



The Sense Project Project Findings & Evaluation

2007-2008



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THE SENSE PROJECT

Project Findings and Evaluation

2007/2008



Administered by **À Deux Mains / Head & Hands** in collaboration with many community and corporate partners, all of whom contributed to the program's success in vital and meaningful ways.

The Sense Project is a community sexual health education initiative conceived and implemented by :

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and has been supported this year with funding from:

Fondation Québec Jeunes
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Church & Dwight

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- ✿ Those who graciously made individual donations to help ensure Sense is a sustainable sex education project, or who participated in Sense's fundraising for social change events such as Faggity Ass Fridays, SNAP ON Sex Ed, Ca Marche, the SERVE tournament, Anti-Hallmark Valentine's Love Brigade and World AIDS Day.
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Executive Summary: 2007 / 2008



Demographics & Reach:

- 415 Montréal (English) secondary school students (215 aged 10-14, 200 aged 15-19) participated in sexual education workshops offered through the Sense Project, benefitting from a total of 1245 hours of sexual health instruction.
- 17 individuals volunteered on behalf of the project, including 8 volunteer animators who taught workshops in the schools
- In total 1013 hours were volunteered to the project, including 205 hours of animator training, 400 hours of animators teaching workshops, 100 hours completed by university interns, and 240 hours of training received as Peer Educators. Staff worked 1504 hours implementing the project.

Montreal School Partners

- Lower Canada College, Options II, Outreach School, M.I.N.D., Selwyn House and Trafalgar School for Girls

Sense Funding Partners

The Sense Project has been able to deliver sex education to Montréal youth in large part because of the gracious support and contributions of the following organizations:

**Fondation Quebec Jeunes State Street Financial
Church & Dwight**

Community and Corporate Partners

The Sense Project partnered with several organizations in the community to ensure that program volunteers were getting access to a wide variety of expertise and resources related to sexual health awareness, including:

- | | |
|---|--|
| • AIDS Community Care Montreal (ACCM) | • Queer Concordia |
| • The Sexual Assault Centre of the McGill (SACOMSS) | • Queer McGill |
| • Allies | • The Women's Studies Student Association (WSSA) |
| • St. Emilie Skillshare | • The Simone de Beauvoir Institute |
| • CKUT Radio | • Thundrah and Friendship Cove |
| • Atwater Library's Digital Literacy Project | • Trojan Condoms |
| • Concordia University | • People's Potato |
| • McGill University | • 2110 Center |
| | • ACCM |

- V-Day McGill
- V-Day Montreal
- POWER Camp National/Filles d'action
- Snap Magazine
- Lickety Split
- The Main Hall
- The Playhouse

Sexual Health Workshops in Schools

Sexual health workshops occurred in school classrooms for three hours each, and covered information and activities designed to promote awareness on (i) STIs, HIV and contraception (ii) reducing sexual risk (iii) sexual choices, relationships and society (iv) sexual limit setting and negotiation (v) safer sex demonstrations and (vi) local resources students can turn to for help and information.

- **77%** of students said they learned something new in the workshops
- **81%** agreed the information they learned would be useful in their own life and relationships
- **76%** felt comfortable participating in the workshops



- *"Instead of just saying things or telling us just a basic overview of things they wanted to, they let us speak about what we were interested in. It was very good." (male student)*
- *"I found that groups we were in were more interactive than the past ones that I've experienced, so I like it better. In my old high school, we used to just watch movies." (male student)*
- *"It's good that they didn't just talk about (straight) men and women, but lesbians and gay people too, and safer sex factors... 'cause not everybody is straight." (female student)*
- *"I think you guys should do workshops all year, throughout the year...like every week or once or twice a month throughout the whole year." (female student)*
- *"I feel sex education is much easier with someone you don't know, because they're not around to compare or say anything about you and there's more confidentiality. If it was a teacher, they'd probably look at you different, like this person does that and this person does this." (female student)*

Peer Education Workshops

Recent research has confirmed that **Peer Education** is one of the most effective methodologies to teach sexual health awareness in a way that makes a real impact on the sexual risk reduction behaviours of youth. With consistent adult support and mentoring, Peer Educators have access to clear and accurate information, local resources and training in how to refer youth in need to appropriate professionals.

Peer educators received **30 hours of training each, over a five week period**, and participated in 18 workshops addressing topics such as:

- Exploring sexuality
- Identifying your values
- Active listening and referral skills
- STI and Contraception 101
- Anti-oppression training
- Video/radio workshops

Each school group has a resource person assigned to support them with advice & information. Each peer educator was provided with an extensive and comprehensive 255 page resource manual, that was researched, authored and edited by youth (with some adult editorial assistance). Head & Hands offers monthly meetings to support the educators, address some of the challenges they've experienced and to discuss ideas they have for their schools.

Summary of Findings

Comments from students who participated in the program overwhelmingly suggested that they would like to see **more sex education classes, more opportunities for seeing material objects related to birth control** and how they are used (i.e. condoms, birth control pills and dental dams), and **more interactive discussion**. This was particularly notable in classrooms that were mostly boys (i.e. Selwyn House and Lower Canada College) and represents a breakthrough in much of the research that currently exists around teaching sex education to boys that would suggest boys become exceptionally unruly and difficult when they are asked to engage in conversation in classroom sex education settings. Students suggested they would like to see a **web presence** where they could ask anonymous questions and get information, a **resource/supply locker** at their schools and participate in **creating their own knowledge and awareness** about sexual health through the production of videos.

The youth who participated in the peer education workshops had the benefit of learning from a wide variety of sources from the community, and responded extremely positive to their training. The Peer Education manual that was produced to support this initiative is very likely one of the **most comprehensive and accurate publications for youth to learn about sexualities, safer sex and healthy relationships that exists anywhere today**.



1. Background



1.1 The sexual health of Canadian youth

Sexually transmitted infections (STIs) in Canadian youth have almost doubled in recent years – half of all gonorrhoea cases in Canada are presented by 15-24 year olds¹. Health professionals are seeing rates of new infections of chlamydia in youth that have been unheard of since 1990². Students in Canadian schools report that schools are having a hard time accommodating their needs in relation to sexual health; half of youth 14-15 years old report having less than five hours of sex education instruction in the past two years of their schooling³.

Sex education is not just a problem for students; it also presents a challenge for educators. Teachers often feel ill-prepared to address this topic, and are only rarely assessed to determine if they are delivering the most accurate and up-to-date information. Furthermore, 83% of teachers believe sexuality education should be taught by partnerships involving teachers,

¹ McKay, A. (2004). Adolescent sexual and reproductive health in Canada: A report card in 2004. *The Canadian Journal of Human Sexuality*, 13(2), 67-81.

² Public Health Agency of Canada (2005). *Canada Communicable Disease Report*, Volume: 31S2

³ Boyce, W., Doherty, M., Fortin, C. & Mackinnon, D. (2003). *Canadian Youth, Sexual Health and HIV/AIDS Study: Factors Influencing Knowledge, Attitudes and Behaviours*. Toronto, ON: Council of Ministers of Education.

healthcare professionals and other outside agencies ⁴. Echoing this is recent research which found that youth have a profoundly different perception of what constitutes meaningful sexual learning (and how to achieve it) than the ways adults usually define and measure learning this material ⁵

Other studies ⁶ have identified some of the significant barriers Canadian youth experience in incorporating safer sex messages into their learning, including:

- Uninspiring curriculum, materials and learning activities
- Absence of important topics that may be particularly relevant to the students
- Sexualities education comes later than students need it
- The sexual health program is marginalized within the school curriculum
- Educators are sometimes seen as judgemental and uncomfortable teaching the material
- Some teachers lack the expert knowledge needed to teach the material
- Worries about privacy and confidentiality

Sex education is larger than information, affirmation or prohibition .In its address to the most intimate aspects of life— love, loss, vulnerability, power, friendship, aggression—sex education is necessarily entangled in the adolescent’s efforts to construct a self, find love outside the family, enjoy one’s newly adult body; in short, various relationships that might cautiously be called developmental.

- York University sex education researcher, Dr. Jennifer Gilbert, (2007, p.49)

Source: Gilbert, J. (2007). Risking a relation: sex education and adolescent development. *Sex Education*, 7(1), 47-61.

⁵ Allen, L. (2005). *Sexual subjects: Young people, sexuality and education*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan.

⁶ Langille, D., Mackinnon, D., Marshall, E., & Graham, J. (2001). So many bricks in the wall: Young women in Nova Scotia speak about barriers to school -based sexual health education. *Sex Education*, 1(3), 245-257.

The Ministry of Education in Québec announced that commencing 2005, it would introduce a new approach to sex education. The new educational reforms proposed to integrate sexual health and wellbeing concepts across the curriculum. The document *Sex Education in the Context of the Reform* mandates that sex education is no longer to be associated solely with one subject or intervention, but now is to be the responsibility of a group of teaching staff, school administrators, and community partners. In response to the call for holistic integration of sex education, many schools are forming steering committees to develop strategies and community partnerships to infuse learning about sexual health across the subjects, although curriculum support to teach sexual health has been slow in forthcoming from the government. In response, Head & Hands developed the Sense Project as a community based sexual health educational initiative to help ensure that local youth had access to holistic, comprehensive and non-judgemental sex education. Dedicated to help students “make sense” of their sexualities and sexual relationship choices, this program was conceptualized in 2005-2006, and the first student sex education workshops were conducted in the fall of 2007 when the program partnered with six Montréal area schools.

Partnerships such as these are welcomed at a time when the statistics regarding the sexual health of youth in Québec are alarming. 74 percent of Québec youth between ages 15-24 report engaging in sexual intercourse, yet a startling 52 percent of young women in the province did not use a condom the last time they had sex. Québec youth engage more frequently in unprotected intercourse than youth from other provinces, and are therefore at considerable risk to contract sexually transmitted infections.⁷ Recent research reports that 2/3 of Québec students in grade seven, half of students in grade nine, and one third of students in grade eleven do not know that HIV & AIDS are incurable. In 2000, Québec was one of four provinces to have a teen pregnancy rate above the national average, with a teen pregnancy rate of 39.7 per 1000⁸. Taken together, these numbers represent a statistically significant difference from other provinces and suggest that the needs of Québec youth are not being addressed in the way information about sexual health is being constructed and/or received.

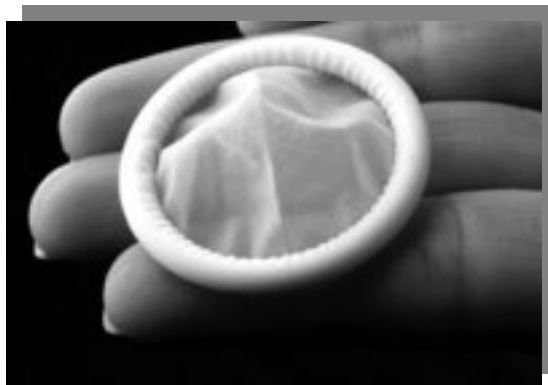
⁷ Roterman, M. (2005). Sex, condoms and STDs among young people. *Health Reports, Statistics Canada*, 16(3), 39-45.

