

How To Speak About Sex With Our University Students

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ABSTRACT

This research was conducted during 2013 in order to determine the type of information, knowledge and attitudes that young people in our university have about sexuality. Parents think their children responsibility ends when they graduate from high school or come of age, but this position is a terrible mistake because education in values, closely related to all aspects of human life should be permanent, as they enter college they discover another world that could dazzle them and bring them to adopt wrong behaviors and attitudes.

The University of Guayaquil rightly included in the syllabi, youth sex education as one of its transverse axis, but there is no program that teachers can develop.

The hypothetical-deductive method was used in the analysis, by applying random, anonymous and confidential survey to a sample of 150 students out of a population of 1105 students corresponding to the eight levels of the School of Management at the Faculty of Administrative Sciences of the University of Guayaquil.

The results determined the background, the type of information and sexual practices of students, demonstrating that there is a degree of ignorance about some issues. At the end of this study, simple strategic tools were suggested, to help teachers refer to these kind of topics objectively, naturally and warmly so that young people understand the importance of taking their sexuality responsibly.

Keywords: taboo, responsible, sexuality, media, reporting, early pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases.

Introduction

Sexuality has always been considered "taboo", forbidden, embarrassing, inappropriate, and other adjectives, but it's an essential part of the life and happiness of all human beings. During adolescence, our university students go through difficult stages of development, which faces transcendental life situations, necessitating a sexual education that enables them, manage their body and sexuality in an informed and responsible manner, as due to their own momentum of an independent and self-taught youth they can take decisions that may affect their physical, spiritual or social welfare.

(Garcia A., 2009) says that teenagers lack of factual and effective information, and that they only know what they hear from experienced friends and the media, because they are ashamed to talk about their questions and concerns with family or teachers.

(Arcila A., 2003) suggests that sex education should provide scientific information free of prejudice and idealistic concepts and must adapt to social, cultural and personal needs. He added that each society develops standards for sexual behavior of people.

(Fominay, 2012) advises parents to be permanently involved in the lives of their children, choosing the right time to discuss

issues of sexuality, overcoming the discomfort and embarrassment, speaking calmly, using the right words, seizing every circumstance: a song, a television program, a film, using wisdom and creativity, never attacking or criticizing the young but rather trying to dialogue and not use the sermon, even a parent can relate to their own experiences and in case of not knowing the answers, investigate and resume the conversation later.

(Lopez, 2010) states that young people think that they can't get pregnant the first time they had sex or that nothing happens for having sex just once, but unfortunately they are myths, pregnancy can occur plus the possibility of getting a sexual transmitted disease.

(Garcia C., Los hábitos sexuales de los estudiantes y universitarios, 2005) states that young people should be motivated to approach sexuality in a simple way, as those responsible for providing sex education to young people, are not prepared or trained properly, so the ignorance and myths that still persists remain in the society.

(Arieu, Paulo and Johana, 2008) Suggest that relations before marriages are illegal, and it is necessary to preserve the purity, avoid bad company and be responsible in making decisions.

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(Ospina, Manrique, 2007) highlighted in their interesting study, that young people develop in a society of risk; violence, uncertainty, threats and reproductive risks are directly related to the economic and cultural conditions, they indicate that teachers must change their methods of group adaptation considering that graduates with the maturity to adapt to the university environment are a minority. They state that under the religious point of view, it's within the family where the children should understand the importance of purity and chastity but at schools or universities, teaching sex education should continue and include teaching of values, as sexual behavior cannot be separated from the moral and spiritual, proposing abstinence, educational guidance in human love.

In the article (The Journal of the Republic, 2004) it is mentioned that nowadays, young people want to remain virgins, but when a couple initiate a sexual life together is because they really fall in love and they don't not wait until they get married.

(Jara Molina, Caba, Molina, 1977) concluded after a detailed study, that it is necessary to develop educational actions to strengthen sex education as a matter of primary prevention at the University level.

