



Sex – sexuality education
Personal development for
the prevention of discrimination
and violence (SEXED)

**Handling misused words in sex and sexuality
education**
by

Author: Hildur Heimisdóttir, Iceland

Editor: Ildikó Lázár

Last edition: March, 2015

The opinions expressed in this work are the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official policy of the Council of Europe.

This training unit has been developed in the trainer training course : « Sex and sexuality education - Personal development for the prevention of discrimination and violence » organised by the [Pestalozzi Programme](#) of the [Council of Europe](#) in cooperation with the Programme “[Building a Europe for and with children](#)”.

**one in five
un sur cinq**



Handling misused words in sex and sexuality education

Brief description

The aim of this session is to find the positive meaning and appropriate use of vocabulary related to gender, sex and sexuality at school. The activities help teachers clarify the meaning of these words, often labeled as bad words, and explore their use and misuse in the classroom. The session also promotes the use of literature and available learning materials to talk about stereotypes and create positive attitudes and appropriate vocabulary in the classroom.

Expected outcomes

- ✓ Participants' knowledge of the purpose and importance of sex and sexuality education will be developed.
- ✓ Participants' teaching repertoire regarding gender, sex and sexuality issues will be enriched.
- ✓ Participants will have become aware of the connection between views of sexuality and discourse.
- ✓ Participants will feel more secure about themselves and their own identity when talking openly about sex/sexuality.
- ✓ Participants' readiness will be enhanced to examine their behaviour, language use and body language (A_SELF_1).
- ✓ Participants will develop their aptitude to elicit and respond to others' beliefs, values and feelings and behaviours (S_DIV_2).
- ✓ Participants will develop their ability to use a variety of languages and registers to express oneself with nuance (S_SELF_2).
- ✓ Participants will acquire knowledge of international frameworks and declarations of Human Rights and the rule of law (K_HR_1).
- ✓ Participants will understand the ways in which meanings of concepts are influenced by contexts and power relations (K_EPIST_2).

Activities

	Duration	Methods used
Activity 1 Aims and methods in SexEd	90 minutes	Icebreaking, reading, brainstorming, poster, group work
Activity 2 Tough issues?	30 minutes	brainstorming, group discussion
Activity 3 Debriefing session	30 minutes	Writing headlines, talking to a bird
Activity 4 Ask a character	45 minutes	Role-play, cooperative group work
Activity 5 Memory game	45 minutes	Designing and playing a game in micro-groups
Activity 6 Freyer model on misused terms	30 minutes	Presentation and pair work

Activity 7 Final debriefing and evaluation	30 minutes	Movement to music, discussion and writing
--	------------	---

Background and context

The unit deals with vocabulary related to gender, sex and sexuality, topics that teachers have to address but often find difficult for a variety of reasons. In everyday school life teachers have to react to the words they hear in the classroom and in the hallways. They would like to be able to teach about delicate subjects without getting into trouble. The first step is to be able to use the appropriate vocabulary that comes with the issues that are raised. In this unit participants learn about the curricular aims of sex/sexuality education and they look for ways to work with misused words, trying to overcome the challenges of sex/sexuality education.

The present training unit was developed in Iceland and it was piloted in an optional in-service training course for primary school teachers of learners aged 10 to 12. The training took place at the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture in spring 2014.

Activity 1: Aims and methods in SexEd

Duration: 90 min

Expected outcomes

- ✓ Participants will explore the way they teach and work on subjects that are related to sexuality education and sexual identity.
- ✓ Participants will have become more secure of themselves as teachers in relation to sex/sexuality education.
- ✓ An atmosphere of trust and respect will be established in the group.

Methods/techniques:

- ✓ Icebreaking (if participants don't know each other)
- ✓ Brainstorming
- ✓ Group discussion

Resources:

- ✓ Pictures of people equal to half the number of the participants. Preferably related to sex and sexuality. Cut the pictures in half for grouping.
- ✓ Big piece of brown wrapping paper (300 cm)
- ✓ Marking pens, one for each participant

- ✓ Vase, flowerpot or basket that can hold all the pens
- ✓ Aims of sex and sexuality education from schools and national curriculum and from publications published by the EU or the Council of Europe, each on one size A4 sheet of paper (see example in Appendix 1)

Practical arrangements

- ✓ The A4 sheets with the aims of sexuality education from local or national curricula and other resources are glued in the middle of the large brown paper, the sentences are facing different ways so participants can read from all sides of the table.
- ✓ Several tables are arranged together to form a place long enough for the 300 cm long paper.
- ✓ Marking pens are spread over the paper.
- ✓ No chairs should be in the way as people are meant to walk around the table.

Procedure

Step 1 (20 min) Icebreaker or warmer

- ✓ Distribute half a picture to participants and ask them to try to find the other half.
- ✓ Ask them to get information about the other person, such as name and occupation (and perhaps age of first kiss which can later be linked to age groups in SexEd)
- ✓ When the group gets together again, each and every participant introduces their “new friend”.

Step 2 (10 min)

- ✓ Explain the aims of the activity to the participants.
- ✓ Ask them to walk around the table with the large brown paper on it and read the aims of sexual education without taking notes.

Step 3 (20 min)

- ✓ Then participants should write down keywords on the large brown paper that describe methods, activity types or teaching materials that they have experience using and they could imagine as useful for one or more of the aims laid down on the table. They can write down as many methods as they like and connect them to several aims if appropriate.
- ✓ They connect the aims with the keywords on methods on the poster..
- ✓ Everyone takes a minute or two to choose a method they want to learn more about.

Step 4 (20 min)

- ✓ The owners, or “experts” of the selected interesting methods or materials get the opportunity to talk briefly about these to the whole group.
- ✓ Alternatively, with a larger group, and depending on how many methods and materials get votes, the four corners of the room can give space to four “experts” and small groups of participants can go visit the experts’ stands and spend two minutes at each stand before they move on to the next expert.

Step 5 - Debriefing (15 min)

- ✓ While still standing around the table participants are asked to hold their pen in their hand, they take turns to reflect on the activity and say a sentence or two in response to some

of the questions below. When they have said everything they wanted, they put the pen back into the vase or flowerpot. The activity finishes when everyone has put their pens back and the vase is full.

