



## SEXUALITY EDUCATION IN HIGH SCHOOLS: TEACHERS' PERCEPTION

### EDUCATION IN SEXUALITY IN HIGH SCHOOLS: THE PERCEPTION OF TEACHERS

Giovanna Souza Picolo

ORCID <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7961-5707>

Celia Regina Rossi

ORCID <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2903-4955>

#### Summary

The study carried out qualitative and bibliographical research seeking to highlight the main questions raised by high school teachers regarding Sexuality Education in schools. A survey of articles published between 2013 and 2022, in Portuguese, was carried out on the Periodicals Portal of the Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel (Capes). The descriptors "Sexual Education", "High School" and "teachers" were used and the analysis is based on Bardin's proposal. The chosen works present in their summary references to the theme of Sexuality Education in High Schools. The results pointed to the unpreparedness and insecurity of teachers to deal with students' manifestations and doubts on the topic of sexuality, as well as Sexuality Education being carried out only in the contents of human reproduction, contraceptive methods, prevention of pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections. The need for investments in continued training stands out so that this theme can be exercised inside and outside the school environment, as one of the means for restoring Education in all its configurations and knowledge.

**Key words:** Education in eexuality. High school. Teachers. Continuing training.

#### Abstract

The study carried out qualitative and bibliographical research seeking to highlight the main questions raised by high school teachers regarding Sexuality Education in schools. A survey of articles published between 2013 and 2022, in Portuguese, was carried out on the Periodicals Portal of the Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel (Capes). The descriptors "Sexual Education", "High School" and "teachers" were used and the analysis is based on Bardin's proposal. The chosen works present in their summary references to the theme of Sexuality Education in High Schools. The results pointed to the unpreparedness and insecurity of teachers to deal with students' manifestations and doubts on the topic of sexuality, as well as Sexuality Education being carried out only in the contents of human reproduction, contraceptive methods, prevention of pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections. The need for investments in continued training stands out so that this theme can be exercised inside and outside the school environment, as one of the means for restoring Education in all its configurations and knowledge.

**Keywords:** Education in Sexuality. High School. Teachers. Continuing training.

#### INTRODUCTION

1 In our culture, the term "sexuality" is constantly associated with sex and the sexual act, triggering pro- and anti-sexual movements, where, according to Ribeiro (2013), Brazilian society in the 20th century alternates between progress and setbacks in relation to how to deal with, understand and conceive sexuality in its biological, psychological and social scope and the possibility of implementing Sexuality Education in schools. For this article, the term "Sexuality Education" is adopted as it comprises an activity of the subject in their learning process, and not just as a receiver of information. Louro (2019) brings the understanding that sexuality constitutes a social and political issue; thus, sexuality is "learned", or rather, constructed, throughout their lives, in many ways by all subjects" (Louro, 2019, p.11).

For Avila, Toneli and Andaló (2011), the defense that primary and secondary schools

in the country they must be promoters of sexual rights and a source of information about sexuality, part of the idea that the school institution must prepare its students for the responsible exercise of sexuality. However, as pointed out by the authors, the Ministry of Education (Brazil, 2005) also signals and points out that “the school, together with other social spaces, plays a role in the reproduction of mechanisms related to male and heteronormative domination” and already shows with evidence the challenges of making a public education network

a privileged place for building critical awareness and developing practices that are guided by respect for diversity and human rights, contributing to changing the framework of this domination (Brasil, 2005, p.6).

Therefore, it is not possible to separate sexuality from schools since it is inherent in the subjects that make up this environment: teachers, students, managers, employees, etc. However, “It is essential that we recognize that the school not only reproduces or reflects the conceptions of gender and sexuality that circulate in society, but that it itself produces them.” (Louro, 1997, p. 80). Maia and Ribeiro (2011) state that the manifestations, values and attitudes linked to an individual's sexuality are parts of a Sexuality Education that will accompany them from the beginning to the end of their life. This education initially has an unintentional modality and is exercised primarily by the family and later by other social groups and influences, such as friends, media, books, etc. It is in her that the first sexual and moral values are built. Sexuality Education with intentionality are, according to Werebe (1998), interventions on the topic of sexuality that have precise, systematized, regular and planned characteristics; It can take place in different spaces and range from children to adults as its target audience.

Once in contact with children, adolescents and young people, teachers informally transmit different messages, implicit or explicit, about sexuality, helping students to build their ideas, values and feelings in relation to it.