In our country, teens are immersed into the Internet, either at home or in popular *cybercafes* where they have uncontrolled access to social networks and virtual games (usually associated with violence).

Computers, tablets and smart phones also provide indiscriminate access to all information, allowing them to visit many dishonest sites without guidance or supervision; inducing them easily to commit undesirable acts.

All these motives drive students towards an early start in the practice of intimate relationships. The results of studies conducted in 2012, showed that in Ecuador, the average age of onset, is between 12 and 18 years, 60% of girls and 78% of boys reported having had premarital relations.

In Ecuador, 19,112 cases of pregnant or breast-feeding teens of 12 to 17 years were documented, according to data provided by the Institute of Statistics and Census (Instituto de Estadísticas y Censos (INEC). The cases of STDs (sexually transmitted diseases), are difficult to detect since many infections have no alarming symptoms, also cases of sexual abuse or abortions often cannot be surveyed.

Alarming percentages are because in many cases the father and the mother must leave home to go to work and complete the budget, leaving their children under the supervision of maids, friends or family members who contribute little or nothing with their training, adding to this the negative influence of the media, especially television, which imposes subtle fashion, reactions and behaviors as a strategy for selling their products or services.

According to an article in the (Comercio, 2012) the Government through the Ministry of Public Health launched in all health centers in the country, the *National Intersectoral Strategy for Family Planning and Prevention of Teenage Pregnancy* (Estrategia Nacional Intersectorial de Planificación Familiar y Prevención del Embarazo en Adolescentes (Enipla)) whose slogan is *serious, sexuality without mysteries*

that included; TV commercials, a website, a hotline to eradicate the myths and taboos plus fifteen units to handle cases of sexual and domestic violence, offering free distribution of contraceptives and the morning after pill, but the program was not focused properly and its website was taken down and which critics say promoted irresponsible sexuality, its course is currently unknown and it is necessary that the current leaders, conduct a thorough study and analysis to propose properly such an important issue and that would benefit our promissory youth.

There are programs that are being implemented in schools, yet there are no specific projects for colleges, thinking perhaps that students no longer need it because they have already learned everything they need, but many students entering the University are teenagers from small towns or provinces that have not been exposed to the social life's of the big cities, reaching an adult world where they listen to comments, conversations, stories and jokes alluding to sex and other world vices, risking capturing a wrong, distorted information and lacking of proper training and knowledge, they could be involved in situations which they might regret later.

Parents are responsible for the sexual education of their children but it is also responsibility of the teachers to guide them and lead them to a better understanding of the magnitude of the issue, as students spend much of their time at the University.

Society must also assume part of the responsibility and it's through the University, that this can be achieved,, offering students not only quality academic training, but protection, values, hope, effective guidance for the project of life, adequate and effective sexual information to thereby prevent early pregnancies, the spread of disease, problems in the family, the dropouts, labor difficulties, among others, for which they are unprepared and that will definitely stop the achievement of their goals, affecting their wishes and dreams of a happy life.

Teachers must refer and discuss the transversal axes in the syllabi during classes which include sex education in youth.

Some logical questions arise such as:

Are teachers trained to deal with the subject with students?
What are the appropriate strategies?

Sexuality has always been a controversial and sensitive topic, so the presence of professional experts to deliver lectures and workshops for teachers is necessary because very few teachers are prepared to conduct such talks, but individually , they can develop research skills to self-educate and enlighten themselves scientifically and then share findings with students.

Objectives

Overall objectives are:

- Know the level of knowledge that students have about sexuality.
- Share with teaching strategies so that they can raise issues about sexuality in a different approach, as the Human Rights Code, is now based on culture and the Code of Good Living.

- Motivate teachers to plan activities that enable the development of values and virtues which will help sexuality be taken with respect, responsibility and the conviction that is a serious commitment that must be undertaken only when they are ready physically, emotionally and spiritually.