⁸ Statistics Canada, 2004



2. **Making Sense**

2.1 **Overview of the Sense Project & Objectives**



- To improve access to empowering sexual health information for youth aged 14-17 attending Montréal secondary schools by being part of community and school partnership initiatives
- To establish peer education programs in local secondary schools and provide them with mentoring resources and support for a period of two years
- To increase the motivation among local youth for practicing safe sex by modeling positive relational behaviours and safer sex methods such as condom use
- To establish a model for other organizations working with youth across Canada who are interested in developing a similar harm reduction sexual health education program in their communities



2.2

Participating Schools, 2007/2008

Outreach High School (Alternative, EMSB) (GRADE 10)

4850 Coronation Avenue, NDG
Phone: (514) 933-7488, Fax: (514) 933-0679

Selwyn House (private) (GRADES 9 & 10)

95, chemin Côte St-Antoine, Westmount
Phone: (514) 931-9481, Fax: (514) 931-6118

Lower Canada College (private) (GRADES 9 & 10)

4090 Royal , Montréal
Phone: (514) 482-9797, Fax: (514) 482-9916

Trafalgar (private, all girls) (GRADES 9 & 10)

3495 Simpson, Montréal
Phone: (514) 935-4581 (and 935-2644)

Options II (alternative, EMSB) (GRADE 10)

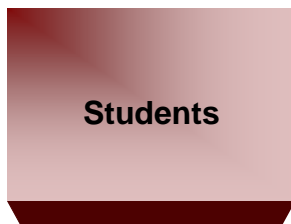
1741 de Biencourt, Montréal
Phone: (514) 769-5282, Fax: (514) 769-7524

MIND (alternative, EMSB) (GRADES 9 & 10)

4563 St. Urbain, Montréal
Phone: (514) 842-0792, Fax: (514) 842-6097

2.3 Demographics & Reach of Sense Participants 2007/2008

In keeping with the philosophy Head & Hands has demonstrated over its 38 years operating as an NGO in Montréal, the Sense Project was conceptualized as a true community initiative, involving students, volunteers, interns, staff members and contributions of time, space and expertise from other community organizations. Below is a breakdown of the contributions and involvement from the community in realizing the Sense vision.



In total, **415 students** benefitted from **1245 hours** of sex ed



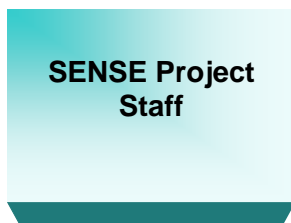
The Sense Project was enriched by the contributions of time resources and/or expertise from members of: : AIDS Community Care Montreal (ACCM), The Sexual Assault Centre of the McGill (SACOMSS), Allies, St. Emilie Skillshare, CKUT Radio, Atwater Library's Digital Literacy Project, Concordia University, McGill University, Queer Concordia, Queer McGill, V-day McGill, V-Day Montreal, Thundrah and Friendship Cove, Women's Studies Student Association, Simone de Beauvoir Institute, Trojan Condoms, People's Potato, 2110 Center, ACCM, PCN, Snap Magazine, Lickety Split and was funded by: **Fondation Québec Jeunes, Church & Dwight and State Street Financial** as well as 26 successful fundraising events in the community and 276 individual donors.



17 members from the community volunteered their time and energy to the project, including **8** sexual health animators who taught in schools. Peer educators received a total of **240 hours** of training. In total, 1013 hours were volunteered to the project.



Interns contributed **100 hours** in various capacities to the project, including fundraising, data collection, conducting focus groups and creation of resource materials.



Sense Project staff worked **1504** hours implementing the project

2.4 Volunteer Sexual Health Education Animators

Eight volunteer sexual health education animators were recruited to teach the sex education workshops in schools. Animators were members of the community who support the harm reduction philosophy of the Sense Project. They participated in training sessions at Head and Hands prior to going to the classrooms. Each animator was given a workshop manual developed by the staff at Sense outlining learning objectives, activities (and suggested times for each activity to occur within), presenter notes and frequently asked questions related to the material they were teaching.

2.5 Workshops

Sexual health workshops took place in school classrooms for a period of three hours each, and covered information and activities designed to promote awareness of (i) STIs, HIV and AIDS and contraception (ii) reducing sexual risk (iii) sexual choices, relationships and society (iv) sexual limit setting and negotiation (v) safer sex demonstrations and (vi) local resources students can turn to for help and information.

2.6 Peer Education Training & Support

Recent research⁹ has confirmed that **Peer Education** is one of the most effective methodologies to teach sexual health awareness in a way that makes a real impact on the sexual risk reduction behaviours of youth. With consistent adult support and mentoring, Peer Educators have access to clear and accurate information, local resources and training in how to refer youth in need to appropriate professionals.

The Sense Project Peer Educators are aged between 14 and 17, and as part of the application process submit three peer and one adult reference. Peer educators were recruited in several ways (i) Interested students were invited to approach animators after the workshops (ii) Schools participated in the recruitment process through poster campaigns, intranets and announcements (iii) Staff and volunteers with the Sense Project spoke directly to classrooms, in school assemblies, and at lunch information sessions.

Eight youth who wanted to become peer educators received **30 hours of training each, on Saturday afternoons over a five week period**, and participated in 18 workshops addressing topics such as:

- ✦ Exploring sexuality
- ✦ Identifying your values
- ✦ Active listening and referral skills
- ✦ STI and Contraception 101
- ✦ Anti-oppression training
- ✦ Video/radio workshops



⁹ Campbell, C. & MacPhail, C. (2002). Peer education, gender and the development of critical consciousness: Participatory HIV prevention by South African Youth. *Social Science and Medicine*, 55 (2), p. 331-345.

Evans, D.L & Tripp, J.H. (2006). Sex education: The case for primary prevention and peer education. *Current Paediatrics*, 16(2), p. 95-99.

Turner, G. & Shepherd, J. (1999). A method in search of a theory: Peer education and health promotion. *Health Education Research*. 14(2), p. 235-247.

Workshops were delivered by a dozen volunteers from across a broad section of the community, including AIDS Community Care Montréal (ACCM), The Sexual Assault Centre of the McGill Student Society (SACOMSS), Allies, St. Emile Skillshare. On the final day of training, the peer educators either went to CKUT where they developed a radio project about sexual health or a video workshop conducted through the Atwater Library's Digital Literacy Project.

Each school group has a resource person assigned to support them with advice & information. Each peer educator was provided with an extensive and comprehensive 255 page resource manual, that was researched, authored and edited by youth (with some adult editorial assistance). Head and Hands offers monthly meetings to support the educators, as well as to address some of the challenges they've experienced and to discuss ideas they have for their schools. **Two of the Peer Educators presented their work at this year's Guelph Sexuality Conference.**

"Using an arts-based approach, the trainings encourage sexual critical thinking and explore issues surrounding gender identity, sexual orientation, sexism, feminism, racism, transgenderism/transsexuality, cultural diversity and more! Peer educators will relay essential information to their friends, classmates and peers about the importance of sexual health and the importance of people's rights. Together with the support of their teachers, school-nurses and guidance counselors they will organize school activities, lunch time drop-in sessions and informally educate and refer their peers as needed. It's a great opportunity to make sex education matter!"

- The Sense Project Page,
<http://www.headandhands.ca/sense>



SENSE participants say:

"This has been one of the most amazing things I've done in my life so far."

"I wished it was longer, because I just loved it."

- Peer educators

"Thank you so much! This has changed my life. I'm sad that it's over."

"I feel like there's a lot I can do."

- Peer educators

2.7 Fundraising for social change

“Sense is based in the notion that social change can start with a conversation about condoms outside of class, a workshop on youth-based activism, a gender-neutral washroom sign. Informal spaces are the best places to re-imagine sexual health education. Since October, Sense events have become the aforementioned informal spaces that have greatly contributed to the future of sex education.” ~ Christina, Sense Project Coordinator & Funding Researcher, (Head & Hands Annual report, 2007/2998, pg. 14)

One of the greatest challenges in making the Sense project a sustainable program is to ensure that funding comes from diverse sources, and that there are strong ongoing relationships that connect Sense with individuals and organizations in the community. In addition to corporate sponsored grants, the Sense team organized **26 fundraising events**, and a total of **595 volunteer hours** were donated this year to raising awareness and funding for the Sense project’s youth oriented, harm reduction sex education.

Some of the key events this year included:

- ✿ Faggity Ass Fridays
- ✿ World AIDS Day
- ✿ Anti-Hallmark Valentine’s Love Brigade
- ✿ SERVE tournament
- ✿ Ca Marche
- ✿ Sense Project Newsletter
- ✿ Snap On Sex Ed Silent Art Auction



2.8 Media Attention to SENSE

The Sense Project's innovative approach to ensuring local youth had access to empowering, comprehensive and non-judgemental sex education caught the interest of several news organizations and brought sex education into the national conversation. Sense was featured in the following media:

- 📺 CTV news net (National)
- 📺 CTV health report (with Ann Lewis)
- 📺 CBC: Home Run
- 📺 Audio Smut (CKUT)
- 📺 Dykes on Mics (CKUT)
- 📺 CKUT news
- 📺 The Suburban
- 📺 The Montreal Mirror
- 📰 The Gazette
- 📰 The Hour
- 📰 The Link
- 📰 The McGill Daily
- 📰 The Concordian

(See: **Appendix 1E** for an example of some of the considerable positive media attention the program generated).



3. Financials

3.1 SENSE Project Funding

Since the project was conceived in 2006, it has received funding from several generous sources, including:

- 📰 Farha Foundation
- 📰 Irving and Dianne Kipner Foundation
- 📰 John and Barbara Poole Foundation
- 📰 Trojan Condoms
- 📰 Fondation Québec Jeunes
- 📰 State Street Foundation
- 📰 Church & Dwight

3.2 Projected Sense Project Budget 2008/2009

In order to continue to build on the excellent work the Sense Project has started in regards to increasing access to accurate and comprehensive sex education for youth in Montréal, the Sense team estimates that a minimum operating budget of \$78,154 would be required.

Expenses for the Sense Project 2008-2009

Peer Education trainers and media facilitators (10 peer education trainers \$100/10, St-Emilie's skill-share workshop \$100, and media facilitator \$20/15 hours)	\$1,500
Project Coordinator/Funding Researcher (\$15.02/30hrs/52+15%):	\$26,945
Health Animator (\$15.02/32hrs/52+15%):	\$28,708
Supervision (\$20/4hrs/12+15%=\$1,104; \$17/3hrs/12+15%=\$703; \$15.02/4hrs/12+15%=\$829.10):	\$2,636
Health Animation stipends (12/\$100):	\$1,200
Evaluation Coordinator Stipend	\$2,500
Workshop Materials (Resource handouts \$0.25/3; pages/600 students; condoms & lube (free from MSSS)+ wooden penis \$30; HIV pamphlet printing \$0.25/600; art supplies \$200):	\$830
Peer Education Training Materials (Handouts: \$0.25/25 pages/12 peers; art supplies \$200; food for trainings \$600; 6 bus tickets per peer \$12/12 \$144, video editing \$300):	\$1,319
Guelph Sexuality Conference (Registration fees \$360/2, \$220/2, loggings \$300/2, train fare 2/\$282 youth and 2/\$279 students \$1,124, food \$200):	\$2,484
Sense Events Coordinators and expenses (Event coordination \$100/10wks, \$65/15wks, \$60/15wks, \$40/10wks)	\$3,275
Evaluation Questionnaires Printing (\$0.25/2pages/600 students):	\$400
Evaluation Report Printing (\$0.25/15pages/50 copies):	\$187
Administration costs (printing PR material and grant applications, office supplies):	\$1,500
Translation of peer education manual and workshops templates (\$15/pg/253pages peer education manual=\$3,795; \$15/pg/25pages=\$375 workshop template, graphic designer \$500)	\$4,670
TOTAL	\$78,154

3.3 Secured Revenue 2008/2009

Secured Revenue for 2008-2009

Fondation Quebec Jeunes	\$15,000
Inter-bar volleyball tournament	\$15,000
Faggity Ass Fridays (December--April)	\$5,000
World AIDS Day	\$3,170
Church & Dwight	\$1,500
School fees (\$700/6 schools)	\$4,000
Merchandise (zines + manuals)	\$120
Ca Marche	\$1086
Total	\$44,876

As of the date of this evaluation, (July 15, 2008) **the project is projecting a shortfall of \$33, 278** in revenue needed to continue to continue offering this program for the upcoming year.

