

Forum

Abstinence-only teaching proves ineffective

MARY EARP

"Three days ago a stork built its nest on top of my garage. I'm not stupid. Obviously it's getting ready to bring me my baby. I know where babies come from." Brittany, played by Heather Morris, portrays a teen clueless about sex in a recent episode of "Glee." Though this may be a lighthearted joke in the show, it may apply to us more than we know. Abstinence seems to be the most heavily emphasized form of sexual education taught at WLHS.

Oregon state law requires schools to provide sexual education annually to students in grades six through eight and at least twice to the grades nine through 12. When taught, information about abstinence must be stressed, though information on safe sex should not be excluded.

"The state has guidelines which we base our teachings off of," Joe Cerny, Health/P.E. Department Chair, said. "We currently have an abstinence-based program, though we give information on safe sex as well."

According to Cerny,

the school brings in guest speakers to talk about abstinence and safe sex. They provide information regarding sexually transmitted diseases and pregnancy as well.

"We discuss safe sex methods that will help to prevent unwanted pregnancies and the prevention of contracting STDs," Cerny said.

Cerny states that the current health system teaches both spectrums of sexual education. Though the school provides information on safe sex and abstinence, according to some students, they do not give both areas equal credence.

"I don't remember being taught anything about safe sex," an anonymous student said. "I just remember the whole 'don't have sex' thing."

If students are not given enough information on safe sex, teenagers may not know its dangers. It is inevitable that some teenagers will have sex, and information on safe sex may help teenagers prevent pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases.

"I think they should teach about both abstinence

and safe sex," Katherine Stubblefield, sophomore,

effectiveness of teaching only abstinence versus sex



Photo courtesy of Barbara Lake, Fox TV

Kurt, played by Chris Colfer, receives "the talk" from his father, Bert, played by Mike O'Malle. Sexual education in schools has always been a widely debated topic, and was theme of a recent "Glee" episode.

said. "Sex is something that is going to happen sometime so kids should know how to do it safely."

According to a recent study done by the AIDS Research Center in San Francisco, Calif., parents agree that schools should teach about safe sex. Eighty-five percent of parents with teenagers wanted safe sex, along with abstinence, to be taught at their child's school.

Congress has done countless studies on the

education. In a unanimous result, teaching safe sex results in fewer pregnancies and less STDs. If teenagers are taught only to not have sex, they may not have the knowledge they need about what to do if they become sexually involved.

I believe that information about safe sex, alongside abstinence, should be equally emphasized in health classes.

It is also important for parents to find a way for their children to learn about

practicing safe sex and learning about the dangers that come with it. They can either sit down and have "the talk" with their child, or find a way for them to talk to someone else if they don't feel comfortable. Students could also schedule an appointment with a doctor to talk about sex. It could be a great way to receive more information if needed.

If students have any questions outside of the classroom, according to Cerny, there are other resources from which they can receive information.

"We always want students to have the information they need," Cerny said. "They can come to their counselor, parents or the health department if they have questions."

If effective sexual education is not provided for teenagers, they might do something that they regret. Sexual education is a huge part of becoming a teenager and carrying out a healthy lifestyle, and teenagers should be taught everything they need to know, giving both abstinence and safe sex equal attention.

Exposure to loud music brings consequences, creates annoyance

CHRISANN KIM

It is a huge privilege to have music in school. Remember how you weren't allowed to have iPods in middle school? In high school, a good amount of free time is used to listen to music or playing on one's iPod Touch. The luxury of free time for students lasts until someone's music is blaring into the open silence.

Rock, metal, country, pop, alternative; it doesn't matter what genre of music it is. Each

genre has its own tune and beat—and loudness. With new technology, younger generations start to listen to more music more of the time, sooner. I've noticed fifth graders holding iPods, listening to loud music.

One out of five teens has lost a small amount of hearing because of the stunningly high volumes that blast out from ear buds into a teen's ears, according to TweenTribune. Researchers analyzed data

from 12-to-19-year-olds on a national health survey. That means 6.5 million teens are affected with at least slight hearing loss. These heavy

During car rides, I can hear my sister's loud pop music through my own pop music. If it's that loud, it's too loud. When a student's music is

cause it's their fault."

