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Alignment of TEKS Objectives Big Decisions

Big Decisions

Curriculum Overview

Big Decisions is a medically accurate, evidence-informed curriculum for 8th and 9th graders consisting of 10, 45-minute lessons. Students are encouraged to postpone sexual activity but are also given information to reduce sexual risk if they engage in sexual activity. The curriculum was designed with Texas TEKS in mind and has been used by schools throughout the state of Texas. Topics covered include internet safety, mental health, healthy relationships, sexually transmitted infections (STIs), and setting and respecting limits.

Program Components

Students

- Grades covered: designed for 8th or 9th, but appropriate up to 12th
- Lessons:
 - 10 lessons
 - 45 minutes long, once or twice per week
 - Classroom-based
- Learning activities include roleplays, games, brainstorming, and group discussion.
- Lesson topics include HIV and STD knowledge, internet safety, mental health, healthy relationships, and setting and respecting limits.

Teacher and School Staff

- The curriculum is designed to be taught by teachers, school staff, and community organizers. Training of facilitators is provided, either in-person or virtually.

Program Logistics

- Where to purchase: <https://www.bigdecisions.org/>
- Cost:
 - Training: \$625
 - Curriculum: \$200
- Program contact info: <https://www.bigdecisions.org/contact>

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Summary of Evaluation Findings

The Big Decisions Study (rigorous clustered randomized controlled trial design) examined the impact of the Big Decisions teen pregnancy prevention intervention on a sample of 3,170 ninth grade, primarily Mexican-American students living in rural communities in South Texas. At immediate posttest, Big Decisions students were more likely to report that they intended to use, or have their partner use, a condom or effective method of birth control if they had sex in the next year. Further, at the one-year posttest, Big Decisions students reported that they had discussed abstinence with a parent or guardian in the past three months significantly more frequently than students in the control group.

Key reference: These results are from a currently unpublished study that was submitted to the Office of Population Affairs Teen Pregnancy Prevention (TPP) program. Find more information about the evaluation [here](#).

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Table 1. Program Overview

Lesson	Activity
1: Rules of the Game: Forming a Respectful Group	1.1 Introduction and Key Messages Review
	1.2 Ice-Breaker: Differences and Respect
	1.3 Setting Ground Rules
	1.4 Respecting Others
	1.5 What Respect Means to Me
2: Goals and Dreams: My Future	2.1 My Dream Board
	2.2 How Could It Affect My Goals and Dreams?
	2.3 My Goals, My Decisions
	2.4 Homework: Talking about Goals and Dreams
3: Relationships and Romance: What is Healthy?	3.1 Homework Review: Goals and Dreams
	3.2 Healthy or Unhealthy?
	3.3 Relationship Role-Plays
	3.4 Relationships and Me
4: Anatomy and Reproduction: How it Works	4.1 Ice-Breaker: What Do They Call It?
	4.2 Reproductive Anatomy: The Body Parts
	4.3 The Journeys of the Sperm and the Egg
	4.4 Reproduction: True or False?
5: Abstinence: Decisions to Wait	5.1 Reasons to Wait
	5.2 Is This Abstinence?
	5.3 Ways to Show You Care

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	5.4 My Ideas About Abstinence
	5.5 Homework: Talking About Abstinence
6: A Clear “No”: Respecting and Defending Limits	6.1 Homework Review: Talking About Abstinence
	6.2 The Right to Say “NO”
	6.3 Pressure Situations: A CLEAR “No”
7: Sexually Transmitted Infections, Including HIV/AIDS	7.1 Index Cards
	7.2 Getting to Know about STIs
	7.3 Preventing STIs
	7.4 STIs and Me
8: Contraception: Pregnancy at a Good Time for You	8.1 When Would Be a Good Time for a Pregnancy or Another Pregnancy
	8.2 Effectiveness Line-Up
	8.3 Contraception Method Bingo
	8.4 Pregnancy in my Life
	8.5 Talking About Having Children Homework
9: Staying Healthy and On Track: My Safety and My Limits	9.1 Homework Review: Having Children
	9.2 Staying Safer
	9.3 A Story
	9.4 My Safety and My Limits
10: My Decisions: Ready for Challenges	10.1 My Goals and My Decisions
	10.2 Decisions and the Brain

