

**AUTONOMY-FACILIAION OR AUTONOMY-PROMOTION?
THE CASE OF SEX EDUCATION**

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In the book *School Choice and Social Justice*, Harry Brighouse makes a compelling case “that children should have the opportunity to learn *the skills associated with autonomy* and that parental preference is not sufficient reason to deny them that opportunity” (2000, p. 70; emphasis mine). Brighouse argues that autonomy-related skills are instrumental in helping individuals discover “how to live well,” particularly under modern conditions of “moral and economic complexity” (2000, p. 69). By his account, because children are not “hard-wired” to be autonomous, the skills and knowledge associated with autonomy “must be explicitly taught” (Brighouse, 2000, p. 71). There is no guarantee that students will have opportunities to acquire these skills and knowledge outside the formal school environment; after all, some parents may deliberately shield their children from “exposure to other ways of life” and seek to forestall their development of the “critical faculties” needed to evaluate different life choices (Brighouse, 2000, pp. 70-71). Thus, Brighouse reasons, the state should ensure that children have opportunities to acquire autonomy-related skills and knowledge in school, regardless of the wishes of their parents. Providing such opportunities to children is a matter of justice, rooted in the “fundamental interest each person has in living well” (2000, pp. 71-72).

In arguing that children should have the opportunity to learn autonomy-related skills and knowledge in school, Brighouse departs sharply from liberal theorists, like William Galston (1991; 1995), who believe that the advancement of autonomy is an altogether inappropriate objective for mandatory schooling. Yet Brighouse also distances himself from liberals, like Eamonn Callan (1997; 2000) and Rob Reich (2002), who argue that the state should actively *promote* autonomy. According to Brighouse, the liberal state should *facilitate*, and not promote, autonomy. Brighouse contends that an “autonomy-facilitating education” is preferable to an

“autonomy-promoting education” from the standpoint of liberal legitimacy (1998, pp. 733-736; 2000, p. 76-82). He argues that insofar as it not only cultivates skills, but also an inclination to use those skills, an autonomy-promoting education “actively conditions” an autonomy-based conception of the good life (Brighouse, 2000, p. 82), thereby undermining citizens’ ability to give free, unconditioned consent (a prerequisite for liberal legitimacy). By contrast, an autonomy-facilitating education is “character neutral”: it aims to cultivate “critical skills without aiming to inculcate the inclination to use them” (Brighouse, 2000, p. 81). In other words, by focusing on imparting knowledge and skills without trying to shape children’s characters, an autonomy-facilitating education seeks to “enable [children] to live autonomously should they wish to...without trying to ensure that they do so” (Brighouse, 2000, p. 80).

The question at the heart of this paper is whether Brighouse’s autonomy-facilitating education is robust enough to overcome threats to children’s development of a capacity for autonomy. I begin in Section I by elaborating on why all children should have opportunities to develop this capacity. In Section II, I briefly examine William Galston’s theory of education in the liberal state, which emphasizes broad toleration of the educational practices of parents and local communities and thus serves as an illustrative counterpoint to theories of education that prioritize children’s prospective interest in autonomy. I argue that Galston’s theory gives parents and local communities too much unchecked control over their children’s cognitive and character development, thereby affording insufficient protection to children’s welfare and developmental interests. In Section III, I draw from Eamonn Callan’s paper, “Liberal Legitimacy, Justice, and Civic Education” (2000), in arguing that Brighouse’s autonomy-facilitating education is inadequate because of its failure to attend to the dispositional aspects of autonomy. Finally, in

Section IV, I use the case of sex education to illustrate further the shortcomings of an autonomy-facilitating education.

I. The value of autonomy in modern pluralistic societies

Personal autonomy generally refers to one's capacity to be self-governing and to make important decisions about the direction of one's life without external manipulation. The value of personal autonomy has to be understood within the context of a certain kind of society, with certain structural features. As Joseph Raz asserts, personal autonomy is:

an ideal particularly suited to the conditions of the industrial age and its aftermath with their fast changing technologies and free movement of labour. [These conditions] call for an ability to cope with changing technological, economic and social conditions, for an ability to adjust, to acquire new skills, to move from one subculture to another, to come to terms with new scientific and moral views (1988, 369-370).

