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Teaching practice in sex education from a connotation of professional practice

Práctica docente en la educación sexual desde una connotación de la praxis profesional

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ABSTRACT

Teaching practice in sexuality education seen from a professional praxis perspective implies a series of competences and attitudes that go beyond the simple teaching of content. The research objective is described as generating a theorisation of teaching practice in sexuality education from a connotation of professional praxis. This article was developed from a phenomenological approach, with the participation of 10 key informants who teach in secondary education, selected with the purpose of deepening their experiences and meanings attributed to the teaching of sexuality education. This theorisation shows how teachers build their practice around adaptability, respect and the development of critical skills, configuring sexuality education as an integral formative space and contributing to the strengthening of a school culture that promotes equity, respect and reflection on sexuality and diversity.

Descriptors: academic teaching personnel; learning methods; teaching practice (Source: UNESCO Thesaurus).

RESUMEN

La práctica docente en educación sexual vista desde una perspectiva de praxis profesional implica una serie de competencias y actitudes que van más allá de la simple enseñanza de contenidos. Se describe como objetivo de investigación generar una teorización sobre la práctica docente en la educación sexual desde una connotación de la praxis profesional. Este artículo se desarrolló desde un enfoque fenomenológico, participaron 10 informantes clave que ejercen la docencia en educación secundaria, seleccionados con el propósito de profundizar en sus experiencias y significados atribuidos a la enseñanza de la educación sexual. Esta teorización evidencia cómo los docentes construyen su práctica en torno a la adaptabilidad, el respeto y el desarrollo de habilidades críticas, configurando la educación sexual como un espacio formativo integral y contribuyendo al fortalecimiento de una cultura escolar que promueve la equidad, el respeto y la reflexión sobre la sexualidad y la diversidad.

Descriptores: personal académico docente; método de aprendizaje; práctica pedagógica. (Fuente: Tesauro UNESCO).

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INTRODUCTION

Teaching practice becomes an axis, not only for the transmission of knowledge, but also for the formation of socio-emotional and critical thinking skills that enable young people to make informed decisions and build healthy relationships. Studies underline the importance of a professional praxis that integrates an ethical, inclusive and culturally and socially diverse approach, making comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) a tool for equity and respect for diversity (Álvarez-Reyes & Aveiga-Macay, 2023; Bourke, Cullen & Maunsell, 2024; Mukanga, Dlamini & Taylor, 2024).

Sexuality education is particularly challenging in public education contexts, where it faces resource constraints and an institutional structure that hinders its full and coherent integration into school curricula. Research indicates that, to overcome these challenges, it is essential that teachers have specific training and institutional support to enable them to teach in a reflective and contextualised way, responding to the needs of their students and promoting a critical view of sexuality (Bolaños, 2022; Chavula, Zulu & Hurtig, 2022; Zulu et al., 2019).

Teaching praxis in CSE requires continuous adaptation of educators, who must be prepared to deal with complex and sensitive issues, as well as to manage the attitudes and beliefs that each one brings to the classroom, which can influence students' learning and environment (Reyes-Torres et al., 2019; Preinfalk-Fernández, 2015). In this sense, teaching practice becomes a space for reflection and self-knowledge, where educators must question and update their perspectives, providing accompaniment that promotes respect and inclusion (Torres, Yépez & Lara, 2020; Villalpando, Estrada-Gutiérrez & Álvarez-Quiroz, 2020).

In particular, the importance of an inclusive approach to CSE teaching, in which students find their diverse gender identities and sexual orientations represented, has been highlighted. This approach contributes to building a safe environment, allowing young people to explore and express their identities without fear of judgement. Inclusion and respect for diversity not only enrich the educational experience, but also strengthen students' self-esteem and sense of belonging, essential elements for their holistic development (Kohen & Meinardi, 2016; Saeteros-Hernández, Pérez-Piñero & Sanabria-Ramos, 2018).

The implementation of CSE also implies constant pedagogical updating, where teachers must keep up to date with new methodologies and resources that facilitate learning on sexuality issues. In this regard, the use of technologies, such as interactive platforms and multimedia resources, has proven to be effective in engaging students' interest and enabling autonomous and flexible learning. Gamification and visual materials, for example, are powerful tools for teaching complex topics and help students process information in a meaningful way (Koch & Beyers, 2023; Oswalt, Eastman-Mueller & Nevers, 2024).