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	10.3 Ready for Challenges
	10.4 Big Decisions Graduation

TEKS Objectives

- Coverage of the Texas Education Agency’s Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills, Reproductive and Sexual Health objectives is provided in the following pages. Table 1 (above) indicates the lessons and activities of the Big Decisions program. Table 2 (below) indicates the percentage of TEKS coverage across all lessons for Middle school (7th-8th grade), Health I, and Health II, respectively.
- Definitions:
 - “Full TEKS coverage” indicates that the entire student expectation (SE) is explicitly covered, as written, in the curriculum.
 - “Partial TEKS coverage” indicates that at least one aspect of the SE is not covered or not explicitly covered in the curriculum.
- TEKS coverage was determined by consensus from two reviewers with relevant subject-matter knowledge. The full review protocol and a detailed review document for each curriculum is available upon [request](#).

Table 2. Health TEKS Objectives, Reproductive & Sexual Health Strand Full or Partial Coverage – All Lessons	
Middle School (7 th – 8 th Grade)	70%
Level I Health (9 th – 12 th Grade)	77%
Level II Health (9 th – 12 th Grade)	85%

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Middle School (7th – 8th Grade) Reproductive and Sexual Health TEKS Objectives Review

Table 3a. (20) Reproductive and sexual health--healthy relationships, Middle School (7th – 8th Grade).

TEKS Objectives	TEKS Coverage (All Lessons)		Notes
	Full	Partial	
(20) Reproductive and sexual health--healthy relationships. The student understands the characteristics of healthy romantic relationships. The student is expected to:			
(A) compare and contrast the difference between friendship, infatuation, dating/romantic relationships, and marriage			Instructor must cover this Student Expectation (SE).
(B) explain how friendships provide a foundation for healthy dating/romantic relationships			Instructor must cover this SE.
(C) describe healthy ways to express friendship, affection, and love	X		
(D) describe appropriate and effective methods of communicating emotions in healthy dating/romantic relationships and marriage			Instructor must cover this SE.
(E) evaluate the importance of mutual respect, trust, support, honesty, commitment, and reliability in healthy dating/romantic relationships and marriage		X	Instructor must evaluate the importance of mutual respect, trust, support, honesty, commitment, and reliability in marriage.
(F) describe behaviors in dating/romantic relationships that enhance dignity and respect	X		
(G) describe the benefits of healthy marriages, including companionship and social, emotional, financial, and health benefits			Instructor must cover this SE.

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Table 3b. (21) Reproductive and sexual health--personal safety, limits, and boundaries, Middle School (7th – 8th Grade).

TEKS Objectives	TEKS Coverage (All Lessons)		Notes
	Full	Partial	
(21) Reproductive and sexual health--personal safety, limits, and boundaries. The student understands how to set and respect personal boundaries to reduce the risk of sexual harassment, sexual abuse, and sexual assault. The student is expected to:			
(A) explain that physical, emotional, and sexual abuse and exploitation are all forms of abuse	X		
(B) explain the social and emotional impacts of sexual harassment, sexual abuse, sexual assault, and sex trafficking			Instructor must cover this SE.
(C) define dating violence and the characteristics of unhealthy or harmful relationships, including anger, controlling behavior, jealousy, manipulation, and isolation		X	Instructor must define dating violence.
(D) identify protective strategies for avoiding unsafe situations that heighten the risk of sexual harassment, sexual abuse, sexual assault, sex trafficking, and teen dating violence		X	Instructor must identify protective strategies for avoiding unsafe situations that heighten the risk of sex trafficking.
(E) explain the importance of reporting to a parent or another trusted adult sexual harassment, sexual abuse, sexual assault, sex trafficking, and dating violence involving self or others		X	Instructor must explain the importance of reporting sex trafficking to a parent or another trusted adult.
(F) describe how a healthy sense of self and making decisions regarding setting and respecting personal boundaries promote healthy dating/romantic relationships	X		