In a society that does not fit this kind of description—a simple agrarian, or hunter/gatherer society, for instance—the capabilities and dispositions associated with personal autonomy will not have the same relevance for individuals. But in modern societies characterized by rapid social and technological change, where different creeds, cultures, and visions of the good life proliferate and where individuals occupy many different social roles, it is critical that individuals learn to adapt to changing circumstances, grapple with different ideas and perspectives, and adjust their lives accordingly. Individuals who lack these capacities are less likely to lead flourishing lives where such complex social conditions predominate.

Personal autonomy has become a key ingredient in the quest for the good life because it helps people negotiate the “moral pluralism” that abounds in complex, diverse and ever-changing societies. Under conditions of moral pluralism, there are many different—and in some cases incompatible—versions of the good life that individuals might pursue: some are dedicated

to action, some to contemplation; some are career-oriented, some family-oriented, and some both; some are religious, some non-religious; etc. But individuals cannot pursue them all. The pursuit of a particular version of the good life preempts the pursuit of some others. This is not to say that a decision about how to live one's life, once made, is irreversible. Yet it is to say that such decisions will always involve tradeoffs between different virtues.

But why must we necessarily make such life decisions for ourselves? Why shouldn't others—parents, religious authorities, or other major figures in our lives—decide for us? The fact of “constitutional pluralism,” to borrow Harry Brighouse's phrase (2000, p. 73), provides a powerful rationale for why we should exercise personal autonomy and direct the course of our own lives in a social context characterized by value fragmentation and the specialization of social roles. The idea behind constitutional pluralism is that “people have different personalities, characters, or internal constitutions, that suit them differently well to different ways of life” (Brighouse, 2000, p. 73). Put another way, individuals are hard-wired differently at birth; they are not cut from the same mold. As a consequence, the life that a person's family or community may wish him to lead may not be the life that he is best suited for. Consider a teenager whose parents insist that she dedicate her life to the practice of law, even though she is cognitively ill-equipped for, and wholly uninspired by such a life. Or to cite Brighouse's “stark example,” assume that homosexuality is largely an “unchosen trait” and then consider a homosexual teenager who grows up in a religious community that commands that he never engage in homosexual activity (2000, p. 73). Unless the teenagers in question have the ability to reject the plans that have been laid out for them, their chances of leading happy, flourishing lives are greatly diminished. This is why personal autonomy is so important. In a world in which there are many different avenues to the good life, and in which everyone's internal constitution is

different, individuals should have the ability and the opportunity to determine their own best course in life, and they should have substantial freedom to pursue that course.

II. A counterpoint: William Galston's theory of education

Thus far, I have been focusing on why children have a fundamental interest in developing a capacity for autonomy. Before considering whether Brighouse's autonomy-facilitating education properly honors this interest, it will be useful to briefly examine William Galston's theory of education in the liberal state.

Galston's views of how far the state should go in imposing common educational standards, and to what ends, clearly distinguish him from liberals who call for the facilitation or promotion of autonomy in schools. Galston argues that in determining objectives for mandatory civic education, the state must balance civic imperatives with respect for "wide parental rights" (1995, p. 529). In his view, the imposition of civic education requirements on recalcitrant minorities can only be justified by recourse to "compelling state interests" (Galston, 1995, p. 529). The promotion of toleration, according to Galston, constitutes a compelling state interest, and to that end, the state may require that students develop a "minimal awareness" of ways of life that differ from their own (1995, p. 529). Yet Galston does not believe that the state is justified in requiring more substantial engagement with alternative ways of life, and he adamantly denies that the state has the authority to "foster in children skeptical reflection on ways of life inherited from parents or local communities" (1991, p. 253). By his account, requiring a rudimentary knowledge of alternative values, beliefs and practices should suffice to promote mutual toleration, which constitutes a compelling state interest and shared liberal

purpose. But if it requires more than this, the liberal state exceeds its rightful authority and transgresses the rights of parents.

Thus, in Galston's view, the liberal state is not justified in instituting an education that facilitates and encourages critical evaluation of different ways of life. To require such an education is to force all citizens—including citizens whose lives are structured around firm moral and religious commitments—to conform to an autonomy-based vision of the good life that he believes should not be associated with liberalism (Galston, 1995, pp. 521-527). Instead, a liberal society must protect and defend citizens' "right to live unexamined as well as examined lives—a right the effective exercise of which may require parental bulwarks against the corrosive influence of modernist skepticism" (Galston, 1991, p. 254). By Galston's account, parents and communities should be free to discourage their children from engaging in critical reflection of different ways of life, and to structure their children's education accordingly. Again, in his view, a modicum of exposure to alternative ways of life is all that is required for the promotion of toleration, and when the state institutes educational demands that go above and beyond this purpose, it exceeds its rightful authority.

