

SEX, SEXUALITIES AND RELATIONSHIPS EDUCATION – PREPARING TEACHERS

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Australia has some the best and the worst examples of sexuality education. The history is steeped in a combination of public health agendas and concerns around the education of girls (gender equity) and more recently, inclusive approaches to LGBTIQ. Although State and Territory governments decide the curriculum status and content of sexuality education, the recent Australian Curriculum recognizes the importance of sexuality and relationships education and firmly places the responsibility in the Health and Physical Education (HPE) discipline area. There are many critics who believe HPE teachers are poorly placed to undertake this kind of work. However, research with young people, pre-service and in-service teachers shows promising results suggesting that the HPE teacher might just be the hope for change to improve practice and move from a focus on risk, harm and shame to one that is strength-based and addresses the issues that young people say they want included. These include: gender and sexual diversity, starting relationships, love and pleasure.