On the other hand, formative assessment has proven to be a valuable pedagogical strategy within CSE, as it allows teachers to monitor students' progress and adjust their methods according to individual needs. Through continuous feedback, teachers can promote reflective learning, helping students to develop a critical understanding of the issues addressed. This assessment practice, which focuses on the process and not just the outcomes, fosters deep learning that is tailored to each student's context (Bolaños, 2022; Palacios-Jerves et al., 2024).

Active student participation is another essential component of CSE teaching practice. By fostering participatory and adaptive learning, teachers promote students' autonomy and ability to make informed and responsible decisions. Co-construction of knowledge, through teamwork and dialogue, enables students to meaningfully engage with CSE content, making them participants in their own learning (Mukanga, Dlamini & Taylor, 2024; Zulu et al., 2019).

CSE also demands a holistic approach to teaching practice, where educators not only transmit knowledge, but also provide emotional support and reflective spaces. Creating a safe environment, where students can express their doubts and concerns without fear, is crucial for young people to acquire a healthy and balanced view of sexuality. Emotional support, in this

sense, is fundamental to students' overall well-being, facilitating personal and social development that enables them to face the challenges of their daily lives with confidence (Bourke, Cullen & Maunsell, 2024; Preinfalk-Fernandez, 2015).

Because CSE is grounded in reflection and dialogue, it also becomes a space for the development of critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Through activities that simulate real-life situations, teachers can teach students to evaluate information, analyse problems and make assertive and ethical decisions. This critical training empowers young people, preparing them to navigate with autonomy and responsibility the challenges and opportunities they will encounter in their personal and social lives (Villalpando, Estrada-Gutiérrez & Álvarez-Quiroz, 2020; Saeteros-Hernández, Pérez-Piñero & Sanabria-Ramos, 2018).

Teaching sexuality education from a professional praxis perspective involves a series of competencies and attitudes that go beyond the simple teaching of content. CSE demands from teachers constant reflection, adaptation to the context and openness to diversity, elements that are essential to build an inclusive and safe educational environment. By integrating technological tools, fostering critical thinking and offering effective emotional support, teachers in sexuality education contribute to the formation of a critical and respectful citizenship of diversity, aligned with the values of equity and social justice that are fundamental in today's education (Álvarez-Reyes & Aveiga-Macay, 2023; Reyes-Torres et al., 2019).

By virtue of the above, the objective of the research is to generate a theorisation of teaching practice in sex education from a connotation of professional praxis.

METHOD

This article was developed from a phenomenological approach, unveiling the subjective experience of teachers who teach sexuality education, capturing how educators interpret and make sense of their role, their challenges and the transformations they experience in their professional educational practice. Phenomenology allowed us to explore the perceptions and lived experiences of teachers, showing how they construct their educational work around values such as inclusion, continuous updating and the development of critical skills in their students.

Ten key informants who teach in secondary education participated, selected for the purpose of delving into their experiences and meanings attributed to the teaching of sexuality education. Each informant was identified through an alphanumeric coding system that assigned specific codes, such as DEB1, DEB2, DEB3, up to DEB10, in line with the phenomenological approach, guaranteeing anonymity and allowing a differentiated and structured analysis of each experience.

This coding facilitated the recognition of emerging patterns and themes in their narratives, capturing their unique perspectives and shared experiences of teaching practice in sexuality education. Through these codes, a deeper understanding of the meanings that each teacher ascribes to their educational work was structured, revealing the commonalities and individual interpretations that define their adaptation, reflection and engagement in a complex and changing educational context.

The interviews were designed to understand how teachers perceive their role in sexuality education, the processes of reflection and adaptation they go through, as well as the strategies they use to address sensitive issues in their classrooms. Phenomenological analysis focused on identifying key themes from the experiences narrated by teachers. A coding process was used to extract the essential elements of their experiences, organising the data into categories presented in Table 1.

RESULTS

Currently, teaching practice in the teaching of sexuality education is a fundamental aspect that has a direct impact on the integral formation of students. In a world in constant evolution, where social and cultural dynamics are in continuous transformation, it is essential that educators

adapt to the new realities related to sexuality. This adaptation involves not only updating content, but also reflecting on the very beliefs and attitudes that teachers bring to the classroom. By approaching sexuality education in an inclusive and scientific manner, educators can promote a safe environment where students feel comfortable to explore topics often considered taboo. In addition, teaching practice should focus on building critical skills that enable young people to make informed decisions about their health and relationships, thus contributing to their personal and social development. See Table 1.