Galston's arguments against the facilitation and promotion of autonomy, and his support for policies aimed at the protection of deep diversity, are motivated by a Millian concern over the homogenizing and despotic tendencies of the modern bureaucratic state. In his famous essay, *On Liberty*, Mill argues that absent alternatives, state-run schools become "a mere contrivance for molding people to be exactly like one another," an instrument of indoctrination and oppression for the party in power, be it "a monarch, a priesthood, an aristocracy, or [a democratic] majority" (2002 [1859], p. 110). It is just this kind of concern that animates William Galston's strong presumption in favor of parents' rights and his corresponding criticism of

extensive state mandates in the educational realm (1991, pp. 241-256; 2002, pp. 93-109). In light of the far-reaching claims that sometimes are made by contemporary liberals in the name of securing civic interests and promoting the common good,¹ this kind of concern is not unfounded, and should not be given short shrift.

But it should be remembered that Mill also warned against giving too much authority to parents in directing their children's education, and he was keenly sensitive to the specter of parental despotism. Mill observed that in Europe during his day, public sentiment leaned so heavily in favor of the supposed right of parents (and fathers, in particular) to exercise "absolute and exclusive" dominion over their children that "one would almost think that a man's children were supposed to be literally, and not metaphorically, a part of himself" (2002 [1859], p. 109). Mill flatly rejected the premise that absolute control over one's children (and their education) is simply an extension of one's own basic rights and freedoms as a parent. Such a premise, he argued, rests upon "misplaced" ideas about liberty. For although the harm principle suggests that the individual should be free to carry out any action that concerns himself only, it does not suggest that the same individual should "be free to do as he likes in acting for another under the pretext that the affairs of another are his own affairs" (Mill, 2002 [1859], p. 108). Mill argued that in spite of their nonage, children ought to be respected as individuals in themselves, with rights and freedoms that are independent of their parents and others. Among the rights children retain, by Mill's account, is a right to an education that adequately prepares them to reason and make informed decisions on their own, and to exercise their rights and freedoms as adult citizens.

¹ Some of the claims that Stephen Macedo makes in his essay "Transformative Constitutionalism and the Case of Religion"—and the language that he uses to advance those claims—are a good example. Macedo says that to ensure its own survival, a constitutional regime "must constitute the private realm in its image." He calls for a "transformative liberalism" in which the state imposes mainstream liberal ideals on constituent communities (Macedo, 1998, pp. 56-80).

In elucidating some of his concerns about absolute parental control over education, I do not mean to suggest that Mill was a proponent of relieving parents of all discretion over their children's education. Mill acknowledged that providing an adequate education for their children "is one of the most sacred duties of the parents...after summoning a human being into the world" (2002 [1859], p. 109). It is a defining duty—one which makes parenting such a profoundly meaningful experience—and he felt parents should have some latitude to fulfill that duty in a manner consistent with their particular vision of the good life. Yet at the same time, Mill asserted that when parents deprive their children of an adequate education, they commit "a moral crime, both against the unfortunate offspring and against society" (2002 [1859], p. 109). He argued that if the father, either through neglect or poor decision-making, should fail in his sacred duty, then the state must see to it that his children receive the education they will need to exercise independent thought. Thus, it must be acknowledged that in addition to his misgivings about state control over education, Mill also voiced deep misgivings about parental control over education, and he believed that the state had a critical role in ensuring that parents make adequate provision for their children's education.

I do not mean to suggest that this latter concern over parental despotism and neglect is completely missing from Galston's account, but it often feels as though he underestimates it. He does not seem to be attentive enough to the various ways in which parents and local communities can become microcosms of the tyrannical state that he finds so troubling. Denying children the opportunity to receive the kind of education that enables them to think and act for themselves is one fairly obvious way that parents exercise despotism over children. Shaping their character so that they are disinclined to exercise independent choice is another. The policies and educational proposals that Galston advances do not seem to be nearly robust enough to counter the kinds of

conformity that some families and groups exact on their children. In negotiating the Scylla of state tyranny and the Charybdis of parental and community despotism, Galston's theory of education drifts too closely to the Charybdis, and the potential moral costs to children are great.