- ✓ Questions that might guide the reflection:
 - Are there any similarities between the different documents on the aims of sex and sexuality education?
 - Are there any important differences?
 - To what extent do the differences come from the different age groups the documents talk about?
 - What is missing from these documents?
 - Is SexEd treated as a cross-curricular subject?

Tips for trainers

- ✓ Before starting a training session on a topic concerning prejudice in language use related to sex and sexuality issues, the trainer needs to be aware of his/her stereotypes regarding language about sex and sexuality that must not "color" the seminar.
- ✓ It takes a while for people to read and think about the aims and how to achieve them.
- ✓ You should add aims from the curriculum of the country. If sex and sexuality education is not in the curriculum, look for aims regarding equality and common health.

Activity 2: Tough issues?

Duration: 30 min

Expected outcome

- ✓ Participants will be able to recognize vocabulary that they find hard to use or hear in the classroom.
- ✓ Participants will be able to see that some barriers are not as high as they seem.
- ✓ Participants will produce materials that can be used in activity 5.

Methods/ techniques used

- ✓ Brainstorming
- ✓ Group work

Resources

- ✓ pens or pencils
- ✓ small slips of paper or a block of notes or post-its for each group

Practical arrangements

- ✓ Participants should be able to sit at a table in the small groups close enough to each other so they can easily share ideas among them.
- ✓ Everyone needs a pen or something to write with, the group should have a notepad or a block of notes.

Procedure

Step 1 (5 min)

- ✓ Participants are asked to stand in a line without talking according to their house numbers in ascending order. When the line is made, the first four people form one micro-group, the second four the next and so on until the whole group has been divided into groups of four.

Step 2 (15 min)

- ✓ Ask participants to write down on post-its words and expressions (i.e. fag, lesbian, fuck yourself) related to sex and sexuality that they find challenging in any way in the classroom, and they have heard or come across in their work. They should write these words on small pieces of paper.
- ✓ When a note has been written, it is put face up in the middle of the table in their micro-groups.
- ✓ When a new note is put on the table, someone else from the micro-group takes the note and reads it out aloud and puts it back on the table, now facing down.
- ✓ If there is no note on the table facing up, anyone from the group knocks three times on the table to indicate that more notes are needed.
- ✓ After about ten minutes each group gathers their stack of notes.

STEP 3 (5 MIN)

- ✓ Participants in the micro-group read the notes one after another and sort them in three piles, based on how hard they find it to address the given words and expressions in the classroom: not difficult, quite difficult, very difficult.

Step 4 (5 min)

- ✓ Each micro-group picks a favorite note from one of the three piles. The micro-groups take turns in reading out the note. If the other groups have the same note in their pile they shout out: "SEXED"!

Tips for trainers

- ✓ Teachers who attend a course about SexEd consider themselves already ready for most of the words and subjects relating sex/sexuality education, which might give the activity a slow start.

Activity 3: Debriefing session

Duration: 30 min

<p>Expected outcome</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Participants will become aware of the issues addressed in the previous activities.✓ Participants will be able to see how they can adapt the activities to their own classrooms.
<p>Methods/ techniques used</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Writing headlines
<p>Resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Computer connected to a projector✓ A piece of paper and a pen or pencil for each participant
<p>Practical arrangements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Participants should be able to see the projected slide.✓ There needs to be enough space in the room for everyone to form a circle.
<p>Procedure</p> <p>Step 1 (10 min)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Participants are asked to think back and individually write the headline of a news announcement about the first few activities of the session. You can help them formulate these headlines by asking or projecting a few questions such as:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To what extent do we address sex and sexuality issues the way they are supposed to be addressed according to our local and national curricula?• In what ways do the media affect students' vocabulary related to sex and sexuality?• What methods and techniques are there to deal with students using inappropriate terminology about their peers and others? <p>Step 2 (20 min)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Ask participants to read out their headlines and type them up so they can see everyone's headlines.✓ Then ask participants to stand in a circle.✓ Pretend to hold a bird in your hands. Tell the bird what you learned, which idea or technique you can use from the session so far in your own teaching. Then pass the bird to the person on your right and ask him or her to do the same.✓ When the bird has gone full circle, ask participants to think about the use of headlines for summarizing a session. For example, you can start by saying that it helps you to put the most essential thoughts into one sentence. Then pass on the bird to the right.✓ In the second round, people are asked to tell the bird how they liked to use headlines to debrief the day. The "bird" is then passed around again. When the "bird" has gone the whole circle it is released to the sky.
<p>Tips for trainers</p>

Activity 4: Ask the character

Duration: 45 min

Expected outcome

- ✓ Participants will distance themselves from the difficulties of talking about sex/sexuality related topics by playing the role of a character from a book.
- ✓ Participants will explore gender and sexuality related stereotypes.
- ✓ Participants will learn how to ask difficult personal questions without having to ask a real person.
- ✓ Participants' interest in literature and its treasures will be raised.

Methods/ techniques used

- ✓ Role-play
- ✓ Cooperative group work

Resources

- ✓ A pack of playing cards
- ✓ Post-it notes or slips of paper
- ✓ Pens
- ✓ Several books for children and teenagers or pictures of the cover of the books (see Appendix 2)
- ✓ Bookmark with information about the character from the book (see details in Appendix 3), for example:

I'm a boy and I am always thinking about girls.

Bert + Samira Olsson, Sören, 1964- Jacobsson, Anders, 1963- Rabén & Sjögren, 2007

I was raped.

The Abduction Newth, Mette, 1942- Farrar Strauss & Giroux, 1993

My family is different.

Else-Marie and Her Seven Little Daddies. Lindenbaum, Pija, H. Holt, 1991

Practical arrangements

- ✓ Chairs are arranged for groups of four.
- ✓ On a table by the wall books should be on display with a stack of notes in front of them.
- ✓ Inside each book is a card or bookmark with information about the main character.

