

Sample Persuasive Outline

Student Z

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Section AZ

Topic: Comprehensive sex education in public schools

Introduction

- A. Attention Gaining Device:** Let's do a little survey. How many of you know what AIDS is? How many of you know what HPV is? HPV, or human papilloma virus, is the most common sexually transmitted disease in the US today. HPV can lead to genital warts and is the leading cause of cervical cancer (King). Why didn't more of us know that?
- B. How this topic affects the audience:** Currently, The US has one of the highest rates of STDs of any industrialized nation (CQ Researcher). Comprehensive sex education in public schools would dramatically reduce the level of STDs in this nation. While you may now know about STD prevention, your partner may not and your friends may not. The Family Life Education Act attempts to address this problem and the problem of unwanted teen pregnancy.
- C. Thesis:** We should support the Family Life Education Act.
- D. Preview**

- I. The Family Life Education Act encourages comprehensive sex education in public schools.
 - A. Currently, the US government funds abstinence only programs primarily
 - 1. Evidence: Statement from President Bush about funding (whitehouse.gov)
 - B. The proposed Family Life Education Act (FLEA) would award \$100 million a year of federal aid would go to comprehensive sex education
 - 1. Comprehensive sex education stresses the importance of abstinence as the only certain way to prevent unwanted pregnancy and STDs.
 - 2. Comprehensive sex education encourages communication about sex and sexuality between parents and children.
 - 3. Comprehensive sex education provides detailed information about the different forms of contraceptives.
- II. Sex education is more morally defensible than you might think.
 - A. Many of you may feel that teaching kids about contraceptives in public school is immoral.
 - 1. Evidence: Statement from Robert Rector of the Heritage Foundation about the explicitness of the teaching material (CQ Researcher)
 - 2. Evidence: Statement from Leslee Unruh, of the Abstinence Clearinghouse about the danger of teaching that sex is ok at any age (CQ Researcher).
 - B. However, teaching kids about contraception is not necessarily immoral.
 - 1. Teaching kids how to use condoms and birth control does not tell them it's alright to have premarital sex.
 - 2. Along with this information, kids are reminded that abstinence is the only way to get full protection from STDs and unwanted pregnancy.
 - 3. Evidence: Study from the Kaiser Family Foundation showing that parents rarely talk with their kids about sex (Kaiser Family Foundation)
- III. Comprehensive sex education is more effective than abstinence-only programs
 - A. Those in favor of abstinence-only programs suggest that they are more effective at reducing teen pregnancy and STDs.
 - 1. Evidence: Statement from President Bush talking about the "power and promise" of abstinence education (Boyer)
 - B. Unfortunately, abstinence-only education is not consistently effective in reducing adolescent sexual activity.

1. Evidence: Report from the Council of Scientific Affairs stating that there is no evidence that abstinence education works better (Council on Scientific Affairs)
 2. Abstinence-only programs do not take into consideration children that are already sexually active, were sexually abused, or come from non-traditional households.
- C. Abstinence training combined with contraceptive education is most effective in reducing teen pregnancy and STD rates.
1. Evidence: Somers and Gleason's study that found that comprehensive education reduced adolescent sexual behavior more than abstinence-only education (Education).
 2. When kids hear the whole story about different forms of contraception, they can see that abstinence really is the best way to prevent STDs
 3. Evidence: It's model supported by the American Medical Association, the American Nurses Association, the American Academy of Pediatrics, and the American Public Health Association, and the Society of Adolescent Medicine (Council on Scientific Affairs)

References

- Boyer D. Teens get Bush's views on sex: stresses abstinence lessons in school. The Washington Times, Friday, September 15, 2000.
- Council on Scientific Affairs. Report of the Council on Scientific Affairs. [Action of the AMA House of Delegates 1999 Interim Meeting, CSA Report 7-I-99]. Chicago, IL: American Medical Association, 1999.
- Family Life Education Act of 2001, H. R. 3469, 107th Cong., 1st Sess. (2001) Retrieved October 13, 2003, from <http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov>
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- Kaiser Family Foundation. (1996, June 24). Survey on teens and sex: What they say teens today need to know and who they listen to. [News release]. Princeton Survey Research Associates. Retrieved November 11, 2003 from <http://www.kff.org/content/archive/1159/teenrel.pdf>.
- King, B. M (2001). Human Sexuality Today. (4th ed.) Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Somers, C. L., & Gleason, J. H. (2001). Does source of sex education predict adolescents' sexual knowledge, attitudes, and behavior? Education, 121(4) 674-681.

Notes on the sample outline:

Invention

- The thesis could be more precise. Something like, "The Family Life Education Act provides the best available way to protect all young people from the spread of dangerous sexually transmitted diseases."
- I would drop the moral argument in point II since people who disagree with sex education on moral grounds probably won't be swayed. The comparison of effectiveness is good. In fact, I might replace the moral argument with an argument arguing that sex education doesn't lead to a significant increase in underage sex. At the very least, the 2 arguments in point III, could be broken up into 2 main points.
- A topic like this would greatly benefit from more examples. This is a topic that affects people in a very real way, but there are no stories or examples that personalize this topic.

Arrangement

- The background point is good, but could be fleshed out more.
- Again, I would make point II a comparative point instead of a moral point. This also provides more clarity to the structure—you have two comparative points: one showing that both programs result in similar levels of sex ed; a second showing that despite this similar sex outcome the health outcomes are very different.

Style

- The style here is pretty straight forward. I would try to spend more time talking about the health outcomes of both programs.
- I would try as much as possible to neutralize the moral objection by arguing that this isn't a matter of promoting sex so much as preserving safety for all young people regardless of moral background.