



# Preventing Unplanned Pregnancy and Completing College

**AN EVALUATION OF ONLINE LESSONS**



### About Us

The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy is a non-profit, non-partisan organization that seeks to improve the lives and future prospects of children and families by preventing teen pregnancy and unplanned pregnancy among single, young adults. Helping students avoid unplanned pregnancy—which places additional stress on their time, finances and relationships—can help them complete college. The National Campaign offers free publications and resources, including three online lessons, that college faculty can use to bring this topic to their campus. For more information, please visit <http://www.TheNationalCampaign.org/colleges>.

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# Evaluation Summary

**A**n unplanned pregnancy can make it more difficult for students to stay in and complete college: 61% of women who have children after enrolling in community college do not finish their education. In addition, births resulting from an unplanned pregnancy account for nearly one in 10 dropouts among female students at community colleges and 7% of dropouts among students at community colleges overall. In one study, 82% of students reported that having a child while still in school would make it harder to accomplish their goals. Research also shows that many young people harbor myths, misinformation, and magical thinking, about sex, contraception, and pregnancy that puts them at risk for unplanned pregnancy.

For these reasons, The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy published free online lessons that help students take action to prevent unplanned pregnancy and complete their education. The lessons are designed to help students understand the impact of unplanned pregnancy on their educational goals, their social lives, their significant relationships, and their finances. Students learn about various birth control methods; select the most appropriate method(s) for their values, lifestyles, and relationships; and create a plan to decrease their chances of unplanned pregnancy. The online lessons are on The National Campaign's website at <http://www.TheNationalCampaign.org/onlinelessons/facultypage.aspx> and are available for free for college faculty to use in first-year experience, college success, and a variety of other courses. Each of the three lessons takes 30–40 minutes to complete.

In the fall 2012 and spring 2013 semesters, 2,050 students participated in the evaluation from three colleges—Georgia Perimeter College, Palo Alto College (San Antonio, TX), and Cincinnati State Technical and Community College. Sixty-eight percent of the students were women and 80% were under 30 years old. (For more about the breakdown of the sample, see the supplemental tables on page 7.)

Data analysis was conducted by The National Campaign to examine the differences in attitudes about pregnancy prevention, behavior and behavioral intent, and knowledge before and after the online modules. It is important to note that there were no significant differences among the three colleges on any of the primary outcome variables of interest. There were also no significant differences between the fall and spring semesters on any of the primary outcome variables of interest.

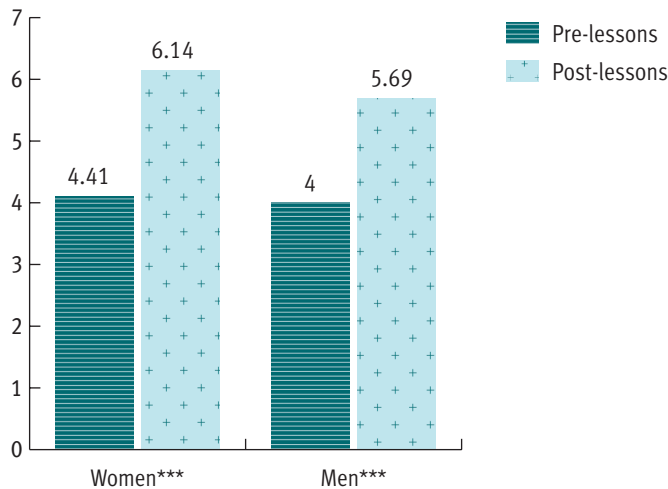
## HIGHLIGHTS

### After completing the lessons both men and women were significantly more likely to:

- ▶ Believe it is important to avoid becoming pregnant at this time in their lives or avoid getting someone pregnant;
- ▶ Believe a pregnancy would make it more difficult to achieve their educational goals;
- ▶ Feel comfortable talking to their doctor about birth control;
- ▶ Have a clear plan for preventing unplanned pregnancy;
- ▶ Know where in the community to get birth control other than condoms; and
- ▶ Believe they will find a birth control method that fits their needs.