"I went to a corner store to buy condoms and they told me I have to be over 18." (female student)

"It was a very interesting workshop. I've never liked sex ed, but this year I did."(workshop participant)

"Come to our school more often and the classes should be longer. They should call some of us out of class and talk to us alone in case we have personal questions." (workshop participant)

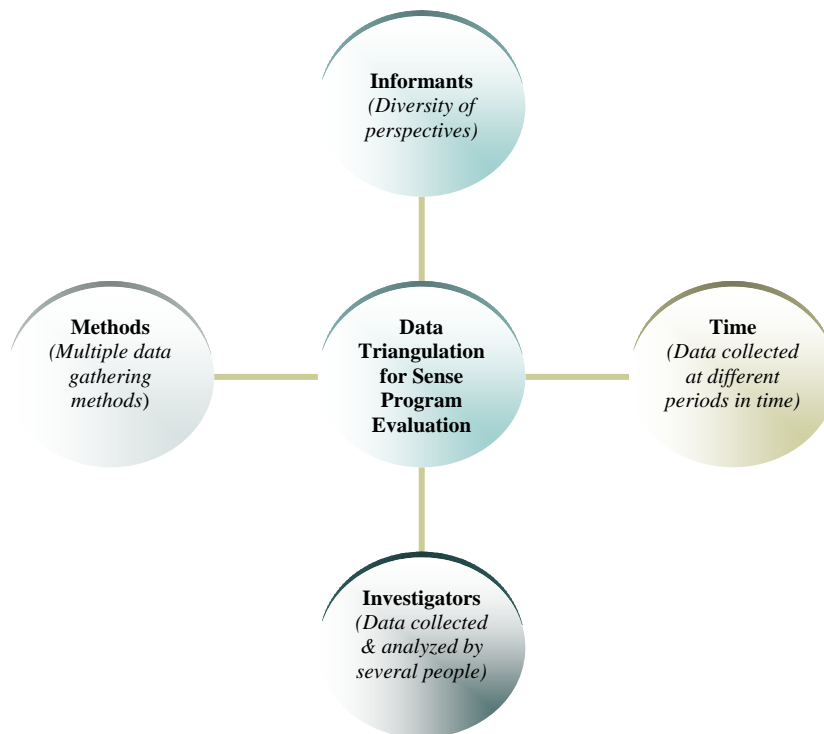


4. Methodology

Ensuring an evaluation's rigor and validity involves comprehensive analysis applied to different sources of data in a process of triangulation. As Jick ¹⁰(1979:603) notes:

Using triangulation can capture a more complete, holistic and contextual portrayal and reveal the varied dimensions of the given phenomenon.

Using different lenses to portray and understand how the Sense Project was conceptualized, developed, orchestrated and received involved several forms of triangulation, including:



Data collection methods included: (i) Quantitative and qualitative surveys of 282 students who participated in the Sense workshops in schools (ii) Focus group conducted with students at one of the schools (iii) Quantitative and qualitative evaluation surveys with peer educators after each of five workshops (iv) Evaluation survey with workshop animators (v) Focus group with workshop animators (vi) Document analysis of materials related to the program [i.e. information and promotional materials, Peer Educator's manual, Head and Hands Annual report, etc.] (vii) Interviews with staff (viii) Observation of workshops

¹⁰ Jick, T. (1979). "Mixing qualitative and quantitative methods: Triangulation in action." *Administrative Science Quarterly*, p. 602-611.

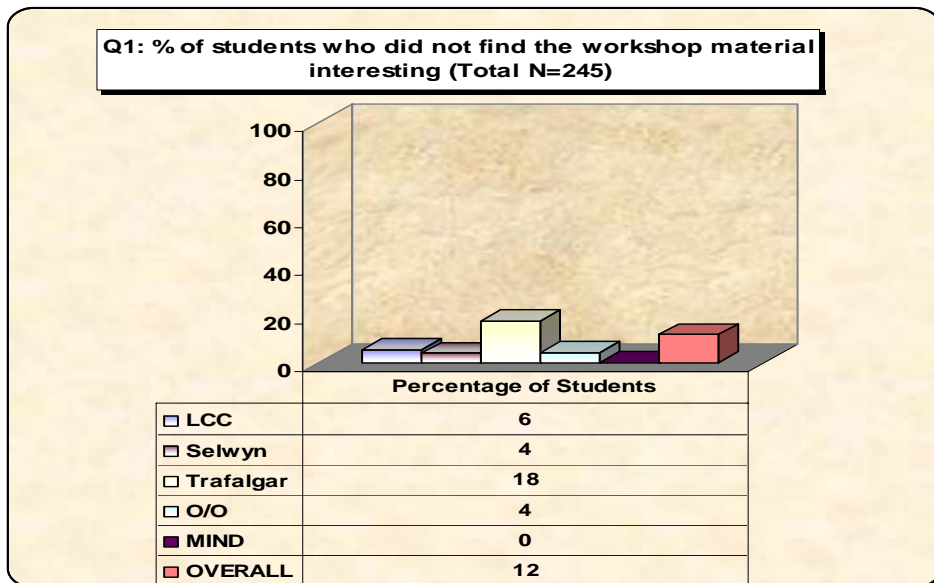
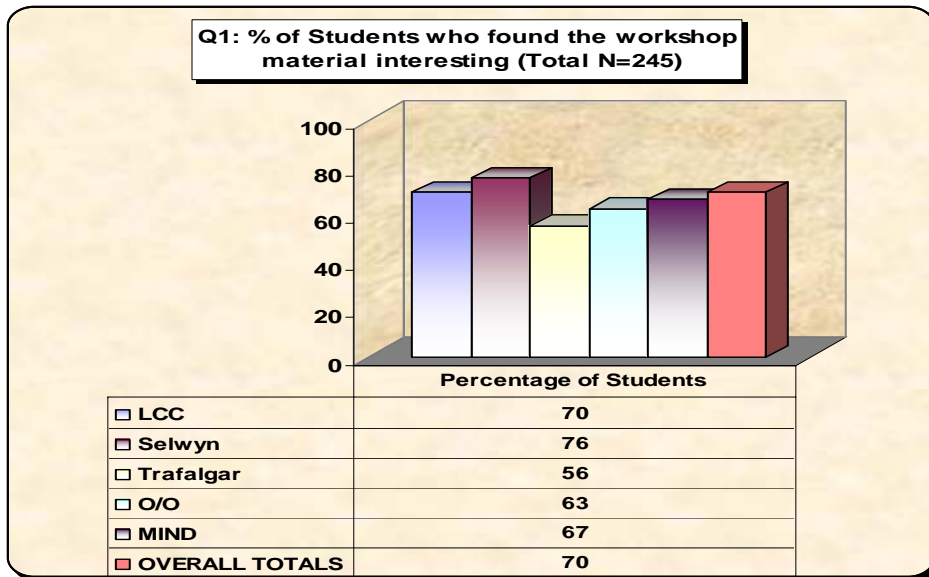


5. Findings

5.1 Outcomes of student surveys on Sense workshops

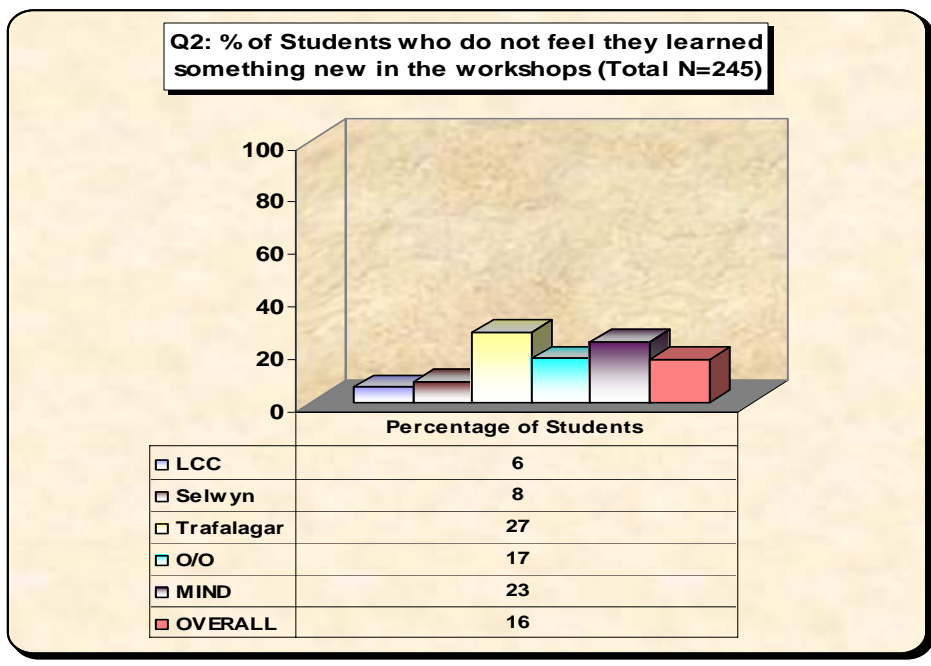
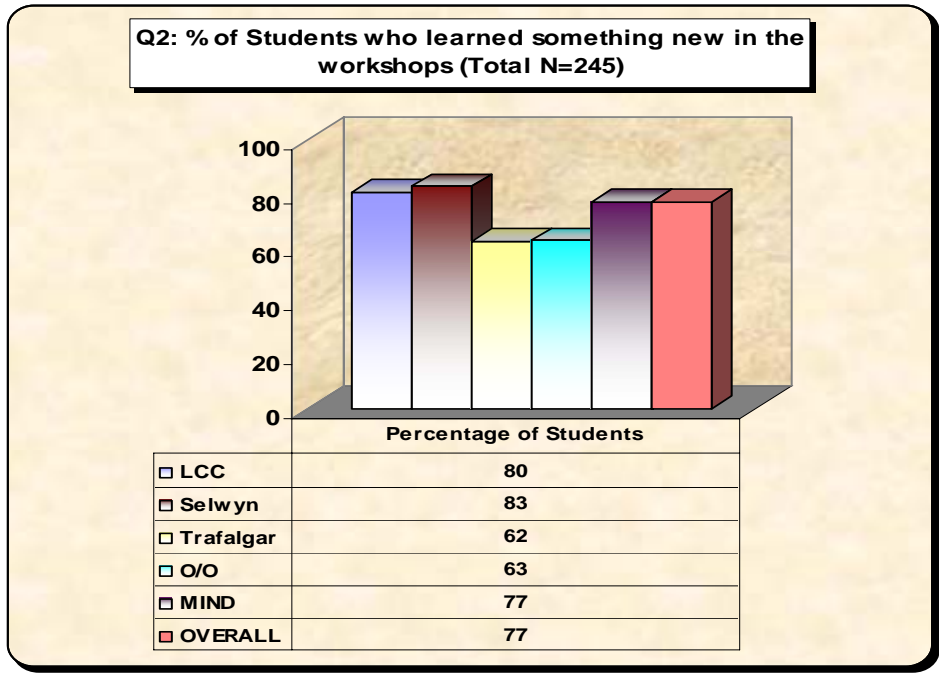
Student Survey Outcomes, by School and Overall