Procedure

Step 1 (10 min)

- ✓ Participants draw a card. With 16 people participating there should only be four numbers available in four different colors in the pack.
- ✓ Participants look at the books that are displayed on tables around the room and write questions addressed to the characters on paper or post-it notes and stick these into the books. Could you tell anyone about the rape? When you think about girls, are they the girls you know or just the phenomenon? Do you think all boys think a lot about girls? If your family is different, what is a normal family?
- ✓ Each participant picks a book and a character that he/she is willing to help to talk.
- ✓ Everyone reads for themselves the questions addressed to the characters they picked.

Step 2 (10 min)

- ✓ Participants are asked to form groups according to the number on their card. (All the 2s will form a micro-group, all the 3s will form another micro-group, etc.)
- ✓ Members of the micro-groups sit down together and take turns in introducing the character they are (but not themselves).
- ✓ The group can use the questions in the book to start a conversation. (Example: I've been asked whom I told about the rape, I told my best friend.)

Step 3 (10 min)

- ✓ Ask participants to form new groups. This time the groups are formed according to the color of the participants' cards (e.g. all hearts will form a new micro-group, all diamonds will form another, etc.).
- ✓ Members of the newly formed micro-groups repeat the same procedure as above.

Step 4 – debriefing (15 min)

- ✓ Ask participants to think about the questions below individually first, and then let them discuss their views with a partner before opening up the floor for a plenary discussion.
 - How did you feel when you were in the role of the chosen character from the book?
 - Was it easy to assume someone else's position and imagine what they may feel like?
 - Did you have to try and break any gender or sexuality related stereotypes in your partners' (or in your own) thinking and reasoning?
 - Would you like to read any of the books we have looked into?
 - Are there any ideas or techniques that you would like to take with you from this activity?

Tips for trainers

- ✓ It is important that everyone understands that you don't have to know how the character is represented in the book. Participants are supposed to improvise what

the character is like and what he/she thinks.

- ✓ Some people find it hard to improvise from the books that they may not know at all. Give more time and help with ideas if necessary.

Activity 5: Memory game

Duration: 45 min

Expected outcome

- ✓ Participants will have acquired a new understanding of vulgar, embarrassing and offensive words related to sex/sexuality education by looking at the words and drawing their meaning in order to have a new mental image attached to each.
- ✓ Participants will learn new ways of dealing with offensive and discriminative discourse.
- ✓ Participants will find a way to look at the misused words in a positive light.
- ✓ Participants will become more confident in addressing difficult topics in a neutral way.

Methods/ techniques used

- ✓ Designing a game
- ✓ Playing the game
- ✓ Group discussion

Resources

- ✓ Stack of cards cut out from cardboard (7x7cm).
- ✓ Candy wrapped in colored paper, four pieces in each color.
- ✓ Colored pencils and pens.
- ✓ The notes from Activity 2

Practical arrangements

- ✓ The room should be set up for groups of four.
- ✓ Every group has to have access to lots of colorful pens and pencils and a stack of blank cards.

Procedure

Step 1 (5 min)

- ✓ To form the group, participants take a candy from a bowl and form the groups according to the color of the wrapping paper.

Step 2 (15 min)

- ✓ Each group gets a stack of notes from activity 2 and will write and draw the corresponding cards to create a memory game with the words and expressions

on the notes.

- ✓ Each group member takes a note and writes the difficult word on one of the blank cards.
- ✓ Then ask them to draw a picture on another card that matches the word. If the word has a double meaning draw the one that is not related to a frequently misused word in a classroom.
- ✓ Participants are allowed to talk and discuss words and pictures in their own groups as they like.
- ✓ Each group is writing/drawing a collection of cards for another group to play a memory game with it.

Step 3 (10 min)

- ✓ When the cards are ready the groups exchange packs and play a round of memory game.
- ✓ The newly created cards are laid out on the table face down. The first player starts the game by turning up two cards. If the cards match, he/she can keep them. Otherwise the cards are turned down again and the next player tries to find a match.

Step 4 – debriefing (15 min)

- ✓ Participants are asked to reflect on both activities (2 and 5) with the help of the following questions:
 - What can we do as teachers to reduce the misuse of sex and sexuality related words in the classroom?
 - How can we go about improving the vocabulary of our students at school?
 - What can we do to help our students question stereotypes?
- ✓ Ask them to stand in a circle and form a sentence in their head that answers one or more of these questions.
- ✓ When everyone has a sentence, they all whisper their sentence repeatedly at the same time.
- ✓ Ask them to whisper more loudly, then talk, then shout, then whisper again and then be silent.
- ✓ Now one by one they can reflect on what they thought of the activities or what they overheard in the whispering session.
- ✓ Moderate a debriefing discussion based on the questions above. At the end of the discussion, ask how participants could adapt any of the ideas to their own teaching context.

Tips for trainers

- ✓ Each group needs about 20 to 28 notes from activity 2, starting with the stack of the hardest words to talk about.
- ✓ If there are not enough notes from activity 2, then you have to add words.
- ✓ If people don't like to draw they can write sentences instead and put an X in the sentence to replace the word.

Activity 6: Freyer model on misused terms

Duration: 30 min

Expected outcome:

- ✓ Participants will learn to use the Freyer model on words in sex/sexuality education.
- ✓ Participants will be able to address subjects/themes regarding sex/sexuality that they find difficult to handle in a classroom.