**Men and women were significantly more knowledgeable about birth control after taking the online lessons.**

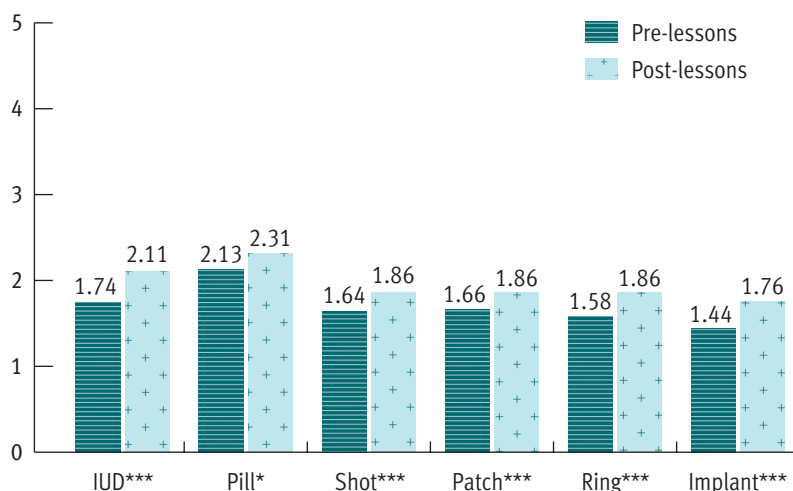
Participants answered seven questions related to their knowledge about birth control. Two of the questions asked about relative efficacy of three methods, and five were true/false. Before taking the online lessons, students were, on average, correct on 61% of questions; after the lessons, they were correct on 85% of questions. See Figure 1 for scores for women and men, and see the supplemental tables for students' scores on each of the seven questions.



**Figure 1.** Knowledge gains pre-post survey (Average score on 7-point scale). \*\*\* $p < .001$

**Men and women were significantly more likely to consider using a new method of birth control—including low-maintenance, long-acting methods—after completing the lessons.**

Participants were asked how likely they would be to use a method of birth control that they were not currently using. Significantly more students—both men and women—said they would be likely to try a new method after taking the online lessons. For example, before taking the lessons, only 22% of women said they would be moderately to strongly likely to try an IUD, after taking the online lessons 33% said they would consider one. Figure 2 shows the average likelihood of trying a new method for women, and full results for both men and women are included in the supplemental tables.



**Figure 2.** Likelihood of using a new method pre-post survey (Average score on 5-point scale of agreement). \*\*\* $p < .001$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \* $p < .05$



#### **Comparing the pre- and post-lessons results, men were:**

- ▶ Less likely to believe that it is unrealistic to expect a person to use birth control every time he or she has sex.
- ▶ Men under age 30 who had sex in the previous month were more likely to report that they had used a method of birth control in the last month.

#### **Comparing the pre- and post-module lessons results, women were:**

- ▶ More likely to say they had a clear plan for avoiding an unplanned pregnancy.
- ▶ More likely to believe that it would get in the way of their plans for work or school if they got pregnant and had a baby.
- ▶ Women under age 30 reported they were more likely to use a method of birth control if they have sex in the next three months.

#### **After taking the three online lessons:**

- ▶ Two-thirds of students said the lessons helped them make a decision about birth control.
- ▶ 81% of students said they are more aware of ways to prevent pregnancy as a result of the lessons.
- ▶ 72% of the students reported they were likely to follow through on their *Action Plan*, a worksheet students complete in the third lesson that includes information such as listing the methods of birth control they want to ask their doctor about, adding contact information for a healthcare provider and scheduling an appointment, and setting up reminders to refill their prescription or use birth control.
- ▶ 70% of students who completed the online lessons said they were very or somewhat likely to recommend Bedsider.org—The National Campaign’s website that serves as the lessons’ primary resource for information about birth control—to a friend or another student.