Question 1: Did the students find the material interesting? *



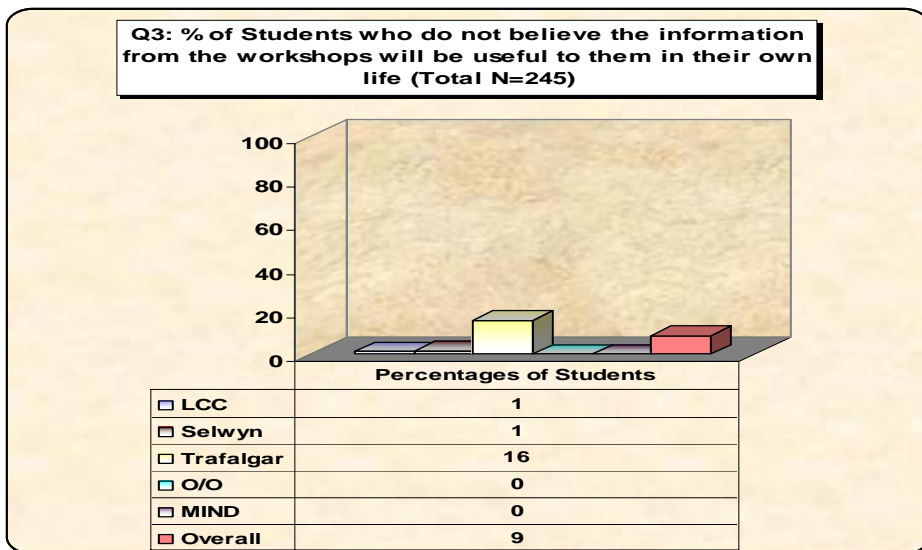
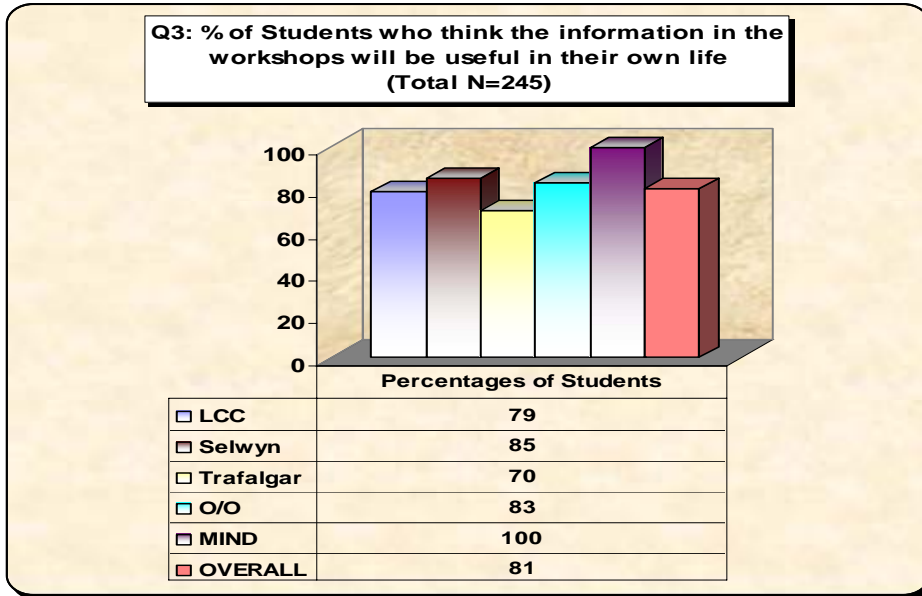
✚ The balance of responses said they neither agreed nor disagreed.

❏ **Question 2: Did the students learn something new in the workshops? ***



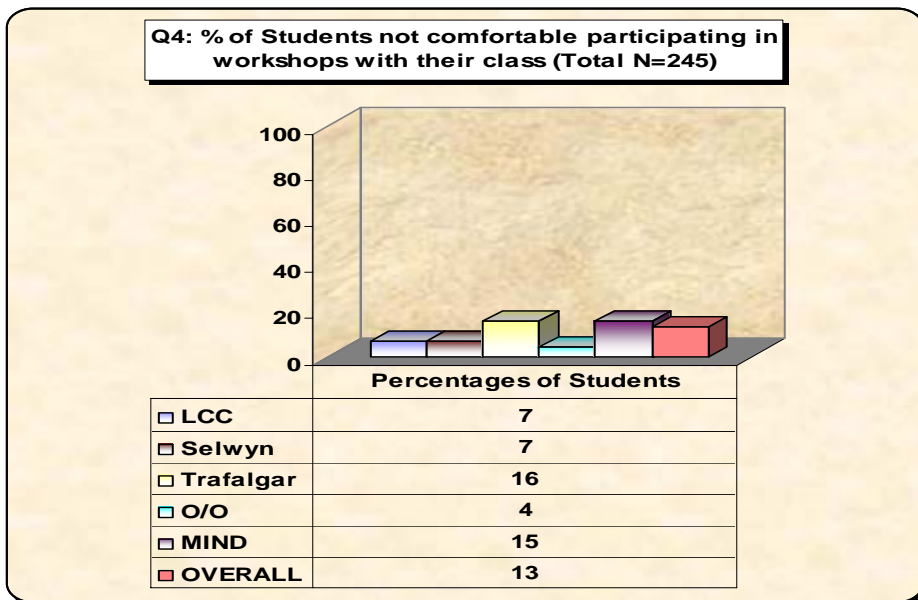
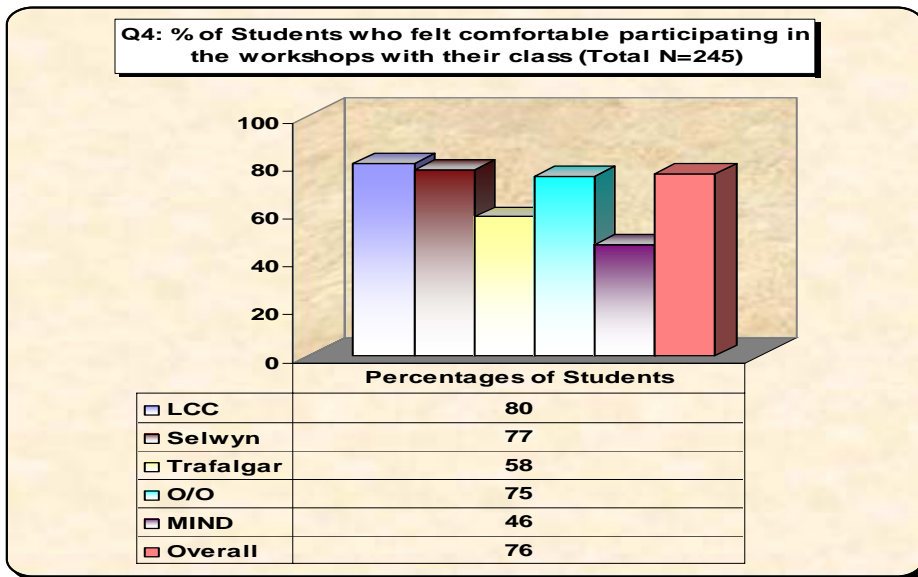
❏ *The balance of responses said they neither agreed nor disagreed*

Question 3: Did the students learn information that will be useful in their own lives? *



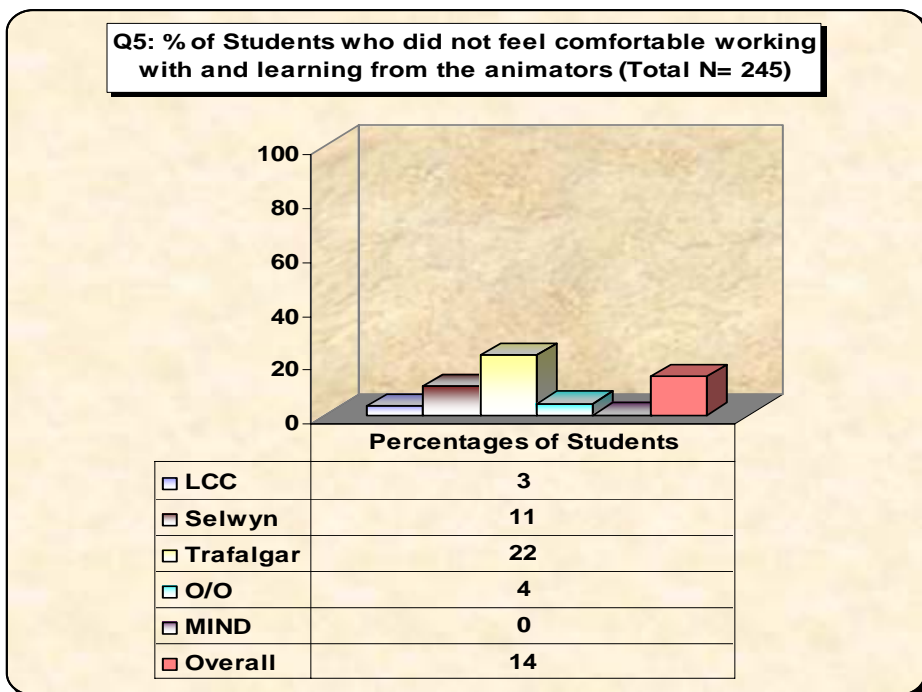
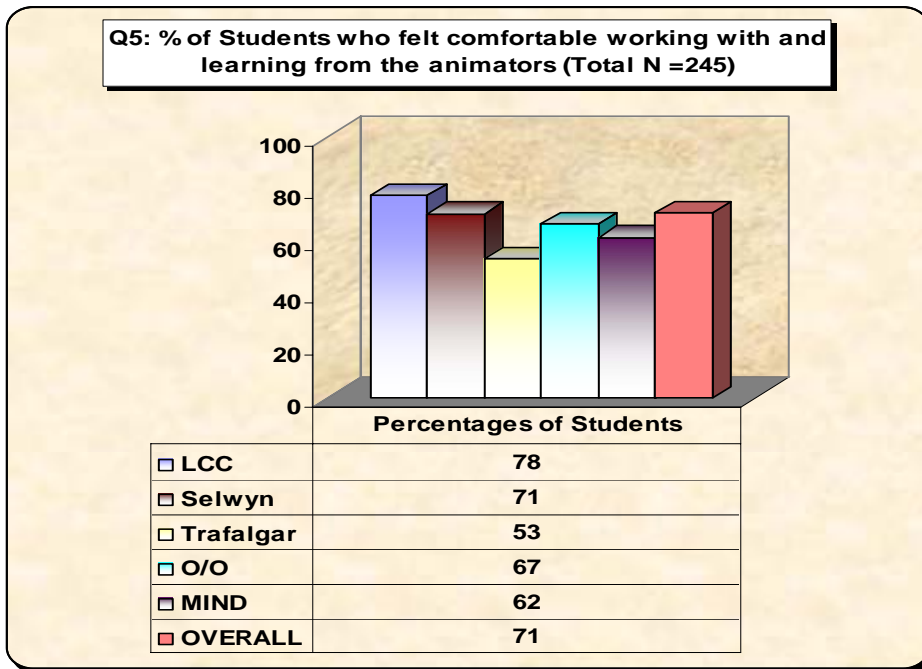
✚ *The balance of responses said they neither agreed nor disagreed.*

Question 4: Did students feel comfortable participating in the workshops with their class? *