Among the specific objectives mentioned:

- Get a larger number of young people interested in receiving adequate information, and understand that their future depends on their correct decisions.
- Get young people to think about the serious risks to their health and life itself.
- Promote family communication as the main support and guidance for young people.
- Reduce the number of people abused by ignorance, the number of unplanned pregnancies and the number of people infected by countless diseases.
- Explain students that much of the information received through the media, is wrong, marketed or raised under their promoters point of view.
- Motivate fellow teachers to be fully involved in one of the most fundamental aspects in the lives of students, realizing that is part of the commitment when they accepted the chair.

Because it is an issue that concerns the private life of every human being, many will feel uncomfortable and find it difficult in expressing their ideas, that is why the teacher should handle the situation with great care, understanding, respect and discretion.

Methodology

Initially anonymous surveys were applied, in order that students can answer questions with greater confidence, in this way teachers will have a specific starting point that will vary according to each group, know the areas in which to work and the issues that must be strengthened, helping them effectively to prepare an open, candid, informative and positive dialogue with the students.

The hypothetical-deductive method was used by applying descriptive and anonymous surveys to a sample of 150 students between 18 and 25 years, from a population of 1105 participants, corresponding to men and women enrolled in 2013 from the first to the eighth level of the Business Management Career, at the Faculty of Administrative Sciences of the University of Guayaquil, to find out the level of knowledge that students have about the subject of sexuality, their situation and in order to obtain a background, attitudes and the kind of information they manage. Responses were tabulated by gender and results using Excel software.

Survey On Sexuality: Men and Women 18-25 Years

Question 1: Have you had an intimate relationship?