Table 1. Teaching practice in the teaching of sexuality education.

Subcategories	Category
Shortcomings in public education Theoretical and policy inputs Inclusive theme Update Visual education Incorporation of digital tools Formative evaluations Participatory and adapted Student characteristics Promoting active participation Assertive decision-making Troubleshooting Collaborative activities Pedagogical evaluation Contextualised assessment Pre-reading Little individual work Varied methodological strategies Plenary Little practice Poor monitoring Intervention by external institutions Encouraging critical thinking Emotional support Talking about issues of interest Institutional resources Student input Technological tools Active communication Reflective spaces	Teaching practice in the teaching of sexuality education

Public education often faces shortcomings in the teaching of sexuality education, which can result in a lack of adequate and up-to-date information for students. These shortcomings can be attributed to limited resources, lack of teacher training and insufficient inclusion of relevant topics in the curriculum. As a result, young people may receive confusing or misleading messages about sexuality, limiting their ability to make informed and healthy choices. It is also important to highlight the following testimony:

> DEB2: The teaching practice in educational institutions, because it is a public education and this goes hand in hand if we talk about public education, as most public things have their shortcomings, we would like to have a little more resources, but that does not mean that the educational institutions stop doing it.

In line with the above, it should be noted that teaching practice in educational institutions is essential, especially in the context of public education. However, as a public system, it faces certain limitations; often more resources would be desirable. Despite these difficulties, educational institutions continue to carry out their educational work. Theoretical and normative inputs, including legal frameworks and pedagogical guidelines that promote an inclusive and respectful approach to sexual diversity, are therefore essential. By integrating these resources

into their practice, educators can provide sexuality education that is grounded in ethical and scientific principles, ensuring that students receive accurate and relevant information. In this regard, the following contribution is appreciated:

> DEB2: there is an institutional set-up that is aligned with the national set-up and there are some theoretical references in which we use as inputs and resources to implement sexual education, diversity, inclusion, there are norms and laws that exist in Colombia.

An institutional proposal is established that is aligned with the national guideline, supported by theoretical references that serve as inputs and resources to implement sexuality education, diversity and inclusion. In Colombia, there are norms and laws that support this approach. When addressing sexuality education as an inclusive issue, it is essential to ensure that all learners feel represented and respected. This approach involves recognising and valuing the diversity of gender identities and sexual orientations, creating an environment in which young people can explore and express their sexuality without fear of rejection. By fostering an open dialogue about inclusion, educators contribute to building a more empathetic and understanding school culture. Thus, the following testimony is appreciated:

> DEB2: the teaching practice is given as it should naturally be given governed and in the light of some standards, some principles, some guiding threads, which oblige in a certain way that the institutional curriculum is aligned to this national or global setting, since it is not only in Cúcuta Norte de Santander, as this stopped being an exclusive issue some time ago, precisely to become an inclusive topic.

Teaching practice develops naturally, guided by standards and principles that act as guiding threads. These elements require the institutional curriculum to be aligned with national or global guidelines. This approach is no longer limited to Cúcuta, Norte de Santander, but has evolved into an inclusive theme that transcends the exclusivity of its original context. The constant updating of teachers is essential in order to offer sexuality education that responds to contemporary realities. As research advances and social perceptions of sexuality change, educators must be prepared to incorporate new knowledge and approaches into their practice. This updating not only improves the quality of teaching, but also enables teachers to address sensitive issues with confidence and sensitivity. The following contribution should also be noted:

> DEB3: I think that in recent years there has been progress in the way courses and workshops have been presented in order to keep up to date.

There has been notable progress in the methodology for presenting courses and workshops. This development has enabled educators and professionals to access more relevant and up-to-date content. In addition, teaching strategies have evolved, incorporating new technologies and pedagogical approaches. As a result, participants can acquire knowledge more effectively. This transformation is crucial to foster lifelong learning in an ever-changing world. It ensures that individuals remain informed and prepared for today's challenges. Visual teaching is a powerful tool in sexuality education, as it facilitates the understanding of abstract and complex concepts. By using visual resources such as infographics, videos and interactive presentations, educators can engage students and facilitate more dynamic learning. This visual approach not only enriches the educational experience, but also helps young people process information more effectively. For this is supported by the following testimony:

> DEB3: Teaching practice in the teaching of sex education at this time should include this more visual, more audiovisual part, since our children, or rather, the students, show more coupling, they feel less dispersed when information is shown in a visual format.

