

# Sexuality education essay

[Parts of the World](#), [Australia](#)



[Client's Name]

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Sexuality is an issue that accompanies every person that is going through the stage of puberty. However, sexuality in this sense is not only the biological maturation of the body but of the mind as well.

Sexuality is a universal issue that should be addressed and explained clearly towards young people as they are the ones who are at risk of being victims to the dire consequences which comes from being ignorant of sexual issues. It is important for these adolescents to be able to comprehend the responsibility when it comes to engaging in sexual activities as it affects not only their physical but also mental and emotional states.

However, to be able to properly make a stand on this controversial issue of the effect of sexuality education on Australian schools, it is necessary first to understand its aspects.

## **Sexual Health Issues**

Several sexual health issues are addressed in sexuality education. One of them is STI's or Sexually Transmitted Infections. Studies show that in Australia, there is an alarming rate of increase in the people affected with STI. In fact, in Chlamydia, STI rate has quadrupled in the last ten years and eighty percent of these cases are people between 15 to 19 years old (Barbagallo & Boon, 2012). Because of this increasing rate in patients of STI, it is necessary for students to understand exactly what this medical condition is about, how it is acquired and how it can be prevented. With proper knowledge, the chances are the statistics of people with STI will decrease in the coming years.

Another sexual health issue that is tackled is the issue of teenage pregnancy. Pregnancy itself can oftentimes be tricky and even dangerous. However, it is even more risky if the would-be mother is younger because the body is not yet fully developed to support another life. It is therefore, alarming to note that the rate of unplanned pregnancy between adolescents aging from 15 to 19 year olds in Queensland remains consistently higher than the national average (Barbagallo & Boon, 2012). However, if students understand how serious pregnancy really is, they might think twice about having sexual intercourse early on or they might have proper guidance on how to protect themselves and their sexual partners by using the appropriate protection.

It was also said in Milena Barbagallo and Helen Boon's (2012) study that young people from rural areas more at risk of unplanned pregnancy than people of the same age from urban areas. It can be assumed therefore that because teenagers from urban areas are more educated when it comes to sexuality, they know how to take care of themselves when they become intimate with their partners.

The emotional state of the students is also being taken into account (Barbagallo & Boon, 2012). As mentioned, sexual activities and decisions not only affect the students' physical health but also their emotional one. The decision involved in sex and sexuality involves having courage to stand for a person's beliefs. As such, it is important for students to confront their own fears, guilt or hypocrisy when it comes to sex (Barbagallo & Boon, 2012). These students need to make their own changes in the present or future

context and to successfully so, they need a firm and strong resolve and their emotions must not be all over the place.

## **Goal of Sexuality Education in Australia**

Sexuality education is a way for students in Australia to have a socially critical perspective about issues concerning sexual health. Critical perspectives includes being able to look at social issues without prejudices or biases.

The goal of sexuality education therefore is to develop people who are able to express themselves in decisions regarding their own sexual health and to stand by this opinion through the ideas that the sexuality education has equipped them with (Farrelly, O'Brien & Prain, 2007). This person must be able to be responsible and sure of his or her choice of with whom he or she will have sex or if he or she will have sex at all (Gilbert, 2010).

Through critical thinking that the sexuality education is teaching, the student will be able to know when the right time for him or her to have sex is and this will prevent her from hastily jumping into an intimate relationship with someone because of things like peer-pressure. Also, sexual education aims to hone the personal and social skills of the students so that when they are faced with several conflicts such as sex-role stereotyping and sexual violence, they are able to make their own stand and not just be swayed to one side because of ignorance (Farrelly, O'Brien & Prain, 2007).

Sexuality Education also aims for students to be knowledgeable on health issues associated with sex so that they know what to do and who to seek for advice or help if they are faced with similar situations. Hopefully, this information can also be passed on to other peers.

## **Inherent Values That Should Be Promoted**

One particular value is respect. From a very young age, everyone learns about respect. It is not taught but somehow it manifests in a person's actions. However, as time passes by and influences from different sectors and groups of people come in, respect can dwindle or take a different form. However, a student learns about sexuality, he or she should also learn to respect that some people may have different views on sexuality. He or she also learns that the aspects of sexuality – such as whether or not a person engages in sex – is borne out of people's personal choices. Sexuality education should promote respect on these choices as well.

