Let's Talk About Sex…Education:

Exploring Youth Perspectives, Implicit Messages, and Unexamined Implications

of Sex Education in Schools

by

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To my family

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Abstract

School-based sexuality education is a critical source of sexual communication for youth in the United States. Although some research exists on the types of sexual communication and "sex education" that young people receive, there exist numerous gaps in the literature. Specifically, research examining school-based sex education tends to evaluate programs based on behavioral outcomes (such as onset of vaginal intercourse, pregnancy, and sexually transmitted diseases.) Although this information is valuable, it is incomplete. Little is known about other possible effects of sex education, especially in terms of sexual negotiation and messages regarding gender and power. Additionally, young people's own voices and experiences are rarely included. My dissertation addresses some of these gaps in a mixed methods approach, through three studies: 1) A quantitative study examining links between sex education content and sexual attitudes and experiences; 2) A quantitative study examining links between sexual socialization discourses received from sex education programs and sexual attitudes and experiences; and 3) A qualitative study of focus groups with first-year undergraduate college students inquiring about their experiences and perspectives regarding their secondary sex education. In Study 1, participants received more messages about biology and mainstream contraception than other topics, and messages about contraception and lifestyle choices were linked with more sexual agency. In Study 2, participants received more messages about sex being egalitarian, and sex as an expression of love, than other

discourses. Sexual double standard messages were linked with more experiences of sexual coercion across groups. Findings from Study 3 revealed three central trends: participants seemed to receive either messages about biology and contraception or messages about abstinence and relationships, but not both; messages were gendered; and a victim-perpetrator dichotomy emerged. Sexual health is a complex issue. School-based sex education may have a variety of effects on sexual attitudes and experiences. It is important to pay more attention to the explicit and implicit messages communicated about power and gender by sex education programs. It is also critical that more research and intervention be conducted in these areas.

Chapter 1

Introduction

Setting the Stage: A New Way to Study Sex Education

Sexual identity development and sexual exploration are important developmental tasks of adolescence and emerging adulthood (Arnett, 2000; Impett et al., 2006; Lefkowitz & Gillen, 2006; Savin-Williams & Diamond, 2004). Learning about sexuality, sexual health, and sexual relationships is a complex process that takes place over many years with input from multiple sources (e.g, parents, schools, friends, mass media). The messages acquired are diverse in both content and kind, and are obtained via both formal (e.g., schools, religious institutions) and informal instruction.

Sexual learning is important from both a developmental and a social work perspective. Sexuality is part of the developmental process, and the development of a sexual identity is an important part of healthy development overall. Sexual decisions made early may have consequences throughout one's life. In addition, sexual health and learning in adolescence and emerging adulthood are critical social justice issues because they have the potential to reproduce inequalities, reinforce habits that may affect ongoing attitudes and experiences, and yield outcomes that may be unsafe or unhealthy for young people. This dissertation explores the impact of sex education upon emerging adults in the United States, conceptualizing sex education as a critical influence in the sexual socialization of young people. Early sexual decisions are likely informed by the sexual

health education and knowledge accumulated, much of which comes from schools. School-based sexuality education has been in existence for almost a century (Moran, 2000) and was designed to prevent negative sexual outcomes and harm and provide sexual knowledge to young people (Bay-Cheng, 2003; Brough, 2008). Furthermore, youth regard schools as an important purveyor of sexual health information (Clark, Jackson, & Allen-Taylor, 2002; Lindberg, Ku, & Sonenstein, 2000). Indeed, of the many potential sources of sexual information, youth typically rank schools as second in importance after peers (Bleakley et al., 2009) or third after peers and parents, respectively (Guthrie & Bates, 2003).

What the Literature Tells Us about Sex Education Program Content

A large majority of American adolescents are exposed to some kind of formal sex education, as it is taught in over 90% of public secondary schools in the United States (Lindberg, Ku, & Sonenstein, 2000), and in some private schools, as well. Despite federal mandates, there are large regional differences in the ways in which sex education is taught throughout the United States, including differential emphasis placed on sexual abstinence (Darroch, Landry, & Singh, 2000). Although topics such as abstinence, HIV/AIDS, and sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) are more commonly taught, topics such as contraception and accessing services about contraception and STDs are less commonly taught (Landry, Darroch, Singh, & Higgins, 2003).

