

LEARNING
SEQUENCE

1

The ups and downs of
growing up

Theme: Knowing me, knowing you

Core concepts

This learning sequence acts as an assessment tool to identify the learning needs of the class and to inform teaching. It will particularly support assessment for learning. *Assessment for learning* occurs when teachers use inferences about student progress to inform their teaching.

The learning sequence also provides the students with an opportunity to identify the things they are concerned about and are looking forward to when it comes to puberty and growing up.

You could draw on the outcomes of this learning sequence to set goals with the students for the coming sessions and to provide them with feedback on their progress.

AusVELS

Health and Physical Education – Health knowledge and promotion dimension

At Level 5, students can:

- identify the likely physical, emotional and social changes that occur during puberty
- describe the physical, social and emotional dimensions of health and establish health goals and plan strategies for improving personal health.

Suggested success criteria

- I know the physical, social and emotional changes that occur during puberty.
- I know some of the good, bad, and best sources of information and support about puberty.

Preparation and materials

You will need:

- butcher's paper
- textas
- RESOURCE: 'Letter for parents/carers – The ups and downs of growing up' (available at the end of this learning sequence).

 **ACTIVITIES**

The ups and downs of growing up

For this activity, it often works better to keep boys in one group and girls in another.

- ➔ Separate the students into small groups who feel comfortable working with one another.
- ➔ Provide each group with two sheets of butcher's paper and ask the students to title them:
 - The great things about growing up.
 - The difficult things about growing up.
- ➔ As a class, come up with an example or two for each heading. An example of a great thing could be *more independence*. A difficult thing could be *period pain*. Discuss with the class that some changes may fit into both categories. For example, more responsibility can be seen as both great ('I get to baby-sit!') or difficult ('Oh dear, I have to baby-sit').
- ➔ Give the students as long as you think they need until their ideas have run out.
- ➔ The groups can then post their sheets to the wall so that everyone can see, or they can take turns reporting back to the class.
- ➔ Further discussion questions:
 - Are there any differences in what is easy or challenging for girls and boys?
 - Are there any changes listed that probably won't happen?
 - Have you noticed that many people share the same feelings about different aspects of growing up?
 - Why might we use the word *difficult* instead of *bad*? (Some changes are difficult, or challenging, but they can turn out to be positive.)
- ➔ Ask the students to identify which of the difficult things can be addressed and which are out of their control.
- ➔ Make the following points:
 - People react differently to change. What is exciting for one person can be scary for another. Feelings about change are personal.
 - Some changes can be both difficult and great at the same time.
 - Families have different expectations of children as they grow older.

What can we do to make change easier?

- ➔ Collect the sheets that outline difficult things about growing up and swap the sheets around the class.
- ➔ Ask the students to come up with ways to make those changes easier to cope with. Remind them to identify skills within their grasp. For example, talking to someone, spending time with friends, using the school library.
- ➔ Help them identify support systems (that is, family, school and community members) that can provide help and support.
- ➔ Finish by telling the students that we will focus on issues to do with growing up in the coming weeks, which will provide them with information and opportunities to ask questions.

Activities in this Learning Sequence were sourced with permission from the Calgary Health Region website: <www.teachingsexualhealth.ca>.



Some ideas for READING

Puberty Boy (2006) by Geoff Price.

In this book, men and boys share their stories about puberty, when it happens and how your body will change. It explores the thinking and emotional changes that are happening alongside the physical. It takes special effort to describe the ‘brain shift’ that happens at puberty and discusses ways to handle it.

Puberty Girl (2004) by Shushann Movsessian.

For pre-teen girls, *Puberty Girl* talks about the big M, the V word (yep – vagina), the period costume, PMS, puberty power and even the B word – breasts. This illustrated book lets you know what to expect, physically and emotionally, as you tread the path to becoming a woman.

LEARNING
SEQUENCE

2

They tell me I'm going
through puberty

Theme: My body

Core concepts

Students are often concerned to know what changes puberty brings to both boys and girls. They are often relieved to see that many changes are similar to both. They also want to know when the changes will happen and in what order.

AusVELS

Health and Physical Education – Health knowledge and promotion dimension

At Level 5, students can:

- ▶ identify the likely physical, emotional and social changes that occur during puberty.