Similarly, the incorporation of digital tools offers new opportunities for interactive and accessible learning. Online platforms, educational applications and multimedia resources allow students to explore sexuality issues autonomously and at their own pace. In addition, these tools can

facilitate communication and the exchange of ideas among students, promoting collaborative and meaningful learning.

> DEB3: Incorporating digital tools such as gamification can be a good tool for teaching practice in this teaching, or multimedia that would enrich the lessons.

The inclusion of digital tools, such as gamification, represents a valuable strategy to enrich teaching practice in the teaching process. In addition, the use of multimedia resources can complement and enhance lessons, making learning more dynamic and interactive. These innovations facilitate a more engaging and participatory approach, which in turn can improve students' understanding. By integrating these technologies, a more immersive learning environment is fostered. In this way, the educational experience is optimised and adapted to the needs of the learners. Consequently, it opens up a range of possibilities for more effective and motivating teaching. Formative assessments are a key component of sexuality education teaching, as they allow educators to monitor learners' progress and adjust their practice according to individual needs. These assessments, which include ongoing feedback and practical activities, foster a reflective learning environment. By focusing on the process of learning rather than just the outcomes, teachers can help students develop a deeper and more critical understanding of the topics addressed. Thus the following testimony was evidenced:

> DEB3: How to evaluate with questions, whether formative evaluations, providing constructive feedback and constant reflection on teaching practice and seeking continuous improvement in the light of new information.

The method of evaluation through questioning, including formative assessments, provides constructive feedback and encourages continuous reflection on teaching practice. This approach enables educators to identify areas for improvement and to adapt to new information emerging in the educational environment. By analysing the results of these evaluations, it facilitates the development of strategies to optimise teaching. It also promotes a cycle of continuous improvement, in which teachers can adjust their methods and resources. This ensures that the quality of education remains evolving, responding to the needs of students and the changing environment. This process is fundamental to professional growth and the strengthening of teaching. Thus, participatory and adaptive teaching in sexuality education is essential to engage students in their own learning. By encouraging active participation, educators can design activities that respond to the specific interests and needs of young people, creating a more relevant and engaging learning environment. This adaptability allows teachers to address relevant topics in a meaningful way, promoting a greater connection between the content and students' everyday lives.

> DEB4: Didactic practice in the teaching of sexuality education is participatory, reflective and adapted to the needs of the learners. The topics are also adapted according to the characteristics of the students, such as their age, level of development and previous ideas about the subject.

Didactic practice in the teaching of sexuality education is carried out in a participatory and reflective way, taking into account the specific needs of the students. The topics addressed are adjusted to the characteristics of the students, taking into account factors such as age, level of development and previous conceptions of the subject. This approach allows for the creation of a more relevant and accessible learning environment, favouring a better understanding. In addition, it seeks to involve students actively in the educational process, promoting meaningful and contextualised learning. In this way, sexuality education becomes an enriching experience adapted to the reality of each group. Recognising the individual characteristics of students is fundamental to teaching practice, as each young person brings with them experiences, values and beliefs that influence their understanding of sexuality. By considering these characteristics, educators can personalise their teaching, ensuring that each student feels supported and understood in their learning process. Thus, the following contribution is evident:

> DEB4: Employ different types of strategies that encourage students' active participation through activities to be carried out both individually and in groups.

A variety of strategies are used that promote active student participation through activities designed to be carried out both individually and in groups. These tactics seek to effectively engage students, facilitating their learning and collaboration. By implementing these dynamics, a more interactive and engaged learning environment is stimulated. This encourages the development of social and teamwork skills, while respecting each student's individual learning process. This holistic approach contributes to a richer and more meaningful educational experience. Similarly, the teaching of sexuality education should focus on promoting assertive decision-making among students. By providing accurate information and tools to assess situations, educators can help young people develop the confidence to make informed choices about their health and relationships. This approach not only fosters autonomy, but also prepares students to face the challenges of everyday life. It is also evident in the following contribution:

> DEB4: Raising awareness of assertive decision-making, affective communication and strengthening critical thinking skills.

Developing problem-solving skills in sexuality education is fundamental to preparing students for complex situations. By engaging young people in activities that simulate real-life scenarios, educators can teach them to analyse problems, consider different perspectives and find appropriate solutions. This practice not only improves students' ability to deal with challenges, but also helps them to apply critical thinking in various areas of their lives.