Sex education programs tend to fall into two broad categories (Kohler, Manhart, & Lafferty, 2008). One category of programs are comprehensive sex education programs, which are programs that include discussion of safer sex practices, HIV and STDs, and options other than sexual abstinence. Conversely, the second category of programs,

abstinence-only programs, identify abstinence as the only viable option for adolescents. Whereas both types of programs may mention contraception, the abstinence programs that discuss it are likely to stress only its lack of effectiveness. Furthermore, both comprehensive sex education programs and abstinence programs tend to discuss biology, HIV, and STDs, but they tend to discuss them very differently. There do not appear to be programs that talk exclusively about biology or anatomy with no other information.

Although these are the two broad categories of sex education programming, curricula-based sexuality education programs tend to fall along a continuum (Kirby, 2001). For example, on one end of the continuum are programs that are abstinence-only (AOE) and do not mention condoms or other forms of contraception. Then, there are programs that mention condoms only in terms of failure rates, and then programs that mention them as an option. There are also more comprehensive sexuality education programs that present sexual abstinence as one of the viable and safe options, and comprehensive sex education programs that do not discuss abstinence in any detail. In addition to abstinence-only programs and comprehensive sex education programs, other categories include HIV/AIDS and other STD education programs, as well as youth development and service learning programs, which tend to focus on volunteer work or career development but may include a sex education component (Manlove et al., 2004).

Additionally, there are a number of different potential foci even within the two broad categories. Comprehensive sex education programs may focus on delay of onset of sexual intercourse, reduction or prevention of risky sexual behaviors more broadly, prevention of STDs, HIV, or teen pregnancy more specifically, or increased use of condoms and other contraceptives. Abstinence programs may focus on virginity pledges,

school and career success, or nonsexual relationships, and may or may not discuss contraception. It is also notable that some abstinence programs take a moral or ethical stance about what young people should do (Bay-Cheng, 2003; Kempner, 2001). For example, WAIT Training stresses "love education" as opposed to "sex education" and suggests that lust is undesirable; it also teaches about differences between men and women, and encourages gendered, fear-based, and power-laden language such as "groomer" and "victim." One curriculum entitled "Unmasking Sexual Con Games" suggests that sex is a game, or even a war, and must be mastered defensively (see Sather & Zinn, 2002).

In a broader analysis of these programs, Kirby (1999; 2001) makes a distinction between programs that target sexual antecedents (e.g., sexual beliefs, attitudes, and self-efficacy) versus nonsexual antecedents, which include conditions at multiple ecological levels. At one level are individual antecedents that include things like school performance and general risk behavior. At another level are family and community level antecedents that include poverty, neighborhood conditions, or detachment from social environments. Finally, some programs target both sexual and nonsexual antecedents. For example, some programs may focus on nonsexual antecedents with the goal of reducing teen pregnancy, onset of initiation of sexual intercourse, or risky sexual behavior.

What the Literature Tells Us about Program Effects

Whereas sex education programs vary widely, research approaches do not. The majority of existing sex education research focuses on assessing behavioral outcomes of these programs, particularly in terms of onset (or postponement) of sexual intercourse, contraceptive use, and incidence of HIV, STDs, and pregnancy. A great deal of research

has been conducted on comprehensive sex education programs and their effectiveness (e.g., Kirby, 2001; Kirby, 2008; Manlove et al., 2004; National Council to Prevent Teen Pregnancy, 2007). The findings are somewhat mixed, and conclusions are difficult to draw because of differences in programs. In a study published in 2001, Kirby found that among 28 comprehensive sex education programs studied, nine delayed intercourse, 18 had no impact, and one hastened initiation of sex (Kirby, 2001; Santelli et al., 2006). A common criticism of comprehensive sex education programs (and specifically, teaching about or providing condoms) is that these programs will increase adolescent sexual activity. However, findings suggest that these accusations are unfounded, and that comprehensive sex education programs do not increase sexual activity, nor does the provision of condoms or contraceptives in schools (Kirby, 2001). Indeed, research suggests that those programs that discuss both sexual abstinence *and* contraception are most successful in delaying heterosexual intercourse, increasing condom use, and preventing sexually transmitted diseases (Kirby, 2001).

