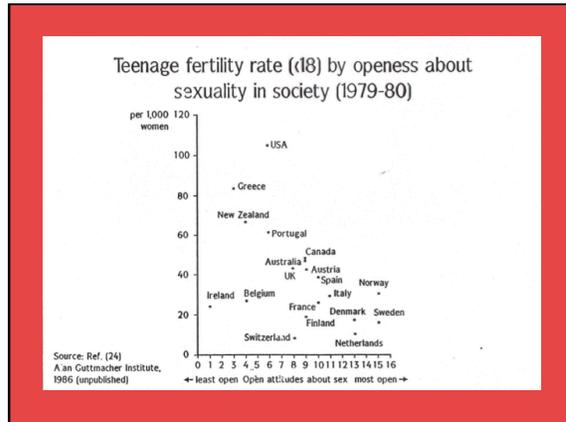


CLASSROOM ACTIVISM

Teaching Outside the Box:
Pedagogical Possibilities of Activism and Travel
Sandra L. Caron & Breanne Fahs

Part 1
Sandra L. Caron, Ph.D.
Professor of Human Sexuality, The University of Maine

New View Campaign Capstone Conference,
Bloomington, Indiana October 7, 2016



The Children in the US

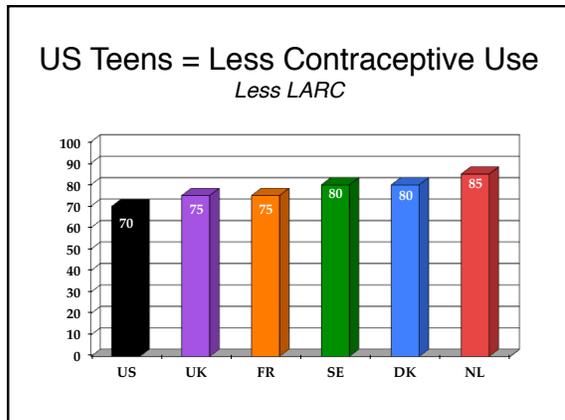
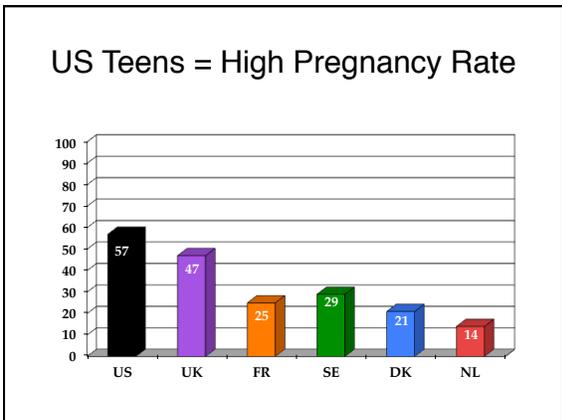
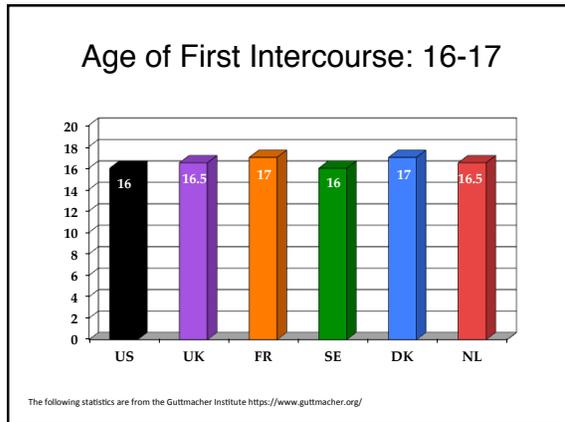
Koch, P. B. (1980). A comparison of the sex education of primary-aged children in the United States and Sweden as expressed through their art. In J. M. Samson (Ed.), *Childhood and sexuality* (pp. 345-355). Montreal, Canada: Editions Etudes Vivantes.