III. The shortcomings of an autonomy-facilitating education

In delving more deeply into the educational prerequisites for children's development of a capacity for autonomy—and potential obstructions to that development—the major weakness of Brighouse's character-neutral, autonomy-facilitating education comes to the fore: its exclusive focus on knowledge and skills and concomitant failure to attend to the dispositional aspects of autonomy. In defending such an education, Brighouse does not show adequate appreciation for the ways in which parents and local communities can thwart their children's prospective autonomy by cultivating a psychological resistance to independent thought and action. As Eamonn Callan argues, adults typically do not inhibit the child's development of a capacity for autonomy simply by “blocking the acquisition of knowledge or skill” (2000, p. 146). Rather, they do so by shaping the child's “affect and desire” in such a way that even if she acquires knowledge and skills that are conducive to autonomy later in life, these will not be enough to overcome her developed disinclination to exercise independent thought and action. In sharpening this point, Callan asks the reader to consider an example of a child who is taught to believe that a woman's proper place is in the home, and that she must become a housewife when she grows up. Callan notes that if all that sustains this sexist belief is a lack of the relevant knowledge or skills, exposure to Brighouse's autonomy-facilitating education might be enough for her to rethink and revise the belief. However, if “emotional inhibitions” have been cultivated in the child, such that she is disinclined to expose this belief to reflective criticism, “then

knowledge of alternative careers and the skills to pursue them acquired later will do nothing to shake her sense of domestic destiny” (Callan, 2000, p. 146). In other words, Brighthouse’s autonomy-facilitating education will not enable children to live autonomously in cases where they have been predisposed, by means of character formation, to live non-autonomously.

In light of these considerations, I do not believe Brighthouse’s autonomy-facilitating education suffices to protect children’s vital interest in developing a capacity for autonomy. Children must be taught knowledge, skills *and* dispositions conducive to autonomy, including a disposition to: a) reflect on the values, beliefs and ways of life inherited from parents and local communities and b) give serious consideration to alternatives. In other words, children must be given access to the kind of character-*partial*, autonomy-*promoting* education that Brighthouse disavows, rather than the character-neutral, autonomy-facilitating education that he advances.

IV. The Case for Autonomy-Promoting Sex Education

In this, the concluding section of my paper, I briefly examine what recent studies suggest about the effectiveness of various approaches to sex education in the U.S. This will help to clarify my major objection to Brighthouse’s autonomy-facilitating education and the reasons why I believe children should have access to an autonomy-promoting education instead.

In spite of the gargantuan sums the U.S. government spends each year on abstinence-only sex education programs², independent research—including a recently-released, multiyear study commissioned by Congress—suggests that such programs are ineffective at delaying the age of first coitus, reducing the number of sexual partners, and encouraging sexually active teens to return to abstinence (Kirby, 2007; Trenholm, et al., 2007). In light of these findings, state

² Since 1981, the federal government has spent roughly \$1.5 billion on abstinence-only education, and for the 2009 fiscal year, the Bush Administration has proposed a record \$204 million for abstinence-only education. (Advocates for Youth, 2008)

support for abstinence-only education is difficult to justify, particularly if other approaches prove to be more effective at reducing the personal and social costs associated with adolescent sexual activity. Moreover, even if abstinence-only programs did prove to be effective (even *very* effective) at promoting abstinence, they still would be difficult to justify in light of the autonomy-related concerns raised in this paper. Suppose we can agree that it is generally best if teens abstain from sex until they're older, and perhaps until they're married. And suppose further that by providing abstinence-only education, we persuade a greater number of teens to remain abstinent. While this may be a desirable outcome, it is not a sufficient criterion of educational success. From a long term perspective on the best interests of children, convincing children to postpone sex—however desirable—is at best a mixed blessing if our methods for accomplishing this involve withholding information (or providing misinformation) about reproduction, contraception, and the spread of STDs, and teaching them simply to defer to authorities on matters of fundamental importance to their own welfare. A sex education curriculum that properly respects children's present and *future* welfare, as well as their prospective interest in autonomy, will help them understand the reasons why they should abstain from sex, and give them the tools they need to make healthy, independent decisions about their own sexuality—objectives that are more often associated with comprehensive approaches to sex education.