Analyses of the effectiveness of broader youth development programs also indicate many successes. This is especially true for service learning programs, which have been found to reduce teen pregnancy; however, vocational education programs have not been found to have significant outcomes (Manlove et al., 2004). One youth development program that combined sex education with other foci (CAS-Carrera) was found to significantly delay onset of sex, increase contraceptive use, and reduce pregnancy and birth rates in girls (Manlove et al., 2004). Manlove and her colleagues have also identified four youth development programs and one service learning program that were effective in delaying sex and/or engendering other positive outcomes in their

participants. Although each program involved an educational component that addressed sexual topics directly, there were also other activities that kept students busy and focused on achieving success and fulfillment in other areas of their lives. The success of service learning programs in delaying sexual initiation in adolescence suggests that an ecological lens may be useful in addressing issues of sexual behavior and risk with adolescents.

Less is known conclusively about the effectiveness of abstinence-only programs than about comprehensive programs because fewer evaluations have been done, and study designs have not always been as strong (Kirby, 2001). There is little rigorous scientific evidence to support the idea that abstinence-only education reduces sexual risk behaviors in teens (Kirby, 2008; Lindberg, Santelli, & Singh, 2006; Santelli et al., 2006). Research on abstinence programs is also mixed, due to a multitude of differences in both program and research characteristics, often making them difficult to compare. For example, programs vary in foci (i.e. abstinence-only v. abstinence-based), length of program, age of participants, target population, and desired effects, and research studies vary in design (e.g., randomized/controlled/experimental) and participant age and demographics. Evaluation strategies are not always clear or effective, which makes it difficult to draw conclusions. For example, one study chose to compare and evaluate three different types of programs together, two of which were abstinence-based and one of which was more comprehensive, and which spanned three different grades in school (NCTPTP, 2007).

One early abstinence-only program found some success in a Mormon community (Olson et al., 1984) in that knowledge increased, but behavior did not change. Another program found that those who completed it delayed sexual involvement, and those who

had initiated sex before the program reported that they engaged in sex less afterwards (Howard & McCabe, 1990). Kirby (2002) identified one mass communication abstinence-only program – Not Me, Not Now – which showed some success in delaying sex in those 15 and younger, but not 17 and older, and may have reduced county-wide pregnancy rates in 15-17 year olds.

At the same time, however, some abstinence-only programs have yielded null or even negative effects. For example, seventh and eighth grade participants of one abstinence-only program were more likely to become pregnant than non-participants; the authors also suggest that this may have been due to other factors (Cagampang, Barth, Korpi, & Kirby, 1997; Kirby, Korpi, Barth, & Cagampang, 1997). A multi-year, experimentally-based impact study analyzing four Title V abstinence-only education programs concluded that program participants had sex at the same age, had as many sexual partners, and were just as likely to use contraception as nonparticipants (Solomon-Fears, 2007). Additionally, research shows that sex education programs or teachers presenting abstinence as teens' only option, along with contraception ineffectiveness, were likely to be *less* successful at teaching various skills and topics, and at yielding desired changes in students' sexual attitudes and behaviors (Landry et al., 2003; Roosa & Christopher, 1990).

