



National Sexuality Standards Practicing Health Educators Confidence & Proficiency

Carol Cummings, PhD, CHES

Christine Fisher, PhD, MPH, CHES

*“Education is not preparation for life;
education is life itself.” John Dewey*





Ask the Audience...

School Health Education

Build Functional
Knowledge &
Skills

Support Healthy
Behaviors:
Health Literacy

- Why might sexual health education be a challenge for educators to teach?
 - What should effective sexuality education teachers know and do?
 - How competent are educators with best practices, and planning and aligning sexual health education lessons with standards.
 - Which standards should be used when planning lessons?
- What have you experienced and/or observed regarding teaching this subject?
 - Factors affecting teaching K-12 sexual health education in your local communities and schools.
 - What have you heard or observed from students or the community that suggest a need for sexual health education?



What do we know?

Sexual Health Education Program Effectiveness

Decrease in
Pregnancy

Decrease in
STIs

Decrease in
Unprotected
Sex

Decrease in
Sexual Activity

Increase in
Decision
Making

(SIECUS, 2009; FoSE,n.d; Aford et al, 2008; Chin et al, 2012; Kirby et al, 2007;



National Teacher Preparation Standards for Sexuality Education

National Sexuality Education Standards

Teacher Standards

- 7 Areas of Proficiency: Professionalism; Diversity & Equity; Content Knowledge; Ethics; Planning; Implementation; & Assessment

Student Standards

- Essential minimum core content and skills; Evidence based appropriate learning; Support healthy sexual development

21st Century Skilled Teacher

21st Century Teacher Education:

What a successful teacher should know and do:

1. understand how all students learn;
2. comprehend national, state and district curriculum content, standards and goals;
3. implement teaching skills using best practices (based on instructional theories and content.)

(Darling-Hammond, 2006)



RI Profiles – Lead Health Educator Teacher Surveys

What can we learn from this information?

42% middle school & 60% high school taught all 11 sexual health topics.

19% reported receiving professional development on this topic

18% received professional development on teaching essential skills

34% received professional development on assessment/evaluation

Secondary teachers reported a need for: professional development in: HIV prevention (74%), Human sexuality (77%), pregnancy prevention (67%); STI prevention (71%).

(CDC, 2014)



Research Focus: National Sexuality Standards: Practicing Health Educators Confidence & Proficiency

- **Design:** A cross-sectional survey (Survey Monkey) emailed to teacher's work email addresses.
- **Target Audience:** RI public school health educators.
- **Data Analysis:** Responses were collected via Survey Monkey, then exported into SPSS.

NSES Topics Taught:	Taught (%)
Personal Safety	84%
Healthy Relationships	81%
Puberty and Development	78%
Anatomy and Physiology	73%
STI/HIV	62%
Pregnancy and Reproduction	60%
Identity	41%



Reported confidence in ability to teach sexuality education topics effectively

Sexuality Education Topics:	Confidence N (%)	Chi-Square
Personal Safety	107 (73%)	.880
Healthy Relationships	103 (70%)	1.16
Puberty and Development	99 (67%)	3.39
Anatomy and Physiology	97 (66%)	4.40*
Pregnancy and Reproduction	90 (61%)	9.28**
STI & HIV	85 (58%)	6.18*
Identity	53 (36%)	1.47

What can we learn from these results?

Do you think these results apply to all sexuality education teachers?

Based on these results, what questions do we need to ask?



Reported Confidence in Ability to Plan and Implement Sexuality Education Aligned with Rhode Island Comprehensive Health Instructional Outcomes

(National Health Ed. Standards)

RI Health Education Standards:

	Very Confident N (%)	Chi-Square
Students demonstrate the ability to use goal-setting and decision making skills to enhance health.	83 (57%)	3.20
Students demonstrate the ability to practice health-enhancing behaviors and reduce health risks.	80 (54%)	3.01
Students demonstrate the ability to access valid health information and health promoting products and services.	76 (51%)	5.87*
Students analyze the influence of culture, media, technology, and other factors on health.	75 (51%)	9.44*
Students demonstrate the ability to use interpersonal communication skills to enhance health.	72 (49%)	7.10*
Students demonstrate the ability to advocate for personal, family, community and environmental health.	71 (48%)	7.56*



Reported Proficiency with National Teacher Preparation Standards for Sexuality Education

National Teacher Preparation Standards for Sexuality Education	Proficient N (%)	Chi-Square
Show respect for individual, family and cultural characteristics and experiences that may influence student learning about sexuality.	110 (77%)	21.92**
Use a variety of effective strategies to teach sexuality education.	94 (66%)	6.35*
Demonstrate comfort with, commitment to and self-efficacy in teaching sexuality education	93 (65%)	13.34**
Implement effective strategies to assess student knowledge, attitudes and skills in order to improve sexuality education instruction.	90 (63%)	7.85*
Plan age- and developmentally-appropriate sexuality education that is aligned with standards, policies and laws and reflects the diversity of the community.	87 (61%)	6.58*
Possess accurate knowledge of the biological, emotional and social aspects of human sexuality and the laws relating to sexuality and youth.	85 (60%)	9.89*
Make decisions based on applicable federal, state and local laws, regulations and policies as well as professional ethics.	71 (50%)	10.38**



Where teachers reported having received training regarding sexuality education...