Yet while I have offered some empirical evidence that indicates abstinence-only education is ineffective, I have not offered any evidence that suggests comprehensive sex education is any more effective in shaping adolescent sexual behavior in positive ways—by discouraging risky sexual behavior and increasing the use of contraceptives, for instance. Without such evidence, we might conclude that whatever form it takes, sex education in schools

does not make an appreciable difference in the lives of individual students, and does not confer benefits on society. Shouldn't, then, schools avoid sex education altogether, especially given the explosive controversy that surrounds the subject, and the impassioned sentiments it invokes among parents and citizens? Aren't limited public revenues better spent on programs that have a discernable impact on the lives of individuals—such as health care and rehabilitation programs for wounded veterans?

Indeed some scholars, while acknowledging that comprehensive sex education is not the “corrupting social practice” many of its conservative detractors make it out to be, nevertheless raise doubts about its efficacy in shaping adolescent sexual behavior. Jeffrey Moran (2000) critiques what he describes as the “instrumentalist model” of sex education, and the faith that both supporters and detractors of comprehensive sex education put into this model. Citing a handful of studies conducted over the last half century, he notes that students who complete comprehensive sex education courses “know more sexual facts” than their peers who don't take these courses (Moran, 2000, p. 219). And students who take these courses “evinced the intention, at least, to alter elements of their [sexual] behavior” (Moran, 2000, p. 219) Yet these studies do not suggest that these students actually do alter their behavior in any significant way. On the one hand, according to Moran, exposure to comprehensive sex education does not appear to increase sexual activity among adolescents. On the other hand, it does not appear to decrease such activity, or make it more likely that adolescents will practice safe sex by using contraception.

Similarly, Barbara DaFoe Whitehead, in an essay entitled “The Failure of Sex Education,” critiques what she describes as the “technocratic approach” to sex education, which focuses on imparting “knowledge and technical skills”—such as information about condoms and instruction in their use (1994, pp. 64 and 67). Supporters of this approach assume that “once

teenagers acquire a formal body of sex knowledge and skills, along with the proper contraceptive technology, they will be able to govern their own sexual behavior responsibly” (Whitehead, 1994, p. 67). Yet according to Whitehead, research on adolescent sexuality has not established a clear connection between sexual knowledge and sexual behavior.³ Citing a decade of work by renowned sex education researcher Douglas Kirby, Whitehead reaches the same conclusion Moran does: that while courses that employ the technocratic approach may help students become more informed about contraception, pregnancy, and STDs, they do not help convince these students to postpone sexual activity, or to engage in safe sex. Ultimately, she argues, the faith that advocates of the technocratic approach place in “the power of knowledge to change behavior” is divorced from the stark realities of adolescent sexuality (Whitehead, 1994, p. 67).

Moran’s and Whitehead’s arguments caution against the assumption that children are predisposed to act autonomously, and merely need access to a breadth of information about the mechanics of sex and reproduction, contraception, and the spread of disease in order to make healthy, independent sexual decisions. The “technocratic” version of sex education with which these authors find fault focuses exclusively on students’ cognitive development in the area of sexuality. It does not attend to students’ emotional and character development. In this respect, technocratic sex education bears a resemblance to Harry Brighouse’s character-neutral, autonomy-facilitating education.

Both of these forms of education share the same basic weakness: they fail to attend to the psychosocial prerequisites of autonomous agency. Adolescents need more than access to a body of knowledge to achieve sexual self-determination. They also need to develop the self-esteem and self-confidence to assert their rights and basic interests in their relationships with others, and

³ Among other studies, she points to an analysis of Planned Parenthood survey data, which “concludes that a ‘knowledgeable thirteen-year-old is no more likely to use contraceptives than is an uninformed thirteen-year-old.’” (Whitehead, 1994, p. 68).

to resist unwanted sexual advances. They need, in other words, to develop a secure sense of their equal moral worth as individuals. Developing and reinforcing these psychosocial capacities is particularly important in a world where the popular media screams “Sex!” from every corner; where peers reinforce the message that “Everyone’s doing it!”; where bullying is omnipresent; and where “giving in to sex” is often perceived as a necessary pre-condition for love and social acceptance.