As highlighted by Studies and Communication in Sexuality and Human Reproduction – ECOS (2001), education must be understood as a right that children and adolescents have to know their bodies and, in this way, have a positive view of their sexuality and the guarantee of healthy Sexuality Education, based on values and habits consistent with valuing life, respect for everyone, always valuing and respecting human rights. The Ministry of Health (2009), in one of its documents entitled Sexual rights, reproductive rights and adolescent contraceptive methods, highlights ten basic and fundamental rights to adolescent sexuality:

- Right to freely live and express sexuality without violence, discrimination and impositions, and with full respect for the partner's body;
- Right to choose sexual partner;
- Right to fully experience sexuality without fear, shame, guilt and false beliefs; Right to experience sexuality regardless of marital status, age or physical condition;
- Right to choose whether or not to have sexual intercourse;
- Right to freely express your sexual orientation: heterosexuality, homosexuality, bisexuality, among others;
- Right to have sexual relations independent of reproduction;
- Right to safe sex to prevent unwanted pregnancy and Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs);
- Right to health services that guarantee privacy, confidentiality and quality care without discrimination;
- Right to information and sexual and reproductive education (Brasil, 2009, p. 4).

two

For Furlanetto et al. (2018), actions linked to Sexuality Education in the Middle School network are characterized by specific interventions carried out by professionals who are not part of the school staff. “These activities reach only a part of the school population, concentrating 75% of the actions in primary education (5th to 9th year), and 25% in secondary education” (Furlanetto et al. 2018, p. 559).

Data pointed out by the authors above (2018) indicate that Sexuality Education today addressed in biology classes in the final years of Elementary School II and in High School has Science teachers

Sciences and Biology as the main responsible (16.6%), while in external interventions, characterized by temporary actions at school, Nursing professionals stand out (37.5%). Most of the studies analyzed by the authors feature research and interventions with objectives aimed at training health professionals, as well as university internships or extension projects.

Most of the actions end up focusing on providing information related to taking care of one's own health, the biology of sex and other characteristics. In other cases analyzed by this research above, there is still less emphasis and prevalence, approaches to issues of gender and identity, prejudices, cultural and family diversities.

When choosing the themes involved in the interventions, the dialogic approach was also identified. In these interventions, the students' reports were considered relevant and necessary for the construction of knowledge, allowing the themes discussed to emerge from the participation of the classes. Despite this, many interventions continued to emphasize themes related to the area of sexual and reproductive health and did not address sexuality as a social and historical construction, including discussions about gender roles and identities, content proposed by the National Curricular Parameters (Furlanetto et al. 2018, p 560).

For Bordini (2012), this conception today inserted in the school curricula of Science subjects follows the contents of Biology, Physics, Chemistry and Genetics. Thus, the view of the body as a product of the biological evolution of the species is taken as universal.

Sexuality is conceived as derived from Physiology and resulting from the action of sexual hormones, that is, education for sexuality, taught from the perspective of the Science discipline, is considered as the meeting of different scientific knowledge, coming mainly from Medicine, Biology and Physiology (Bordini, 2012, p,67).

Thus, the needs of young people and children form the core of Sexuality Education, where the starting and ending point of actions are their doubts and expectations on the subject (Werebe, 1998). Therefore, planning, organization and intentionality are the pillars of actions in Sexuality Education, seeking to offer training that integrates knowledge with the subject's experiences and encourages reflections and changes in attitudes towards sexuality, as well as the transformation of values for citizenship combating discrimination and violence. (Maia, Ribeiro, 2011). The elements offered by Sexuality Education are:

- know your own body, its functioning, its demands; learn to accept your own body, a sexual body;
- know their psychosexual development, in its different phases, according to age and sex;
- know the place and meaning of your sexuality and its manifestations; understand the affective dimensions of sexuality, accept it as a source of pleasure and satisfaction;
- know and understand common sexual behaviors at each age, for both sexes and their frequency;
- know and understand the development of sexual identity, issues linked to masculinity and femininity;
- understand what it means to live as a man or woman in the society in which you find yourself, and learn to respect the other sex, their rights and duties
- reject double morality in sexual matters (freedom for men and repression for women);
- accept equal rights, rejecting discrimination in relation to both sexes and different ethnicities and nationalities.
- know and understand different sexual orientations and learn to respect them;
- know and understand the different cultural and moral values linked to sexuality;
  
- adopt your own decisions about your options in terms of sexual and emotional life, based on the knowledge acquired and your cultural, moral and/or religious values;

- know that in affective and sexual relationships it is necessary to respect your partners, their needs, desires, options and values;
- assume responsible behavior in relation to their sexual health, contraception, prevention of sexually transmitted diseases (Werebe, 1998, p.178).