Methods /techniques used:

- ✓ Presentation
- ✓ Pair work

Resources:

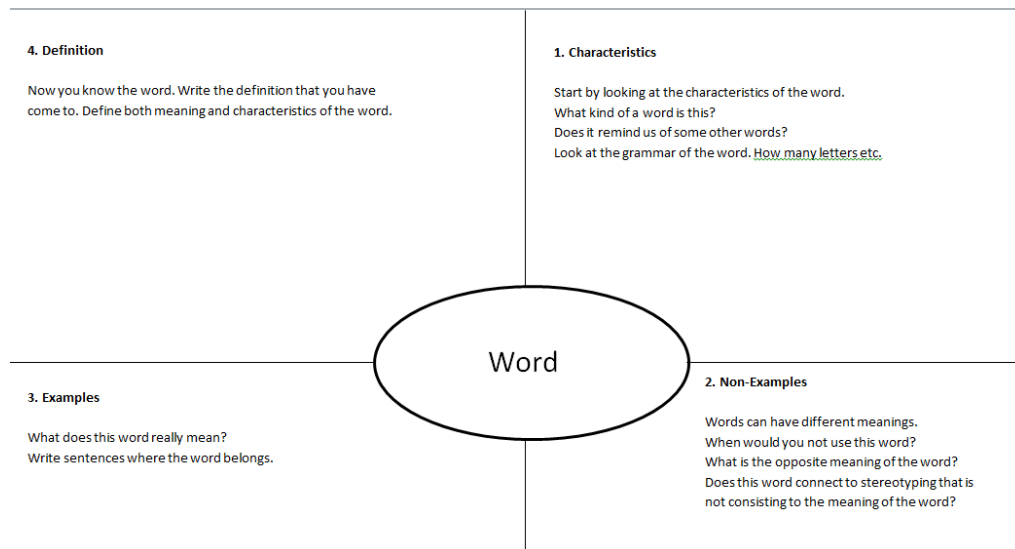
- ✓ A3 paper for each pair of participants (appendix 4) or an empty sheet.
- ✓ Pens or markers

Practical arrangements:

- ✓ You need a black- or whiteboard or a computer connected to a projector.
- ✓ The pairs have to be seated in a way that they see the blackboard or projection.

Procedure:

- ✓ Introduce the Freyer model to the group. The model is an excellent tool known to help students in an organized way to understand words and negotiate the meaning of a word.
- ✓ Each pair should pick a word that they find hard to handle in their classroom and write it in the middle of their paper.
- ✓ They draw a circle around the word and a line from the circle to the center of each side of the paper. Participants can also get an empty model (see below and in Appendix 4).
- ✓ After doing so, they start to fill it in according to the Freyer model, starting in the upper right corner.



Activity 7: Final debriefing and evaluation

Duration: 30 min

Expected outcome

- ✓ Participants will reflect on what they learned.
- ✓ Participants will put into words what they want to use/adapt in their teaching.
- ✓ Participants will evaluate the session.

Methods/ techniques used

- ✓ Group game
- ✓ ...

Resources

- ✓ Cards with the name of the activities.
- ✓

Practical arrangements

- ✓ Large space to move around
- ✓ The names of the activities written on cards should be placed on the floor
- ✓ Music
- ✓ A piece of paper for final feedback

Procedure

Step 1 (15 min)

- ✓ Music is played in three rounds and participants are asked to go to an activity that they find:
 - A: useful as a technique in teaching (first round)
 - B: creative (second round)
 - C: helpful in overcoming barriers (third round)
- ✓ The music is stopped when everyone is in place. (You might want to take a picture of where people stop at each stage.)
- ✓ The group standing by the name of an activity gets two minutes to agree on a sentence that describes why they choose this activity.
- ✓ Each group gets an opportunity to describe the reason for their choice.
- ✓ Repeat for each of the A, B, C.

Step 2 (5 min)

- ✓ To finish the session everyone stands in a large circle in the room and then they tighten it by taking steps forward towards the center of the circle. When the whole group is united shoulder to shoulder, participants are asked to move to the right. At any time one of the participants can shout 'stop', and then the moving stops. The person who shouted 'stop' reflects on the session and gives directions for the next movement of the circle; "go left" or "go right".

Step 3 (10 min)

- ✓ Participants give feedback to the trainer in writing (strong points of the session, weak points, suggestions for improvement and/or future cooperation).

Further reading:

Convention on the Rights of the Child, General Comment 4 (2003) para. 26 & Committee on Economic Social and Cultural Rights General Comment 14 (2000) para. 11

Compasito: Manual on human rights education for children / edited and co-written by: Nancy Flowers Strasbourg : Council of Europe 2007

Greenwood, S. C. (May/June 2002). Making Words Matter: Vocabulary Study in the Content Areas. Clearing House, 75(5), p. 258-263

http://brunnur.stjr.is/mrn/utgafuskra/utgafa.nsf/xsp/ibmmodres/domino/OpenAttachment/mrn/utgafuskra/utgafa.nsf/E7DE015E63AA2F2C00257CA2005296F7/Attachment/adalnnsk_greinask_ens_2014.pdf

Moore, Maggie and Barrie Wade. 1988. Supporting Readers, School and Classroom Strategies. London, David Fulton.

Reading Educator <http://www.readingeducator.com/strategies/frayer.htm>

Appendices

Appendix 1

Aims of sexual education from curricula and published resources from EU, each on one size A4 sheet of paper, see examples such as the one below in a separate pdf file in Appendix 1:

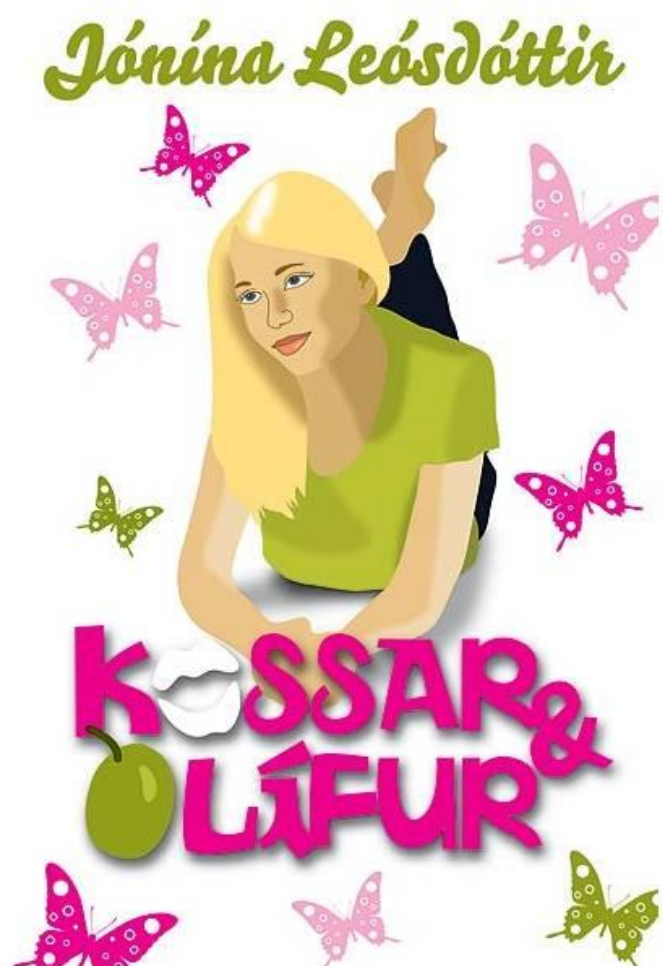
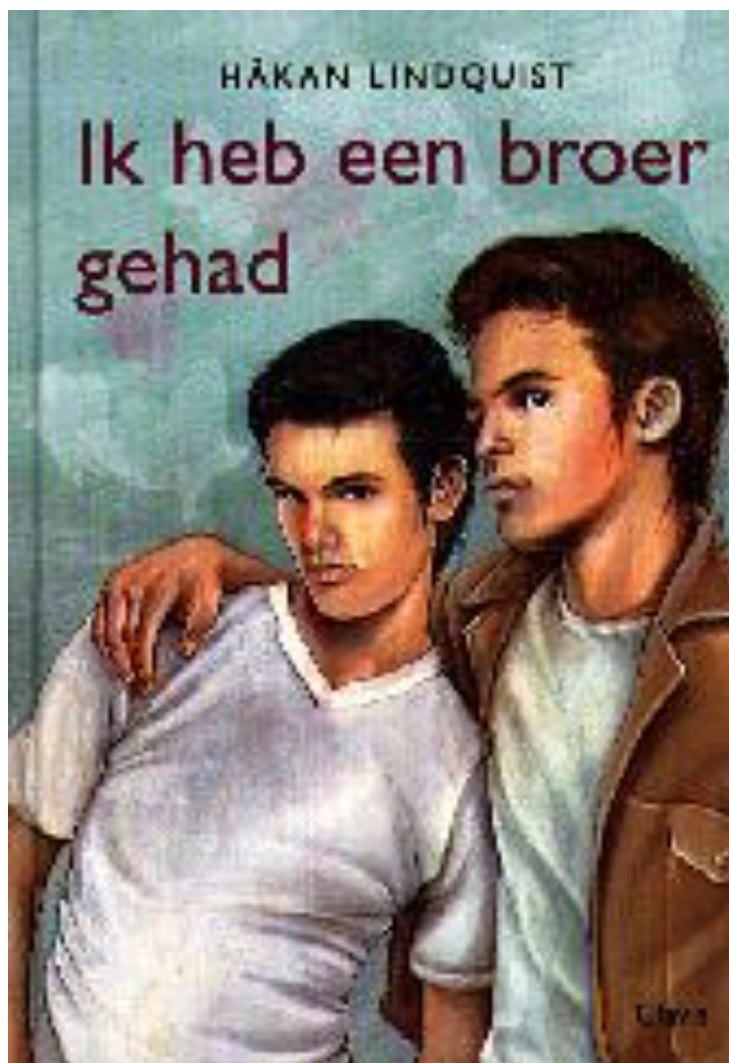
International human rights standards recognise that adolescents have the right to access adequate information essential for their health and development and for their ability to participate meaningfully in society.

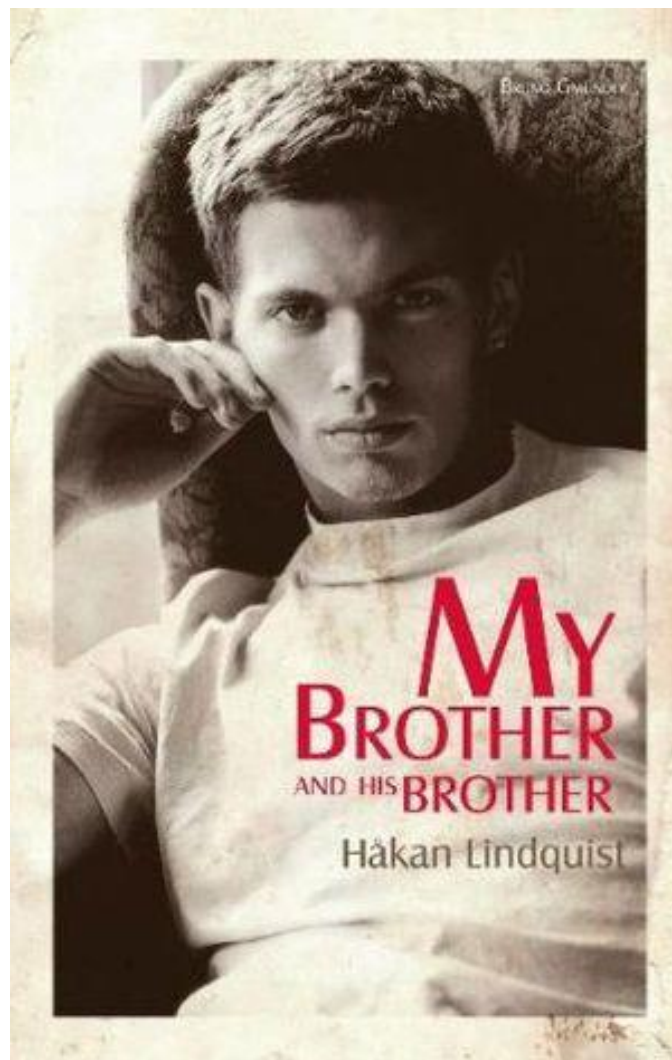
It is the obligation of States to ensure that all adolescent girls and boys, both in and out of school, are provided with, and not denied, accurate and appropriate information on how to protect their health, including sexual and reproductive health.