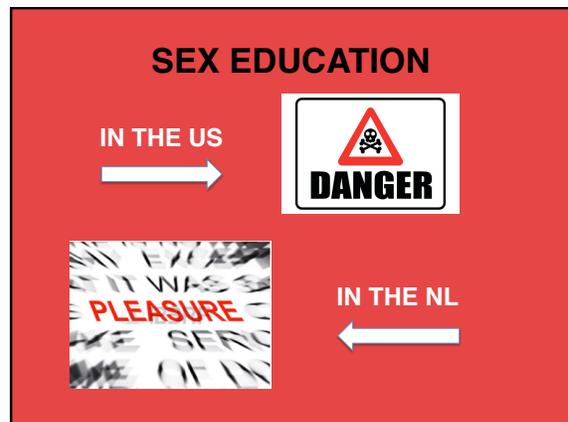
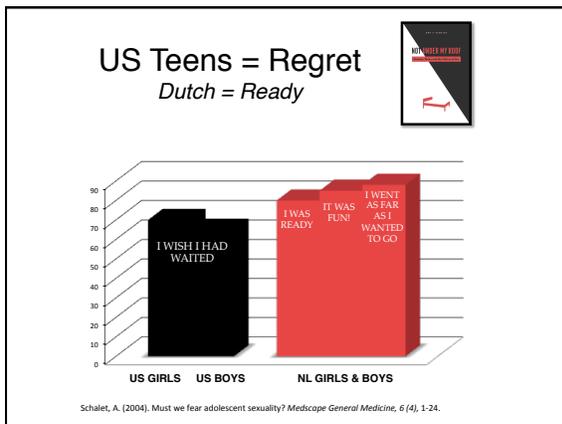
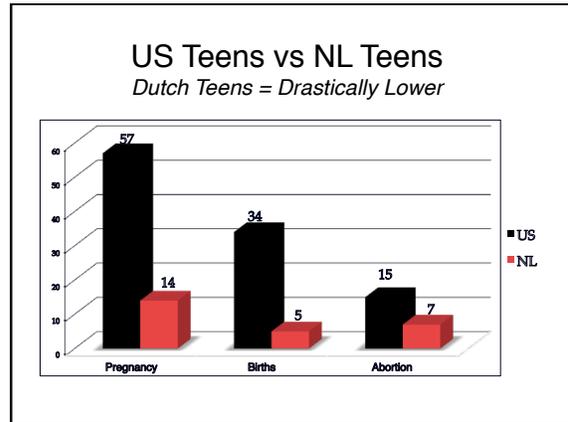
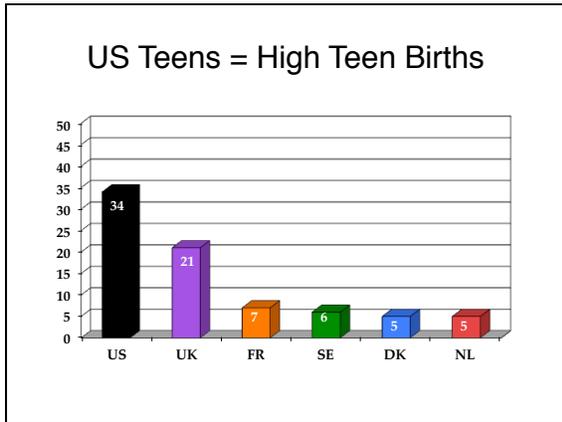
Swedish children



Just say **K-N-O-W**

◆ **TOO LITTLE**
◆ **TOO LATE**
◆ **TOO BIOLOGICAL**



<p>We teach the 3 Rs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• READING• WRITING• ARITHMETIC	<p>We need a 4th R:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• RELATIONSHIPS
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LONG LIVE LOVE



http://www.langlevedeliefde.nl/sites/default/files/folder/long_live_love_english/index.html

Unlike teens in the US, teens in these other countries

- ✿ **Start sex LATER**
- ✿ **Have fewer partners**
- ✿ **Are in a LOVE relationship**
- ✿ **Use effective contraception**
- ✿ **Plan ahead**
- ✿ **Are more sexually LITERATE**

Film: "Let's Talk About Sex"



Their governments view sexuality as a public health issue.

Sexual rights are human rights!

We are more interested in the **MORALITY** than the **REALITY** of sex.

WE VALUE SEXUAL IGNORANCE



We think withholding information and services will lead to responsible behavior.

