

Student Name

Project Research Report

3-25-10

### **Sex Education that Works**

<http://www.avert.org/sex-education.htm>

This article, coincidentally, is a comprehensive overview of comprehensive sex education. Because of that, the article focuses more on providing knowledge than it does on arguing a point. That said, the writer of the article obviously supports comprehensive sex education, and his opinion comes through in the points he raises. Most of the article is written in a question/answer format, but the questions are built to address certain issues and provide counterarguments to concerns. Most of the questions address comprehensive sex education and what that means, and how to successfully implement it.

On this particular article, there's not much directly related to the writer and/or his credentials. However, he's writing the article for AVERT, and, as an organization, they have some impressive credentials for promoting comprehensive sexual education. AVERT is an organization based in the UK that works to avert HIV and AIDS worldwide. Their Community Programme supports and builds partnerships with local organizations who are working to directly avert the spread of HIV & AIDS, and to improve the treatment, care and support of people infected with, or affected by HIV/AIDS.

This resource fits like a glove into my arguments. The article has many of the same points to prove that I do, and the article proves them very elegantly- stating clear facts that are almost irrefutable, backed up by claims, which is exactly the way I'd prefer to do it. It even goes into depth on how to get involved in the ways that the reader can help the cause. I actually used this source as a catalyst for a lot of my own ideas.

## **Do Abstinence-Only Programs Delay the Initiation of Sex Among Young People and Reduce Teen Pregnancy?**

[http://www.thenationalcampaign.org/resources/pdf/pubs/abstinence\\_only.pdf](http://www.thenationalcampaign.org/resources/pdf/pubs/abstinence_only.pdf)

This article is basically a lab report, with the research attempting to prove or disprove the title listed above. It's very technical, but it presents a very scientific, methodical approach to the data presented. A lot of the article is spent proving how the conclusion of another paper, "The Effectiveness of Abstinence Education Programs in Reducing Sexual Activity among Youth", is incorrect in its assumptions that abstinence-only sexual education programs do work.

The researchers and authors of this article are very qualified to present this kind of scientific argument, as proven by a page right in the beginning. All of the members of the research group that presented the paper are listed, along with various credentials. It is of interest to note that of the fourteen members listed, only three of them do not have Ph. D.'s, and none of them have anything less than a Master's Degree. On top of that, all of their career fields have great relevance to the task at hand, such as "Director of the National Teen Pregnancy Prevention Research Center" and the like. This page leans the reader very strongly into treating the article with credibility, and it's a good example of a good credentials page- simple, yet elegant and compelling.

This resource fits into my arguments well because I have to argue the point that abstinence-only sexual education programs are not as effective as they say they are. The actual conclusion of this article comes to the conclusion that abstinence-only sex education "could" be effective, but a paper that asserts that they are is based on faulty evidence. While this doesn't particularly prove my point, it was not in the scope of this lab report to provide evidence that comprehensive sexual education is more effective than abstinence-only sexual education. Therefore, in that regard, the dubiousness that the article provides in regards to the effectiveness of abstinence-only sex education is useful. Also, the idea that pro-abstinence-only sex education proponents don't adhere to the scientific method helps cloud their viewpoints even more.

The client should come out of this article knowing that any information they might have received regarding the effectiveness of abstinence-only sexual education could be faulty and should not be trusted.

### **What 20-Somethings Are Saying About Pregnancy, Sex, and Childbearing**

<http://www.thenationalcampaign.org/resources/pdf/FocusGroup20-SomethingJune2007.pdf>

This article, in contrast to the one listed above, is much less scientific, but for good reason- instead of looking at existing reports for their scientific merit, this one gets much more social and focuses on findings from focus groups with young adults between the ages of 20-29. The focus is sexual attitudes of the members of these focus groups. The age of the subjects might be a little on the high side for what I'm looking for, but their findings on "Confusion about contraception and fertility" is invaluable.

These focus group studies were organized by The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy, which works to "provide *more education* to teens, parents, and young adults in their 20s that encourages them to take sex and pregnancy seriously, stresses personal responsibility and respectful relationships, and includes extensive information about contraception". These goals are very similar to the overarching goals of comprehensive sexual education, which qualifies them to have something to say regarding all of this.