> DEB4: At an evaluative level, different activities are proposed in which it is possible to analyse and demonstrate the knowledge acquired by the students. For example, the activities to be carried out collaboratively allow students' learning to be enriched, as well as resolving doubts and concerns among them.

It is evident that, in the area of assessment, various activities are proposed that allow students' acquired knowledge to be analysed and evidenced. For example, collaborative activities favour the enrichment of learning, while at the same time providing the opportunity to resolve doubts and concerns jointly. This approach not only reinforces individual learning, but also promotes interaction and mutual support among learners. This creates an environment in which students can share their ideas and learn from each other, strengthening their understanding of the content.

This evaluative process becomes a valuable tool for students' academic and social development. Collaborative activities in teaching sexuality education allow students to work together to explore and discuss complex issues. By encouraging teamwork, educators can promote the exchange of ideas and experiences, enriching the learning process. These activities not only strengthen interpersonal skills, but also create a sense of community and support among young people, which is essential for addressing sensitive issues such as sexuality. Thus, it is evident in the following testimony:

> DEB4: As a teacher, I accompany the collaborative activities by observing how the students work, and I am willing to deal with any doubts and concerns that may arise in relation to the subject.

Teachers should accompany the collaborative activities by observing the students' work process, showing an open attitude to resolve any doubts and concerns that may arise regarding the subject matter. This promotes a learning environment in which students feel supported and motivated to participate actively. Pedagogical evaluation in sexuality education is crucial to ensure that learning objectives are being met effectively. This process involves gathering information about learners' performance and reflecting on teaching practice. By conducting assessments that consider both knowledge and social and emotional skills, educators can adjust their approach and continually improve the quality of teaching. This is evidenced by the following testimony

> DEB4: once the execution of the activities and the approach to the topics have been completed, there are spaces for socialisation and feedback, as well as attention to doubts, in order to subsequently evaluate using different activities and pedagogical strategies.

Therefore, at the end of the execution of the activities and the treatment of the themes, spaces are created for socialisation and feedback, where any doubts that may arise are addressed. Subsequently, evaluation is carried out using various activities and pedagogical strategies. These moments are fundamental to consolidate learning and ensure that all students understand the contents addressed. Contextualised assessment therefore allows educators to consider the specific environment and circumstances of their students. By designing assessments that reflect the reality of young people, teachers can gain a more accurate understanding of their learning and their ability to apply what they have learned in real-life situations.

> DEB4: Contextualised assessments are used to a greater extent in which students are presented with a set of ICFES-type questions in preparation for external tests.

Contextualised assessments, in which students are presented with a set of ICFES-type questions, are mainly used to prepare them for external tests. This approach allows students to become familiar with the format of these assessments and to develop skills necessary for their performance. Similarly, pre-reading is a valuable tool in teaching sexuality education, as it prepares students to actively participate in class discussions. By assigning relevant readings prior to sessions, educators can encourage reflection and critical analysis of the topics to be covered. This practice not only improves understanding of concepts, but also fosters a more dynamic and participatory learning environment. Therefore, the following testimony should be reviewed:

> DEB5: There are several options where the teacher has already planned a topic and tells the students in advance to read, right? To read on a certain page and to bring their... well, their reflections on what they have read. They work in the classroom in teams.

Similarly, there are various options where the teacher plans a topic in advance and asks the students to read on a specific page. They are then asked to bring a reflection on what they have read. In the classroom, work is done in teams, thus promoting collaboration and the exchange of ideas among students. This method not only reinforces individual learning, but also fosters a collective learning environment. In addition, little individual work may limit students' ability to reflect on their own identity and experiences. While group activities are valuable, it is equally important that educators provide opportunities for young people to engage in self-analysis and develop their personal understanding of the topics covered. This balance between individual and collaborative work is conducive to more holistic and meaningful learning. In addition, the following input should be noted

> DEB5: In sex education it is very rare that I work individually because the idea is knowledge, but of all of us as human beings, right? What we think, what everyone internalises and what everyone sort of... according to their beliefs and according to their family, because that also has a lot of influence.