In other words, a Sexuality Education that transcends the biological, organic and prophylactic sense is legitimized, and that understands sexuality, sexual health and gender relations as an inherently social, educational and political issue. Thus, the importance of a unique look at the specificities of youth, especially adolescence (from 15 to 18 years old), is highlighted, due to the major questions for the future at this stage of development. During this period, the subject enters high school, the last stage of the basic and mandatory education cycle.

Here, it is understood that sexual education work carried out in a restricted and superficial way has a more direct impact on development and the way of dealing with sexuality in the future. The urgency of directing attention to professionals who are currently mainly responsible for Sexuality Education in schools is highlighted. The large portion is unprepared for such an exercise, because, according to Araújo, Augusto and Ribeiro, due to the difficulty “[...] presented when working with topics on sexual education and gender, which, due to lack of theoretical depth, ends up using concepts of common sense and experiences, demonstrating a conception of failure in teaching” (Araújo, Augusto, Ribeiro, 2010, p.3).

In this way, the present study sought to highlight the main issues highlighted by high school teachers when dealing with Sexuality Education in schools, as well as reflecting on the consequences of this scenario.

## METHODOLOGY

The present investigation was based on the qualitative and bibliographical nature of research, that is, according to Gil (2002), the research is developed using already prepared materials as a basis, especially scientific articles and books. The same author (2002) considers that the main advantage lies in allowing the researcher a broad coverage of phenomena that have already occurred, being an advantageous modality when searching for data that is widely dispersed throughout space. Severino comments that there are requirements in the prior organization and methodology of the research in order to achieve its objective. Firstly, the maturation of reasoning is essential, as it is not possible to “[...] prepare a scientific work based on intuitive and spontaneous inspiration, without following a plan and applying a method” (Severino, 2000, p 73). The present has characteristics of a state-of-the-art bibliographical research. This genre, according to Ferreira (2002), covers research that seeks to list, systematize and evaluate production in a specific area of knowledge. The method involves the identification of works produced in the area, selection and classification of documents using criteria established in accordance with the interests and objectives established by the researcher, description and analysis of the characteristics and trends of the material found and the evaluation of its main results, contributions and needs.

This research aimed to systematize and analyze the scientific production that deals with Sexuality Education in high schools. To select the works studied in this work, a search was carried out on the Periodical Portal of the Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel (Capes) for articles on research that was carried out with high school teachers and their perceptions about Sexuality Education. For the survey, the descriptors “Sexual Education”, “High School” and “teachers” were used. The period of publication of articles in Portuguese was selected from 2013 to 2022. The survey was carried out on July 11, 2023 and 26 works were initially displayed, however, two were repeated on the platform; Therefore, the initial selection consisted of 24 articles. Subsequently, they were

4

Those that did not contain the term “Sexual Education” in their key words were excluded. Lastly, Only those whose research took place with high school teachers and of a qualitative nature were considered in order to contribute in more depth to the objective of the research. Thus, it presents

- if information regarding selected articles:

**Tabela 1 - Seleção dos artigos analisados**

Título	Autores	Ano	Palavras-chaves
Sexualidade na adolescência: potencialidades e dificuldades dos professores de ensino médio de uma escola estadual de Sorocaba	Vanessa dos Reis Queiroz Janie Maria de Almeida	2018	Educação sexual Adolescência Conhecimentos Atitudes e práticas em saúde Professores escolares Ensino fundamental e médio
	Glauberto da Silva Quirino João Batista Teixeira da Rocha	2013	Educação sexual Sexualidade Ensino Médio Ensino fundamental Escola pública
	Nívea Aparecida Alves de Moraes Zara Faria Sobrinha Guimarães João Paulo Cunha de Menezes	2021	Ensino de biologia Educação Sexual Adolescentes
	Renan da Silva	2015	Adolescência DST Educação e saúde Educação sexual Ensino Médio
	Glauberto da Silva Quirino João Batista Teixeira da Rocha	2012	Sexualidade Educação sexual Gênero Escola

Fonte: As Autoras

The data found in these researches were categorized according to the topics covered and with the aim of elucidating the congruent and discordant points on the topic in the bibliography consulted. Data analysis was carried out using Content Analysis based on Bardin's proposal, which is one of the forms of data processing in qualitative research. For Santos (2012), in this analysis, the researcher seeks to understand the characteristics behind the messages considered in the research. Bardin (2011 apud. Santos, 2012) indicates that this use of analysis has three phases: pre-analysis, exploration of the material and treatment of results, or, inference and interpretation thereof.