Research conducted on abstinence or virginity pledge programs has indicated that they may be effective in delaying onset of sexual intercourse by up to 18 months, the longest study done (Blinn-Pike et al., 2004). Students who take virginity pledges have been found to be much less likely to have sex than do students who do not pledge (Bruckner & Bearman, 2005). However, pledging is contingent upon certain contextual

factors, including the pledger's desire to abstain, the age of the pledger, and the number of pledgers in a particular context. Findings also indicate that pledges might delay onset of intercourse among some young people under certain conditions, but that the pledgers might also *decrease* their use of contraception once they choose to have sex (Bearman & Bruckner, 2001; Kirby, 2002) and to feel less fear about contracting HIV/AIDS and more readiness to have sex (Blinn-Pike et al., 2004). In a follow-up study on a pledge program, Bruckner and Bearman (2005) found that STD rates did not differ in pledgers compared to nonpledgers, despite later sexual debut, less cumulative exposure, and fewer partners and nonmonogamous partners. Furthermore, pledgers were less aware of their STD status and less likely to get tested than nonpledgers (Bruckner & Bearman, 2005). Additionally, pledges have not been found to affect girls younger than 14 or older than 17, have not been found to have a significant impact if no peers pledged *or* if more than 30% of peers pledged, and taking the pledge did not affect chances of pregnancy (Kirby, 2002). Finally, Kirby also identifies a "self-selection bias" among students who select into the pledge movement.

It is difficult to draw conclusions from these studies. It has been suggested that sexual abstinence programs would work better for individuals who have not yet initiated sexual intercourse (Coyle et al., 2001; Olson, 1984). In urban, low-income settings with many students of color, better success rates are found with programs that are more comprehensive in approach, focus on safer sex, and openly and directly address issues such as pregnancy prevention, rather than programs that focus on abstinence (Jemmott, Jemmott, & Fong, 1998). Because the sexual abstinence programs that have been evaluated vary greatly in target audience, research design, and sample, it is often difficult

to compare these programs. A common critique of abstinence-only programs is that many of them do not employ rigorous evaluation techniques, including experimental or quasi-experimental designs, a large enough sample, and an evaluation of behavioral measures. In one report, Kirby (2002) discussed studies assessing 10 sexual abstinence programs which had yielded mixed findings in different reports, and concluded that nine of the studies failed to use rigorous evaluation techniques, making their effectiveness inconclusive. The literature seems to conclude that whereas abstinence-only programs may have some success and value, they tend to omit important information, and do not actually yield better outcomes than more comprehensive programs, especially those that also suggest abstinence as a safe and viable option. More recent research on abstinence education is suggesting that it is largely ineffective (see Kantor, 2008; Kirby, 2008).

The CDC has identified only five sex education programs throughout the country as successful, and Kirby (1999; 2001) identified 10 critical characteristics shared by all of them, including a focus on reducing one or more sexual behaviors that lead to unintended pregnancy or HIV/STD infection; a grounding in theory; inclusion of activities that address social pressures; and examples of and practice with communication, negotiation, and refusal skills. Most importantly, according to Kirby, effective programs deliver and consistently reinforce a clear message about abstaining from sexual activity and/or using condoms or other forms of contraception. The five programs identified were each successful in delaying the initiation of sexual intercourse, reducing the frequency of sex, or increasing the use of condoms or other forms of contraception. All five of these programs utilized experimental evaluation designs and found positive behavioral effects

for at least 12-31 months, yielding a distinction of evidence-based success by the CDC (Kirby, 1999; National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy, 2007).

The literature on sex education is quite mixed in nature, and is reflective of the diversity of programming available. Successes and failures can be found in all types of sex education programs. However, the research suggests that more information is better – that is, teaching young people about abstinence *and* contraception is likely to yield the best outcomes. One limitation of current sex education research is that it is difficult to draw conclusions across programs because programs are so different. There is little standardization across sex education programs *or* research studying them.

It is notable that the 10 characteristics identified by Kirby as critical for a successful sex education program do allude to developmental and cultural appropriateness, and also include the importance of practicing communication and negotiation skills. This is heartening and indicates attention to these issues. However, only five programs amidst hundreds meet these qualifications.

What the Literature Does Not Tell Us

Although research in this area has come a long way, there are still gaps in the literature on sex education programming. First, the research is relatively one-dimensional: it focuses on behavioral outcomes, a sense of "did they or didn't they" (engage in vaginal intercourse or other sexual activities) and whether adolescents are getting pregnant or contracting sexually transmitted diseases (Whitaker, Miller, & Clark, 2000). Although these studies address some behavioral outcomes, they do not address affective or agency-related effects, including how efficacious youth feel about their

choices, whichever they may be, how youth are negotiating these sexual situations, nor how these messages may be linked with unwanted or coercive sexual experiences.

