

BARBARA WILLIAMS

Towards a health strategy

(Barbara Williams is the Health Co-ordinator of a large comprehensive school in Avon. The Health Related Behaviour Questionnaire was administered in May, 1982, and in the following article she describes some of the observations and strategies that have emerged. Would other Health Co-ordinators like to comment? What do home economists and dieticians think about the nutrition strategy? —Ed.)

I have recently taken over as Health Co-ordinator of this mixed school, and I should like to outline the work I am implementing as a result of the SHEU computer analysis of our survey. Some very useful results have come out of it.

Hygiene

Boys need more training in hygiene. I have not really tackled this yet, other than putting up posters in the toilets — any suggestions?

Nutrition

This is our worst area! 46% had a poorly-balanced diet at lunchtime — too much carbohydrate and fat, insufficient protein, fruit, and roughage. Action has been taken as follows:

3rd year: Nutrition is on the syllabus, but the results reinforced the need to do a personal analysis. A one-hour session is now devoted to this.

4th & 5th years: I have taken over two one-hour Personal and Social

Responsibility (PSR) sessions, including a half-hour talk on nutrition, followed by their own analysis of their diet (see over).

One window of the biology laboratory, which looks out on to the main corridor, is now devoted to posters and displays reinforcing the need for a balanced diet. This is changed every 2-3 weeks.

Smoking

This seems to start at age 11 for boys and age 12 for girls, so I am going to push a non-smoking campaign with that age group — assemblies, tutor periods, etc. In the 1st year, the aim will be to prevent them starting, and in the 2nd and 3rd years it will aim to reinforce those who don't smoke. The active tutorials, on the same theme, will last for half an hour.

In "Smokers' Detention, advice on "Smoking and how to stop" will be given, using leaflets available from the Central Health Clinic.

Alcohol

Since analysis showed that significant drinking commenced at age 14-15, an Assembly will be arranged for the 3rd year, two weeks before Christmas, on the effects of alcohol. This will be followed up by a "girls only" talk on the effects of drinking upon their behaviour — to prevent unwanted pregnancies.

Dental health

This programme, aimed specifically at the 3rd year, has already proved efficient.

Homework

A Curriculum Committee meeting produced a paper on homework, for all staff. An in-service training day in July 1983 will be given over to deciding, on a departmental basis, how difficulties could be met: preparing worksheets, etc., etc. I should be interested if the SHEU included, in a future survey, some information on home conditions, to indicate where homework can be done. It would also be interesting to see a comparison with other schools of those doing outside

jobs. Are they falling behind with home-work because of work commitments? Are these effects, in our school, on a par with those in other schools?

(Since this article was written, Barbara Williams has done some more work with her "smokers", and has added the following comment. — Ed.)

Since doing the Assemblies, I have started a Smokers Anonymous Club. We talk about how they started smoking, how they can give up (I have printed advice sheets), and their weekly progress. Their aim is to both support and criticise each other. In the Active Tutorials we are comparing the pulse rates of smokers and non-smokers before and after running up

and down the school drive. We also use a stethoscope to monitor the time taken by smokers' hearts to return to a normal beat after exercise.

I feel that a comparison between different schools on the following health aspects would be interesting:

1. The age at which smoking increases.
2. The age at which drinking increases.
3. Mid-day meal: balance of diet.

(This information is contained in the responses to the Health Related Behaviour Questionnaire, and studies such as those suggested by Barbara Williams will appear in future issues of **Education and Health**. — Ed.)

Below: The diet analysis sheet used by Barbara Williams in her 4th and 5th-year work. On the back is a table giving the content breakdown and calorie count for different items.

Name: _____

A Balanced Diet:

- 1) Carbohydrate, Fat and Protein in the correct proportions. (5:1:1 by weight)
- 2) Varied enough to provide minerals and vitamins and roughage.
- 3) Correct number of calories for age, sex and occupation.

My diet is:

	Class of Food	Calorie Content
<u>Breakfast:</u>		
TOTAL -		_____