While these other countries value

- ⌘ **Information**
- ⌘ **Access**
- ⌘ **Openness**

[Adolescent sexual development accepted as normal and healthy](#)

Norway's Sex Education: Puberty



<https://www.youtube.com/v/2PeOG61W4f0&index=8&list=PLIX8EALq4PzmhYdnK6AxcAbm45FyCCK> PLAY

We're still talking about what we could do.

They've done it.

I believe the most powerful things an individual American can do are to travel a lot, learn about the world, come home with a new perspective, and then work to help our country fit more comfortably and less fearfully into this planet.

– Rick Steves' Europe

CLASSROOM ACTIVISM

Teaching Outside the Box:

The Pedagogical Possibilities of Activism and Travel

1:45-3:15 Friday, New View Conference, Bloomington, IN

Part I: Presentation by Dr. Sandra Caron, University of Maine

Part II: Presentation by Breanne Fahs, Arizona State University

This workshop will showcase strategies for pushing classroom boundaries and reimagining students' sexual lives. We first discuss how Caron takes students to London, Amsterdam, and Stockholm to witness cross-cultural differences in sexuality. We then focus on teaching activism with specific examples from Fahs's body hair, menstruation, and vagina activism projects.

Human Sexuality in Europe travel study course: Sandra L Caron

SLIDE: Beginning 20 years ago in 1996, I've offered a summer travel course, *Human Sexuality in Europe*, taking students from the United Kingdom, The Netherlands, and Sweden to see firsthand how other countries deal with sexuality.

SLIDE: I have been interested in the difference between European and American approaches to adolescent sexuality for awhile....ever since I saw **this slide** back in the late 1980s that showed that the more open a country is, the lower their teen pregnancy, births, and abortion rates. This remains true today.

Around that same time, I also read a study by Dr. Patricia Koch at Penn State comparing responses of 7-8 year olds in the US vs Sweden: "Where do babies come from and how are babies made?"

Show 4 slides: Children in US, Swedish Children

- **SLIDE 1:** US drawings:
 1. "God makes babies and puts them in your stomach. I don't know how the baby gets into the stomach, but the doctor cuts her out." and "God puts babies in the stomach and the doctor makes them come out."
 2. "Mom has a baby when she eats a certain kind of food, then the doctor has to cut her open. It hurts a lot."
- **SLIDE 2:** US drawings:
 1. "I don't know how babies are made, but there is a door for the baby to come out."
 2. "The baby grows form something.... The heart I think." And "Babies are formed of the stomach and come out the rear end. Ouch!"
- **SLIDES 3 and 4:** Sweden:
 1. Discussion of anatomy/uterus and egg and sperm, father involvement, vaginal birth, family, even condoms

This inspired my own research a few years ago comparing children in the US, UK, NL, and Sweden –with similar results.....our children talking about heaven, something mom ate, etc...

SLIDE: And then a decade later, in 1995, while spending a sabbatical in London, I was able to travel to various countries in Europe and visit family planning agencies and schools. I saw this film, *Sex, A Guide for the Young* while sitting in on a classroom of 12 year olds in Denmark.

Clip: Show 3 minutes of Sex, A Guide for Young start @2 min – stop at female body parts labia @4 min)

At the same time I am watching this in Denmark, back in the US we are funding “abstinence-only” education programs and bills are being introduced and laws passed across the nation placing restrictions on a woman’s right to choose and limiting access to family planning services. And while I am happy to see that President Obama has taken abstinence-only funding out of the 2017 budget, our country has now spent more than \$1.8 billion on abstinence-only "education" instead of providing comprehensive sexuality education.

SLIDE: I am all for "**just say no**" as long as it's spelled **K-N-O-W**. And as the U.S. saw the rise in virginity pledges and virginity balls sweeping across the South and Midwest in the 1990s and early 2000s - with its specific focus on girls virginity (not boys), it is hard to understand how we reached the point where we judge a girl's character on what is between her legs more than what's between her ears and in her heart.

SLIDE: And what "sex education" we might provide in this country is often **too little, too late, and too biological**.

The following summer (1996) I led my first study tour of undergraduates from Syracuse University to the UK, Netherlands and Sweden. In each country, the college students saw firsthand how other countries deal with various sexuality issues. They listened to lectures from public policy representatives, learned about public education and media campaigns, visited clinics and learn about public health systems, met with sexuality education teachers, and got to meet and talk to other college students their own age.