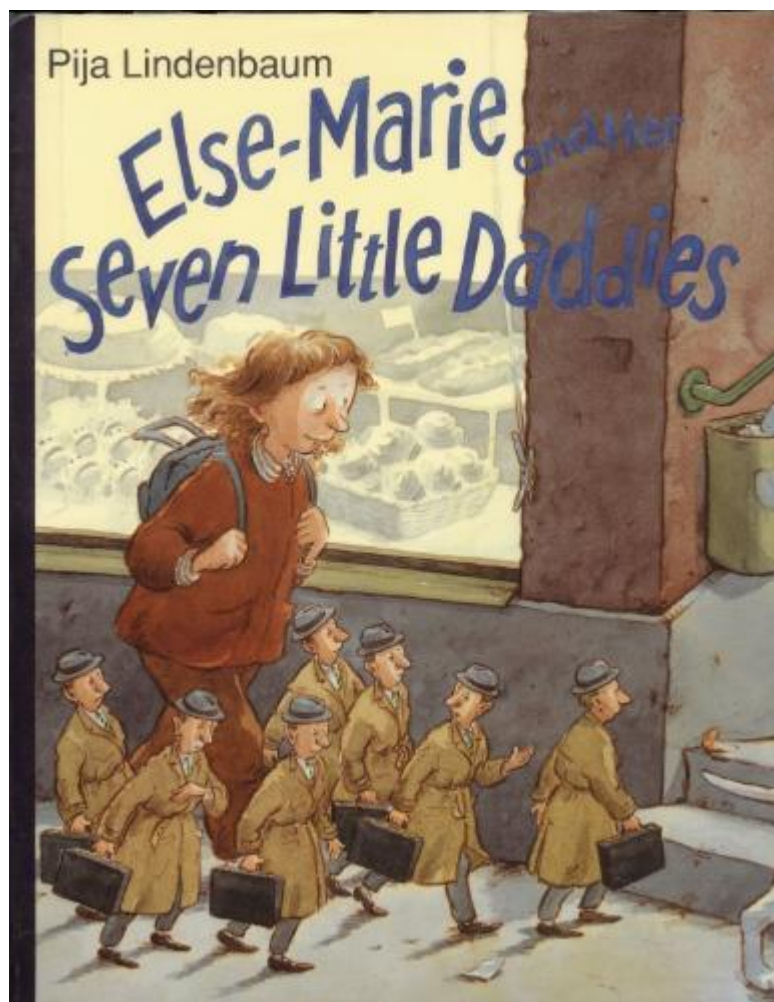
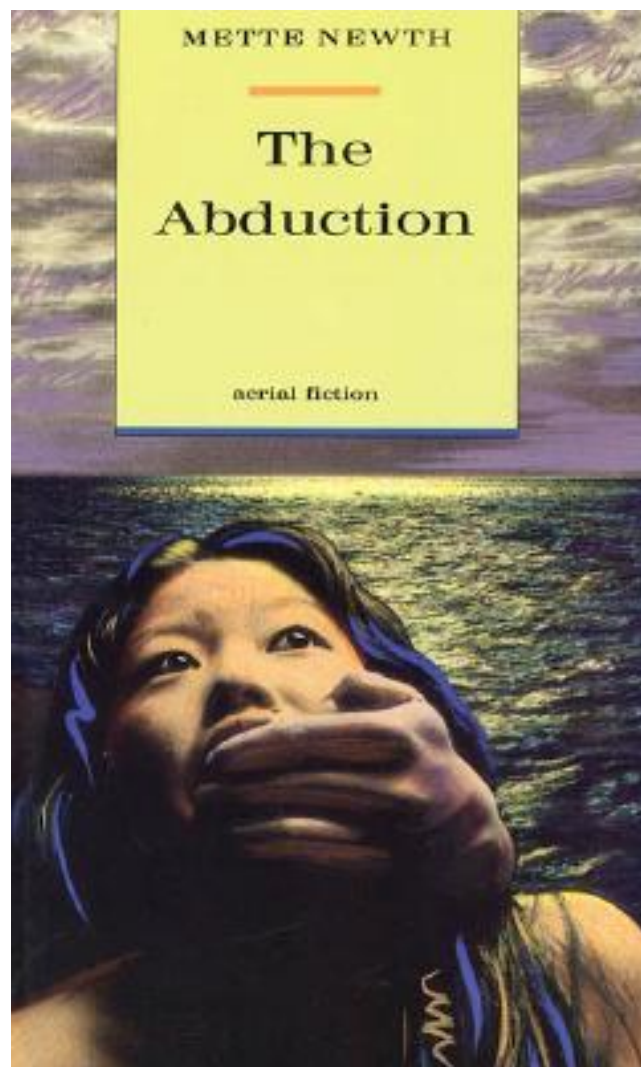
(Convention on the Rights of the Child General Comment 4(2003) para. 26 & Committee on Economic Social and Cultural Rights General Comment 14(2000) para. 11)

