

Characteristics of Effective Sexuality Education

Doug Kirby, the premier researcher on elements of sexuality education that were effective to create desired outcomes, created a list of characteristics of effective programs published in 2007 and reprinted here.

- Focuses on specific behavioral outcomes.
- Addresses individual values and group norms that support health-enhancing behaviors.
- Focuses on increasing personal perceptions of risk and harmfulness of engaging in specific health risk behaviors, as well as reinforcing protective factors.
- Addresses social pressures and influences.
- Builds personal and social competence.
- Provides functional knowledge that is basic, accurate and directly contributes to health- promoting decisions and behaviors.
- Uses strategies designed to personalize information and engage students.
- Provides age-and developmentally appropriate information, learning strategies, teaching methods and materials.
- Incorporates learning strategies, teaching methods and materials that are culturally inclusive. Provides adequate time for instruction and learning.
- Provides opportunities to reinforce skills and positive health behaviors.
- Provides opportunities to make connections with other influential persons.
- Includes teacher information and plan for professional development and training to enhance effectiveness of instruction and student learning.¹

Learn more about sexuality education: Sexuality Education: Building an evidence- and rights-based approach to healthy decision-making

1 Kirby, D., Roller, L. A., Wilson, M. M. Tools to Assess Characteristics of Effective Sex and STD/HIV Education Programs (TAC). 2007.