The data on adolescents’ own interpretations of their initial sexual experiences suggests that many are being initiated into sex before they’re ready and willing to give authentic consent, and that adolescent girls are especially susceptible to sexual predation and manipulation. In a 2002 national survey commissioned by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 9% of teenage females reported that their first experience of sexual intercourse was involuntary, 13% described it as “unwanted,” and 52% described having “mixed feelings about it.”⁴ And among a national sample of sexually active, 15-17-year-olds surveyed in 2003, 33% reported that they had “been in a relationship where things were moving too fast sexually,” 24% said that they had “done something sexual they really didn’t want to do,” and 24% said that they had “had oral sex to avoid having intercourse.”⁵ These statistics suggest that alarming numbers of young people are victims and/or perpetrators of sexual coercion of one kind or another. And in light of this stark reality, the limitations of the technocratic approach to sex education are especially clear. If it is to help adolescents defend themselves against such exploitation and take control of their own sexuality, sex education must do more than equip children with a breadth of knowledge

⁴ Among teenage males, 6% described their first experience of sexual intercourse as “unwanted,” and 31% described having “mixed feelings about it” (Abna, et al., 2002).

⁵ Among the females in this particular sample, 36% had “been in a relationship where things were moving too fast sexually,” 31% had “done something sexual they really didn’t want to do,” and 33% had “had oral sex to avoid having intercourse” (Kaiser Family Foundation, 2003).

about sex. As Douglas Kirby says, “Ignorance is not the solution, but knowledge is not enough” (quoted in Whitehead, 1994, p. 97).

The preceding discussion suggests that a sex education curriculum that properly honors children’s and teen’s basic interest in becoming sexually autonomous individuals must attend to their cognitive *and* psychosocial development. In the interest of students’ cognitive development, sex educators must provide a range of up-to-date, accurate information about the mechanics of sex and reproduction, the effectiveness of various forms of contraception (and instruction in their use), and the medical risks associated with different sexual activities. They also must provide students with information about their own emotional development, and their susceptibility to being bullied and cajoled into sexual activity before they are ready for it. Communicating this knowledge in a way that is meaningful for children and teens—and that maximizes retention—will involve addressing difficult and awkward topics in a frank and plainspoken way, and creating a safe social environment for active student participation. It also will involve the use of a variety of interactive instructional methods and technologies, such as short lectures, class discussions, video presentations, live skits, role playing, simulations of risk, and condom demonstrations.⁶

While these methods—when implemented together—have proven effective in increasing students’ sexual knowledge, they also go beyond the merely informative to address the affective and conative dimensions of independent sexual decision-making. And herein lies their educational power. Because children and teens have a basic interest in becoming autonomous, self-respecting adults, and because sexuality is an area in which they are particularly susceptible to manipulation, exploitation and abuse, sex education must do more than transmit information.

⁶ Douglas Kirby (2007) cites each of these methods in his recent analysis of effective, curriculum-based sex education programs.

It must be “comprehensive” not only in the cognitive sense, but also in the sense that it encompasses the emotions and volitional capacities that are intrinsic to autonomous agency. To put the matter in more concrete terms, an autonomy-promoting sex education will help adolescents understand why it is a good idea to avoid precocious sexual activity, and why they should insist that their partner use a condom when they do have sex. But it also will help them develop the emotional strength and social skills to make these kinds of decisions—and insist that others respect these decisions—in the face of enormous pressure to do otherwise.

Meeting these educational objectives will require significant investments of time and resources, and parental involvement in the design and conduct of the curriculum. At present, sex education occupies a very small niche in the curricula of most junior high and high schools in the United States—a fact which helps to explain its minimal effectiveness in shaping adolescent behavior.⁷ Making more room in the required curriculum for the kind of sex education I have outlined above will be a tough sell in the current, test-obsessed educational policy climate. Yet it will be necessary if we are to do justice to the basic welfare and developmental interests of individual children.

⁷ In response to a 1995 study showing that 7th-12th graders spend an average of six and a half hours on sex education per year, Jeffrey Moran asserts, “It is difficult to imagine that teachers could create significant changes in student behavior in such a short time” (Moran, 2000, 220). A more recent estimate suggests that students spend an average of twelve hours on sex education in seventh grade and eighteen hours in twelfth grade, but this is still hardly enough time to help students develop the cognitive and psychosocial capacities for sexual self-determination (Massachusetts General Hospital, 2008).

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