# Faculty and Student Perceptions of the Online Lessons

## FACULTY PERCEPTIONS

During the pilot phase of the project, 14 faculty members from seven different colleges previewed the online lessons and used them in their classrooms. In a survey, all of the participating faculty agreed the lessons were easy to integrate into their courses, and they would recommend the lessons to a colleague.

Here are some comments from faculty who have assigned the lessons:

- ▶ “The interactive practice quizzes were great. I thought the video clips were very appropriate and helped the topic seem more real and important.”
- ▶ “I would have no problem continuing to use the online lessons. I think it is such an important issue and I can’t imagine where else they could get all this information so easily.”
- ▶ “They really enjoyed the birth control myths, and it started a good discussion in class.”
- ▶ “I did not encounter any problems or negative reactions. They all had positive comments.”
- ▶ “The males seemed to express learning the most about various types of birth control.”
- ▶ “The videos allowed students to learn about other students’ values and beliefs. They also gave different perspectives which allowed my students to make their own decisions.”
- ▶ “I enjoyed our conversations about birth control methods and how students were unaware of the many options available to them.”

## STUDENT PERCEPTIONS

We also asked students for their feedback on what they liked most about the lessons, and overall they found them very helpful.

Here are some of their comments:

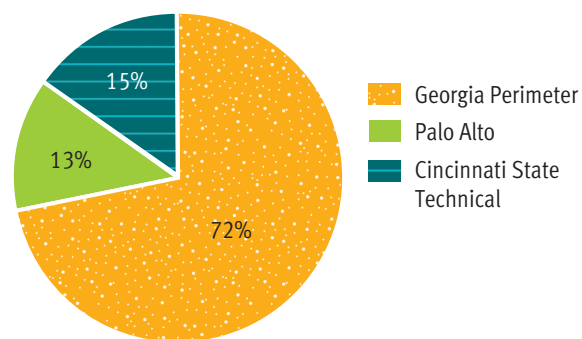
- ▶ “I think the stories really helped me put things into perspective especially realizing that unplanned pregnancy is such a big thing. It changes everything!”
- ▶ “They were casual and easy for young people to listen to.”
- ▶ “Everything was educational and informative.”
- ▶ “The lessons are very clear and make me know more about how to avoid unplanned pregnancy.”
- ▶ “It was funny, and not embarrassing. Like most visits to the doctor, I was red-faced and nervous about asking for contraception for the first time. If I had had this informational guide, it wouldn’t have been so bad!”

# Supplemental Tables

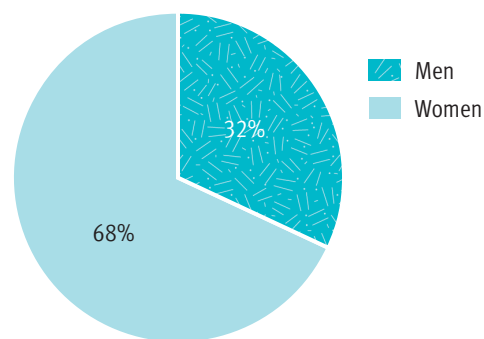
## Participant Demographics

*Sample Size:* Approximately 2,050 students completed both the pre-and post-lessons survey in fall 2012 and spring 2013. Note: numbers do not equal 2,050 because of inconsistent missing data patterns.

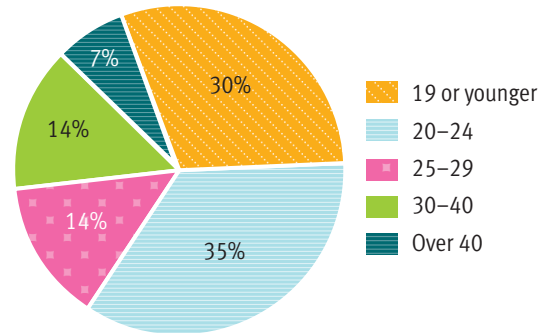
	Number of participants
Georgia Perimeter College	1648
Palo Alto College	290
Cincinnati State Technical and Community College	340