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(G) discuss and practice how refusal skills can be used to resist negative peer influences and reinforce personal boundaries to avoid dangerous situations and behaviors that increase sexual risk in dating/romantic relationships	X		
(H) explain the importance of clearly communicating and respecting personal boundaries and why individuals have the right to refuse sexual contact	X		

Table 3c. (22) Reproductive and sexual health—anatomy, puberty, reproduction, and pregnancy, Middle School (7th – 8th Grade).

TEKS Objectives	TEKS Coverage (All Lessons)		Notes
	Full	Partial	
(22) Reproductive and sexual health—anatomy, puberty, reproduction, and pregnancy. The student analyzes adolescent development, the process of fertilization, and healthy fetal development. The student is expected to:			
(A) compare and contrast the physical, hormonal, and emotional changes in males and females that occur during puberty and adolescence		X	Instructor must compare and contrast the emotional changes in males and females that occur during puberty and adolescence.
(B) identify how the process of fertilization occurs between a man and a woman through sexual intercourse	X		
(C) explain significant milestones of fetal development and the harmful effects on the fetus of certain substances such as alcohol, tobacco, and prescription drugs and environmental hazards such as lead			Instructor must cover this SE.

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(D) describe the importance of telling a parent or another trusted adult, obtaining early pregnancy testing, and seeking prenatal care if signs of pregnancy occur			Instructor must cover this SE.
(E) define the emotional changes that may occur during and after pregnancy, including postpartum depression, and discuss resources for support and treatment			Instructor must cover this SE.

Table 3d. (23) Reproductive and sexual health--sexual risk, Middle School (7th – 8th Grade).

TEKS Objectives	TEKS Coverage (All Lessons)		Notes
	Full	Partial	
(23) Reproductive and sexual health--sexual risk. The student understands that there are risks associated with sexual activity and that abstinence from sexual activity is the only 100% effective method to avoid risks. The student is expected to:			
(A) explain how teen pregnancy is a possible outcome of sexual activity	X		
(B) explain the short- and long-term educational, financial, and social impacts of pregnancy on teen parents, the child, families, and society	X		
(C) identify the difference between bacterial and viral sexually transmitted diseases/sexually transmitted infections (STDs/STIs), including long-term or lifetime effects such as infertility and cancer	X		
(D) describe various modes of transmission of STDs/STIs	X		
(E) identify the prevalence of STDs/STIs among teens by referencing county, state, and/or federal data sources	X		

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(F) list the signs and symptoms of STDs/STIs, including human papillomavirus (HPV), human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS), chlamydia, syphilis, gonorrhea, herpes, and trichomoniasis, and explain why not all STDs/STIs show symptoms initially	X		
(G) explain the importance of STD/STI screening, testing, and early treatment for sexually active individuals, including during yearly physicals or if there is a concern	X		
(H) identify community resources, a minor's right to consent under certain circumstances, and the importance of parent or other trusted adult support for STD/STI testing and treatment	X		
(I) identify emotional risks that can be associated with sexual activity for unmarried persons of school age, including stress, anxiety, and depression		X	Instructor must identify anxiety and depression as emotional risks.
(J) identify support from parents and other trusted adults to be abstinent from sexual activity and create strategies for building peer support to be abstinent		X	Instructor must create strategies for building peer support to be abstinent.
(K) analyze the importance of abstinence as the preferred choice of behavior in relationship to all sexual activity for unmarried persons of school age	X		
(L) analyze the effectiveness and the risks and failure rates (human-use reality rates) of barrier protection and other contraceptive methods in the prevention of STDs/STIs and pregnancy	X		
(M) explain that HPV vaccines can help prevent the transmission of the most common types of HPV, a virus that can cause genital warts and cervical cancer and other cancers in males and females	X		