Interpersonal Development – Building social relationships dimension

At Level 5, students can:

- ▶ demonstrate, through their interactions in social situations, respect for a diverse range of people and groups.

Suggested success criteria

- I know the physical changes of puberty experienced by both boys and girls.

Preparation and materials

You will need:

- labels marked *Girl*, *Boy* and *Both*
- two hula hoops (or skipping ropes) to make a Venn diagram on the floor
- RESOURCE: 'Puberty cards' – you can prepare a few sets so that students can work in small groups, or just one set with enough for every child to have at least one card
- RESOURCE: 'Background information for the teacher'.

These resources are available at the end of this learning sequence.

ACTIVITIES

What is puberty?

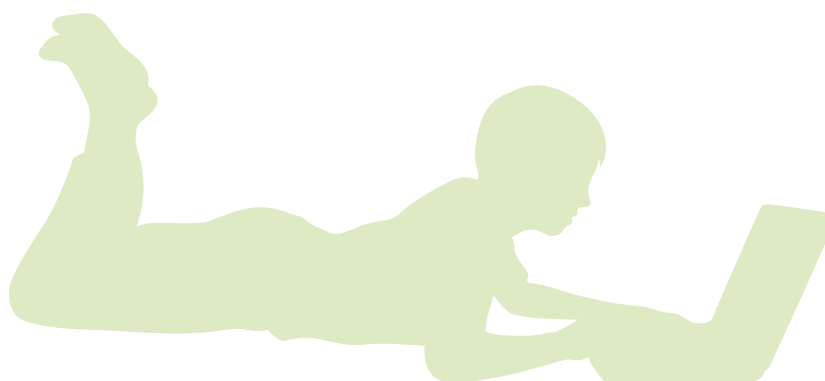
- ➔ Ask the students:
What does the word *puberty* mean to you?
- ➔ Write student responses on the board and as a class discuss the meaning of the word. Here are some definitions that can be used in the class discussion:
 - *Puberty* is when your body begins to change from the body of a child to that of an adult.
 - *Puberty* occurs because new chemicals produced by the body – called hormones – are developing in the body, creating changes in the body and turning children into adolescents, and eventually into adults.
 - *Puberty* does not happen all at once. It happens in stages and starts according to each person’s own body clock.

This activity has been used with permission from *Puberty Changes, Grade 4, Lesson 2*, Calgary Health Region (2009) <www.teachingsexualhealth.ca>.

Teacher advice

The Hormone Factory is a specially designed website for children between the ages of 10 to 12. It was developed by researchers and educators for the Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society, Faculty of Health Sciences, La Trobe University, Australia.

The Centre has a long-established record in research, policy and practice into sexual and reproductive health with a focus on young people, and in working with the school sector on sensitive issues.



Boy, girl, both

- ➔ Create a two-circle Venn diagram on the floor. You could use two hula hoops or skipping ropes to create the two intersecting circles.
- ➔ Place the labels 'Girls' and 'Boys' in the circles, and 'Both' in the intersection.
- ➔ Distribute the Puberty Cards, at least one to each student.
- ➔ Working in pairs or alone, ask students to place their card(s) in the appropriate place. For example, changes only experienced by girls are placed in the area labelled 'Girls'.
- ➔ Ask students to sit in a circle around the Venn diagram, and review the results to see if you need to change the card placements. Ask students questions such as:
 - Do you agree with the placement of the cards?
 - Are there any cards that you would like to move?
 - What is your reason for suggesting a card should be moved?
 - Are there any cards you would like explained?
 - Are there more similarities or differences in the changes experienced by boys and girls?
- ➔ Point out that there are many changes that everyone experiences.

Question box

Providing a question box is a good way to complete this learning. Often students are embarrassed to ask a question in front of the rest of the class. Using the question box enables students to be anonymous. The use of a question box also has the added benefit of allowing the teacher time to reflect on how to answer the students' questions.

- ➔ Ask students to write and place in the class question box, a question or topic suggestion they would like to explore further at a later date.