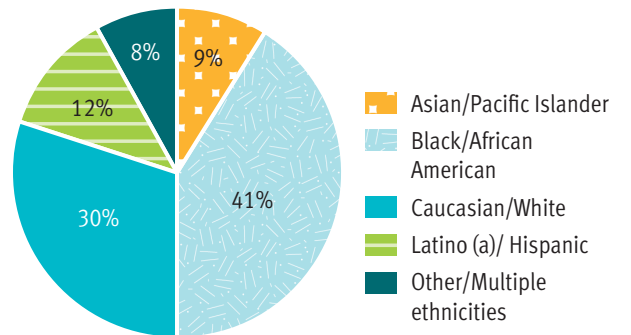
Gender	# in Fall	# in Spring	Total
Men	220	429	649
Women	471	912	1,383



Participant Age	# in Fall	# in Spring	Total
19 or younger	236	379	615
20–24	231	473	704
25–29	99	197	296
30–40	85	201	286
Over 40	39	95	134



Race/Ethnicity	# in Fall	# in Spring	Total
Asian/Pacific Islander	56	91	147
Black/African American	227	454	681
Caucasian/White	170	317	487
Latino (a)/ Hispanic	67	128	195
Other/Multiple ethnicities	51	86	137



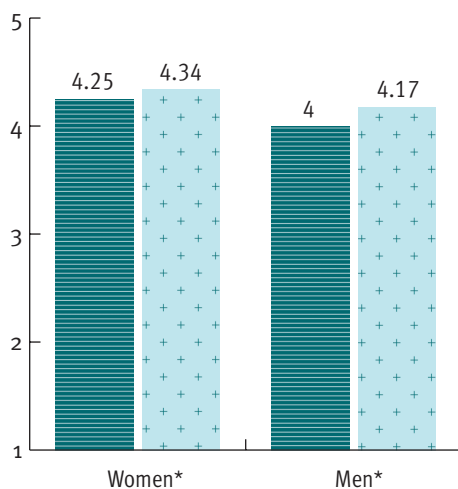
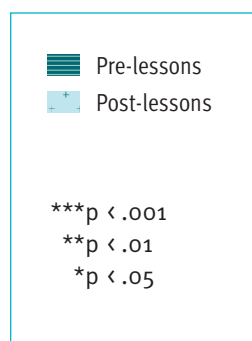


### Attitude and Behavioral Intent Questions

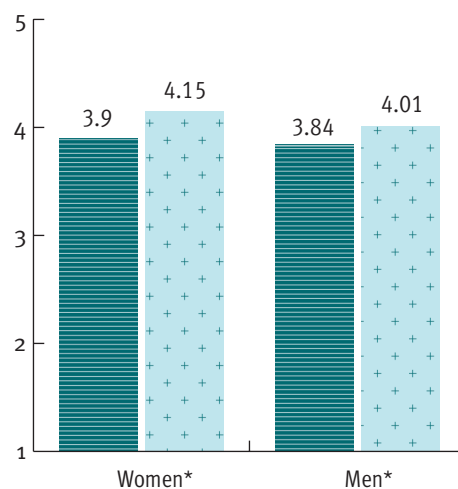
N=approximately 2,050. We used repeated measures of analysis of variance (ANOVA) to assess whether participation in the online lessons influenced attitudes, knowledge, and behavioral intent. A number in the P-value column indicates a statistical significance between pre- and post-lessons surveys; ns = not significant.