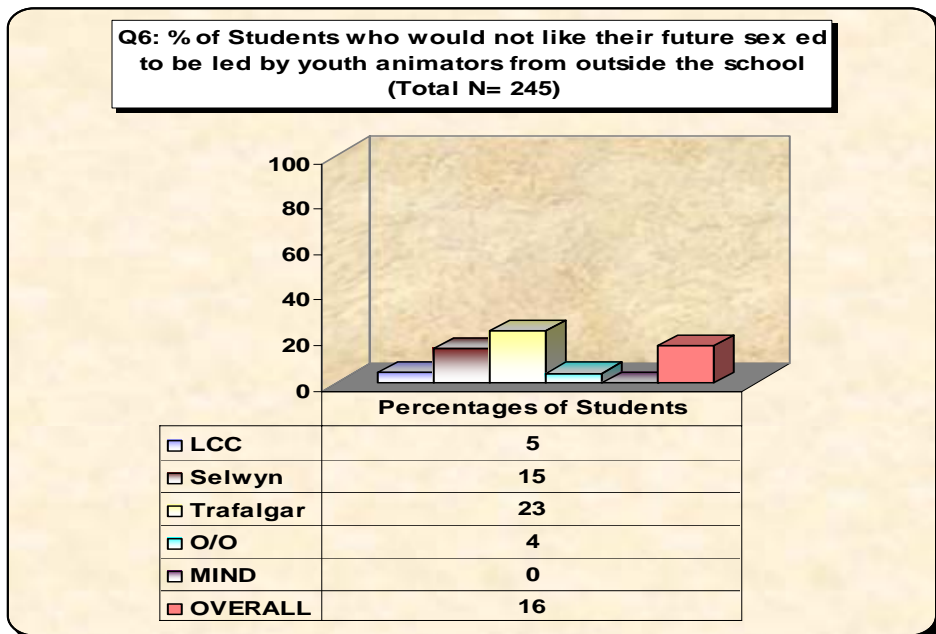
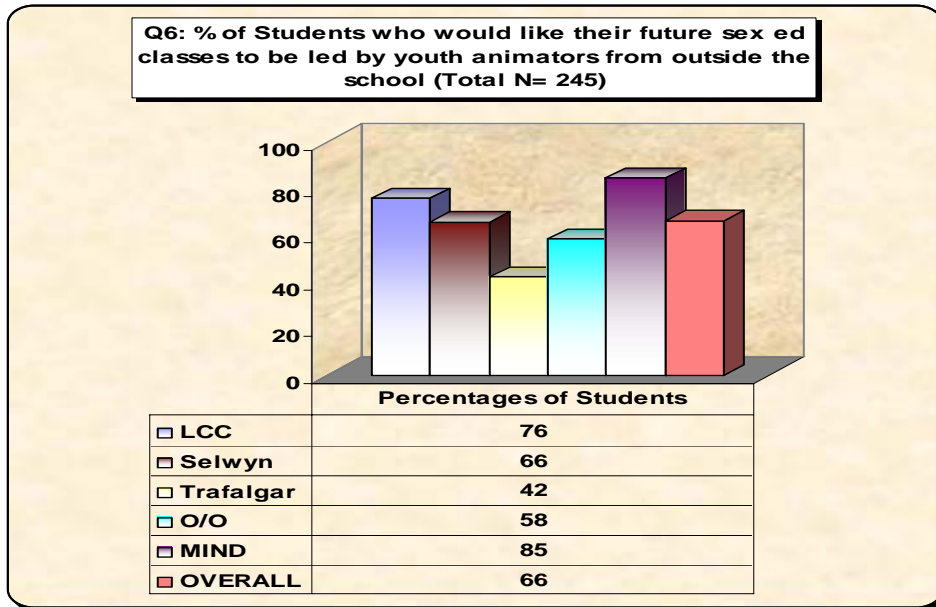
✚ *The balance of responses said they neither agreed nor disagreed.*

Question 5: Did the students feel comfortable learning from and working with the animators? *



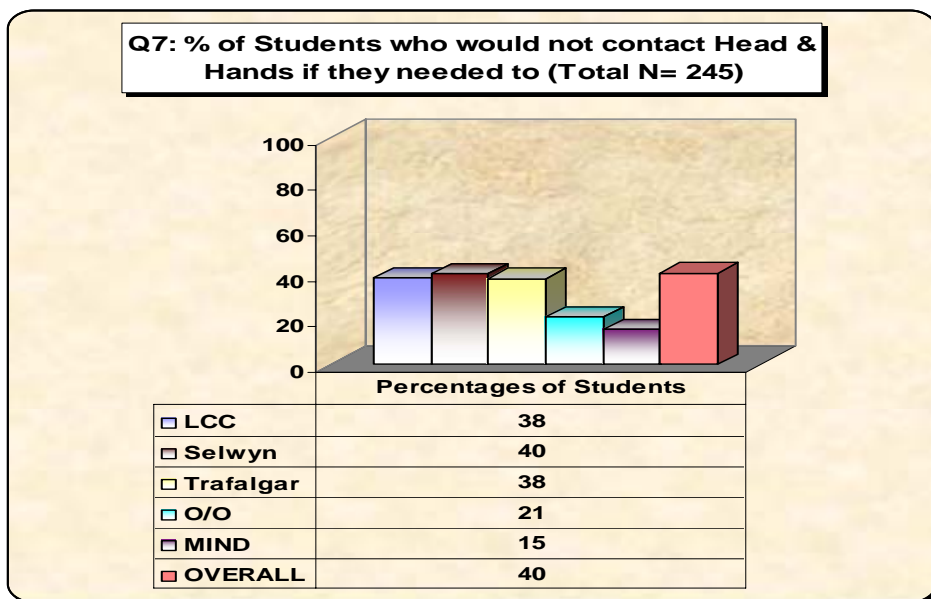
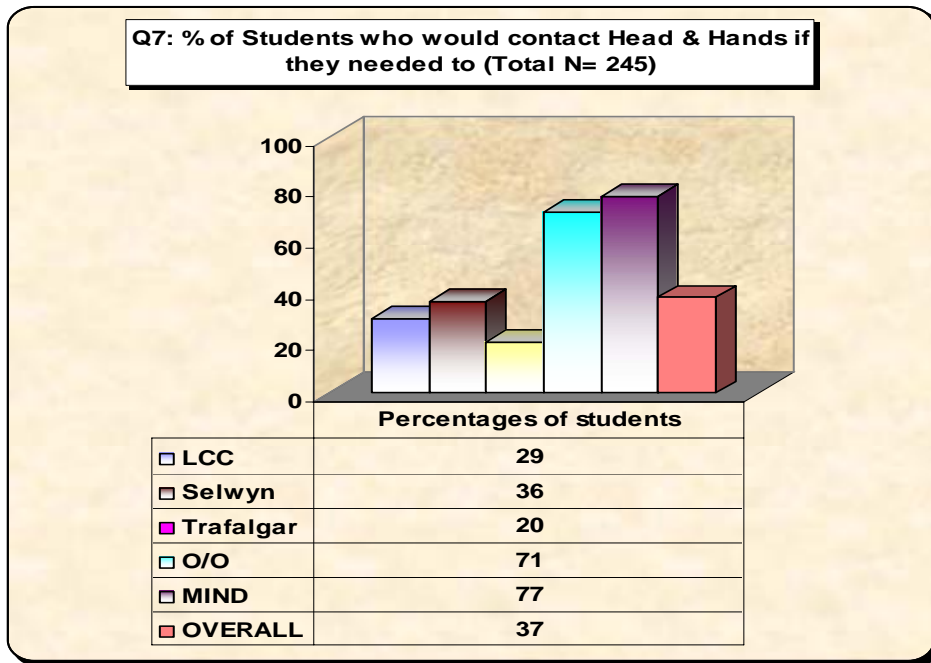
❏ *The balance of responses said they neither agreed nor disagreed*

Q6: If the student had more sex ed classes, would they like them to follow a similar format? *



✚ *The balance of responses said they neither agreed nor disagreed*

Question 7: If the student needed to, would they contact Head and Hands? *



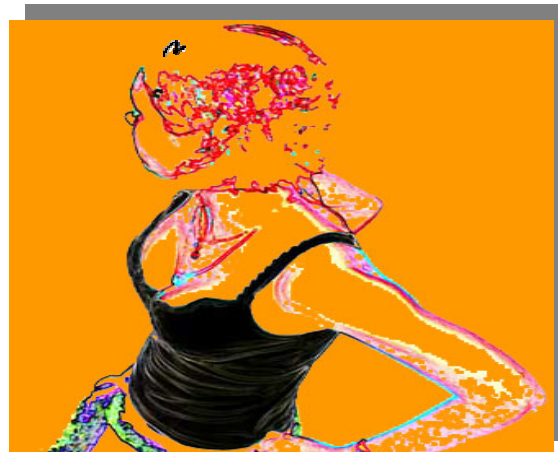
The balance of responses said they neither agreed nor disagreed.

5.2 Student ideas about how to access info & resources

(Overall totals)

Resource/Mean of Access Number of Responses

Website	127
Supply locker	124
Hands on video	117
Bathroom	98
Posters and pamphlets	76
Drama Performance	68
Small group discussions	59
Sex health fair	56
Drama games	51
Radio show	34



5.3 Student ideas about the workshops

They said YES to:

- ☛ Seeing much more of what actual material objects like condoms, birth control pills and dental dams look like and how they work. Youth are very interested in seeing and handling these items.
- ☛ More sex education, for longer periods of time.
- ☛ Playing a larger role in the creation and distribution of sexual health knowledge through more interactive discussion and the creation of hands on media projects that promote sexual health awareness
- ☛ The desire to watch relevant sex education videos as part of the workshops was consistently mentioned in all the evaluations.
- ☛ Less focus on AIDS, more on other STIs
- ☛ A web presence where they can ask anonymous questions and look up information themselves
- ☛ A supply locker being set up at their school where they can obtain information and supplies

- ☛ Information and awareness posters in their bathroom, as well as condom distributing machines being available to them
- ☛ STI Jeopardy was very popular, as was the 'risk line' activity. The icebreaker activities went over very well, and the response to the 'alphabet' activity was almost evenly divided with about half saying it was worthwhile and half suggesting it be dropped from the workshop.
- ☛ A review of the names and location of parts of the body. Several students said they would really have appreciated a refresher
- ☛ Some suggested they would like to speak about the positive aspects of sex (pleasure, desire, relationships etc.) at greater length

They said NO to:

- ☛ Role playing games where they had to imagine a party situation and act it out
- ☛ The negotiation activity where one youth had something the other wanted and they had to practice saying 'no'
- ☛ Blowing up condoms was another divisive issue; some of the youth really loved it and stated it was one of the things they really enjoyed, others thought it was childish.

"Learning this was very helpful, I learned a lot."

"It was a good workshop and a very good approach to STIs"

"Very educational, I learned many new things"

- Youth workshop participants

"I think they did a great job and made you feel comfortable, although maybe I would have gone over the parts of the body."

"It was really interesting. The workshops were informative and useful. Important information was given."