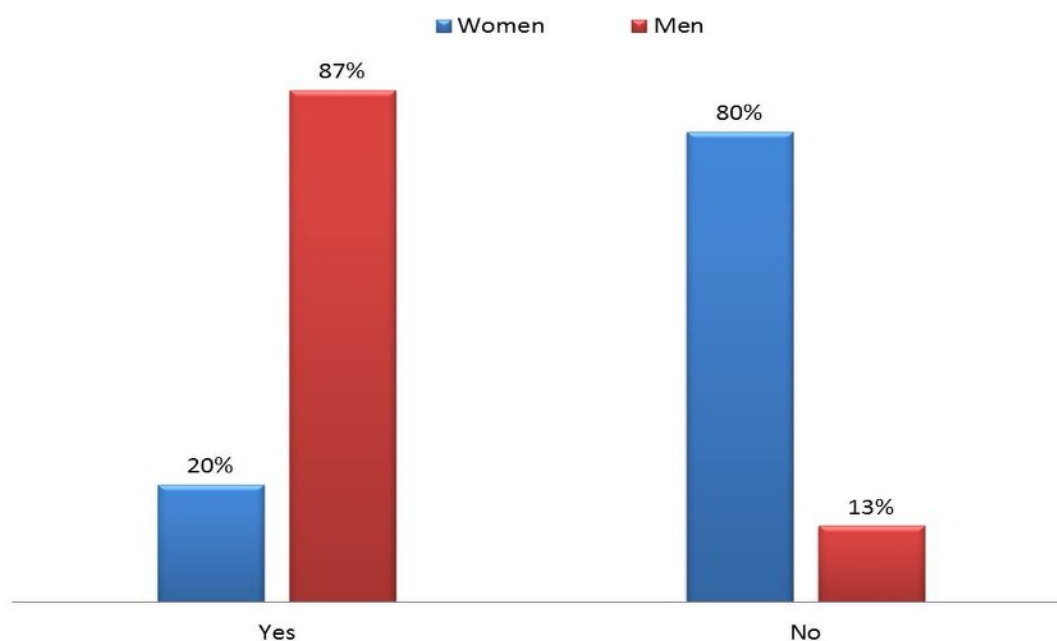


Chart 1: Intimate Relationships

Source: Survey conducted by the FCA to students of the School of Management

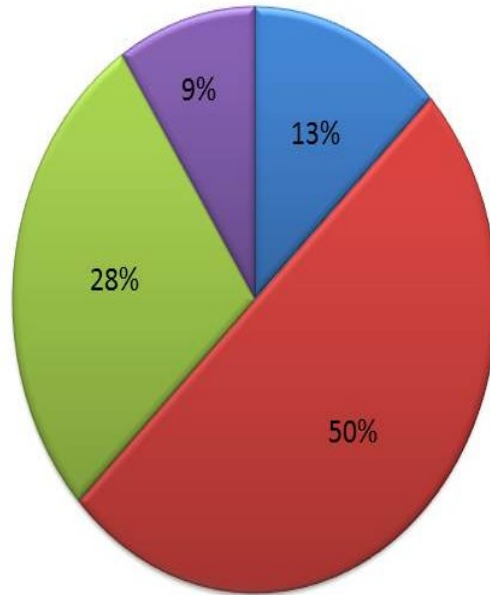
Authors: Dra. A. Cañizares Stay. / Mariela Cañar.

Chart 1 indicates that one in five female students and 87% of men reported having had intimate relations, reflecting a significant percentage of women who have received adequate and timely sexual information. For males, the high percentage that responded have had the experience, may be due to false

macho instilled by parents to their children and the influences and pressures from friends.

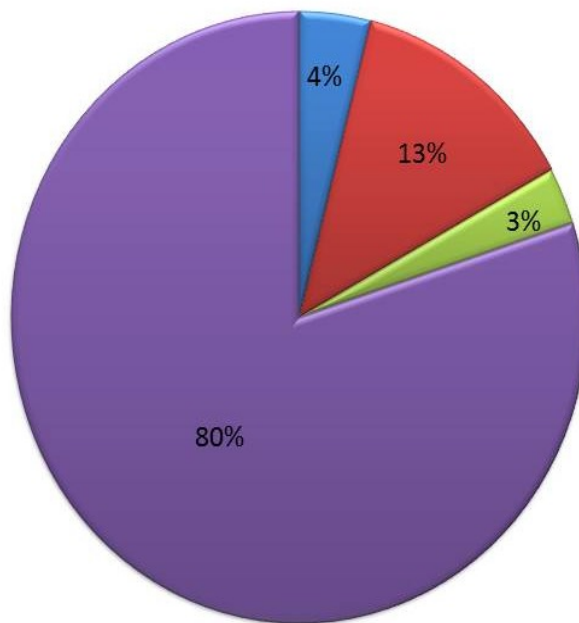
Question 2: At what age did you had your first intimate relationship?

Chart 2: First intimate relationship.



■ 12 Years ■ 13-18 Years ■ 18+ Years ■ Haven't had an Intimate Relationship

First intimate relationship-Male



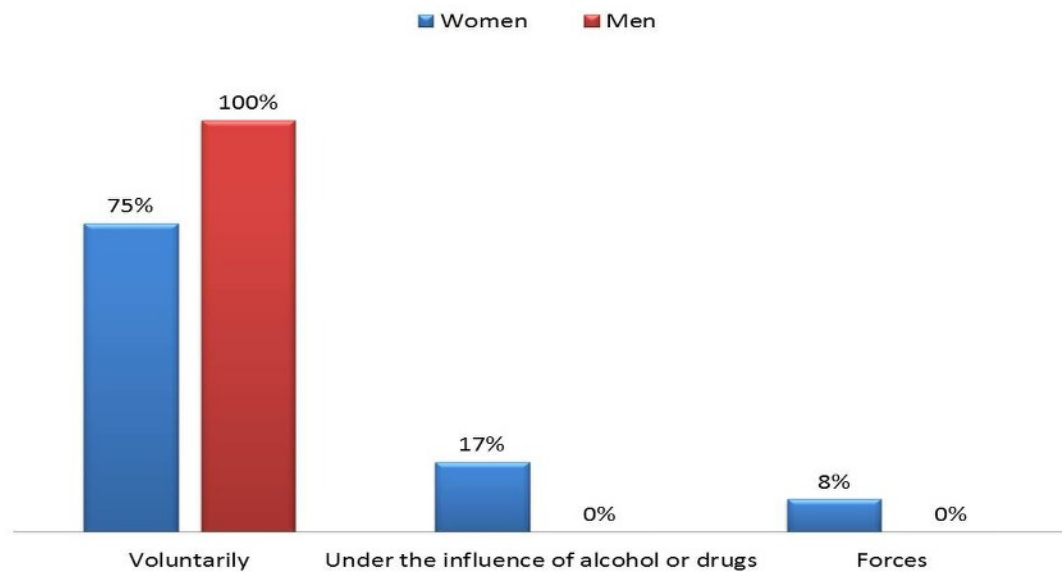
■ 12 Years ■ 13-18 Years ■ 18+ Years ■ Haven't had an Intimate Relationship