5

## CONSIDERATIONS OF HIGH SCHOOL TEACHERS ABOUT SEXUALITY EDUCATION

### CATEGORY: CONCEPTS OF SEXUALITY

The concepts of sexuality among teachers in the work of Quirino and Rocha (2012) were divided into



two categories: sex and sexual option. The first refers to differentiation in biological terms (male/female) and psychic terms (male/female), the inherent sexual/affective relationship of an essentialist nature between beings. "In it, there is supremacy of biological attributes in relation to sociocultural ones, although they recognized that it could not be thought of exclusively through these" (Quirino, Rocha, 2012, p. 211). The second category is thought of as homo and heterosexuality. Here, the authors (2012) observed the use of the term "sexual choice" with the connotation of a clear choice of gender identity, since this issue is influenced by several influences and is characterized as a considerable element of the transitional process of adolescence. At this point, the existing debates in society about sexual diversity were introduced by the research participants right from the beginning to reinforce the controversial nature of the topic.

Understanding sexuality and its manifestations through the biological aspects of sex may be an initial path, however, analyzes of cultural and social transformations should not be discarded.

For Werebe (1998), the fluctuating boundaries between sexual and non-sexual make it difficult to define the term "sexual" and its notions; This occurs due to the impossibility of relating the sexual only to the genital, as well as, it can be admitted that behaviors where the genital is absent have a sexual connotation. "This connotation may not be explicit or give rise to doubts, given the ambiguities that exist in these behaviors. Likewise in the explicitly sexual, there are non-sexual aspects" (Werebe, 1998, p.5).

## CATEGORY: SEXUALITY EDUCATION

Regarding the topic of Sexuality Education, indications in the authors' 2012 research (Quirino, Rocha, 2012) indicate that teachers believe that such a teaching-learning process should be subsidized in three axes: the first would be sexual intercourse, the sex as an act in itself and for which students should be prepared to exercise it responsibly, aiming to avoid teenage pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections (STIs); the second axis focuses on body physiology and body transformations that differentiate the sexes from a biological perspective.

The authors (2012) highlight that this approach has biological assumptions about sexuality, and sexuality issues are frequently addressed in this domain. As pointed out by the researchers, Sexuality Education limited by the biological dimension may be related to the ineffective academic and continuing training of teachers, where historical-social and cultural issues are not addressed and related to sexuality, "[...] once that they recognize the need for training to better perform their pedagogical action, as they do not consider themselves prepared or confident to develop more effective guidance" (Quirino, Rocha, 2012, p.218). Still in this aspect, Bastos and Lüdke (2017) comment on the fundamental role of the teacher in the classroom in terms of the relationship between the knowledge they transmit and their position as a continuous learner of the facts that surround them:

The teacher, as a social subject, often emits such knowledge and practices and, precisely for this reason, he, as an eternal learner, is asked for attention by being aware of the very concrete effects of power that these discourses produce in the lives of the subjects. involved (Bastos, Lüdke, 2017, p.157).

In the third and final axis, the behavioral aspects of society are addressed, involving the practices of men and women in the performance of their sexual roles and behaviors in relationships - called sexual option - with emphasis on the role and responsibilities in guiding adolescents with a shared work. The authors (2012) highlight the prejudice against sexual diversity as an aspect of current society. In the work carried out by them in 2013, the authors mention that sexuality education work should be carried out in a group and not individually, where the teachers interviewed suggested the use of annual projects to work on sexuality that involved the community.

As for work strategies, the research teachers cited the use of textbooks, videos, films, lectures, news, classroom debates and research carried out by students. The relevant themes were selected in order to sensitize and raise awareness among students, being: "pregnancy in adolescence, sexually transmitted diseases, virginity, sexual intercourse, homosexuality, and contraceptive methods - these included: the table, the condom and the pill" (Quirino, Rocha, 2013, p.681).

Queiroz and Almeida (2017), in their work, mention that Sexuality Education broadens the student's perception of the world and helps them reflect on how sexuality presents itself in culture through a sociocultural approach to it. In this way, it helps the subject to prevent health problems and to mature without experiencing trauma or other adverse events.

Morais, Guimarães and Menezes (2021), classify the responses of the teachers interviewed when to the definition of Sexuality Education in two categories. The first as a biological-centralized model, focused on a simplistic approach to sexuality and its relationships with human physiology and disease prevention, absent social and cultural issues. The second category, entitled the biopsychosocial model, includes the social and cultural issues of sexuality in addition to its biological aspects, expanding its conception. For the authors, the interviewed teachers who adopt this model

[...] are not restricted to physiological and reproductive aspects, addressing themes of significant relevance to adolescents, that is, an understanding of sexuality in a way that is not strictly biological, but rather that includes more subjective issues (Morais , Guimarães, Menezes, 2021, p.143).

