-emphasized in lieu of other health education-related information.

Again, it needs to be iterated that these observations represent one health educator's view of this text. Suffice to say that overall the text is well written and useful.

In terms of a comparative analysis, the Pollock and Middleton text compares favorably with other available manuscripts on elementary health education. This reviewer cannot recommend this text over others in the field, but would encourage health educators to consider this text as a viable option when choosing a text for classroom use or for a reference library.