Appendix 2

Book covers and suggested bookmarks







Dobranoc, Albercie Albertsonie

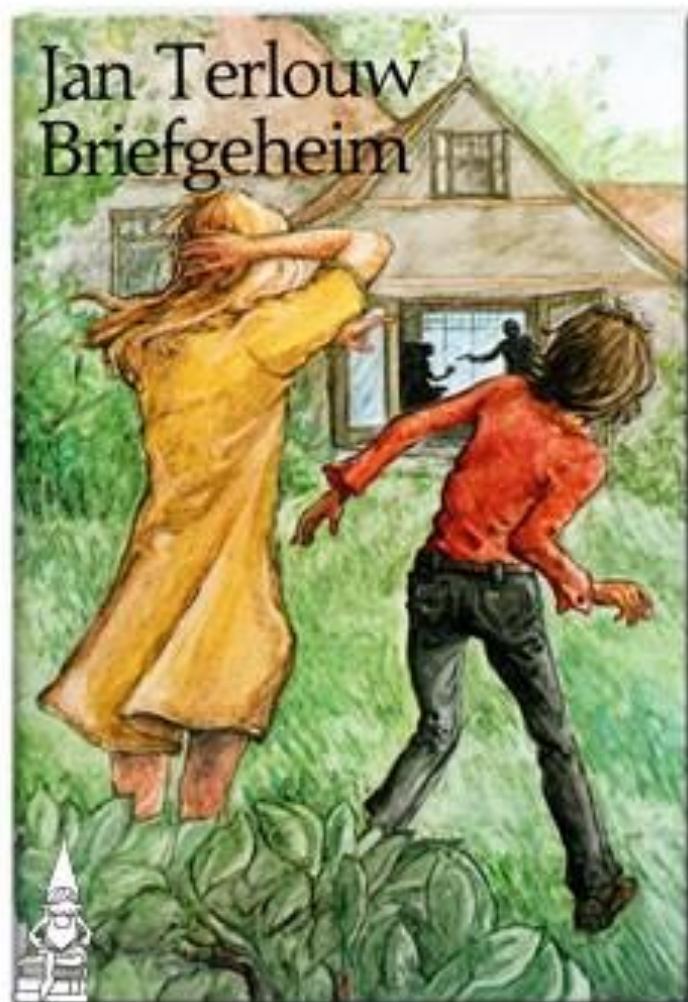
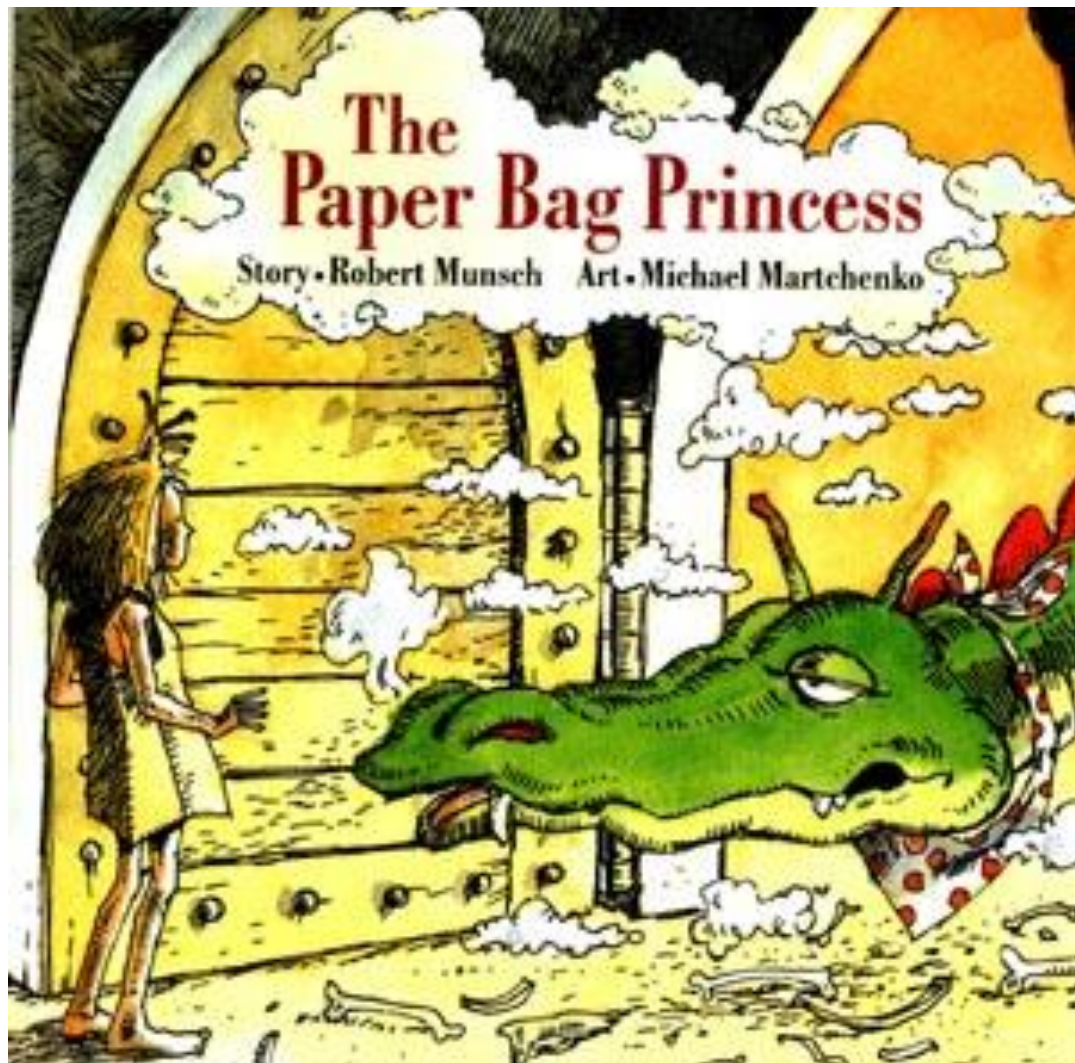
Gunilla Bergström

