Sex Education in Schools – rough draft

Sex! As living breathing human beings we all know that sex is a big part of our lives. We can't get enough of sex and it definitely intrigues our minds and takes over our body unwillingly, increasing our adrenaline and paralyzing our initial senses. How young is too young to know about sex, or to engage in sex? For my research paper I wanted to go in depth and explore the subject of sex education given specifically to minors in school.

The reason I am interested in this topic is because I believe that it's a subject worth while taking time to figure the ins and outs of what sex education really boils down to. As a young teenage mother myself I ponder on the fact that sex education was a prerequisite in order for me to graduate from high school yet, after taking the class I still failed to endure the message they were trying to convey to the students. How beneficial is sex education given to students if teen pregnancy is on the rise?

Definitely one of the most controversial issues surrounding this topic is whether or not sex education should be taught in schools and to what extreme the content will contain. Should it be abstinence only, or abstinence plus how to put on a condom? The npr.org website listed possible subjects that teachers may have to cover such as homosexuality, sexually transmitted diseases, where to obtain birth control, facilities that do abortions without parent consent, penetration, female/male condoms, and the list goes on. Those were just some of the few topics being covered in high school class rooms as if today.

Prior to researching the ultimate topic to formulate a great paper, I was more stuck on the heart of the issue as to whether or not it should be taught in schools, but after a quick research I
definitely found out that about ninety-three percent of Americans agreed that sex education should be taught to minors. Quickly I had to revert to my thesis to how effective is sex education given to minors and is the content of what they teach appropriate.

Within this research paper I hope to learn as well as educate the readers about what's going on in America's classrooms exploring the subject of sex education in school. Is the school board preaching abstinence or are they giving students an insight on how to have safe sex, therefore promoting it indirectly? As you read this paper I hope to provide point of views coming from the student, the schools, and the parents. I want to explore their perspective and find out what the ultimate message they are trying to receive, portray, and approve.

Some of the questions I will cover in this research paper about sex education are: What does the content consist of, is it appropriate or inappropriate? Are Americans condoning sex education given to their children or are they strictly against it? How beneficial or effective is sex education, is it worth taking a big cut in the schools budget? How young is too young to be educated/have sex and what are the rates/success/statistics on students who have had some type of sex education?

Although the issue has now become the content of sex education, it still relied on what was appropriate and what was inappropriate. Let's face it! The growing rate of minors becoming sexually active has increasingly risen to high statistics. An alarming fact "As a result, each year there are about one million pregnancies resulting in approximately four hundred thousand abortions, five hundred thousand births and one hundred thousand miscarriages." I then formulated a question in my heard; if sex education is already being taught in school, how effective is it? Is it even worth its "purpose" abstinence?
The first item on my agenda was to visit a high school and actually sit in a classroom that was teaching sex education. I went to Rodriguez high school located in Cordelia, California where the population rate was fairly diverse. The principal was kind enough to let me make observations for my report and sit in one of the teachings. The teacher's name was Mr. Vega and the course subject was called Health Education. Prior to class starting I met with Mr. Vega and asked him what type of subjects is he required to cover in this course. Mr. Vega stated "Abstinence, STD's, Hiv, Sex, hormones, subjects like that." Everything he reiterated to me was no surprise and pretty much redundant because I figured the lesson plan has not changed since I was in high school, 3 years ago to be exact. Shortly after that, the bell rang and kids began staggering into class two by two's and by the look on their face's they seemed to be extremely excited to be in this class. One student even shouted out, "YES! We get to talk about sex, it's about time something is interesting in this school". I figure the message he was trying to convey was that he was interested in the topic as oppose to English or history. Once everyone got settled in the class began. Today's subject was "How to say no to peer pressure". As the teacher was teaching I started to observe the students reactions and their nonverbals. Everyone and I mean EVERYONE had their eyes locked shut on the teacher engaging in the lesson and interacting in the conversations with one another. Of course you had the occasional giggle or the manly boy talking about how he gets "it" anytime he wants but the point is everyone seemed to be enjoying class. Time flew by quickly and before we knew it, it was the end of the day. So once everyone was dismissed I pulled aside my cousin who happened to be in the class room and I asked her what she thought about teaching sex in schools. She responded with, "I like it because it teaches us about safe sex and what to look out for when a guy is trying to have sex with you. I know you may think we're too young for this but its better we know it early on rather then being stuck later on in life not knowing a single
thing." Sadly to say my little 17 year old cousin had a point. I gathered my thoughts and started making comparisons to my high school health ed class. Everything was very similar down to the subjects being taught and the student's reactions. My teacher in high school even showed us vivid images of private parts, gruesome pictures of sexually transmitted diseases, taught us how to put a condom on, and also but not the least a video tape physically giving birth to a child. This was a lot for a sixteen year old to grasp. The outcome I received from the information besides the total feeling of being grossed out was that I did get some helpful information about where to get condoms, birth control, and pregnancy tests without needing parental consent and doing everything confidential. Looking back on that experience, I believe that if I didn't get the resources of Planned Parenthood or teenage health centers, I think I wouldn't have engaged in sex that early. I would have been more skeptical about sex and more reluctant to participate. The response from students couldn't be obvious enough; they wanted to be educated on sex.

