Are the Kids Alright?

January 1, 2001 By Michelle Tan

Love is a battlefield -- and so is high school sex ed. Michelle Tan went back to class to find out what's really making the grade:

Scott Hoeninger, 18
Junior, Kirkwood High School, St. Louis, MO
"The core message is that abstinence is the only sure-fire way not to get STDs, and I think that's outdated. Also, students don't encounter other areas of sexuality in school. It's all about a man and a woman. Certain kids are out on a limb not knowing what to do."

Metsuka Nicolas, 17
Alumna, Norland Senior High School, Miami, FL
"We would talk about the reproductive system, but sex ed was never the main subject. They said the basics: Abstain from sex, use a condom, have one partner. But nothing about different avenues [of infection]. If they were trying to succeed at teaching about AIDS, I didn't learn anything."

Rick Gallagher, 17
Senior, Central Regional High School, Bayville, NJ
"The teacher is great, but he stresses abstinence a lot. It's funny because half the class has already had sex. But we're not learning about this until senior year, and by then it's too late. Abstinence is just one choice out of 100 that a teenager can make. It would be better to focus on early education."

Lindsey Armstrong, 17
Senior, Strath Haven High School, Wallingford, PA
"I was certified by Planned Parenthood to teach students things like how to put condoms on wooden penises -- most of my education came from there rather than class. They do say that if you're male and have same-sex relations, you should use a condom. They don't address women."

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