As such, it is rare for sexuality education to be approached individually, as the focus is on collective knowledge as human beings. Each person brings his or her thoughts, experiences and beliefs, which are influenced by his or her family and social context. Furthermore, the implementation of varied methodological strategies is essential to meet the diverse needs of learners. By combining approaches such as debates, role-plays, case studies and creative projects, educators can maintain the interest and motivation of young people. This variety not only enriches the learning process, but also allows students to approach issues from different perspectives, promoting deeper understanding. Therefore, the following contribution is appreciated:

> DEB5: So what is enriching is that these activities are planned by the teacher in groups and that various methodological strategies are also used, videos, images, case studies.

In the same way, it is noted how valuable the activities are for the teacher to organise them in groups, using various methodological strategies such as videos, images and case studies. These tools enrich the learning process and facilitate the active participation of students. **Plenary** sessions in sexuality education provide a space for all students to share their ideas and reflections on the topics addressed. This format allows for an open and respectful dialogue, where doubts can be clarified and perspectives can be exchanged. By creating a safe environment in plenary sessions, educators contribute to building a learning community that values diversity of opinions and experiences. For which the following testimony is appreciated:

> DEB5: The plenary is to hear how each team came to their conclusion, what they thought was good, what needs to be changed, or what I learned, or what myths I solved and it is very interesting.

It is appreciated that the plenary allows to listen to the conclusions of each team, resulting in an exchange of ideas on what they considered positive, what could be improved and what myths they managed to demystify, which is very interesting for all involved. Therefore, little practice can limit the application of concepts in everyday situations. It is essential that educators provide students with opportunities to practice what they have learned, whether through simulations, role-playing or guided discussions. This practice not only reinforces learning, but also prepares young people to face real-life situations with greater confidence and competence.

> DEB6: Teaching practice in the teaching of sexuality education from my point of view is really poor.

Similarly, it is apparent that from the perspective of some in the education field, teaching practice in sexuality education is quite limited. As a result, poor follow-up in the teaching of sexuality education can lead to a lack of understanding and application of the content by students. It is important for educators to implement follow-up mechanisms that allow them to monitor their students' progress and offer additional support when necessary. This accompaniment not only improves learning, but also helps young people to feel supported in their educational process. It is therefore relevant to review the following contribution:

> DEB6: in many cases limited to the implementation of the PESCC project, which in most cases is not implemented, monitored and evaluated.

Similarly, it can be seen that this practice is often restricted to the implementation of the PESCC project, which is rarely carried out effectively, without adequate monitoring and evaluation. The intervention of external institutions can provide valuable resources and expertise to complement classroom teaching. By collaborating with specialised organisations, educators can enrich their curriculum with up-to-date information and innovative approaches. These collaborations not only benefit teachers, but also provide students with a broader perspective on sexuality issues. The following contribution is therefore appreciated:

> DEB6: In the educational institution, sex education is not given the respective importance and when a subject is addressed, it is due to single planning or to the intervention of external institutions, as is the case of the National Police.

In educational institutions, sexuality education does not receive due attention and, when it is addressed, it is often through isolated planning or with the intervention of external entities, such as the National Police. Therefore, encouraging critical thinking in sexuality education is essential for students to be able to analyse and evaluate information effectively. By encouraging questioning and reflection on the messages they receive from various sources, educators help young people develop skills that will enable them to make informed and responsible decisions in their personal lives. This critical approach also promotes autonomy and self-confidence. In this regard, the following testimony should be explored:

> DEB7: Teaching practice in the teaching of sexuality education involves creating a safe and inclusive environment, encouraging **critical** thinking

Teaching sexuality education should create a safe and inclusive environment that encourages critical thinking among students. Emotional support is crucial for students to feel safe in addressing sensitive topics. Educators must be prepared to provide a supportive environment where young people can express their concerns and experiences without fear of judgement. This emotional accompaniment not only facilitates learning, but also contributes to students' overall well-being, helping them to cope with challenges that may arise in their personal development. This is evidenced by the following testimony:

> DEB7: accurate information and emotional support for students in their overall development.

Providing accurate information and emotional support is essential for the holistic development of students. Similarly, talking about issues of interest is essential to capture students' attention and keep them engaged. By identifying and addressing issues relevant to young people's lives, educators can create a more meaningful and engaging learning space. This approach not only encourages active participation, but also ensures that students feel heard and valued in their experiences.