Thus, intentionality, planning and organization are part of the beginning of the Sexuality Education process, with the objective of providing the student with training that involves knowledge and encourages reflections, doubts and attitudinal changes; as well as transformations in values and active citizenship to combat gender-based discrimination and violence.

For Werebe (1998), Sexuality Education must offer its audience possibilities to understand the dimensions and meanings of sexuality in order to incorporate it positively into their personality. It is also necessary to consider the affective plane that is implicit; This is the meeting between the social, symbolic and affective aspects of sexuality.

## CATEGORY: TEACHERS AND SEXUALITY EDUCATION

Next, we seek to bring reflections and considerations from teachers inserted in the High School network from different parts of the country. The investigations carried out and pointed out by the authors of the works converge on several points, therefore, this work sought to bring those that are discordant and of significance to the topic.

In the 2012 research by Quirino and Rocha carried out in an elementary and high school school, the objective was to understand the perceptions of sexuality and Sexuality Education of working teachers, indicating that the teaching perception in relation to Sexuality Education is the main stimulus for adolescents have sexual behavior among those classified as healthy, which is linked to informative aspects and associated with common sense. The change in paradigms regarding the treatment of sexuality by society was also indicated, where it currently loses the taboo label given that sexual practices and experiences have gained more space for expression. For the authors (2012), this freedom is related to more openly spoken sex, the themes of sexuality more present in the media, the detachment from pleasure, motherhood, increased sexual expressions and early eroticization.

Furthermore, at other times, it was found that teachers believed that sexual education was a relevant subject that should be worked on from the fourth or fifth year of elementary school, because for young people, although they had knowledge practical knowledge on the subject, they lacked theoretical knowledge, combined with the media that harmed the educational process, showing explicit sex, which made it difficult to prevent sexual relations (Quirino, Rocha, 2012, p.217).

In research published in 2013 with the same group of teachers, Quirino and Rocha (2013) found that the group understood sexual education as an orientation process that involves preparing young people for sexual intercourse, preventing STIs and pregnancy, describing the physiology and body development and the recognition of gender roles, sexual orientation and their modulations by social relations. Such education had privileges in science classes and began in the fourth or fifth year of elementary school. In practice, Sexuality Education work with students took place in specific contexts and in accordance with the group's demands, such as behaviors and doubts, according to the teachers interviewed. The demand did not always come to light explicitly, happening through jokes that had sexuality implicit in their content. According to the authors (ibid.), this required astuteness on the part of teachers to perceive such a need, culminating in the work being carried out by only a few and not by all. The aforementioned teaching stance was also pointed out as causes of issues such as: little teaching sensitivity to such perception, theoretical and conceptual unpreparedness, as well as lack of interest on the part of teachers in discussing



with students on the topic of gender and sexuality, and finally, the privilege of formal content in work dynamics.

Morais, Guimarães and Menezes (2021) mention that public school teachers in their research recognize the importance of Sexuality Education, but their limitations in working with the topic generate difficulties and resistance on their part. Furthermore, the demand comes directly from students who “present their doubts, questions, desires and concerns” (Morais, Guimarães, Menezes, 2021, p.141); This aspect is also found in the research of Silva (2015). In the work (2021), the authors mention that there were teachers who classified Sexuality Education as the exclusive responsibility of the school and others who classified it as exclusive to the family; however, the majority considered that both bodies have responsibilities for Sexuality Education.

One of the teachers from a state high school interviewed in the work by Queiroz and Almeida (2017), argues that the approach to sexuality content in the classroom should be the Biology teacher; however, it should not be restricted to physiological and preventive issues but include relationships with the social context and debates on prejudiced actions. The authors also state that, according to most teachers, dialogue should be the main way to discuss the topic, giving students the opportunity to bring their questions to class, as mentioned below: “I try to talk to them in the most open way possible, without moralizing and in a natural way, as sexuality is intrinsic to being” (Queiroz Almeida, 2017, p.212). In the work of Silva (2015), teachers commented that the topics covered include aspects of STIs.

Among the materials and resources used by teachers in Silva's research (2015), texts, figures and presentations in slides and seminars were cited by teachers from the public and private schools researched. In the work of Moraes, Guimarães and Menezes (2021), the authors mention that diverse resources and strategies are essential to the theme with the aim of awakening students' interest with a view to qualitative learning, leading them to reflect on criticism on the subject. Furthermore, it is assumed that the teacher must consider the students' life history, as well as their experiences in order to link them to the content and knowledge acquired in the class, promoting the formation of critical subjects.