Additional activity

Group Research

- ➔ Over two or three sessions, the students can work in groups to research topics such as periods, erections or wet dreams.
- ➔ After vetting the question box and rewriting the questions so students cannot recognise their peers' handwriting, students can be given the responsibility of answering the questions or finding out more about certain topics.
- ➔ Each group could present its findings to the class.
- ➔ Students could use selected books and resources, and La Trobe University's The Hormone Factory website to assist in their research:
 - the Hormone Factory: <www.thehormonefactory.com>.



Some ideas for READING

Puberty Book: A Guide for Children and Teenagers (2001) by Wendy Darvill and Kelsey Powell

This book gives children and teenagers accurate and up-to-date information about themselves, their bodies and growing up. In simple, straightforward language, the authors discuss the changes that happen at puberty, sex and sexuality, health and looking after yourself, relationships, pregnancy and birth.

Let's Talk About Sex: Growing Up, Changing Bodies, Sex and Sexual Health (2005) by Robie H. Harris

This book has many excellent (and funny) illustrations about the biological and psychological facts of sex from conception and puberty. It answers questions and has sections about sex and feelings, our bodies, families and babies, and sexual health.

Teacher advice

What if students express distress over weight gain during puberty? Reinforce that normal changes of puberty include weight gain and temporary out-of-proportion growth; fat does not by itself define 'overweight'. Dieting interferes with normal hunger regulation and is counterproductive to weight loss. Children (and adults) need to learn to appreciate and accept their body type.

LEARNING
SEQUENCE

3

When will it happen?

Theme: Growing and changing

Core concepts

When talking about growth and development, outside of wanting to know the answer to the question ‘Am I normal?’ students most often ask, ‘When will it happen?’ This learning sequence outlines the likely order of physical change and reinforces the idea that students will develop at their own rate.

AusVELS

Health and Physical Education – Health knowledge and promotion dimension

At Level 5, students can:

- identify the likely physical, emotional and social changes that occur during puberty
- describe the physical, social and emotional dimensions of health and establish health goals and plan strategies for improving personal health.

Interpersonal Development – Building social relationships dimension

At Level 5, students can:

- accept and display empathy for the points of view and feelings of their peers and others.

Suggested success criteria

- I understand that puberty does not happen all at once. It happens in stages.
- I know that puberty happens to everyone somewhere between the ages of eight and 18.
- I know that everyone is on their own body clock and puberty will start according to each person’s body clock.
- I appreciate that we can all feel sensitive about our bodies at this time of our lives and we need to be respectful of each other’s feelings.

Preparation and materials

You will need:

- RESOURCE: 'Puberty cards' (available from the previous learning sequence)
- RESOURCE: 'Puberty for girls/Puberty for boys – What happens when?'
- RESOURCE: 'Dear Abby – Is puberty the same for everyone?'

These resources are available at the end of this learning sequence. If you wish, the 'What happens when?' timelines can be reproduced in poster size. This will allow students to see at a glance the order that changes are likely to occur.

ACTIVITIES

What happens when?

- ➔ Using the 'Puberty cards' ask the students to place them in order of occurrence.
- ➔ As a class, check the results against the 'What happens when?' timelines (pages 150-152).
- ➔ Comment:
 - Puberty changes generally occur in a certain order, but the age of change can be approximate and the order can also be different. There are no hard and fast rules.

Dear Abby – Is puberty the same for everyone?

- ➔ Read the letters written to Abby the magazine health adviser.
- ➔ As a class discuss the following questions:
 - Why are Concerned or Worried unhappy about their bodies?
 - When does puberty start and finish?
 - Does puberty happen at the same time for everyone?
 - Are Concerned or Worried normal?
 - What advice would you give Concerned or Worried?
- ➔ Ask students to write an advice letter to either 'Concerned' or 'Worried'. The letter should address the concerns expressed in their stories and answer their questions.

Teacher advice

How do you explain sexual feelings?

During puberty, it is normal to feel more sexual. In boys, the main sign of strong sexual feelings is an erection of the penis. In girls, it is wetness of the vagina, a hardening of the clitoris and may include sensitive nipples.

Sexual feelings can come from reading a romantic novel or thinking about another boy or girl. Having sexual feelings is normal and is nothing to feel guilty about.