> DEB8: Teaching practice has a limit, since one cannot talk about certain topics that are considered taboo in society, and also to prevent adolescents and parents from believing that what one is doing is inciting them to initiate their sexuality and not what we are really looking for, that they learn everything they really need to be able to initiate it. The tools that we as teachers use depend a lot on the resources that each institution has.

Teaching practice faces limits, as there are topics that are considered taboo in society, which can lead to misunderstandings among adolescents and parents about educational intent. Institutional resources play an important role in teaching sexuality education, as they provide educators with tools and materials that enrich the curriculum. By taking advantage of these resources, teachers can provide a more comprehensive and diversified education, ensuring that students have access to accurate and up-to-date information. These institutional inputs are essential to support teaching practice and improve the quality of teaching. The following testimony should also be highlighted:

> DEB8: teachers seek to address the topic, these topics through videos, brochures, debates within the classroom where each of the students can express the information they have and find out how they obtained it so that they can start from there and resolve possible doubts that are discovered during the contributions of each of the students.

Teachers seek to address these issues through the use of videos, handouts and class discussions, where students can express their knowledge and clarify doubts that arise during the discussion. In addition, student input in sexuality education is valuable, as it allows educators to better understand young people's perspectives and experiences. By fostering an environment where students' contributions are valued, teachers can adapt their teaching to reflect the interests and needs of the group. This collaborative approach enriches the learning process and promotes a sense of belonging among young people. Therefore, the following should be highlighted:

> DEB8: Well, nowadays there are many podcasts, many blogs, videos that have a lot of interesting and relevant information, but this is mostly used by teachers to complement the subject of the class and help to take advantage of the fact that now most students have a mobile phone and one can access these types of tools.

Nowadays, there are numerous resources such as podcasts, blogs and videos containing relevant information, which teachers use to complement lessons, taking advantage of the fact that many students have access to mobile phones. Technological tools offer new possibilities, facilitating more interactive and accessible learning. By incorporating digital resources, such as videos, online platforms and educational applications, educators can engage students' attention

and promote their active participation. These tools not only enhance understanding of concepts, but also prepare young people to navigate an increasingly digital world.

> DEB9: Technological media such as slides, videos or images are often used to help exemplify what we are trying to explain to the students, ask questions, resolve doubts and always maintain active communication with the student.
>
> DEB10: Well, it's about using different platforms that exist as educational capsules so that they learn, some links that encourage participation, delving into different knowledge, debate, round table feedback, group and individual work.

Similarly, it should be noted that technological tools such as slides, videos and images are used to help illustrate what is being taught, promoting questions and clarifying doubts, while maintaining active communication with students. Creating reflective spaces in the teaching of sexuality education allows students to explore their thoughts and emotions in relation to their sexuality. These spaces can include debates, discussion groups and self-reflection activities, where young people have the opportunity to share experiences and learn from each other. By facilitating these reflections, educators foster a deeper and more personal understanding of the issues addressed, promoting meaningful learning.

> 4DEB10: in transversal studies, the children do, participate, evaluate continuously, one is planning one's classes in the classroom, making the spaces more and more reflective.

Also, in cross-curricular studies, students participate and evaluate continuously, which allows the teacher to plan lessons that provide spaces for reflection.

Theorising about teaching practice in the teaching of sexuality education.

Teaching practice in sexuality education is today positioned as a key component for the comprehensive development of students. This area of teaching demands from educators a capacity for adaptation that integrates both pedagogical advances and changing social demands, understanding sexuality education not only as a subject, but as a formative process that promotes autonomy and respect for diversity in a constantly evolving cultural and social context.

In public education systems, the teaching of sexuality education is constrained by chronic under-resourcing, fragmented policies and often insufficient institutional support. This situation forces teachers to innovate their methods and sometimes rely on external interventions, such as the involvement of specialised institutions. However, this fragmented approach and dependence on external resources underlines the need for unified education policies that support a comprehensive sexuality education programme, capable of responding to both national policy frameworks and local needs. Sexuality education thus becomes an essential educational right, the full implementation of which will depend on a strong educational infrastructure and sustained institutional commitment.

Inclusion and respect for diversity are fundamental principles in the teaching of sexuality education. In the classroom, this inclusion translates into practices that recognise and value the plurality of sexual identities and orientations. Educators should strive for a safe and empathetic environment where students can feel accepted and understood. This approach not only fosters a culture of respect and belonging, but also strengthens students' self-esteem, providing them with a solid foundation to explore their own identities without fear of prejudice. From a pedagogical perspective, this inclusive practice is closely linked to human rights, shaping sexuality education that focuses on holistic development and the recognition of diversity.