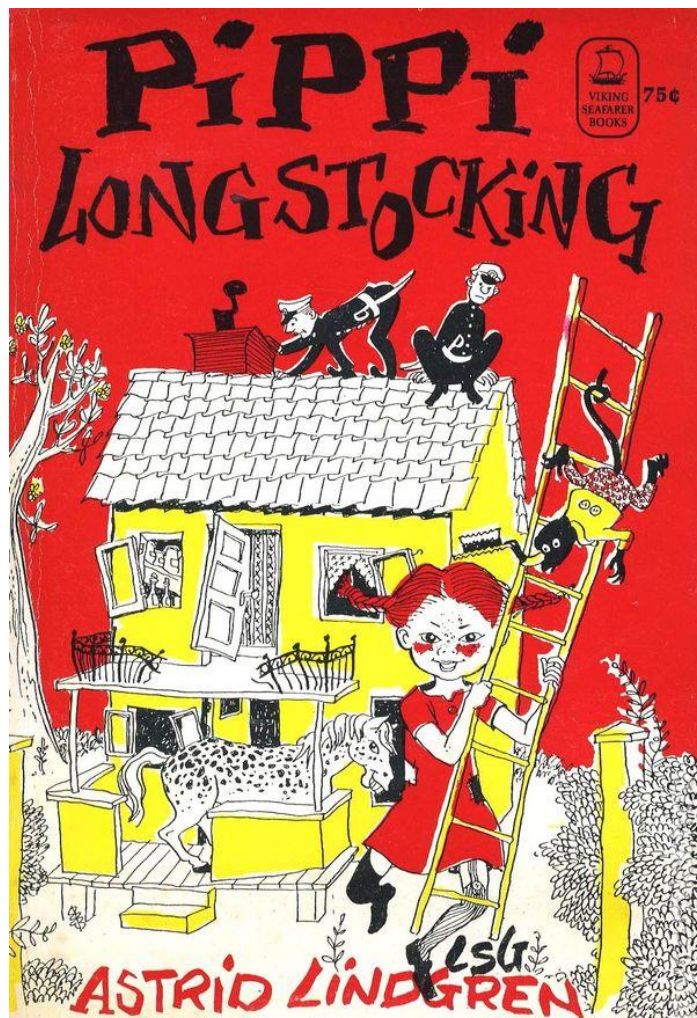
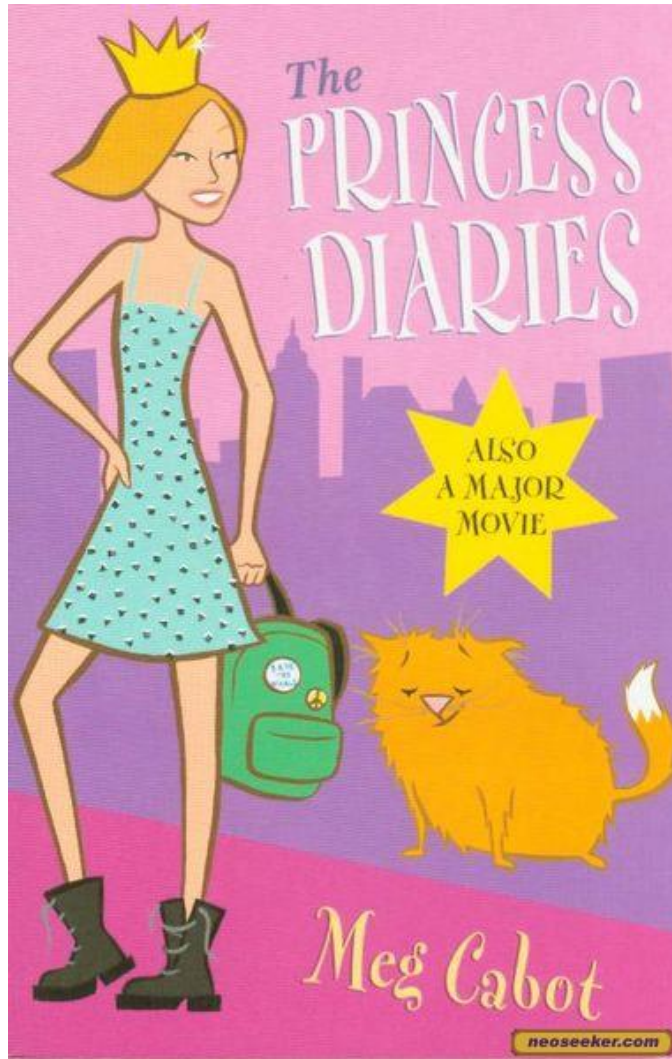


Maria Gripe

THE NIGHT DADDY







Enid Blyton

THE FAMOUS FIVE



Five on a Treasure Island

Princess Smartypants



By Babette Cole

Appendix 3
Suggested bookmarks

I am a girl and
I am in love
with her!

I'm gay, and
in love with
my best
friend.

My brother
was gay.

Kossar & ólífur
Jónína Leósdóttir 1954
Reykjavík : Vaka-Helgafell 2007

Ik heb een broer gehad
Zanger, Jan de, 1932-1991
Clavis, 1996.

My Brother and His Brother
Lindquist, Håkan, 1958-
Bruno Verlag, 2011

I'm a boy and
I am always
thinking
about girls.

I was raped.

My family is
different.

Bert + Samira
Olsson, Sören, 1964-
Jacobsson, Anders, 1963-
Rabén & Sjögren, 2007

The Abduction
Newth, Mette, 1942-
Farrar Strauss & Giroux, 1993

Else-Marie and Her Seven Little
Daddies. Lindenbaum, Pija, H.
Holt, 1991

I am a man
and I live
alone with my
son.

I am a young
man, and I
babysitt a girl
in the
evenings.

I am a
princess and I
don't need a
prince to
resque me

Good night, Alfie Atkins
Bergström, Gunilla, 1942-
R & S Books, May 3, 2005

The Night Daddy
Gripe, Maria, 1923-2007 Dell,
1975

Paper bag princess
Munsch, Robert N., 1945-

I am a man, I
do my work
dressed as a
woman.

I am 14 years
old and has
no breasts
and have
recently
found out
that I am a
real princess.

I am a strong
girl who dares
to be
different.

Briefgeheim
Terlouw, Jan, 1931-
Wolters-Noordhoff, 1995

The Princess Diaries
Cabot, Meg
Harper Collins, 2009.

Pippi Longstocking
Lindgren, Astrid, 1907-2002
Oxford University Press, 2002

I am a girl
who dares
but many
think I'm a
guy

I am a young
girl, I want to
live alone. I
don't need a
prince in my
life.

Famous Five 1: Five On A Treasure Island
Blyton, Enid, 1897-1968
Hachette Children's Books,
2010

Princess Smartypants
Cole, Babette
New York : Putnam 1991, c
1986

4. Definition

Now you know the word. Write the definition that you have come to. Define both meaning and characteristics of the word.

1. Characteristics

Start by looking at the characteristics of the word.
What kind of a word is this?
Does it remind us of some other words?
Look at the grammar of the word. How many letters etc.

Word

3. Examples

What does this word really mean?
Write sentences where the word belongs.

2. Non-Examples

Words can have different meanings.
When would you not use this word?
What is the opposite meaning of the word?
Does this word connect to stereotyping that is not consistent to the meaning of the word?