ABSTRACT. This paper discusses the use of Web site presentations in human sexuality courses. Web site presentations are a good way to incorporate additional information about human sexuality into a course, and they provide a way to learn to critique human sexuality material on the Internet. In addition, they help students to practice presentation skills. A discussion of how to use Web site presentations is included. Considerations for this type of assignment, student reactions, and the benefits of this assignment also are included.

KEYWORDS. Human sexuality, Web site presentations, teaching human sexuality, college
GOAL

The goal of this paper is to demonstrate how to use Web site presentations to stimulate students' critical thinking about human sexuality material from the Internet. Connor-Greene and Greene (2002) note that with the volume of information on the Internet expanding, teaching analytical and evaluative skills to students is even more essential, so that they can effectively evaluate the information.

OBJECTIVES

After completing this assignment, the students should be able to:

1. critique information about human sexuality from the Internet, and
2. practice their presentation skills and receive feedback about their presentations.

TIMING

Each student presents his or her Web site or group of Web sites for 8–10 minutes at the beginning of the assigned class day. For classes with 30 students, each student presents once a semester, which means there is a presentation almost every class day. For a class with 15 students, each student presents twice a semester. For larger classes group presentations can be used.

RATIONALE

Before I began teaching Human Sexuality, I decided I wanted to use a variety of teaching techniques as I did in my other courses. I thought it was important for my students to be actively involved in the course, and I wanted my students to be required to give oral presentations. Before I developed my presentation guidelines, I reviewed the research literature on assignments given in human sexuality courses. I did not find information about how to teach a human sexuality course that included presentations, but I did find articles that described the use of other assignments. For example:
• **Applied term papers.** McKinney (1987) suggested that students explain an event, behavior, or incident relevant to human sexuality using sociological or psychological theory. The students also were asked to design a future research project that could be conducted to investigate the topic they selected.

• **Cartoons.** Adams (1974) introduced topics during class by using sexual humor in cartoons.

• **Critiques of articles.** Sprecher and Pocs (1987) had students find magazine or newspaper articles and gave them a set of questions to answer concerning the articles. The authors noted that journal articles also would work for this assignment.

• **Debates.** Finken (2003) suggests using in-class debates, which she believes pushes students to consider multiple viewpoints for human sexuality topics.

• **Discussion groups.** Several authors (Barbour, 1989a, 1989b; McKinney, 1987; Morrison, 1972; Sprecher & Pocs, 1987; Watts, 1977) have written about discussion groups. These groups are typically led by either undergraduates who have already taken the course or by graduate students. The groups often involve a discussion of ethical issues, written assignments, class topics, current events, or theories. McKinney also suggested giving the groups newspaper or magazine articles about human sexuality topics to start discussions within the groups.

• **Essays.** Atwater (1987) has students write anonymous essays reflecting on human sexuality topics. She does not share the essays with the current class but obtains the permission of the class to use the information in future courses.

• **Games.** Walters (1993) suggests using a sexual jeopardy game with human sexuality content.

• **Guest speakers.** McKinney (1987) suggests bringing in guest speakers such as sex therapists, so that students can hopefully see the real-world relevance of the material presented in the course.

• **In-class writing assignments.** McKinney (1987) suggests having students write short applied essays for each topic or section covered in the course.

• **Interviews.** Stinson (1987) has students interview family members and peers about their sexual attitudes. He has the students predict how they think the people will respond during the interviews. The students then write a paper about the relationship between what they learned in the interviews and the material they learned in the course.
• Journal writing. Moy (1987) suggests having students write their thoughts, feelings, and reactions to the course readings in a journal. The professor reads the journals and gives feedback.

• Reaction papers. Sprecher and Pocs (1987) have students respond to material from class by stating how it applies to their lives in reaction papers. An example they gave was when teaching about sex through the life cycle, the student writes about when he or she first learned about sex and his or her reaction.

• Research study participation. Sprecher and Pocs (1987) has students become collaborators for research studies by having them interview others about nonthreatening human sexuality topics.

• Web site quizzes. McCarthy (2005) has students go to two Internet sites that present national data about sexuality to gather information to answer quizzes developed by the author.

I did not want to use the majority of the class assignments listed above because of concerns about disclosure of personal information (Finken, 2006), and I still felt that presentations would be a nice addition to the course. This led to the development of my Web site presentation assignment, which I will explain next.

AUDIENCE

This assignment is intended to be used in college-level human sexuality courses.

MATERIALS

Each student is given a Web site or group of Web sites to research and critique. The Internet sites' URLs are typed and printed onto small pieces of paper. The pieces of paper are folded and put into a jar. The students use the jar to select a presentation topic or topics.

The classroom needs to have a computer, projector, and screen. This allows the students to project their Web sites onto a screen for the class to see during the presentations.
PROCEDURE

Before the Semester

Before the semester begins, the instructor should search for acceptable Web sites about topics related to human sexuality. These can be found by writing the author of this article, by looking at human sexuality textbooks that often have lists of Web sites, or by searching the Internet using human sexuality terminology. By doing this, the author of this article was able to develop a list of 345 Web sites. However, it should be noted that only 222 of them were active and appropriate for the course. See Table 1 for an example list of 20 Web sites.

