

OPINION

Sex Education vs. Abstinence Education

L'Asia Brown

In the North Carolina public school system, state law currently prohibits a comprehensive sex education curriculum. Abstinence education is the only program available to some 765,000 preteens and teenagers aged 12-18 (www.ncpublicschools.org; 2009 statistical profile), who are currently adjusting to raging hormones and battling puberty in 2010---not 1965, but 2010. According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention's National Center for Health Statistics, from 1940 to 1957 the teenage pregnancy rate soared 78%. The rate steadily decreased until the mid 1980s, from which it rose another 24 percent. The rate dropped until 2007, in which it increased, reversing a 15 year decline, according to National Center for Health Statistics.

Tragically, 68% of teen mothers will drop out of high school. The United States has the highest teenage pregnancy rate out of all developed countries. It is twice that of England and Canada, and eight times the rate of Japan. Although 21 states, plus the District of Columbia, allow teenagers to obtain contraceptives without parental consent, there are still another 29 states with millions of teens who may simply be too embarrassed to ask mom or dad about the pill, the shot, or other contraceptive methods (www.pregnantteehelp.org; Teen Sex Statistics). This brings me to believe that North Carolina needs to re-evaluate and tailor its sex education policies to keep up with the modernized lifestyles of young men and women.

A staggering 49.5% of children in the NC public school system come from low-income homes and receive free or reduced lunch (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, Child Nutrition Services), meaning that although the ideal parent should sit down with their child to discuss intimacy, sexuality, contraceptive availability, and answer any questions their children may have about sex, many of them are too busy working tirelessly to ensure the child has shoes to walk to the bus stop in. The child ends up not getting the "sex talk" from anybody, then they go and make the same mistakes their parent(s) did and continue the vicious cycle of teenage pregnancy that is contaminating low-income neighborhoods across the nation.

These situations are detrimental to a culture during a time when African-American children are being born more often to young, unmarried mothers than to established, married couples. Many pro-comprehensive individuals feel that North Carolina is silently catering to a Christian Agenda by ruling out comprehensive sex education programs. "Yes the bible states that premarital sex is a sin, but with 78.5 pregnancies out of every 1,000 teens in the US, it becomes an issue of education verses ignorance. It doesn't matter whether a child grew up in the church or in an Agnostic home, their hormones are going to get the best of them if they don't know how to act in pressured situations. They have to know how and have the ability to protect themselves" says Brittany, a senior Sociology major.

There is the ideal versus reality, and we as a society must always encourage the ideal, but never stray from teaching reality. "I believe that both should be taught in public schools. Kids are having kids at younger ages everyday and adolescent STD rates are soaring...We want them to be aware of all the risks so that they can refrain from [practicing risky behavior] not just hear about them," comments Omar Blue, a junior Business Administration major.

Commonly in the past, children had three sources of guidance and discipline: home, school and their chosen place of worship, whether it was a church, mosque, or synagogue. Fast forward to 2010 and many children and teens get one out of three...school. Teachers can serve as more than talking textbooks and give needy teens the tools to prevent themselves from becoming statistics, while still encouraging the students to wait for a stable, mature relationship to engage in intimate behavior. The saying "It takes a village to raise a child" has never been more relevant.

Product Review_ *Review Of The iPad*

By: James Mundy

Many of us now have the iPhone, or the iPod as forms of communication as well as entertainment. Downloading different applications and attributes to these devices is fairly simple and are very effective. Apple CEO, Steve Jobs has now released a new technological device, the iPad. Similar to a netbook, a smaller notebook, the iPad will be compatible with nearly 150,000 programs coming from the factory. The keyboardless design of the device allows you to easily type documents, send emails,

or keep track of day to day activities without losing any level of comfort while doing so. Applications from the iPhone can also be run on the iPad as well. The size of the device is moderate and convenient at 9.7 inches.

There are many limitations however to the iPad, one being that it does not have a camera, a tool that many of us use daily. It also has no support for Adobe's Flash technology, so many video sites and most online games won't work. The iPad doesn't have a memory card or a USB port, making transferring photos, music and videos

a lot harder to do. You can upload photo files onto iPad, but you have to purchase an external adapter to do so. The cost may limit many people from purchasing the soon to be released iPad mainly because of a lack of capabilities and features that many thought would be there. Its starting price is \$499. This includes 16-GB of storage, and no 3G broadband. The price tops out at \$829, with the buyer getting 64-GB of storage, and AT&T 3G coverage.

Don't become infatuated with the new iPad. Talks are that in 2011,

Apple will release another version of the iPad, which will more than likely have everything the first one didn't, but at a different price. If Apple's new device interests you, wait until the review of the iPad comes out to see if it's worth spending the money Apple is asking for. There are also similar devices out there that are roughly the same price, that do the same thing. The Amazon Kindle 2 priced at \$259, is essentially the same product. The buyer just can't utilize the amount of programs that one could have with an iPad.