Survey Item	Women			Men		
	Pre-test mean	Post-test mean	P-value	Pre-test mean	Post-test mean	P-value
How important is it to avoid becoming pregnant or avoid getting someone pregnant? (1=not at all important; 5=very important—see figure 3)	4.25	4.34	.02	4.00	4.17	.02
How difficult do you think a pregnancy would make it for you to achieve your educational goals?(1=not at all difficult; 5=very difficult—see figure 4)	3.90	4.15	.04	3.84	4.01	.015
If you have sex in the next three months, how likely is it that you will have sex without using any method of birth control? (1=not at all likely; 5=very likely)	1.95	1.99	ns	2.09	2.11	ns
In the last month, I used a method of birth control (among individuals who had sex) (1=Never; 5=Always)	2.51	2.57	ns	2.41	2.58	.005
How likely are you to talk to your doctor about birth control? (1=Not at all likely; 5=Very likely—see figure 5)	3.14	3.58	.000	1.93	2.68	.000
How comfortable are you talking about birth control with your sexual partner or potential partner? (1=Not at all comfortable; 5=Very comfortable)	4.25	4.32	ns	4.04	4.09	ns
It is unrealistic to expect a person to use birth control every time he or she has sex. (1=Strongly disagree; 5=Strongly agree)	1.84	1.77	ns	2.17	1.96	.03
It would get in the way of my plans for work or school if I got pregnant (or got someone pregnant) and had a baby now. (1=Strongly disagree; 5=Strongly agree)	4.25	4.37	.02	4.08	4.11	ns
I have a clear plan for preventing an unplanned pregnancy. (1=Strongly disagree; 5=Strongly agree—see Figure 6)	4.16	4.27	.01	3.86	4.00	.006
I am committed to avoiding an unplanned pregnancy. (1=Strongly disagree; 5=Strongly agree)	4.37	4.43	.002	4.26	4.29	ns
I know where to go in my community to get birth control (other than condoms). (1=Strongly disagree; 5=Strongly agree—see Figure 7)	4.06	4.29	.000	3.55	3.97	.000
It is unlikely I will find a birth control method that fits my needs. (1=Strongly disagree; 5=Strongly agree—see Figure 8)	1.94	1.80	.04	2.03	1.85	.03

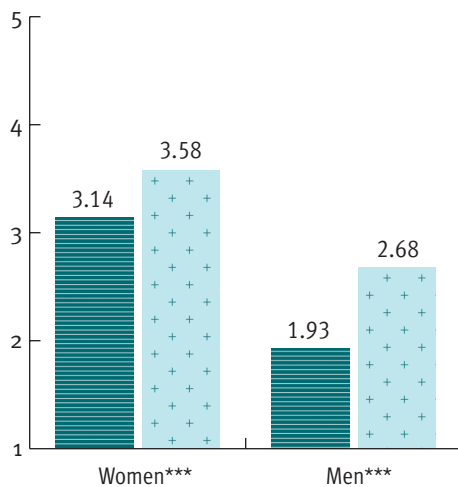
## Item-level Graphs



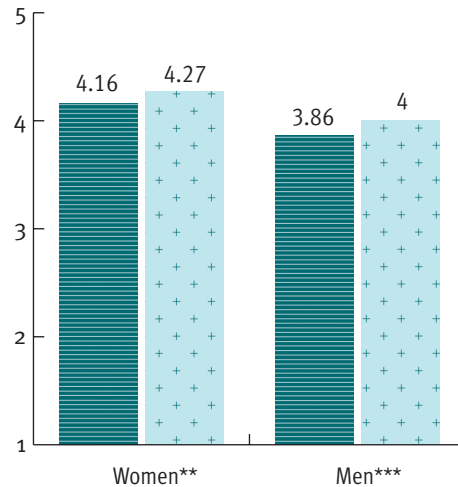
**Figure 3.** Importance of avoiding becoming pregnant or getting someone pregnant.



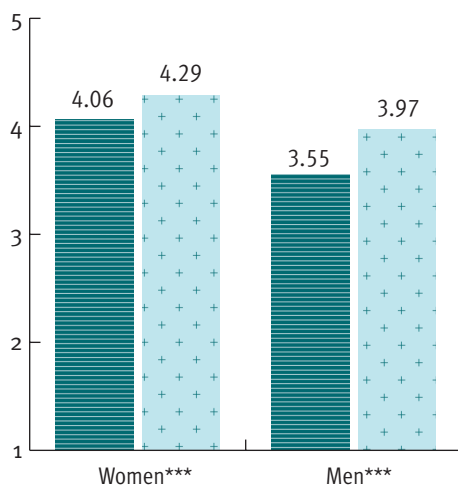
**Figure 4.** How difficult a pregnancy would make it to achieve educational goals.