Another value that should be promoted is individuality. Every person is unique. However, in adolescents, the issue of fitting in with the rest of the society is so strong that it pressures them. This pressure comes from peers, the mass media and other institutions that dictate how they should dress, speak or behave in an often sexual way (Goldman, 2008).

## **Learning Strategies to be Facilitated to Support Student Learning On Sexual Health**

There are several strategies that can be implemented on sexual education. One of which is to start early. It is said that recently, young people are entering puberty earlier than the generations before them. Therefore, it is beneficial for students if they are slowly eased into the concept of sexuality from an early age and then follow through each year until they are mature enough to understand more sensitive topics (Goldman, 2011).

Another strategy is assigning younger teachers to be the sexual health educators. According to the study conducted by Barbagallo and Boon (2012),

many students preferred younger sexual health educators because younger teachers can relate better to them and because older teachers tend to have very strong opinions that often times intimidates the students.

The same study by Barbagallo and Boon (2012) discussed that students are often times reluctant in asking questions about sexuality in class because they are not comfortable with everyone hearing their answer for fear of being ridiculed. Due to this issue, several of the respondents suggested using a 'question box' where they can anonymously ask their questions. This is favorable not only to the students but to the teacher as well. Because the teachers would have to review the questions before answering any of them, this would give the teachers enough time to research on the appropriate answer before discussing it to the class (Barbagallo & Boon, 2012).

Having professionals on different topics of sexuality from outside the school can also be invited as guest speakers so that the students can gain insights from them (Barbagallo & Boon, 2012). This would make the students more open because they have the confidence that most probably, they won't see these professionals again and these professionals are unlikely to remember them all because they are strangers to each other. It's the same concept with people being more comfortable with talking about their problems to total strangers. They don't know you so they can't judge you.

It would also help students of sexuality education is the information that is given to them is unbarred. Sensitive topics such as homosexuality should be discussed as well because these topics are relevant for some of the students (Diorio & Munro, 2003). Not all students are interested in the idea of

reproductive maturation because these are information that they can easily get. However, some students have questions or are wondering about topics that the society tries to keep hidden. For example, in some Catholic schools in Australia, guidelines for Sexuality Education were reviewed to match the conservative teachings of the Church before being passed (Barbagallo & Boon, 2012). In this way, the most controversial topics that the church considers 'wrong' are most likely censored or modified.

With regards to information, as with any form of teaching, it is necessary for the data and facts that are being taught in sexual education to be updated regularly as facts are ever changing (Barbagallo & Boon, 2012). What may be true now may not be necessarily true tomorrow. If the facts are outdated, then the ideas will be as well. Outdated ideas would be useless for students are learning about it because they can no longer apply it in their lives.

The information is not the only one needed to be updated. The teachers themselves need to be educated. A study made by Isik Gursimsek (2010) showed that teacher candidates who attended courses on sexual health education not only successfully gained the necessary knowledge needed to be teaching the students on sex and sexuality but also achieved a positive attitude towards less conservative social issues such as homosexuality.

### **Sexual Health and the National PDHPE Curriculum**

In accordance with the national PDHPE curriculum, students basically learn sexual health starting in their 7th or 8th year basically because this is generally the age when the students' transition into adolescence happens. This is the time when they will explore the concepts of social and cultural influences and pressure that comes with entering the bridge to adulthood (“

Shape of the Australian Curriculum”, 2012).

When it comes to years 9 and 10, with students ranging from 14 to 16 years old, the curriculum equips these students to take control of their lives by having a positive outlook in life and knowing their options when they are facing certain problems (“ Shape of the Australian Curriculum”, 2012). With regards to sexual health, students are encouraged to change their mindsets when it comes to topics that they used to approach with fear, guilt or wariness.

## **Conclusion**

As can be deduced by its several aspects as of now, Australian schools’ sexuality education is far from perfect. As it is now, it can do little to guide the students towards a healthy and safer sexual life not only in the present but in the future as well. However, its aim is for the betterment of the students so it should not be totally disregarded especially now that technology had made access to a sexual culture easier.

Instead, insights from students, teachers as well as professionals on this topic should be taken into account and applied to the system of sexuality education that is being presented to the students so that the goal of sexuality education can be achieved. Also, non-conformist ideas should be studied too. Homosexuality, for example, is admittedly excluded from most – if not all – sexual education of schools in Australia.

Any education is useless if it is not absorbed by the students. Therefore, a more effective sexuality education is one where knowledge is not stagnant and is not afraid on tackling non-conservative topics to keep up with the changing times as well as the interest and the need of the students.



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