First intimate relationship-Female

Source: Survey conducted by the FCA to students of the School of Management

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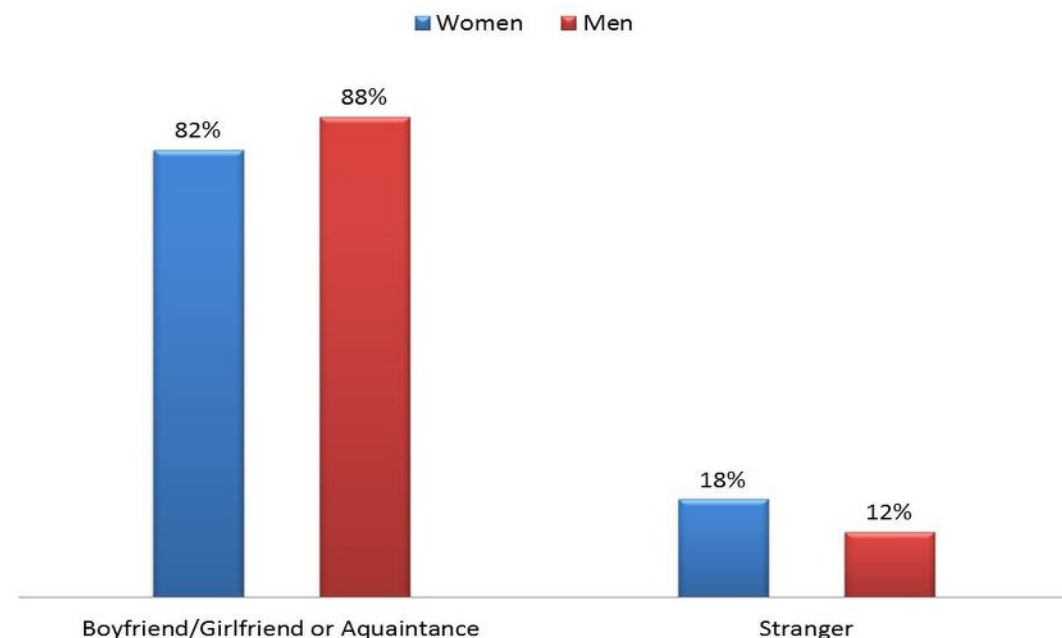
According to graph 2, males begin earlier in sexuality, only 3% indicated that they had experienced their first sexual intercourse at 12 years and 50% had their intimate relationships between 13 and 18 years. For women, 80% have not, the remaining 20% have had intimate relationship, 4% had sex at 12 years and 13% between 13 and 18; it's satisfactory to know that a large percentage of women handle their sexuality responsibly.

Question 3: The close relationship happened:**Chart 3:** Circumstance

Source: Survey conducted by the FCA to students of the School of Management

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All men said their relationship was voluntary, in the case of women, 25% answered that occurred without their consent: 17% under the influence of alcohol and 8% of this was a forced relationship; worrisome, recognize the vulnerability and risks to which women still today are exposed.

Question 4: The close relationship happened with:**Chart 4:** Implications

Source: Survey conducted by the FCA to students of the School of Management

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82% of respondents had indicated that their relationship with a boyfriend or friend and 18% to a relationship with a stranger, 88% of men responded that it happened with their girlfriend / acquaintances and 12% with an unknown woman.