The instructor then needs to select the Web sites that he or she wants to use in the course. One way to make the selection easier is to select topics based on the material presented in the course. These can correspond to chapters or readings. Or another way is to select Web sites that cover topics that are not covered in the textbook or readings but relate to the course material. This allows for new information to be presented, which can make the presentations more interesting.

The more credible Web sites not selected for the class can be posted for students to use if they want more information about one of those topics. Instructors should also consider that since this assignment is based on Web sites that can become inactive during the semester, additional Web sites might be needed to be used as substitutes.

Beginning of the Semester

The first day of class each student randomly selects a piece of paper or two pieces of paper from the jar. Each piece of paper states the Web site topic, the Web site address, and the presentation date, which coincides with the course material. The students are then asked to introduce themselves to other class members and to announce the topic(s) for their Web site presentation(s). After introductions are finished, the students are encouraged to swap topics if they do not like the topic(s) or presentation date(s). They are given 10 minutes to walk around the classroom to possibly swap topics. They are asked to re-introduce themselves when talking to others. This serves as a nice ice-breaker for the first day of class.

Since anyone can post information on the Internet with no quality control, the students are instructed to use their critical thinking skills to investigate the Web site(s). Critical thinking skills are defined as an effortful and careful evaluation of the information with an emphasis on striving
TABLE 1. Example Human Sexuality Web Sites

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</table>
| 1. | Sex Research and Obstacles  
    | http://www.apa.org/monitor/apr03/obstacles.html  
| 2. | Dangerous Dolls?  
    | http://www.apa.org/monitor/sep06/dolls.html  
    | http://www.packaginggirlhood.com/bg.html |
| 3. | Breast Augmentation  
    | http://www.soc.ucsb.edu/sexinfo/?article=anatomy&refid=002 |
| 4. | The Hymen  
    | http://www.soc.ucsb.edu/sexinfo/?article=anatomy&refid=027 |
| 5. | Pap Smear Results  
    | http://familydoctor.org/138.xml |
| 6. | Penis Enlargement  
    | http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/penis/MC00026 |
| 7. | How to Talk to Your Parents about Sex  
    | http://www.soc.ucsb.edu/sexinfo/?article=communication&refid=020 |
| 8. | Polyamory  
    | http://www.polyamorysociety.org/page6.html |
| 9. | First-time Sex Worries  
    | http://www.soc.ucsb.edu/sexinfo/?article=teensex&refid=017 |
| 10. | Coping with Affairs  
      | http://www.netdoctor.co.uk/sex_relationships/facts/affairs.htm |
| 11. | Long-Distance Relationships  
    | http://www.soc.ucsb.edu/sexinfo/?article=communication&refid=010 |
| 12. | Drugs and Sex  
| 13. | The Fetal Senses  
    | http://www.birthpsychology.com/lifebefore/fetalsense.html |
| 14. | Can I Get Pregnant If?  
    | http://www.soc.ucsb.edu/sexinfo/?article=faq2&refid=003 |
| 15. | Breastfeeding as Birth Control  
    | http://www.breastfeeding.com/reading_room/lam.html |
| 16. | Persistent Sexual Arousal Syndrome  
    | http://www.femalepatient.com/html/arc/rel/april02/article03.asp |
| 17. | Tuskegee Syphilis Experiment  
    | http://www.infoplease.com/ipa/A0762136.html |
| 18. | Salmonellam and Molluscum Contagiosum  
    | http://www.sexhealth.org/std/salmonella.shtml  
    | http://www.sexhealth.org/std/molluscum.shtml |
| 19. | Sharing Sexual Histories with a New Partner and How to Ask Your Partner to Get Tested for STDs  
    | http://www.soc.ucsb.edu/sexinfo/?article=stds&refid=018  
    | http://www.soc.ucsb.edu/sexinfo/?article=stds&refid=019 |
| 20. | Online Dating and Prisoners  
to overcome individual biases (Riggio & Halpern, 2006). The instructor should stress to the students that their critical thinking will help others in the course to learn the accurate information and to be skeptical of the incorrect information, which will give them a stronger base of correct human sexuality knowledge.

In their presentation the students are told to critique the Web site(s) by explaining the following:

- How the information listed on the Web site(s) is correct and/or incorrect. The students are told to determine the accuracy of the material by researching the topic using research articles and books. Other human sexuality textbooks, besides the books used in their course, are provided for the students to use in a departmental library and a list of human sexuality journals is provided for the students, so they will know where to search for information about their topic.
- Whether or not the students feel that the information on their Web site(s) is useful for other students to know about.
- Whether or not the information on the Web site(s) is presented in a way that is interesting and keeps the reader’s attention.
- Finally, if the Web site cites research, the students are asked to comment on the quality of the research.

The students also are told for an interesting presentation they need to be creative by bringing in outside material, interacting with the class, using humor, and so forth.