There's a saying that goes like this, "Music on, world off." Alright, I understand how people love to listen to

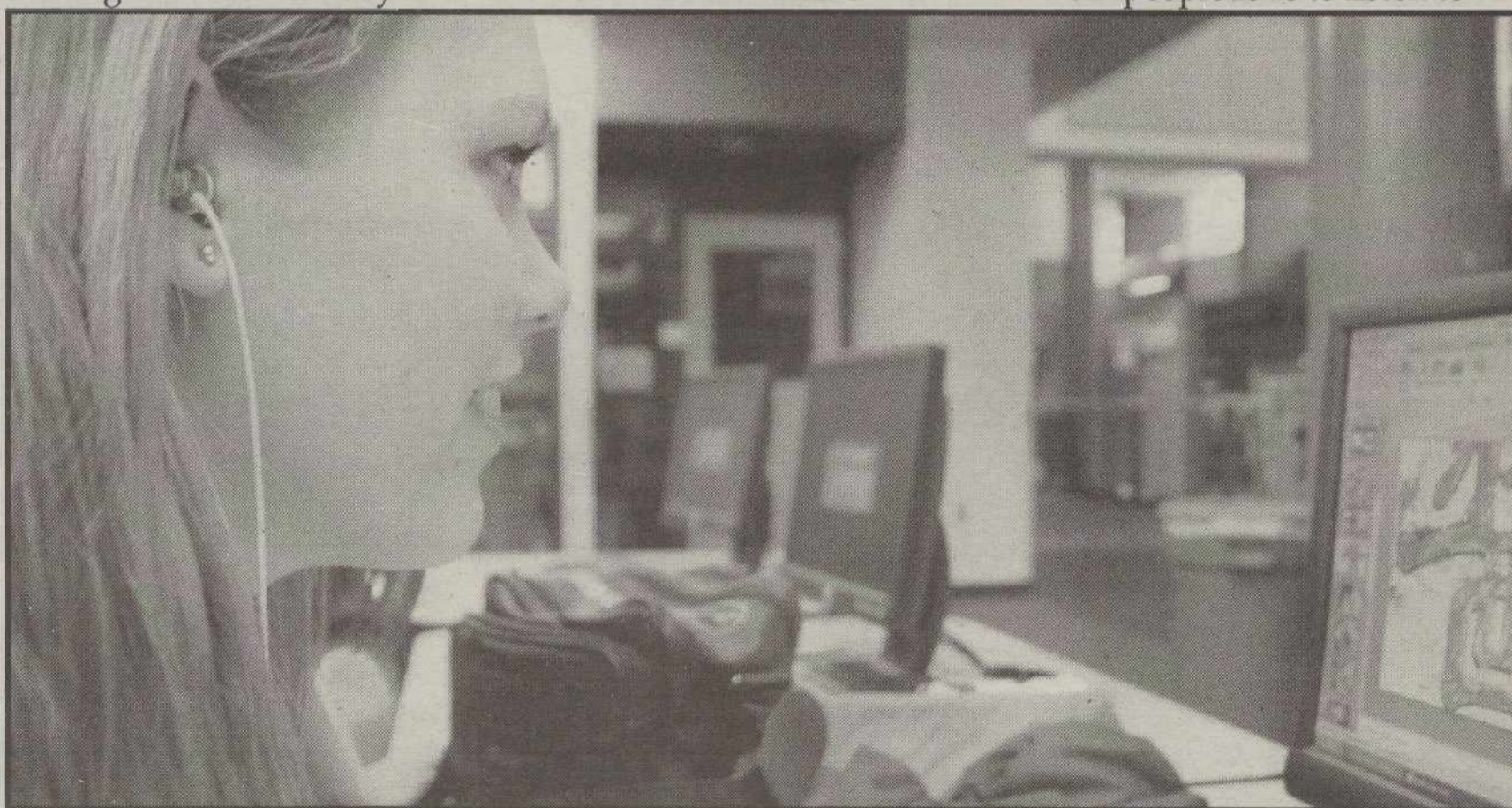


Photo by Laurel Massaro

Gretchen Provinsen, freshman, listens to music while researching on the computer. Past research has proven that teens who listen to loud music are inflicted with hearing loss. Loud music has also created disturbance to other students who try to focus in class.

consequences may appear minimal at first, but they can affect you permanently. They can also affect how you learn in school. If you can't hear your own friends talk to you, how do you expect to be able to hear a professor at the bottom of a classroom during a college lecture?

Personally, I don't turn up the music volume more than halfway. If I can't hear someone next to me talking to me, the volume is too loud.

the loudest thing in the quiet classroom, one: it disrupts everyone else, two: the student doesn't realize it, and three: it's awkward asking them to turn it down when they can't hear you.

"It's so annoying. It's mostly their fault because they'll find out later about the consequences and they'll find out they can't hear as well anymore," Dana Rost, sophomore, said. "They can't do anything about it, really,

Justin Bieber or karaoke or to Taylor Swift's love songs. But if it's the one and only thing an entire classroom can hear through your earphones, it is TOO LOUD. You are inflicting terrible damage on your ears. If grades are important to you but music is, too, turn down the volume. Your ears will be eternally grateful if you treat them nicely so they can serve you well for the rest of your life. Wouldn't want to go deaf, you hear?

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