- Youth workshop participants



6. Discussion

6.1 Discussion: Summary of Accomplishments

The accomplishments and outcomes of the Sense Project are both impressive and substantial. On a minimal budget the project was able to:

- **Train** eight community volunteer animators
- Research, develop and publish a **255 page peer educator manual** on youth sexual and relationship health
- Offer peer educators **full training scholarships worth \$300** each so that they could attend five weeks of full day workshops and develop media projects promoting youth sexual health awareness, assigned each peer educator a resource person they can go to for information and support for two years.
- Partnered with **six local schools** to deliver sex education to 415 students.
- Hire a **Health Educator** to facilitate the training and workshops
- Hire a **Program Coordinator/Funding Researcher** to write grants, coordinate fundraising events and bring community awareness to the program
- Conduct focus groups with youth both pre-workshop and post workshops as part of a **youth-identified needs assessment for sex education in the region**
- Partner with **Concordia University** and **McGill University**. Interns from the Concordia/HIV project were deeply involved in the Sense Project. A research team from the Faculty of Education at McGill is working with Sense in securing grants to study the impact of the educational reforms in Québec as they relate to the sexual health of local youth.
- Garner **extremely positive national and local media attention** to the project
- Make enough of an impact that students who benefitted from the program asked for **more sex education**, more interactive ways of learning and creating awareness about sexual and relationship health and stated that they had both learned new material and things about sexual health that would be useful in their own lives.
- **Establish a regular following** with one of their most popular fundraising events, Faggity Ass Friday, a highly anticipated and attended queer-friendly dance party to raise money for the Sense Project
- **Build relationships** with other organizations in the community who work with youth in cooperative and inclusive workshop partnerships

- Through extensive data collection, documentation and engaging in collaborative research that carefully identified and responded to the needs of all participants (volunteers, school administration, students who received the workshops, peer educators and staff have been able to **develop a model that can be used by other youth organizations with a similar mandate.**
- The data suggests that the Sense Project has **met and exceeded** its proposed objectives and deliverables

6.2 Discussion: Summary of Challenges

- One of the most significant challenges facing the program is ensuring its **financial sustainability**. At present, the project will have difficulty continuing to deliver sex education for the 2008/2009 year, as there is at the time of writing this report a minimum of an additional **\$33,000** that will need to be infused into the budget if they are to continue the project.
- **Relationship building and open dialogue with the school boards** will continue to be a challenge and needs to be an ongoing priority of the Sense project. Some of the school boards are wary of the Sense Project's grassroots and youth-oriented approach, and have perceived the project as being adversarial and critical of the way the schools are attempting to meet the reform's mandate of infusing sexual health education throughout the curriculum. Steering committees are being formed at many schools to generate ideas about the ways the reforms can best be implemented; Sense can be a vital and useful part of those conversations.
- **The culture of the school** itself needs to be taken into consideration. For example, the responses at Trafalgar School for Girls were demonstrably less well received than other schools. Some students were uncomfortable with a male animator. Language such as "this was inappropriate" came through in their evaluations, as did the request for "more discipline". At Selwyn House, an all boys school, homophobic comments were made about one or some of the animators who were either perceived as gay or had situated their identities that way in the conversation. Boys in this age group are often homophobic, and can feel their own masculinity threatened by gay men. In no way is this report suggesting that animators be recruited and trained based on their gender identity or sexual orientation, however, more research may be needed into the special contexts that all girls or all boys schools present in the delivering of sex education workshops. More discussion of issues of diversity and relationship building may be required to ensure the comfort and success of the workshops in schools like these.
- **Concerns, comments and complaints**, notably from the schools mentioned above, but also from other schools need to be anticipated and addressed.

Usually, concerns from parents, students and staff will be noted by the contact person at the school the Sense Project liaisons with (i.e. guidance counselor, nurse). The youth developed graphics in the resource guide were sometimes considered controversial and bothered several of the adults, who would prefer to see a tamed down and more 'professional' aesthetic. One particularly innovative way of addressing a parents' committees set of concerns was when Adriana (the previous health educator) attended a meeting and played "STI Jeopardy" with the parents' group. This was a non-confrontational and friendly way to demonstrate to the parents that there were gaps even in their own sexual knowledge, and diffused a potentially difficult situation in a creative and authentic way. Comments came from nurses and guidance counselors suggesting that the youth were scared and disturbed by the language and material discussed. Although there were some students for whom the workshops were a negative experience, this percentage was remarkably low, and is not reflected in the student data which overwhelmingly suggested it was a positive and useful learning experience for them. This will continue to present a challenge as the differences in youth discourse and adult discourse generate tensions in the perceptions of how the program was and should be received.

"I had to field one phone call from a nurse who felt that our content/language was scaring some students. She also felt that our discussion of anal sex was inappropriate and was concerned that by talking about it, young people (girls especially) would think that it was normal and ok. To this I replied that we can never make assumptions about the kind of sex youth are having, so it's important to talk about all sex acts and the inherent risks. I also explained that we try to make our workshops as inclusive as possible, so in the interest of not being heterocentric or assuming, we talk about and attempt to normalize all sex acts.

She was also concerned that we broached the nitty gritty (my words) of sex too quickly without adequate lead-up, i.e. talking about love and healthy relationships first. She was concerned that there were young girls in the class who had experienced sexual assault in their lives and would find the discussion traumatic without a more extensive introduction. I agreed with her on this point. I thanked her, validated her concerns and told her that we would take them into consideration for next year."

- Jos, Sense Project Health Educator



7. Future Vision & Recommendations

Based on the data supplied for this evaluation, there are some recommendations I would suggest for the Sense Project as it continues to grow and evolve as a community involved sex education initiative for Montréal youth:

- There has been some discussion in the project about **expanding into the francophone population** and delivering sex education in French as well as in English, thus fulfilling Head & Hands' mandate to deliver bilingual services. Before doing so, it would be wise to ensure the project is financially sustainable for at least two years before expanding on the services offered. During this time, it would be worthwhile to investigate which organizations are already offering similar services and materials to French youth and to consider consolidating projects with them.
- Youth said very clearly that they wanted a **bigger stake in creating and communicating their own sexual health knowledge** through more interactive discussion, learning how to make media productions, and producing sexual health posters and pamphlets. This could be an important focus of the program going forward. Part of this could be the web page suggestion that youth put forward.
- It would be useful for **new animators to meet with and be trained by the volunteer animators who were involved in this phase of the program**, to learn lessons from them and to engage with some of their own worries/fears/concerns and seek advice from people who had already been engaged with students
- If it is not already part of the project's procedures, it seems vitally important that **complaints and concerns from schools/parents/students are logged and addressed, as soon as they come up**. For the sake of coherence and accuracy, it should consistently be one person who assumes this role, preferably the Health Educator. As the project expands, so too does the possibility that there will be a very vocal opponent to the work that the program is doing, who may go to the media with their complaints. I would highly recommend that the Sense Project **strategize** how they would handle this situation if it comes up (i.e. who speaks to the media for the organization, the language that should be used to respond, the data that can be released in relation to these inquiries, how complaints and comments have been handled, etc.)
- Youth involved with the Sense workshops said they wanted **more sex education**, more often. Expanding the number of workshops available for the youth also means that some of the students who were not entirely comfortable with animators from outside their school have an opportunity to build relationships with the animators. More space for discussion of relationships and emotions, desires would be available if the workshops

were extended. Dialogue with some other grassroots organizations who have expanded their sexual health education programs might prove highly beneficial (i.e. Planned Parenthood in Eastern Pennsylvania who deliver sex education weekly to students in grades eight and ten).

- Volunteer animators might benefit from some instruction on the **cultural differences** that might present themselves and become a challenge during sex education (i.e. constructions of gender and sexuality based on faith, geography, etc.)
- The **Peer Education manual is exceptional**, and it would be worthwhile to explore with publishers who focus on youth and educational publications if they would be interested in publishing and distributing the guide. It's possible that revenues from the sale of this book could contribute to building future incarnations of the project.
- When administering surveys in future data collection, it might be good to rethink the **"neither agree nor disagree"** rating; as a general rule, at least 20% of the responses were located in this neutral response. With Options II and Outreach, this number sometimes jumped as high as 40%. In addition, interviewing teachers and parents of students involved either in the workshops or as peer educators would add another rich dimension of inquiry for the evaluation.
- Building **strong relationships with the school boards** is possibly one of the most urgent priorities for the Sense Project as it continues to create partnerships with individual schools. The Sense Project needs to be seen as supporting the aims of the educational reforms, and offering solutions (not critique) to the schools as they are trying to implement them.





Appendix 1: Summary of Survey Data by schools

1A: SUMMARY FOR LOWER CANADA COLLEGE SENSE WORKSHOPS

Quantitative Outcomes

(Total responses N= 89)

Str/Agree Totals	% of LCC
1. I found the workshop material interesting.	69.7
2. I learned something new in the workshops.	80.5
3. The information I learned will be useful in my own life.	78.7
4. I felt comfortable participating in the workshops with my class.	80.3
5. I felt comfortable learning from and working with the animators.	77.5
6. If I had more sex ed classes at school, I would like them to follow a similar format (activities led by youth animators from outside my school)	75.9
7. If I needed to, I would contact Head and Hands.	29.2
Str/Disagree Totals	
1. I found the workshop material interesting.	5.6
2. I learned something new in the workshops.	5.7
3. The information I learned will be useful in my own life.	1.1
4. I felt comfortable participating in the workshops with my class.	6.7
5. I felt comfortable learning from and working with the animators.	3.4
6. If I had more sex ed classes at school, I would like them to follow a similar format (activities led by youth animators from outside my school)	4.5

* The balance of responses said they neither agreed nor disagreed

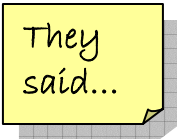
Notes:

- **81%** of LCC students who participated in the SENSE workshops learned something new. **80%** felt comfortable participating in the workshops with their class. **79%** believed the information will be useful in their own life and **78%** were comfortable working with the workshop animators. **76%** wanted future sex education to be directed by youth animators from outside the school.



- The workshops were not a positive experience for approximately 6% of the students (respondents numbered between 1-6 students). The remainder of respondents said they neither agreed or disagreed with the questions (neutral)

Highlights of Qualitative Outcomes:



Quotations from LCC students who participated in the workshops:

"The risk line was useful I learned a lot about the ways you can get AIDS."

"I would not change anything, it was interesting and informative."

"There should be more actual classes; three is not enough."

"I think they should be longer and more interactive."

"There should be less theory, more personal, interactive, more often / longer."

"I would keep it the same because it was very helpful and it will help me as i get older but maybe they could have explained it more. I also think we should have it more often."

"I would have smaller classes, more personal, more classes, more often."

"More chances to ask questions anonymously."

"I would change nothing, I enjoyed it thoroughly."

"Leave it the same but talk

more about the sex stuff and explain more."

"Having it more often, would give us a better understanding ."

"If I could change anything, it would be less talk about AIDS because I feel like we hear so much about it already, it's sorta boring and repetitive."

"It was perfect, but we need more sex ed classes."

"I wouldn't change anything."

"Less talking about AIDS because there was more information that needed to be discussed."

"Divide the groups and make them smaller."

"More discussions ."

"It was great."

"It's all quite informative."

"I have no suggestions; the workshops were informative

and useful.”

*“I would use smaller words,
but i would not change
anything .”*

*“I would not change many
things maybe would not stay
on the same topic all period
though.”*

*“I think they did a great job
and made you feel
comfortable although maybe
i would have gone over the
parts of the body.”*

*“I have no suggestions at this
time and I believe that Head
and Hands is doing a great
job with their workshops.”*

“Make them longer .”

“I think they did an excellent

*job and made the workshops
really interesting; the only
thing i would change would
be to go over parts of human
anatomy, etc. “*

“It was really interesting.”

“It was very good.”

*“Show us movies, pass
around more condom type
things like dental dams.”
“They were all interesting
and informative.”*

*“They were perfect, and
important information was
given.”*

*“I would just simply have
more classes which would
help us all learn a bit more.”*

1B: SUMMARY FOR SELWYN HOUSE SENSE WORKSHOPS

Quantitative Outcomes

(Total responses N= 75)

Str/Agree Totals	% of SH
1. I found the workshop material interesting.	75.68
2. I learned something new in the workshops.	82.67
3. The information I learned will be useful in my own life.	85.33
4. I felt comfortable participating in the workshops with my class.	77.33
5. I felt comfortable learning from and working with the animators.	70.67
6. If I had more sex ed classes at school, I would like them to follow a similar format (activities led by youth animators from outside my school)	65.75
7. If I needed to, I would contact Head and Hands.	36.00
Str/Disagree Totals	
1. I found the workshop material interesting.	4.05
2. I learned something new in the workshops.	8.00
3. The information I learned will be useful in my own life.	1.33
4. I felt comfortable participating in the workshops with my class.	6.67
5. I felt comfortable learning from and working with the animators.	10.67
6. If I had more sex ed classes at school, I would like them to follow a similar format (activities led by youth animators from outside my school)	15.07
7. If I needed to, I would contact Head and Hands	40.00

* *The balance of responses said they neither agreed nor disagreed*

Notes:

- **83%** of Selwyn House students who participated in the Sense workshops learned something new. **77%** felt comfortable participating in the workshops with their class. **85%** believed the information will be useful in their own life and **71%** were comfortable working with the workshop animators. **66%** wanted future sex education to be directed by youth animators from outside the school.