Constant updating is a key requirement for sexuality education teachers. This process not only involves keeping up to date with scientific and pedagogical advances in the field, but also adapting practice to social and cultural changes that affect perceptions of sexuality. Updating

teachers also allows educators to integrate new methodologies, such as the use of digital tools and visual resources, which facilitate the teaching of sensitive and complex topics. In this sense, the role of the teacher expands, becoming a facilitator who uses up-to-date and contextualised resources, promoting sexuality education that responds to the realities and needs of each generation.

The incorporation of digital tools transforms teaching practice in sexuality education, promoting active learning adapted to students' current contexts. Gamification, audiovisual resources and interactive platforms offer students the opportunity to explore and understand content at their own pace, promoting a dynamic and meaningful learning experience. These digital resources are key to engaging students, providing them with an environment in which they can explore complex topics autonomously and through familiar media. This transformation is based on theories of meaningful learning, in which students become the protagonists of their learning.

Formative assessment is fundamental in sexuality education, as it goes beyond the simple measurement of knowledge and becomes a process of accompaniment. Through formative assessment, teachers monitor students' progress and provide continuous feedback that encourages critical reflection and a deeper understanding of the issues being addressed. This approach allows students to develop not only academically, but also in their capacity for self-reflection and analysis. In practice, formative assessment applied to sexuality education facilitates learning that is adapted to students' experiences and needs, creating a pedagogical space in which learning is personalised and contextualised in everyday life.

Therefore, fostering participatory learning in sexuality education involves designing activities that promote decision-making and autonomy. Educators who employ collaborative and inclusive methodologies not only motivate learners to be actively involved, but also reinforce learners' ability to make informed and responsible decisions about health and relationships. This pedagogical approach, which focuses on the student as an active agent in their own learning, not only allows for greater understanding of the issues, but also results in greater engagement on the part of students, who find in the classroom a space for personal expression and reflection.

Sexuality education does not only involve the transmission of technical or scientific content, but also demands a safe and emotionally sensitive environment. Teachers play a crucial role in creating supportive spaces where students can openly discuss their experiences and emotions without fear of judgement. This emotional approach enables students to develop a healthy and confident self-understanding of their sexual identity, approaching sexuality education from a perspective that transcends theoretical knowledge and focuses on students' emotional and interpersonal development. Pedagogy argues that this holistic approach is fundamental to strengthening young people's identity and emotional well-being at a critical stage of their development.

Critical thinking and problem solving are essential skills in sexuality education, as they enable students to approach real-life situations with responsibility and reflection. Through activities that simulate complex situations, teachers promote students' ability to analyse, evaluate and solve problems in an informed and ethical manner. This critical training is essential for students to develop autonomy in their decisions and in their personal relationships, preparing them to face the challenges of their daily lives with a solid foundation of knowledge and values.

Overall, the theory of teaching practice in sexuality education is based on a set of principles that seek to balance pedagogical innovation, inclusion and adaptation to context. This practice not only responds to the need for sexuality education, but also becomes an agent of social change, empowering students and promoting a sense of respect, responsibility and autonomy. In an educational context characterised by diversity and constant change, sexuality education is an opportunity to build critical and empathetic citizens, aware of their rights and responsibilities, and able to act ethically and reflexively in their interpersonal relationships.

Thus, the role of teaching practice in sexuality education goes beyond imparting knowledge; it is about creating learning spaces where students feel supported, listened to and empowered to make informed and responsible decisions. In this process, teachers become guides and facilitators of learning that, more than content, offers students tools to live their sexuality in a healthy, respectful and empowered way, within a society that values diversity and inclusion as pillars of coexistence.

CONCLUSION

The theorisation of teaching practice in sexuality education, approached from a phenomenological perspective, shows that this work involves a series of competencies and attitudes that go beyond the mere transmission of knowledge and are oriented towards a committed and reflective professional praxis. The participation of 10 key informants made it possible to unravel the meanings and values that teachers attribute to their role in this area, highlighting the importance of an inclusive, up-to-date and ethical approach that responds to the diverse needs and realities of students. This theorisation shows how teachers build their practice around adaptability, respect and the development of critical skills, configuring sexuality education as an integral formative space and contributing to the strengthening of a school culture that promotes equity, respect and reflection on sexuality and diversity.

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