Training Source	N (%)
College course(s) focusing on sexuality education content knowledge	74 (39%)
Professional development (workshops, conferences, etc.) focused on sexuality education topics .	66 (35%)
College course(s) focusing on sexuality education teaching methods	37 (20%)
I have not received any training	34 (18%)
Professional development (workshops, conferences, etc.) focused on teaching sexuality education .	31 (16%)
Other: independent research (N=3), sought assistance from other faculty (N=4)	7 (4%)



National Sexuality Standards: Practicing Health Educators Confidence & Proficiency

Professional Development (PD)	N (%)
Interest in PD	90%
Focus of Sexual Health Education Professional Development	61% Teaching Strategies
	61% Engaging Learners
	46% Specific Topics and Content Knowledge

Limitations
Modest Return Rate / 1 New England State
Gender Bias / Self-Reported Responses

Discussion
Only 36% reported confidence in teaching about gender identity. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• NSES - identity addresses fundamental aspects of understanding who we are.
Less than 50% reported confidence teaching lessons where students master communication and advocacy skills (NHES)
Significant differences revealed those who took a college sexuality education course reported higher confidence/proficiency levels for several topics and standards.



Recommendations and Q & A

- Results: Academic course increases **Teacher Confidence & Perception of Proficiency**
- Professional development should mirror academic course components that build comfort where teachers can:
 - develop deep content knowledge
 - apply and practice pedagogical skills to engage learners
 - explore personal perspectives & vulnerabilities related to sexual health education & sexual development
 - analyze and develop competency with standards
(National Sexuality Education & National Teacher Preparation Standards for Sexuality Education)
- Professional development opportunities
 - Multitiered Framework: Deep Content Knowledge and Pedagogical Skills / Develop Self-Efficacy / Strategies to Address Barriers to Effective Sexual Health Education



21st Century
Highly Qualified
Sexual Health
Education Teacher

Moving Forward.....

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L0jQz6jqQS0>

John Oliver – Sex Education

- How can we better measure highly qualified sexual health education teachers?
 - Evidence should point to perceptions of proficiency that align with practice
 - How do we measure highly qualified practice?
- What can be learned from highly qualified sexual health teachers?
- How can we build skills in teachers to ask for professional development that meets their needs?
- Is there a professional development framework that can be explored that nudges resistant teachers to “get on board” with becoming a highly qualified sexual education teacher?
- Role of local colleges and universities in preparing pre-service teachers and practicing teachers?



References

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2013). Results from the school health policies and practices study. Retrieved from http://www.cdc.gov/healthyouth/data/shpps/pdf/shpps-results_2012.pdf
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2014). Characteristics of exemplary sex education. Retrieved from <http://www.cdc.gov/healthyouth/fundedpartners/1308/strategies/education.htm>
- Future of Sex Education Initiative. (n.d.). National teacher preparation standards for sexuality education. Retrieved from <http://www.futureofsexed.org/documents/teacher-standards.pdf>
- Alford S. (2008). Science and success: Sex education and other programs that work to prevent teen pregnancy, HIV and sexually transmitted infections. Washington, DC: Advocates for Youth.
- Chin, H. B., Sipe, T. A., Elder, R., Mercer, S. L., Chattopadhyay, S. K., Verugheese, J., ...Santelli, J. (2012). The effectiveness of group-based comprehensive risk-reduction and abstinence education interventions to prevent or reduce the risk of adolescent pregnancy, human immunodeficiency virus, and sexually transmitted infections. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 42(3), 272-294.
- Darling-Hammond, L. (2006). Constructing 21st-century teacher education. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 57(3), 1-15.
- Kirby, D. B, Laris, B. A., & Roller L. A. (2007). Sex and HIV education programs: Their impact on sexual behaviors of young people throughout the world. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 40, 206-217.
- SIECUS. (2015). SIECUS fact sheet: Support adolescent sexual health promotion & advance comprehensive sexuality education. Retrieved from <http://www.siecus.org/document/docWindow.cfm?fuseaction=document.viewDocument&documentid=489&documentFormatId=568>