Silva (2015) at the end of his work mentions the influence of the social context on Sexuality Education work.

In the most favored class, represented by the private school, there is access to more selective means, in a way, such as the internet and books; which no longer happens with the less favored class, that is, students who study in public schools, where there is a lack of access to these resources, probably end up favoring relationships with their family (Silva, 2015, p.231)

The author emphasizes that, even though the planned content is the same in schools, the methodologies and relationships used individually in each school generate different learning. The same logic applies regarding the meaning that this learning has in each school context (Silva, 2015).

The presumption that sexuality is a private matter or, at least, restricted to outside the school is something common, however it is present at school because it is part of the subjects in an integral way, making it impossible to transfer it to another space or over a period of time as an accessory that can be taken off (Miskolci, 2005).

For Louro (1997), the school produces and transmits knowledge, but it is also part of the fabrication of the subjects who are part of it. Thus, there is the production of identities, ethnicities, genders, classes and other identities that originate in inequalities. Therefore, the school, as an institution committed to maintaining society and its structure, ends up maintaining such inequalities on a daily basis. However, school practices are collective and political, subject to transformations, which justifies the need to infer the continuity of these inequalities. Thus, Sexuality Education becomes a possible mechanism for such infections.

ferences.

Regarding the need for Sexuality Education within schools, Autor, et al. (2012) comment that work on the topic must be constant, initiated in the relationship with families and sequenced by the school institution. In this, the development of work must be “[...] continuous, systematic and critical, so that young people have the opportunity to re-signify in a critical and autonomous way the different issues they face in the course of their lives ( Autor, 2012 et al., p. 30)”.



In school environments there are several coexisting values within them, thus, Freitas (2013) highlights some assumptions that make it possible for teachers to carry out Sexuality Education through a great emancipatory approach. The first assumption is the recognition of the differences between the concepts of sex and sexuality. For the author

If we are clear that sexuality goes beyond sexual relations and has to do with relationships of affection, with the different ways of being a man and a woman or any other form of transgender, with the different ways of perceiving and revealing the body, with pleasure that is not only sexual, among other aspects, we will possibly expand our concept of what it means to carry out sexual education work. This way we will be able to be more calm and open to carrying out intentional sexual education work with children. The second assumption, as important as the first, refers to the need to review our concepts and prejudices regarding sexuality (Freitas, 2013, p.51).

Therefore, the work of Sexuality Education carried out intentionally requires a self-evaluation of the values we carry and perpetuate, identifying those that may discriminate in some way against the sexual rights of beings with the aim of eliminating them. Another assumption commented by the author (ibid.) is directly related to school teachers but also applies to families: the awareness that there is no neutrality when dealing with values related to sexuality. The challenge highlighted is how to carry out Sexuality Education work in an emancipatory way without conflicting with their values and those of their families. For Freitas (2013), avoiding placing personal values in these actions is a necessary step, even though considering the multiplicity of values present in school environments is a difficult challenge.

We must be clear that we are not neutral and that in all information we discuss, whether verbal or non-verbal, we have the intention, consciously or unconsciously, of influencing the other. This does not mean to say that we can indicate to our students and their families the norms and values or paths related to sexuality that we consider correct, but it does mean to say that we must be more attentive to our words, postures, expressions, as well as the our concepts and preconceptions (Freitas, 2013, p.55).

The role of the Sexuality educator must therefore be to respect differences and provide spaces where students, school staff members and families reflect on such differences and multiplicity of values in order to respect them. Bastos and Lüdke (2012) consider that listening to students as a means of promoting dialogue between them and teachers is the best strategy for accessing their opinions; Thus, when thoughts of an inhuman/pejorative/prejudiced nature are exposed, they can be reflected and denaturalized. To achieve this, it is necessary to understand sexuality as a historical-sociocultural construction that transcends the limits of biological sciences maintained by school. "This implies, therefore, approaching the concept of gender taking as reference the (power) relations between women and men, and the many social and cultural forms that constitute them as "gender and sexual subjects" (Bastos, Lüdke, 2017, p.168).

## Conclusion

The objective of the study was to highlight the main issues highlighted by high school teachers when dealing with Sexual Education in schools through qualitative and bibliographical research.

The results indicated that Sexuality Education must have a systematic nature within the school environment, in a continuous and comprehensive manner, bearing in mind that sexuality permeates all phases of human development. Therefore, attention turns in particular to High School, where the actions carried out are classified as occasional and insufficient because they are not part of a continuous pedagogical practice.