A second limitation in the field is the lack of attention to the prevalence of sexist and heteronormative messages conveyed through sexuality education. Some suggest that formal sex education is heteronormative, focuses on dyadic experiences and a binary view of gender, and rarely addresses issues of diversity with regard to culture, race, or sexual or gender orientation (e.g., Bay-Cheng, 2003; Fine, 1998). For example, Bay-Cheng asserts that the way in which school-based sex education is constructed enforces compulsory heterosexuality and "reifies definitions of normal teen sex as heterosexual and coital" (2003, p. 61). There is also little known about the differential messages received by boys and girls in school sex education classes. Furthermore, current sex education programming largely neglects the needs of sexual minority students, those who are questioning their sexuality or gender, or anyone who may engage in non-coital or non-heterosexual behaviors.

A third limitation, closely related to the second, is a veritable omission of discussion of sexual negotiation and the (gendered) power dynamics involved. For example, there is concern that sex education may reify existing traditional gender stereotypes, which may in turn increase power inequalities and unwanted experiences, including sexual coercion (Fine, 1988; Sieg, 2007; Tolman, 1994; Weis, 2000). There may be many reasons for omission of this topic, including a lack of time, lack of knowledge about what to say, or concern that these conversations will bring up sensitive issues for students. Whereas it seems, anecdotally, that sexual violence is often discussed in sex education programming, it seems to be done in a cursory way. Sex education

programs often mention rape, but they tend to gloss over the topic and discuss it in a particular(ly gendered) way. In addition, the sex education literatures and the dating violence literatures seem oddly disconnected, considering both the similarities in consequences and subjects and the possibilities for collaboration. This is concerning for both the psychology and the social work literatures.

Finally, there is minimal attention given to the processes by which students themselves experience these programs. Sex education research is largely behavior-focused, and does not investigate how youth come to understand (and potentially internalize) the messages communicated to them, how they interpret these messages, and in what contexts these messages are received. There are a few notable exceptions. Measor (2004) conducted focus groups with adolescents in England and found that gender is an important operator in the sex education young people receive. Allen works in New Zealand, researching the experiences young people have with their sex education in a way that centers their perspectives and gives voice to their thoughts and opinions (2008; 2009). However, overall, there is a dearth of work conducted with young people about their own sex education experiences, particularly in the United States.

In summary, the outcomes examined in current sex education research tend to be health-focused and dichotomous. Nearly all research studies seem to be concerned with whether young people are having sexual intercourse or not, and related health issues. Most existing research addresses whether young people are having sexual intercourse, delaying intercourse, or having less sex. If youth are having sex, research addresses whether they are using contraception, contracting STDs, or getting pregnant. Whereas these issues are important, more attention is needed on internal issues such as self-

efficacy, interactive issues such as nature of communication within a sexual experience, as well as issues of power, gender, sexual orientation, and culture. In addition, more attention is needed on how youth interpret and internalize the diverse messages they may be receiving.

Adopting A New Approach

Accordingly, with my dissertation research I sought to address these limitations in four important ways. First, in assessing the impact of school-based sex education, I expanded the outcomes previously studied, focusing on communication and negotiation skills, endorsement of traditional rape myths, and experiences of sexual coercion (as both received and perpetrated.) Second, I focused on program content and messages instead of program type. As noted above, most existing analyses on the impact of school sex education have compared programs – for example, abstinence-only program A versus abstinence-only program B. However, because programs vary widely in content and theme, labels can be deceiving, and do not fully indicate the specific content conveyed. To circumvent this factor, I focused on the messages conveyed, regardless of program label, beginning with topics and explicit messages received in sex education (e.g. biology, contraception) and moving onto students' exposure to more subtle, implicit messages through the following three types of cultural values: sexual double standard messages, sexual abstinence messages, and positive sexuality messages. Third, I conceptualized sexual coercion and unwanted sexual experiences as an important and integral part of sex education and sex education research, rather than a peripheral add-on or a separate literature.