- The workshops were not a positive experience for approximately 4-10% of the students (depending on the question they were answering). The remainder of respondents said they neither agreed or disagreed with the questions (neutral)

Highlights of Qualitative Outcomes:

Quotations from Selwyn House students who participated in the workshops:

They said...

“Branch off into small groups so that there is less distractions and easier to learn.”

“Cut down on the tedious and time consuming group discussions – I didn’t find them very useful to learning things.”

“Bring in more condoms.”

“Less activities and more discussion.”

“Show the fun side of sex, videos also might help.”

“Have more that you can know the people better and feel even more comfortable with them .”

“More role playing so we’re more involved with hands on activities also talk about the positive things about sex and not only the negative.”

“More conversations about relationships instead of the science of sex.”

“I would only speak about stuff students wanted. “

“I wouldn’t change a thing.”

“Have more activities, and also more sessions. Also explain things in detail.”

“Come to our school more often and the classes should be longer. They should call some of us out of class and talk to us alone in case we have personal questions and they should have more activities and games. “

“I would have changed the focus to a program focusing more on relationships that actual sex, since it is an area where today’s youth have problems”

“More activities and games. On the first day find out what people already know about the topic that you will be covering.”

“It was good, sex ed is important I would think that we should’ve done more group activities during the class.

1C: SUMMARY FOR TRAFALGAR SCHOOL FOR GIRLS SENSE WORKSHOPS

Quantitative Outcomes

(Total responses N=45)

Str/Agree Totals	% of Trafalgar
1. I found the workshop material interesting.	55.56
2. I learned something new in the workshops.	62.22
3. The information I learned will be useful in my own life.	70.00
4. I felt comfortable participating in the workshops with my class.	57.78
5. I felt comfortable learning from and working with the animators.	53.33
6. If I had more sex ed classes at school, I would like them to follow a similar format (activities led by youth animators from outside my school)	42.05
7. If I needed to, I would contact Head and Hands.	20.00
Str/Disagree Totals	
1. I found the workshop material interesting.	17.78
2. I learned something new in the workshops.	26.67
3. The information I learned will be useful in my own life.	15.56
4. I felt comfortable participating in the workshops with my class.	15.56
5. I felt comfortable learning from and working with the animators.	22.22
6. If I had more sex ed classes at school, I would like them to follow a similar format (activities led by youth animators from outside my school)	22.73
7. If I needed to, I would contact Head and Hands	37.78

* The balance of responses said they neither agreed nor disagreed.

Notes:

- **62%** of Trafalgar students who participated in the Sense workshops learned something new. **58%** felt comfortable participating in the workshops with their class. **70%** believed the information will be useful in their own life and **53%** were comfortable working with the workshop animators. **42%** wanted future sex education to be directed by youth animators from outside the school.



- The workshops were not a positive experience for approximately 15- 27% of the students (depending on the question they were answering). The remainder of respondents said they neither agreed or disagreed with the questions (neutral).

Highlights of Qualitative Outcomes:

Quotations from Trafalgar students who participated in the workshops:

They
said...

"Talk more about real life situations."

"Have more sex ed classes to educate more people."

"Our class wasn't respectful of the speakers so they talked over them and it was hard to listen."

"I think it was most useful learning how to properly use condoms; most teachers are not comfortable talking about that."

"I'd like to know more about slang words and consequences."

"Talk more about relationships, friends and choices."

"I thought the most useful thing was not really an activity, but having people our own age who knew how to talk to us."

"No guys"

"I thought putting on the condom was the most useful part."

"Make the girls stop talking"

"There was too much time spent on STIs."

"Learning about putting on condoms was the most useful."

"The condom putting on was the LEAST useful because, of course, we're GIRLS."

"We learned about STIs already in science class."

1D: SUMMARY FOR COMBINED DATA OUTREACH/OPTIONS II SENSE WORKSHOPS

* Data was combined because of small numbers in each school who received workshops

Quantitative Outcomes

(Total responses N=24)

Str/Agree Totals	% of O/O
1. I found the workshop material interesting.	62.50
2. I learned something new in the workshops.	62.50
3. The information I learned will be useful in my own life.	83.33
4. I felt comfortable participating in the workshops with my class.	75.00
5. I felt comfortable learning from and working with the animators.	66.67
6. If I had more sex ed classes at school, I would like them to follow a similar format (activities led by youth animators from outside my school)	58.33
7. If I needed to, I would contact Head and Hands.	70.83
Str/Disagree Totals	
1. I found the workshop material interesting.	4.17
2. I learned something new in the workshops.	16.67
3. The information I learned will be useful in my own life.	0.00
4. I felt comfortable participating in the workshops with my class.	4.17
5. I felt comfortable learning from and working with the animators.	4.17
6. If I had more sex ed classes at school, I would like them to follow a similar format (activities led by youth animators from outside my school)	4.17
7. If I needed to, I would contact Head and Hands	20.83

* The remainder of the responses said they neither agreed nor disagreed.

Notes:

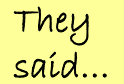
- 63% of Outreach and Options II students who participated in the Sense workshops learned something new. 75% felt comfortable participating in the workshops with their class. 83% believed the information will be useful in their own life and 67% were comfortable working with the workshop animators. 58% wanted future sex education to be directed by youth animators from outside the school.



- The workshops were not a positive experience for approximately 4% of the students (depending on the question they were answering). The remainder of respondents said they neither agreed or disagreed with the questions (neutral)

Highlights of Qualitative Outcomes:

Quotations from Outreach and Options II students who participated in the workshops:



They said...

"I think the activities were fun but just talking about things is good – I find it a good way to learn."

"I think you guys have it down pretty well, i don't really have any suggestions."

"I think we should just have MORE sex ed. "

"It was a very interesting workshop. I've never liked sex ed but this year did. the animators were pretty cool. "

"Do more demonstrations and BRING MORE CONDOMS."

"Don't stress people to answer questions. Don't pressure people to participate. Some people just like to sit there and listen."

"I'd like to see movies that would make things more comfortable and useful."

"I think you should be bringing in movies that show or explain scenarios."

"I would try and get people more comfortable."

1E: SUMMARY FOR MIND SENSE WORKSHOPS Quantitative Outcomes

(Total responses N=13)

Str/Agree Totals	% of MIND
1. I found the workshop material interesting.	66.67
2. I learned something new in the workshops.	76.92
3. The information I learned will be useful in my own life.	100.00
4. I felt comfortable participating in the workshops with my class.	46.15
5. I felt comfortable learning from and working with the animators.	61.54
6. If I had more sex ed classes at school, I would like them to follow a similar format (activities led by youth animators from outside my school)	84.62
7. If I needed to, I would contact Head and Hands.	76.92
Str/Disagree Totals	
1. I found the workshop material interesting.	0.00
2. I learned something new in the workshops.	23.08
3. The information I learned will be useful in my own life.	0.00
4. I felt comfortable participating in the workshops with my class.	15.38
5. I felt comfortable learning from and working with the animators.	0.00
6. If I had more sex ed classes at school, I would like them to follow a similar format (activities led by youth animators from outside my school)	0.00
7. If I needed to, I would contact Head and Hands	15.38

* The remainder of the responses said they neither agreed nor disagreed.

Notes:

- **77%** of MIND students who participated in the Sense workshops learned something new. **46%** felt comfortable participating in the workshops with their class. **100%** believed the information will be useful in their own life and **62%** were comfortable working with the workshop animators. **85%** wanted future sex education to be directed by youth animators from outside the school.



Highlights of Qualitative Outcomes:

Quotations from MIND students who participated in the workshops:

(Note: very few MIND students wrote comments)

They
said...

“I thought the character sketch was the most useful”

“The most fun thing was the ABC thing.””

“The most useful activity was the one where we created a character. It was useful in the way that we should know how to trust and consult our friends in stressful sexual situations.. I thought the ABC poster was the least useful.”

“I thought the most useful was the one about condoms and safe sex.”

“The most useful was the Disease Game where we put them into different categories from least to most dangerous of getting that disease.”



Appendix 2: Related Documents

Appendix 2A: Head & Hands Condom Philosophy

- When talking to schools explain in detail the Head & Hands approach (including harm reduction and condom distribution)
- Condom distribution is not negotiable when we are presenting or facilitating in regards to sexuality or HIV/AIDS
- If the outreach is a general health fair, for example, we can accept to attend without bringing condoms.
- **Head & Hands Sexual health philosophy**
 - Confidential
 - Non-judgmental
 - Harm reduction philosophy (in clinic or in the community)
 - Inclusive (sexuality, gender identity, in doing activities)
 - Respectful
 - Positive (no scare tactics used)
 - Empowering (through education)

- History of not having the teacher present (workshops are more useful as youth are more open without a figure of authority present).
- Workshops can be tailored to meet the needs of particular groups. Many aspects of workshop content are negotiable, but not condoms.
- **Why do we distribute condoms?**
- We believe that condoms need to be introduced to youth before they become sexually active. To see and explore what condoms look and feel like is an important part of education.
- We promote safer sex when youth are ready.
- We want to reduce the rates of STIs and unplanned pregnancy amongst youth
- If youth bring condoms home, it can promote discussion with guardians about the importance of safer sex.

Appendix 2B: Sense Project Info Sheet

The Sense Project

Supporting young people's healthy sexual development by giving them the tools to make sensible choices.

The Sense Project is an in-school sex education program offered by Head & Hands.

It is designed to ensure sustainable sex education in Quebec high schools through a 2-part program.

Part 1: In-class Workshops

Working with the school, Head & Hands' health animator will train volunteers to facilitate three hour long **in-class workshops** on sexual health, using the Health Canada's Information-Motivation-Behavioral Skills (IMB) educational model. The goal of this non-judgmental workshop is to reduce youth's risk of acquiring sexually transmitted infections, HIV and unplanned pregnancy.

Part 2: Peer Education

Following the workshops, the health animator will train a group of students to be sexual health peer educators in their schools. These students will:

- act as a peer education resource for other students at your school.
- receive support and supervision from Head & Hands' health animator and a team of resource volunteers
- implement appropriate interventions such as a day of awareness and

a drop-in question and answer centre that will keep students informed about the importance of sexual health

- use creative strategies to communicate about the importance of sexual health issues.

Why is this comprehensive sex education project important to your school?

There is a pressing need for sexuality education for Quebec's youth. Statistics Canada indicates that the incidence of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) in youth aged 15 to 19 has almost **doubled** in recent years.

Recent surveys show that over 85% of parents and 92% of teens agree with the statement "Sexual health education should be provided in schools." (1)

With the Curriculum Reform, the onus is on your subject teachers to incorporate sex education into their course content. The Sense Project will ensure sustainable sex education at your school. (*The Canadian Youth Sexuality and HIV/AIDS Survey*, Council of Ministers of Education and Health Canada, 2002.)

Appendix 2C: Peer Education Information Sheet

PEER EDUCATION



The Sense Project

Sense is a two part project. It consists of:

1. Three sex-ed workshops in the fall
2. The Peer Education program, starting in the winter

Congratulation, you've all received the Sense workshops! So...