Question 5: Protection used

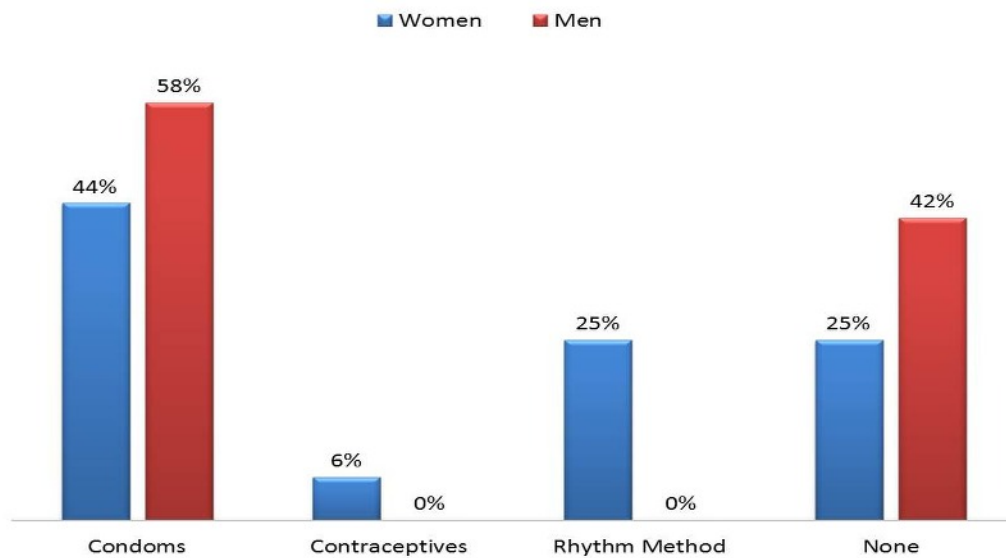


Chart 5: Types of Protection Used

Source: Survey conducted by the FCA to students of the School of Management

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The graphic shows that one out of four women did not take any precaution, 44% used condoms, 6% used contraceptives and 25% followed the rhythm method.

The results of men's answers showed that 58% protected with condoms and the remaining 42% did not take any protection.

Question 6: Additionally to an unwanted pregnancy did you know that there is a high risk of infection or any sexually transmitted disease in these practices?