This resource fits into my arguments because of the section on the confusion about contraception and fertility. The young people listed here normally present flawed information, but there's no way to pin it on sexual education (or lack thereof) until that section of the article. When it gets there, every misconception in the book gets thrown around liberally, which explains a lot of their strange, ambiguous stances on pregnancy and STDs in sections before and after. I can use this article as something to cite when I want to prove that sexual education is needed.

The client should take away from this article a feeling that something needs to change. Reading some of the misconceptions in this article, I was a tad stunned. The criteria for being a member of the

focus groups might have created some selection bias, but I was truly shocked to think that some of my peers might feel this way about sex.

### **Comprehensive Sex Education: Research and Results**

[http://www.advocatesforyouth.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=1487&Itemid=177](http://www.advocatesforyouth.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=1487&Itemid=177)

This article is definitely out to prove a point, and makes no bones about it. This article talks about comprehensive sex education and its myriad of plusses, and casts a negative light over abstinence-only sex education programs. These points are, thankfully, backed up on hard data, with lots of statistics and numbers from varying studies that support the cause.

This article is hosted by Advocates for Youth, an organization that “champions efforts that help young people make informed and responsible decisions about their reproductive and sexual health.” Advocates believes it can best serve the field by “boldly advocating for a more positive and realistic approach to adolescent sexual health”, which is evident in the tone of this particular article.

Overall, I find the accusatory, inflammatory way of presenting something distasteful, and a liability on your argument, but it’s hard to argue with data without at least doing some research afterward. This article has lots of data supporting it, and while I was unable to verify it as being scientifically sound, the general trend that I have noticed in these circles is that comprehensive sexual education is proven effective, and abstinence-only has been proven either not effective or has insufficient data to rule one way or another. Plus, sometimes you need to take that kind of tone to prove your point.

The client, provided they’ve been adequately convinced, should take away the reasons that make comprehensive sexual education a better choice than abstinence-only sexual education.

### **Facts on Sex Education in the United States**

[http://www.guttmacher.org/pubs/fb\\_sexEd2006.html](http://www.guttmacher.org/pubs/fb_sexEd2006.html)

This article is basically a collection of statistics from other sources about sex education in the United States. There's very little fluff surrounding the article itself - the data is succinct and very readable. The facts themselves cover a myriad of different topics in sex education, from teen perspectives to school board policies.

As a source, this resource is invaluable, especially to me – whenever I read something like this, I realize the impact that legitimate-sounding statistics have on an argument. So many times I prefer to argue using logic and reasoning – while this is nice, it doesn't have quite the instant bite that statistics carry. Also, it's a lot harder to disagree with statistics without disproving them – with a logical argument, the person reading can say “That's a convincing argument, but I disagree” and everything I've worked to accomplish is for naught. I plan on using data gathered from here to augment my arguments from here on out.

The client should take a lot of facts away from this source. An added plus is that whoever compiled this list of statistics was obviously for comprehensive sex education, as all the facts lean toward comprehensive sex education as the solution. The Guttmacher Institute's motto is “Advancing sexual and reproductive health worldwide”, which sounds to me like a pro-comprehensive standpoint.

### **Comprehensive Sex Education Might Reduce Teen Pregnancies, Study Suggests**

<http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2008/03/080319151225.htm>

I decided to use this as my last source, because none of my sources so far have been news articles, as I see them as oftentimes seeped in bias, based on the writer or editor. However, this one caught my eye for its careful use of science and statistics, and balance between study and opinion.

At this point, I have a lot of statistics, however, so I'd be more inclined to include the block quotes in my arguments somewhere. The quotes and opinions come from people with impressive credentials (doctorates, etc.) so it would be worthwhile to quote them if I decided to use them in an upcoming paper of sorts. I also liked how the quotes came back and said “the study does not show how

educators should implement comprehensive sex education in the classroom.” Using a quote like that to end an informative section would be ideal in a segue between a problem statement and a solution.

The client should take away from this article another source that confirms the same data that has been presented time and time again. Also, the client should take away from this particular source that all the studies suggest the same things, but that something needs to be done in implementation, which is perfect because in our project, we’re arguing for implementation.