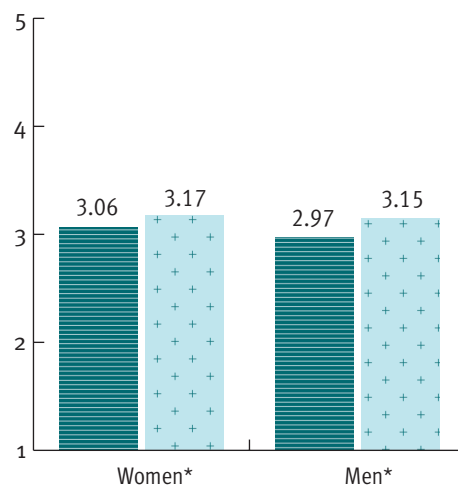
**Figure 5.** Likelihood of talking to doctor about birth control.



**Figure 6.** Have a clear plan for preventing unplanned pregnancy.



**Figure 7.** Know where to get birth control (other than condoms).



**Figure 8.** Belief they will find a birth control method that fits their needs (note that this graph represents reverse-coded average to denote positive change).

### Likelihood of Using a Method in the Future

Participants were asked how likely it would be that they would use the following methods. They endorsed likelihood on a 5-point scale from not at all likely to very likely. Means are included only for participants who are not already using the method.

We used repeated measures of analysis of variance (ANOVA) to assess whether participation in the online lessons influenced attitudes, knowledge, and behavioral intent. A number in the P-value column indicates a statistical significance between pre- and post-lessons surveys; ns = not significant.

Method	Women			Men		
	Pre-test mean	Post-test mean	P-value	Pre-test mean	Post-test mean	P-value
The pill	2.13	2.31	.05	1.92	2.16	.01
The shot	1.64	1.85	.000	1.53	1.85	.000
The patch	1.66	1.86	.000	1.55	1.80	.006
IUD	1.74	2.11	.000	1.56	1.90	.000
Ring	1.58	1.86	.000	1.55	1.90	.000
Implant	1.44	1.76	.000	1.44	1.79	.000

### Knowledge gains

	Women			Men		
	Pre-test mean	Post-test mean	P-value	Pre-test mean	Post-test mean	P-value
Total knowledge gains (7-point scale that includes sum of all questions)	4.41	6.14	.000	4.00	5.69	.000

Knowledge item-level analysis. Items were analyzed using Chi-square to determine statistical significance.

Relative effectiveness	Women			Men		
	Percent correct pre-test	Percent correct post-test	P-value	Percent correct pre-test	Percent correct post-test	P-value
Which of the listed birth control methods is least effective? (Comparing IUD, the ring, and diaphragm; the diaphragm is the correct answer)	56%	73%	.000	43%	65%	.000
Which of these birth control methods is most effective? (comparing the implant, condoms, and the patch; the implant is the correct answer)	42%	71%	.000	28%	65%	.000

True/false questions	Women			Men		
	Percent correct pre-test	Percent correct post-test	P-value	Percent correct pre-test	Percent correct post-test	P-value
Emergency contraception can be purchased without a prescription if you are 17 or older. (True)*	79%	93%	.000	75%	78%	ns
It is okay to use petroleum jelly or Vaseline as a lubricant when using latex condoms. (False)	78%	95%	.000	73%	92%	.000
Birth control pills reduce the risk of certain types of cancer. (True)	33%	92%	.04	31%	84%	.02
It's ok to use a condom more than once. (False)	89%	98%	.002	96%	98%	ns
To get an IUD, a woman must have a surgical operation. (False)	62%	87%	.000	53%	75%	.000

\*This question was asked before the FDA approved over-the-counter sales of one type of EC pill without age restriction.



[www.TheNationalCampaign.org](http://www.TheNationalCampaign.org)  
[www.StayTeen.org](http://www.StayTeen.org)  
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