Just because the children wanted to be educated on sex didn't mean it was going to sit well with the parents. I interviewed some of the parents and surprisingly most of them approved of it. They had the same outlook as the children which was "we know their having sex at younger ages so mightest well educate them on how to do it safely." To me it seemed as if they were condoning sex, like as if they've given up the fight and let the children win. Whatever happened to moral values and parental control? I guess now living in the 21st century things have changed. To sum up my information that I have to date, children, parents and school all are in favor of sex education being taught.

I live in California also known as the golden state. It's a beautiful state where the sun shines and the people are diverse, it is one of the best states to live in and a great tourist attraction. But
California isn't all that perfect, "California has the 2nd highest teen pregnancies in the nation. One hundred twenty-five pregnancies per one thousand women aged fifteen to nineteen occurred in nineteen ninety seven. The national rate is ninety-seven per one thousand women." It is estimated that about twenty five million dollars is the cost to our government in relations to teen pregnancies. Pregnancy is not the only problem, "Every year 3 million teens--about one in four sexually experienced teens--become infected with a sexually transmitted disease or infection." Working in the medical field I physically see these statistics with my own two eyes. Unfortunately I was one of the statistics of pregnant teenage mothers but I've learned my lesson. Those statistics seem so unrealistic but only because as parents we find it hard to believe that our children are engaging in such behavior. The United States has something to be ashamed of, "The United States has the highest teen pregnancy rate of any developed country. It is twice as high as England, France & Canada, three times as high as Sweden and four times as high as The Netherlands." So if we have the highest teen pregnancy rate, what is the purpose of sex education?

From my point of view sex education is benefiting our youth. The only problem is its battle against the media. I believe at a point of time teachers were preaching about abstinence but our society has changed. On most of the popular teenage shows you see on television like MTV or BET, the majority of what they portray is people engaging in sexual activity. The curriculum being taught in school has no competition against the media. The media is preaching sex and the school is preaching abstinence which of the two is the adolescent going to pay attention to? The MEDIA! Sex sells and it has definitely persuaded the young teenage mind and as a result you see statistics like one out of every three teenagers are infected with an std or we have this many teen pregnancies a year. It's ridiculous to have statistics so high. The school system has to come up with a better way to counter act the pressure from the
media and enforce safer sex and most importantly preach abstinence.

After reviewing the information I received from the websites I searched, I came to a conclusion that sex education in schools is helpful to a certain extent, but it can also be an aid to the curious teen. I used to think that sex education was not acceptable because it was promoting teenagers to have sex, but now I think it's a great resource to educate teenagers on the possible sexually transmitted diseases they can contract or the possible pregnancies they can have, or simply how to prevent both of those from happening. I think the most important thing we need to face is teenagers are having sex and it's hard to control their hormones. So the way I look at the issue is not necessarily promoting sex, but aiding teenagers to make the right decisions and where to get help if they need it. Sex education was a good idea to educate teenagers in school and gave them an insight on the positive and the negative aspects of sex. Knowledge is power; it's just up the individual to make the right decisions.

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