What is Peer Ed??

Peer Education is an amazing opportunity if you're interested in taking on a leadership role at your school and becoming a sexual health educator. Sex education is not very accessible or present in high schools these days, and by putting sexual health information straight into your hands we can help counteract the lack of sex education in your school.

Being a Peer Educator might interest you if you want to learn *more* about:

- Sexual health
- Safer sex and STIs
- Contraception
- Sexuality
- Active listening and support skills
- How to refer your friends and peers to organizations/people who can help them with any of the above
-

The Process...

If you're interested in being a Peer Educator at your school, you must APPLY. Only the best candidates will be accepted, so it is not guaranteed that we can accept everyone. But don't worry about competing against your fellow students; we're looking for a few students in each school.

After you have handed in your application, you will be contacted for an interview. Interviews will take place at your school in December and January, either during lunch or after school.

Prove to us that you would be a fantastic Peer Educator in your school and you're in!

What are we looking for in a Peer Educator?

We are looking for youth who are:

- Able to keep secrets and respect privacy (confidentiality is *really* important)
- Open-minded and non-judgmental
- Comfortable talking about sex and sex related issues with their peers
- Eager and committed to the project

What is expected of Peer Educators?

A Peer Educator's job is to relay essential information to their friends, classmates and peers about the importance of sexual health and about people's rights as

individuals. They act as role models and are trusted by their peers to provide up-to-date information about sex with complete confidentiality.

Becoming a Peer Educator requires attending five Saturday training sessions (a total of 30 hours) starting in late January and providing ongoing support to your friends and fellow students. If you're interested in becoming a Peer Educator, talk to your parents or guardians and make sure that this is ok.

Why be a Peer Educator?

Being a Peer Educator is a great opportunity to learn lots of cool stuff, to meet other like-minded people, and looks great when applying for a job or to university. Most of all it's a chance to spread good information about sexual health and to make a big difference in the lives of your friends and peers.

Get an application form from a Head & Hands Health animator or your Guidance Counselor today!!

Appendix 2D: Letter to parents of potential peer educators

Wednesday, January 23rd, 2008

Dear Madam/Sir;

This is a letter to inform you about an exciting leadership opportunity that your son/daughter has become involved in; they have applied to take part in a **“Peer Education” training** offered by **Head & Hands**. After assessing their application and speaking with them personally, we are happy to offer them a spot in this training! Hopefully this letter will answer any questions you may have about the program and your daughter/son's involvement in it.

To begin with, Head & Hands is a non-profit community organization that has been dedicated to youth empowerment since the early 1970s. We are located in NDG at 5833 Sherbrooke West (a few blocks west of the Décarie). We provide a variety of services for youth; if you have any questions about what we do or who we are feel free to stop by or check out our website: www.headandhands.ca.

This fall we launched a project that we have been working on since the 2005 education reform, called the **“Sense Project.”** Sense was created to address a current lack of sex education in high schools. The education reform (which ostensibly eliminated sex ed in most high schools) corresponded with increased statistics surrounding STI transmission among youth in Québec. Sense grew out of a need to address the lack of information and education among this vulnerable age group.

This fall, Head & Hands/the Sense Project provided a series of workshops at you son/daughter's school, which s/he may or may not have partaken in. This winter we went back to their school and recruited for the Peer Educator training.

The training is **completely free** and will take place from **10am to 5pm** at Head & Hands, over a series of five Saturdays:

January 26

February 2nd

February 9th

February 16th

February 23rd

This adds up to a total of 30 hours. As you can see, this is no small commitment on your daughter/son's part. We congratulate them for taking the initiative to join in this project and are very excited to work with them! It is important to us, however, that you be aware of this commitment and support it.

Once again, the training is completely free. We will provide lunch and snacks, although if your son/daughter has any specific dietary needs, they should alert us. We will also provide them with an extensive training manual and a variety of other resource material.

Following the training, your son/daughter will return to their school and there assume the role of a Peer Educator. This role will largely be defined by them and what they assess to be the needs of their peers and schoolmates, although *potential* duties may include:

- * stocking a locker with referral pamphlets, information, tampons/pads, condoms for their fellow students
- * organizing awareness and fundraising events, i.e. for World AIDS Day or Violence Against Women Day
- * starting a Gay-Straight Alliance at their school
- * maintaining a website or blog with useful information for their peers

A team of resource volunteers and I will shadow your daughter/son and offer them support in their role. They will also have the support of their school staff, with whom we have formed partnership agreements.

I have attached a copy of the training agenda if you wish to look at it and see specifically what we're doing. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours truly,

Jocelyn Porter

Health Animator / Sense Project Co-coordinator

Head & Hands / A deux mains
(514) 481-0277
5833 Sherbrooke West, NDG
healthed@headandhands.ca
www.headandhands.ca

Appendix 2E: Montreal Mirror article, Feb. 14/2008

(Montreal Mirror, Feb 14-20, 2008, vol 23, no. 34, pg. 10)

High school confidential

Students and teachers scramble to find a way to teach sex ed with minimal guidance from the province



**HEAD AND HANDS AND PRIVATE PARTS:
Sense Project coordinator Christina Foisy**

by SAMER ELATRASH

On a Saturday afternoon in January, students from several high schools in Montreal leave the offices of NDG community group Head and Hands, where they were taking instruction on becoming peer sex educators in their schools.

“It’s cool, and it’s non-judgmental,” says 16-year-old Joanna Bennet, while waiting for her mother to pick her up. “This is a good opportunity to learn about safe sex and to teach others about it.”

She is one of four students from Trafalgar, a private high school, who've signed up for the courses with Head and Hands. "A lot of people [have unsafe sex]," she says. "And they're not thinking of the consequences, as if it's nothing, like a handshake."

Her mother, Denise Chakar, a sex ed consultant for high schools, says she supports her daughter becoming a peer educator. "I think she'd be great," she says. "I think there should be more of these role models."

Chakar says provincial government reforms to school curriculums, which no longer require schools to set aside classes on sex ed, may leave students without information on safe sex habits. In a 2003 booklet distributed to high schools in Quebec, the provincial Education Ministry suggested that sex ed become the responsibility of all teachers, who should incorporate the topic into their classes. The reform was assailed by critics, who said it was impracticable.

"The reform isn't doing justice to sex ed," says Chakar. "A lot of teachers are uncomfortable talking about sexuality, and if they are comfortable, they don't have the training."

Vaguely holistic

The Education Ministry says its reform, which took effect in secondary schools in 2006, introduces a holistic approach to sex education. Before the reform, schools set aside five hours a year for instruction in sex ed during moral education classes.

"[The reform] requires teachers to help the students become more responsible in lifestyle practices on the level of their health, security and sexuality, and to develop their sense of critical thinking," says ministry spokeswoman Stéphanie Tremblay, adding that it ought to be applied by a group of teachers.

Although the ministry says it's a requirement, the absence of a formal curriculum and oversight has left sex ed instruction to each school's discretion.

"I love the [holistic] spirit of it," says Annie Ogle, a teacher at NDG's Outreach high school and a board member of Head and Hands. "But it's vague. On the one hand, it's part of the program. On the other hand, nothing is specifically required. There is no measure to implement it."

Linda Henderson, a veteran sexologist and consultant with the English School Board of Montreal, supports the reform. "The reform approach is more sensible than the occasional drive-by harm-reduction approach. The new approach is holistic," she says.

However, she says some schools may be neglecting the topic. "I must sadly admit some schools have nothing, no sex ed," she says. Henderson says she has given a few training workshops to teachers, which were well attended, but teachers are not required to undertake the training.

"Teachers are reluctant, there's no doubt about that," says Richard Mason, principal of Marymount Academy. "They already have a heavy workload." Mason says his school relies on the services of a social worker for sex ed, and has brought in speakers on the topic, "but there's no prescribed program, per se."

Eileen Kelly, principal of Laurier Macdonald high school in St-Leonard, says the school tries to incorporate sex education into "the school ethos." However, teachers may already have their hands full with their courses.

“When a teacher is saying, ‘I can’t get through my science curriculum,’ it’s difficult to tell them, ‘Put this in too,’” she says. The school retains a nurse and a social worker who are available to help students, she says.

Common sense

Implementing the reform would also require coordination between teachers in different departments, which may be difficult in larger high schools, says Patrice Asselin, head teacher at MIND, an alternative high school on the Plateau. “It’s a logistical problem,” he says. “In a big high school, it’s hard to get teachers from humanities and the sciences to work with each other. The principal would have to redraw schedules to make it happen.”

Some schools seem to have consigned the subject to guidance counsellors and nurses, while inviting outside groups like Head and Hands in for lectures, workshops and peer education training to students.

Two years ago, Head and Hands launched Sense, a pilot project in several private schools in Montreal in response to the reform. The group offers workshops provided by trained facilitators on sexually transmitted infections (STI) prevention, relationships and negotiating safe sex with partners. “It’s not just information-based,” says Christina Foisy, funding coordinator for the Sense Project. “It includes attitudes, values and behaviour.”

Sense also provides students courses on becoming peer educators. Students (with parental consent) are taught listening and referral skills and act as “role models” for fellow students, says Foisy. “Peer-based models are more effective in disseminating information,” she says.

The project has attracted the attention of a research team from McGill’s education department. Head and Hands’ peer education is “extensive,” says Lisa Trimble, a Ph.D candidate at McGill working on the research team. “The way sexuality is usually discussed is by measuring teen pregnancies and STIs, but there’s also relationships and emotions,” she says. “It’s very difficult just to pass information down and say, ‘That’s what you should do.’ Peer education offers some opportunities for the message coming from the youth to be believable, and to address what they want to know.” Trimble says youth are mostly likely to ask their peers for information on sex.

Teens do it better

Having students as peer educators in schools gives the message more credibility, says Trafalgar student Bennet, who’s completed three of five courses needed to become a peer educator. “We could do it in a way that makes people comfortable,” she says. “I think the students would respond better to people my age.”

While Joanna’s mother is supportive, some parents object to exposing youth to sex education. “There is still a taboo about sexuality,” says Denise Chakar. “Some religious parents don’t want schools to talk about sexuality.” Chakar says one school she consulted at received phone calls from parents who objected to the school providing condoms to students.

“It can be a scary topic,” says Laurier Macdonald principal Eileen Kelly. “I’m talking as a parent. You don’t like to think of your child as being sexually active. It’s an emotional issue. And schools are multicultural, different cultures will approach it from different viewpoints.”

Claudia Mitchell, a professor of education at McGill who’s researched sex education internationally, says high school students may lack knowledge about STIs at an age when they start having sex. “That’s the age young people are likely to become sexually active,” she says.

“There’s a basic lack of information. I had beginning teachers conduct small surveys in schools. A majority [of the students who took the survey] thought there was a cure for AIDS.”

“Youth in schools don’t fall under the at-risk category,” says Sense project coordinator Jocelyn Porter. “So people say, ‘Okay, they’re taken care of, they’re fine.’ Sex affects everyone. They still need the information.”

Evidently so: A 2006 study by the federal Public Health Agency reported HIV rates were increasing among women between the ages of 15 and 29. Health researchers say women are more susceptible to HIV than men during unprotected heterosexual sex.

A 2002 study commissioned by the Council of Ministers of Education Canada reported that most students consider school an important source for sex ed and called for more attention on sexual health in high schools. The report found that 40 per cent of boys and 46 per cent of girls had sex by Grade 11. “Those not engaged in intercourse usually explain this on the basis of not being ready or not having the opportunity,” the report said.

But the report also says that only just over one quarter of students surveyed had used a contraceptive the last time they’d had sex.

Findings & evaluative report
The Sense Project
À deux mains / Head and Hands
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