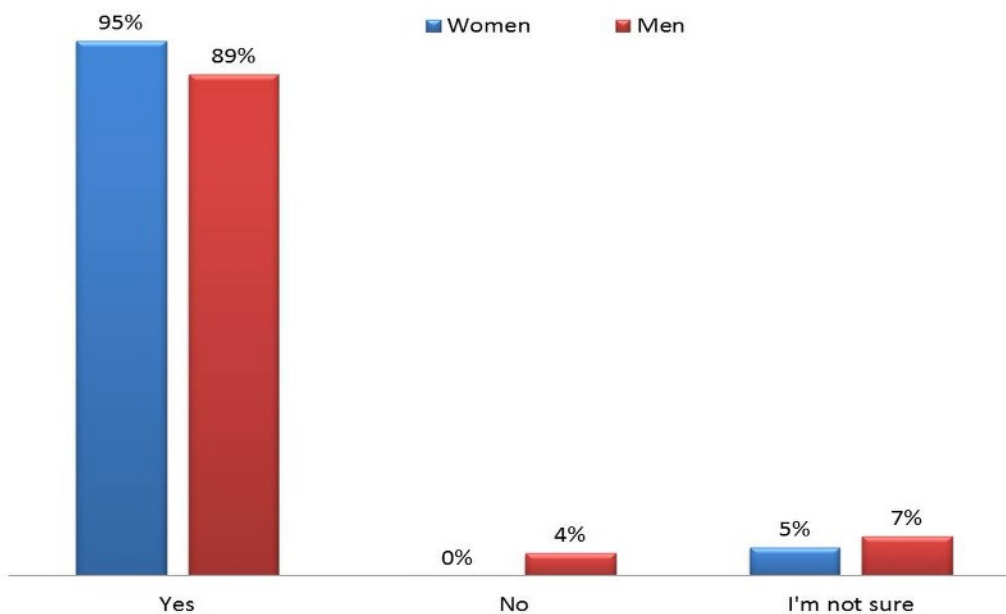


Chart 6: Risk Disclosure

Source: Survey conducted by the FCA to students of the School of Management

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The chart shows that the majority of students, 95% of women and 89% of men are aware of the risks and consequences of having illicit intimate relations.

Conclusions and Recommendations

As indicated at the beginning of the article, parents who love their children must guide them properly and promptly about

sexuality and in most cases there is no communication at home, no dialogue on this subject consequently resulting in the youth seeking wrong and inappropriate information, the same as in large percentage comes distorted, played under a bad approach which causes young people to acquire a totally manipulated orientation toward certain sexual education interest.

It is the duty of the government authorities to ensure proper teaching of sexual education aimed at young university students who have some knowledge about sexuality, yet we see often in our classrooms a significant number of students with serious problems resulting in the irresponsible management of their sexuality, we not only refer to female, because men also face many difficulties and are often forgotten, considering that the girls are the ones that require preventive education, which is discriminatory, since they also commit errors and must address the serious results of their wrong decisions.

Teachers have a responsibility to complement this important task by giving confidence to students, analyzing their questions, listening intently, not judging gestures or expressions, respecting their comments and lack of knowledge and, responding with affection and naturalness.

Among the topics suggested to be covered in class:

- Scientific and social aspects of sexuality
- Premarital sex and pregnancy
- Courtships and its limits
- Virtues to develop and strengthen
- Education in love

In order to provide teachers with a guide, some strategies are proposed to be applied in the classroom:

Guided Discussion

Discussing issues of sexuality is sometimes complicated because it touches the privacy and vulnerability of people but properly managed, brings many advantages: it helps to build a positive climate in the classroom, encourages students to be more realistic, analytical, reflective and caring in their sexual health.

A teacher must initially establish the rules of respect, sensitivity and interaction, then present the issue through a text article, image or video, commenting, refuting facts and myths, ensuring that all students have a similar level of understanding, then guide the discussion and encourage students to participate, whether asking, suggesting or expressing their ideas, distributing evenly over time from one participant to another. In the end, doubts are clarified and ideas for reaching a conclusion are summarized.

Teamwork

Excellent results are obtained in collaborative learning; students working in small groups learn more quickly, efficiently, identify problems, exchange ideas, opinions, experiences, points of view and propose solutions, developing academic and social skills. By working with others, attitude towards sexual health becomes positive and not only promotes intellectual growth, but social, as participants must

listen while others speak, learn body language techniques and use clear language, simple, respectfully.

Creating a website or blog

At these sites, the student has the opportunity to actively participate and discuss their experiences, ask questions about fears and concerns, read and comment other publication and give suggestions, the teacher acting as moderator is who defines the rules and decides what is published on the page.

Case studies

A great advantage can be taken from cases presented in books, soap operas, newspapers, advertisements on the streets, they offer excellent opportunities to be discussed with students.

Discussions, debates and forums

Topics about clothing, language, manners, habits and controversial issues are proposed. This type of strategy can be applied to groups that present a higher degree of maturity.

Symposium

Professional experts in different areas of knowledge related to the subject can be invited to contribute with their different points of view; psychologists, priests, sociologists gynecologists, sexologists.

Polls

They should have the character of anonymous and confidential and which will mark the starting point of the teacher's work.

Interviews

They can be applied equally to married couples with children, couples without children, single mothers or teenagers. It could include questions such as: What is love? How do you think children should be educated in love? What are the virtues that children should develop? Conversations about sexuality with children are important?

Contests

Teachers can organize posters, flyers, slogans, songs, videos or drama contests, alluding to the selected topic.

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