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(N) research and explain the benefits of abstinence from sexual activity such as increased self-esteem, self-confidence, and student academic achievement			Instructor must cover this SE.
(O) define legal implications of teen pregnancy, including the legal effects of acknowledgement and proof of paternity			Instructor must cover this SE.
(P) describe legal aspects of sexual activity with a minor person, including the legal age of consent, statutory rape, aggravated sexual assault, sexual abuse, and indecency with a child		X	Instructor must describe legal aspects of aggravated sexual assault, sexual assault, sexual abuse, and indecency with a child.
(Q) examine the legal ramifications of sexual offenses such as sexual harassment, sexual abuse, and sexual assault			Instructor must cover this SE.

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Alignment of TEKS Objectives Big Decisions

High School (9th – 12th Grade, Health I – One-Half Credit) Reproductive and Sexual Health TEKS Objectives Review

Table 4a. (18) Reproductive and sexual health--healthy relationships, Health I.

TEKS Objectives	TEKS Coverage (All Lessons)		Notes
	Full	Partial	
(18) Reproductive and sexual health--healthy relationships. The student understands the characteristics of healthy romantic relationships. The student is expected to:			
(A) analyze how friendships provide a foundation for healthy dating/romantic relationships			Instructor must cover this SE.
(B) identify character traits that promote healthy dating/romantic relationships and marriage		X	Instructor must identify character traits that promote healthy marriage.
(C) describe how a healthy marriage can provide a supportive environment for the nurturing and development of children			Instructor must cover this SE.

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Table 4b. (19) Reproductive and sexual health--personal safety, limits, and boundaries, Health I.

TEKS Objectives	TEKS Coverage (All Lessons)		Notes
	Full	Partial	
(19) Reproductive and sexual health--personal safety, limits, and boundaries. The student understands how to set and respect personal boundaries to reduce the risk of sexual harassment, sexual abuse, and sexual assault. The student is expected to:			
(A) describe the characteristics of sex trafficking such as grooming, controlling behavior, exploitation, force, fraud, coercion, and violence			Instructor must cover this SE.
(B) analyze the characteristics of harmful relationships that can lead to dating violence	X		
(C) analyze healthy strategies for preventing physical, sexual, and emotional abuse	X		
(D) analyze how a healthy sense of self and making and respecting decisions about safe boundaries and limits promote healthy dating/romantic relationships	X		
(E) explain and demonstrate how refusal strategies can be used to say "no" assertively to unhealthy behaviors in dating/romantic relationships	X		
(F) examine factors, including alcohol and other substances, that increase sexual risk and that affect setting, perceiving, respecting, and making decisions about boundaries	X		
(G) examine and discuss influences and pressures to become sexually active and why it is wrong to violate another person's boundaries and manipulate or threaten someone into sexual activity	X		

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(H) explain the importance of reporting to a parent or another trusted adult sexual harassment, sexual abuse, sexual assault, and dating violence involving self or others

X

Table 4c. (20) Reproductive and sexual health—anatomy, puberty, reproduction, and pregnancy, Health I.

TEKS Objectives	TEKS Coverage (All Lessons)		Notes
	Full	Partial	
(20) Reproductive and sexual health—anatomy, puberty, reproduction, and pregnancy. The student analyzes adolescent development, the process of fertilization, and healthy fetal development. The student is expected to:			
(A) analyze the importance of telling a parent or another trusted adult, obtaining early pregnancy testing, and seeking prenatal care if signs of pregnancy occur			Instructor must cover this SE.

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Table 4d. (21) Reproductive and sexual health--sexual risk, Health I.