From this, they discovered huge contrasts in programs, policies, and attitudes towards adolescent reproductive and sexual health between the United States and Europe.

Note: *Sex, A Guide for the Young* was shown to my students on the first study tour when we visited Sweden as an example of a good film to use in middle school. Please know this film was later released in English and was available first in Canada, then later in the US through The Media Guild in CA – and was rated “for high school, junior college, college.”

While we have made progress, when we compare teens in our country to those in other countries, we see we still have a long way to go in terms of sexual health:

Show 6 slides comparing US vs Europe

- **SLIDE:** Typical age of first intercourse: 16-17 (same or later)
- **SLIDE:** US Teens = High Pregnancy Rate
- **SLIDE:** US Teens – Less Contraceptive Use – contraceptive use is up, but low % using LARC (7%)
- **SLIDE:** US Teens = High Teen Births
- **SLIDE:** US Teens vs NL Teens (pregnancy, births, abortion)
- **SLIDE:** US Teens = Regret (Dutch = Ready)

SLIDE: We are sex saturated but sex silent

- **Clip: Show 1 minute Swedish song about penis and vagina**

SLIDE: US Sex Education = Danger NL Sex Education = Pleasure

SLIDE: We teach the 3 Rs: Reading, Writing and Arithmetic. We need a 4th R: Relationships

SLIDE: Long Live Love – Sex ed program in NL with emphasis on relationships

SLIDE: Unlike teens in the US, teens in these other countries – The Netherlands, Sweden, Denmark, etc

- Start sex **LATER**
- Have fewer partners
- Are in a **LOVE** relationship
- Use effective contraception
- Plan ahead
- Are more sexually **LITERATE**

And when we listen to teens in our country vs others, we also see how we still have work to do

Clip: Show 3 minute clip *Let's talk about sex*: (30:00-32:42) Exchange on condom use by teens in US vs NL talking about if a guy/girl had a condom (*end with US teens saying 'kind of a whore'*)

While no single strategy accounts for the successful health outcomes in Europe, contributing factors include:

SLIDE: Their governments view sexuality as a public health issue. Science, not religious ideology, dictates public health policies and programs and education is valued, not feared.

SLIDE: As my friend Dr. Evert Ketting, who is a noted sex researcher in The Netherlands likes to point out: **We are more interested in the morality than the reality of sex.**

SLIDE: We value sexual ignorance. Too many people in this country **think withholding information and services will lead to responsible behavior.** As other countries have shown, this is not true; this does not work.

As former Surgeon General Jocelyn Elders has said, *"We have tried ignorance for a very long time, it's time we try education."*

SLIDE: While these other countries (Sweden, Netherlands, Denmark, Norway, etc) **value: information, access to services, openness**

Adolescent sexual development is accepted as normal and healthy.

The message that the travel study tour participants return with is we need to change our attitudes and policies here in the US to provide young people with the tools for healthy sexual behaviors. Complete information and access to confidential contraceptive services. Youth are taught at an early age about sex so there is less stigma.

SLIDE: These countries have effective use of mass media public education campaigns

Clip: Show 6 minute video on Norway's sex education - Puberty (episode 8)

<https://www.youtube.com/v/2PeQG61W4i0&index=8&list=PLJX8EALqb4Pz mhYdnK6AxcAhm45FyCCK->

SLIDE: As you can see just from the clip of Norway's sex education for 8 year olds and the clip I was shown 20 years ago while in Denmark & Sweden for 12 year olds: **We're still talking about what we could do. They've done it.**

Quote: “I believe the most powerful things an individual American can do (to fight terrorism) are to travel a lot, learn about the world, come home with a new perspective, and then work to help our country fit more comfortably and less fearfully into this planet.” – *Rick Steves’ Europe*

To date, 175 have participated in the Human Sexuality in Europe travel study course. Many have returned as activists who have taken their health and rights into their own hands to promote a positive message of what normal and healthy adolescent sexual development looks like, organizing activism efforts on campus, contacting their state legislators, educating their peers, and taking leadership roles in agencies both locally and nationally.