See Table 2 for an example grid to use when grading this assignment. The students are given this grid when discussing the instructor’s expectations for the presentations on the first day of class. To grade the assignment, the box that corresponds with the student’s performance is checked and the corresponding points for all of the checked boxes are added together. The students are given the completed grid, along with written feedback about what they did well and an explanation about the points they lost during the presentation.

The presentations are during the first 10 minutes of each class. A timer is used and presentations that are more than 10 minutes are stopped. If students in the class have questions, they can ask the presenter questions for up to an additional 5 minutes after the presentation.
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>Audience could not understand the presentation because there was no sequence of information.</td>
<td>Audience had difficulty following the presentation because student jumped around.</td>
<td>Student presented information in a logical sequence that audience could follow.</td>
<td>Student presented information in a logical, <em>interesting</em> sequence that audience could follow.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Engagement with audience</td>
<td>The student made no eye contact and/or stood behind the computer podium.</td>
<td>The student occasionally used eye contact and/or mostly stood behind the computer podium.</td>
<td>The student maintained eye contact most of the time and rarely stood behind the computer podium.</td>
<td>The student maintained good eye contact with the audience and did not stand behind the computer podium.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Elocution</td>
<td>The student mumbled, incorrectly pronounced terms, spoke too quietly for those in the back of class to hear, and/or said um a lot.</td>
<td>The student mumbled, incorrectly pronounced terms, spoke too quietly for those in the back of class to hear, or said um a lot.</td>
<td>The student's voice was clear. The student pronounced most words correctly. Most audience members could hear the presentation. The student said um only a few times.</td>
<td>The student used a clear voice and correct, precise pronunciation of terms so that all audience members could hear the presentation. The student did not say um.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Observation of time limit</td>
<td>The student presented for 6 minutes or less.</td>
<td>The student presented for 6-7 minutes.</td>
<td>The student presented for less than 8 minutes but more than 7 minutes or was not finished before 10 minutes.</td>
<td>The student presented for 8-10 minutes.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Subject knowledge</strong></td>
<td>The student did not have a grasp of the information on the Web site(s).</td>
<td>The student demonstrated partial knowledge of the material on the Web site(s).</td>
<td>The student demonstrated good knowledge of the material on the Web site(s).</td>
<td>The student demonstrated complete knowledge of the material on the Web site(s).</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Critique of Web site</strong></td>
<td>The critique was incorrect. Or the student did not explain whether or not the information on the Web site(s) was correct, useful, and interesting.</td>
<td>The critique was adequate, but was not complete. Or the student did not explain well as to whether or not the information on the Web site(s) was correct, usefulness, and interesting.</td>
<td>The critique was correct, but not interesting. The student explained whether or not the information on the Web site(s) was correct, usefulness, and interesting, but not in an interesting way.</td>
<td>The critique was correct and thought-provoking. The student explained whether or not the information on the Web site(s) was correct, usefulness, and interesting in an interesting way.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Interesting and creative</strong></td>
<td>The presentation was not interesting or creative.</td>
<td>The presentation was somewhat interesting or creative.</td>
<td>The presentation was mostly interesting and creative.</td>
<td>The presentation was interesting and creative.</td>
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</table>

Total points (out of 30):
For the six semesters this assignment has been used, the students \((N = 157)\) gave the assignment a 6.53 out of 7, with 1 being strongly dislike, 4 being neither like nor dislike, and 7 being strongly like. The written comments were generally positive. A few examples of the positive written comments from students are “the Web site presentations were an excellent addition to the class and helped me reinforce and apply the material, as well as encouraged me to participate,” “the Web site presentations were a nice way to get the class started,” and “I really enjoyed the class conversations that resulted from the Web site presentations.” This assignment has not received many negative comments, but two examples from students include “I did not like the Web site presentations because I was embarrassed about having to talk about a sexual topic in front of others” and “I feel that some of the Web site presentations are wonderful and some are boring. I wish there was a way to have more quality control.”

This assignment is useful in many ways.

- Using the Web site presentations allows for another teaching technique to be incorporated into the course, which helps keep students interested and involved.
- The Web sites allow students to learn additional information that is not covered in their textbooks or the articles assigned for the course.
- This assignment helps students develop their presentation skills and become active participants in the class.
- This assignment, unlike many of the others listed above, allows students to present human sexuality material in a more objective way and to not share personal information with others in the class.
- This assignment stresses the importance of critically thinking about material from the Internet. Frechette (2005) notes this is a skill that students are not often taught. By doing this assignment students often see that the material presented on Web sites is not correct, incomplete, or outdated (Smock, 1995).

Before using this type of activity, the instructor should consider several things. First, the size of the class is important. Classes of 30 students or less
or using group presentations is important since otherwise too much class time would be spent on presentations. Another important consideration involves selecting established Web sites that will be operational during the semester, so that students will not panic if their Web site goes down. Third, some students are very shy or become embarrassed about giving presentations about human sexuality topics. To resolve this situation the student can be given a more neutral Web site to present or if necessary an alternative written assignment could be instituted. Finally, instructors should develop a respectful class environment (Finken, 2006) and should encourage students to be objective when evaluating the material.

REFERENCES


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