This fact appears to be a consequence of the unpreparedness of teachers to deal with issues about sexuality expressed at school, in addition to a rigidity in the curriculum in concentrating Sexuality Education work only on a prophylactic and hygienist perspective. Hygienist practices and repressed freedom of sexual expression, along with religious beliefs, characterized Brazilian Sexuality Education as promoting the heteronormative relations of patriarchy and the belief that sexuality is taboo.

Thus, Sexuality Education is thought of in an ethical, politicized and responsible way as a means of understanding the origins of discriminatory thoughts, supporting the deconstruction of taboos and myths that establish hierarchies and bringing new horizons about sexuality. In this context, Education is thought

in Sexuality as part of a broader education that shares concepts, methodologies and ideologies with the already dominant ideas. Thus, seeking a pedagogical practice aiming at a critical formation of the subject, offering him means to understand the roots of the human relationship with sexuality, existing power relations and existing ideological manifestations, promoting him as an active subject and protagonist of sociocultural transformations. In this way, it will be possible to overcome restricted conceptions that propagate actions of dehumanization.

## References

ARAUJO, KCV de; AUGUSTO, VO; RIBEIRO, PRM Some reflections on sexual education and gender studies in the work of educators in cycle II and high school. **Ibero-American Journal of Studies in Education**, Araraquara, v. 4, no. 1, p. 152–161, 2010. Available at: <https://periodicos.fclar.unesp.br/iberoamericana/article/view/2699>. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.21723/riaee.v4i1.2699>. Accessed on: 10 Aug. 2022.

AVILA, AH, TONELLI, MJF, ANDALÓ, CS DE A. Teachers facing sexuality-gender in everyday school life. **Psychology in Study**, Maringá, v. 16, no. 2, p. 289-298, Apr./Jun. 2011. Available at: <https://www.scielo.br/j/pe/a/5vZsjnCDqBNtdJGZRCK7FbP/?lang=pt>. Accessed on June 30, 2022.

BASTOS, GD, & LÜDKE, E. Reflections on gender in Biology teaching: A look at the discourse of first-year high school students about teenage pregnancy. **Context & Education Magazine**, 32(101), 142–174, 2017. Available at: <https://www.revistas.unijui.edu.br/index.php/contextoeducacao/article/view/6690> DOI: <https://doi.org/10.21527/2179-1309.2017.101.142-174> Accessed on Aug 22, 2022.

BORDINI, SC The place of Sexuality Education in the science discipline and its relationships with scientific knowledge. **Context & Education Magazine**, 27(88), 62–76, 2012. Available at: <https://www.revistas.unijui.edu.br/index.php/contextoeducacao/article/view/371> DOI: <https://doi.org/10.21527/2179-1309.2012.88.62-76> Accessed on 11 Aug. 2022.

BRAZIL. **Reference term**: Instructions for Presentation and Selection of Training Projects for Education Professionals for Citizenship and Sexual Diversity. Brasília: Ministry of Education, 2005. Available at: [http://portal.mec.gov.br/secad/arquivos/pdf/termo\\_ref.pdf](http://portal.mec.gov.br/secad/arquivos/pdf/termo_ref.pdf). Accessed on Aug 14. 2021.

BRAZIL. Ministry of Health. **Sexual rights, reproductive rights and contraceptive methods**. Brasília, DF: Ministry of Health, 2009. Available at: [http://bvsmms.saude.gov.br/bvs/publicacoes/direitos\\_sexuais\\_reprodutivos\\_metodos\\_anticoncepcionais.pdf](http://bvsmms.saude.gov.br/bvs/publicacoes/direitos_sexuais_reprodutivos_metodos_anticoncepcionais.pdf). Accessed on Aug 14. 2021.

ECHOES – **Studies and Communication in Sexuality and Human Reproduction**. Promoting sexual education in schools, 2001. Available at: <http://www.polis.org.br/uploads/623/623.pdf>. Accessed on 13 June. 2022

FERREIRA, NSA Research called “State of the Art”. **Education & Society**, Vol 23, No. 79, p. 257 - 252, 2002. Available at: <http://www.scielo.br/pdf/es/v23n79/10857.pdf> Accessed on September 13, 2023.

FREITAS, D. L de. Assumptions of a Sexual Education Trainer: lessons from practice. **Context & Education Magazine**, 27(88), 35–61, 2013. Available at: <https://www.revistas.unijui.edu.br/index.php/contextoeducacao/article/view/366> DOI: <https://doi.org/10.21527/2179-1309.2012.88.35-61> Accessed on 15 Aug. 2022.