TEKS Objectives	TEKS Coverage (All Lessons)		Notes
	Full	Partial	
(21) Reproductive and sexual health--sexual risk. The student understands that there are risks associated with sexual activity and that abstinence from sexual activity is the only 100% effective method to avoid risks. The student is expected to:			
(A) research and analyze the educational, financial, and social impacts of pregnancy on teen parents, the child, families, and society, including considering the effects on one's personal life goals	X		
(B) describe various modes of transmission of STDs/STIs	X		
(C) investigate and summarize the statistics on the prevalence of STDs/STIs among teens by referencing county, state, and/or federal data sources	X		
(D) describe signs and symptoms of STDs/STIs, including human papillomavirus (HPV), human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS), chlamydia, syphilis, gonorrhea, herpes, and trichomoniasis, and identify that not all STDs/STIs show symptoms	X		
(E) analyze the importance of STD/STI screening, testing, and early treatment for sexually active people, including during yearly physicals or if there is a concern	X		

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(F) analyze emotional risks that can be associated with sexual activity for unmarried persons of school age, including stress, anxiety, and depression		X	Instructor must analyze emotional risks of anxiety and depression that can be associated with sexual activity for unmarried persons of school age.
(G) analyze the importance and benefits of abstinence from sexual activity as it relates to emotional health and the prevention of pregnancy and STDs/STIs	X		
(H) identify support from parents and other trusted adults and create strategies, including building peer support, to be abstinent or for return to abstinence if sexually active	X		
(I) analyze the effectiveness and the risks and failure rates (human-use reality rates) of barrier protection and other contraceptive methods, including how they work to reduce the risk of STDs/STIs and pregnancy	X		
(J) explain the legal responsibilities related to teen pregnancy, including child support and acknowledgement of paternity			Instructor must cover this SE.

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High School (9th – 12th Grade, Health II – One-Half Credit) Reproductive and Sexual Health TEKS Objectives Review

Table 5a. (19) Reproductive and sexual health--healthy relationships, Health II.

TEKS Objectives	TEKS Coverage (All Lessons)		Notes
	Full	Partial	
(19) Reproductive and sexual health--healthy relationships. The student understands the characteristics of healthy romantic relationships. The student is expected to:			
(A) compare and contrast effective and ineffective methods of communicating emotions in healthy dating/romantic relationships and marriage	X		
(B) analyze behaviors in romantic relationships that enhance dignity and respect	X		
(C) examine how a healthy marriage can provide a supportive environment for the nurturing and development of children			Instructor must cover this SE.

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Table 5b. (20) Reproductive and sexual health--personal safety, limits, and boundaries, Health II.

TEKS Objectives	TEKS Coverage (All Lessons)		Notes
	Full	Partial	
(20) Reproductive and sexual health--personal safety, limits, and boundaries. The student understands how to set and respect personal boundaries to reduce the risk of sexual harassment, sexual abuse, and sexual assault. The student is expected to:			
(A) identify community resources to support individuals who have experienced sexual harassment, sexual abuse, sexual assault, dating violence, and sex trafficking		X	Instructor must identify community resources to support individuals who have experienced sex trafficking.
(B) evaluate the importance of reporting to a parent or another trusted adult sexual harassment, sexual abuse, sexual assault, and dating violence involving self or others	X		
(C) discuss how refusal skills can be used to set limits and boundaries to avoid behaviors that increase sexual risk	X		
(D) analyze factors, including alcohol and other substances, that increase sexual risk and that affect setting, perceiving, respecting, and making decisions about boundaries		X	Instructor must analyze other substances that increase sexual risk and that affect setting, perceiving, respecting, and making decisions about boundaries.
(E) evaluate influences and pressures to become sexually active and why it is wrong to violate another person's boundaries and manipulate or threaten someone into sexual activity	X		

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Table 5c. (21) Reproductive and sexual health—anatomy, puberty, reproduction, and pregnancy, Health II.

TEKS Objectives	TEKS Coverage (All Lessons)		Notes
	Full	Partial	
(21) Reproductive and sexual health—anatomy, puberty, reproduction, and pregnancy. The student analyzes adolescent development, the process of fertilization, and healthy fetal development. The student is expected to:			
(A) analyze the significance of hormonal, physical, emotional, and social changes in males and females and their relationship to sexual health		X	Instructor must analyze the significance of hormonal, emotional, and social changes in males and females and their relationship to sexual health.
(B) list factors such as heredity, environment, STDs/STIs, and the mother's health and nutrition that can affect fetal development from conception through birth		X	Instructor must list factors such as heredity, environment, and the mother's health and nutrition that can affect fetal development from conception through birth
(C) describe the emotional changes that may occur during and after pregnancy, including postpartum depression, and identify resources for support and treatment			Instructor must cover this SE.

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Table 5d. (22) Reproductive and sexual health--sexual risk, Health II.

TEKS Objectives	TEKS Coverage (All Lessons)		Notes
	Full	Partial	
(22) Reproductive and sexual health--sexual risk. The student understands that there are risks associated with sexual activity and that abstinence from sexual activity is the only 100% effective method to avoid risks. The student is expected to:			
(A) analyze the options available to teenage parents such as parenting or the process of adoption and the legal rights of parties involved		X	Instructor must analyze the process of adoption and the legal rights of parties involved available to teenage parents.
(B) evaluate long-term or lifetime effects of bacterial and viral STDs/STIs, including infertility and cancer	X		
(C) identify community resources, minors' right to consent under certain circumstances, and the importance of parent or other trusted adult support for STD/STI testing and treatment	X		
(D) analyze the effectiveness and the risks and failure rates (human-use reality rates) of barrier protection and other contraceptive methods, including how they work to reduce the risk of STDs/STIs and pregnancy		X	Instructor must analyze the risks and failure rates (human-use reality rates) of barrier protection and other contraceptive methods.
(E) identify the effectiveness of vaccines in preventing the transmission of the most common types of HPV, a virus that may cause genital warts and head and neck cancer, cervical cancer, anal cancer, or other cancers that may occur in males and females		X	Instructor must identify the effectiveness of vaccines in preventing the transmission of the most common types of HPV.

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(F) analyze the benefits of abstinence from sexual activity, including focusing on personal development and encouraging individuals to build healthy relationships not complicated by sexual involvement		X	Instructor must provide further instruction on personal development and encouraging individuals to build healthy relationships not complicated by sexual involvement.
(G) assess support from parents and other trusted adults and create strategies, including building peer support, to be abstinent or for return to abstinence if sexually active	X		
(H) investigate and summarize legal aspects of sexual activity with a minor person, including the legal age of consent, statutory rape, aggravated sexual assault, sexual assault, and indecency with a child		X	Instructor must investigate and summarize legal aspects of sexual activity with a minor person including aggravated sexual assault, sexual assault, and indecency with a child.
(I) investigate and summarize current laws relating to sexual offenses such as sexual harassment, abuse, and assault			Instructor must cover this SE.

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Texas Education Code §28.004 Statutory Compliance

Texas Education Code §28.004 lays out requirements for human sexuality instruction. These requirements (see table 6) are reflected in the above TEKS Objectives and in our assessment of their coverage in this program.

Table 6. Texas Education Code §28.004 Statutory Compliance

Course materials and instruction must:

- (1) Present abstinence from sexual activity as the preferred choice of behavior in relationship to all sexual activity for unmarried persons of school age;
- (2) Devote more attention to abstinence from sexual activity than to any other behavior;
- (3) Emphasize that abstinence from sexual activity, if used consistently and correctly, is the only method that is 100 percent effective in preventing pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases, infection with human immunodeficiency virus or acquired immune deficiency syndrome, and the emotional trauma associated with adolescent sexual activity;
- (4) Direct adolescents to a standard of behavior in which abstinence from sexual activity before marriage is the most effective way to prevent pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases, and infection with human immunodeficiency virus or acquired immune deficiency syndrome; and
- (5) Teach contraception and condom use in terms of human use reality rates instead of theoretical laboratory rates, if instruction on contraception and condoms is included in curriculum content.