FURLANETTO, MF, LAUERMAN, F., COSTA, CB DA, MARINI, AH Sexual Education in Schools Brazilian colas: Systematic literature review. **Research Notebooks**, v.48 n.168 p.550-571 Apr./Jun. 2018. Available at: <https://www.scielo.br/j/cp/a/FnJLpCKWxMc4CMr8mHyShLs/abstract/?lang=pt>. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1590/198053145084>. Accessed on 1 Aug. 2022.

GIL, A.C. **How to design research projects**-4th ed. - São Paulo: Atlas, 2002

LOURO, GL **Gender, sexuality and education**: A post-structuralist perspective. Petrópolis, RJ: Vozes, 1997.



LOURO, GL Pedagogies of sexuality. In LOURO, G. L (Org.) **The educated body: Pedagogies of sexuality**. Authentic Editora, 2019.

MAIA, ACB RIBEIRO, PRM (2011). Sex education: principles for action. Doxa. **Paulista Journal of Psychology and Education**, v. 15 (1), 41-51, 2011. Available at: <http://hdl.handle.net/11449/124985> Accessed on September 22nd. 2023.

MISKOLCI, R.. A foreign body in the classroom. In: Abramowicz, A.Silvério, VR (Orgs.). **Stating differences: Putting together the diversity puzzle at school**. Campinas: Papirus, 2005.

MORAIS, NAA de; GUIMARÃES, ZF . S. .; MENEZES, JPC de. Sex education: the perceptions of high school biology teachers. **SBE nBio Biology Teaching Magazine**, [S. l.], v. 14, no. 1, p. 135–156, 2021. DOI: 10.46667/renbio.v14i1.395. Available at: <https://renbio.org.br/index.php/sbenbio/article/view/395>. Accessed on: 11 Jul. 2023.

QUEIROZ, V. dos R.; ALMEIDA, JM de. Sexuality in adolescence: potentialities and difficulties of high school teachers at a state school in Sorocaba. **Magazine of the Faculty of Medical Sciences of Sorocaba**, [S. l.], v. 19, no. 4, p. 209–214, 2018. DOI: 10.23925/1984-4840.2017v19i4a9. Available at: <https://revistas.pucsp.br/index.php/RFCMS/article/view/31788>. Accessed on: 11 Jul. 2023.

QUIRINO, G. DA S., ROCHA, JBT Sexuality and sexual education in teacher perception. **Educate in Magazine**, Curitiba, Brazil, n. 43, p. 205-224, Jan./Mar. 2012. Available at: <https://www.scielo.br/j/er/a/rXwRNn9Lhr5Q9MjgMgZgMsL/abstract/?lang=pt>. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1590/S0104-40602012000100014>. Accessed on June 25th. 2022.

QUIRINO, G. DA S., ROCHA, JBT Teaching practice in sexual education in a public school in Juazeiro do Norte, CE, Brazil. **Science Education.**, Bauru, v. 19, no. 3, p. 677-694, 2013. Available at: <https://www.scielo.br/j/ciedu/a/rFqWjDCskZ7WvZwybQJKJR/?lang=pt>. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1590/S1516-7313201300030001>. Accessed on Aug 15, 2022.

RIBEIRO, PRM Sexual education in teacher training: sexuality, gender and diversity as elements of active citizenship. In: Rabelo, AO; Pereira, G. P & Reis, AM de S. (Org.). **Teacher training in gender and sexuality: intertwining theories, policies and practices**. From Petrus et Alii, 2013, p. 7-17. Available at: [http://www.scielo.mec.pt/scielo.php?script=sci\\_arttext&pid=S0874-55602014000100012](http://www.scielo.mec.pt/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S0874-55602014000100012) DOI: Accessed on 2 Aug. 2022.

SANTOS, FM **Content analysis: Laurence Bardin's vision**. Electronic Education Magazine, v. 6, no. 1, p. 383 - 387, 2012. Available at: <http://www.reveduc.ufscar.br/index.php/reveduc/article/view/291/156>. Accessed in Sep 2023.

SEVERINO, AJ. **Scientific work methodology**. 21.ed. São Paulo: Cortez, 2000.

SILVA, R. When the school works to raise awareness among young teenagers in the fight against STDs. **Educate in Magazine**, Curitiba, Brazil, n. 57, p. 221-238, Jul./Sept. 2015. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1590/0104-4060.41170>. Available at: <https://www.scielo.br/j/er/a/gfzdzSRTsFkKGSFdxFljHLC/?lang=pt#>. Accessed on May 14th. 2023.

11 WEREBE, M.J.G. **Sexuality, Politics, Education**. Campinas, SP: Associated Authors, 1998.