Finally, I spoke directly with young people who recently graduated from high school (all but one were first-semester freshmen), in order to better understand their experiences and the messages they received, expand the scope of messages explored, and reflect the true experiences of youth in these programs. As noted above, the field's emphasis on virginity status and use of contraception as effects tells only part of the story of emerging sexuality. By focusing on students' exposure to specific values and themes in their sex education, by speaking with them directly about their own experiences of sex education, and by testing a range of resulting attitudes and behaviors related to sexual health and sexual agency, I hoped to capture more fully the nature of how school sex education affects emerging sexuality. In the sections that follow I outline my conceptualization of the new constructs incorporated.

Examining Diverse Sexual Discourses

A first component of this new approach involved assessing the thematic content of sex education programs. My goal here was to move beyond the general program labels and explicit curricular goals to assess what specific themes were being conveyed about sexuality and sexual relationships. A distinction can be made between education, which is an intentional and structured process, and socialization, the process through which a person develops an understanding of beliefs, values, and cultural meanings (see Shtarkshall, Santelli, & Hirsch, 2007). I chose for my analysis three specific socialization discourses that capture a range of sexual themes and values in contemporary American culture: the sexual double standard discourse, the sexual abstinence discourse, and the positive sexuality discourse. I examined exposure to these discourses within the context of school-based sex education, as well as contributions of this exposure to sexual

attitudes and experiences. These three discourses were chosen because they had emerged as salient themes developed through socialization statements in my previous research, and because they are also reflected in the extant research as salient sexual socialization themes communicated to young people.

The double standard discourse. One set of sexual messages that could be expressed are gender-specific communications that frequently reflect a sexual double standard, in which men are encouraged to show sexual desire and pursue sex inside or outside of a committed relationship, but women are not (Tolman, 2002). Indeed, adolescent boys and girls are socialized differently, and receive different, often conflicting, messages about sexuality. Sexual expression and experimentation are often viewed in American culture as acceptable activities for adolescent boys, yet unacceptable for girls (Steinberg, 1996). Heterosexual scripts often play on women's concern about being "sluts" and falling into stereotypes (Kalmuss et al., 2003; Tolman, Striepe, & Harmon, 2003), and encourage women to please their boyfriends but not show signs of desire (Tolman, 2002). Research shows that while girls receive negative messages about sex from their parents, boys are more likely to receive positive sexual messages (Darling & Hicks, 1982). Additionally, girls are more likely to hear fear-based messages about things like rape and the importance of protecting themselves (Downie & Coates, 1999). More research on the sources and outcomes of these messages is critical.

The sexual abstinence discourse. A second common discourse to which youth are often exposed is the sexual abstinence discourse, which emphasizes waiting until marriage to have sexual intercourse and often omits critical health information. There are currently 3 Federal programs in the United States devoted exclusively to abstinence-only

education (Dailard, 2002) in schools. In these "abstinence-only" programs, sexual abstinence is portrayed as the only acceptable response to sexual intercourse before marriage. These programs are forbidden from discussing contraception at all, except to emphasize its failure. There is currently no federal education program that supports comprehensive health education in this country. Abstinence messages may also come from informal sources such as parents and friends, within family or peer contexts. Recent findings indicate that abstinence messages are much more likely to come from parents than from friends (Epstein & Ward, 2008; Lefkowitz, Boone, & Shearer, 2004) or from schools (Levin, 2010).

The positive sexuality discourse. A third, less common but emergent discourse, is one conveying messages that sex is natural, and can be positive and egalitarian, or equally acceptable and pleasurable for girls and boys. The World Health Organization defines sexual health as "a state of physical, emotional, mental and social well-being in relation to sexuality" and asserts that sexual health "requires a positive and respectful approach to sexuality and sexual relationships, as well as the possibility of having pleasurable and safe sexual experiences, free of coercion, discrimination, and violence" (WHO, 2007). Although there seems to be tacit agreement that sex can be a positive and healthy expression of love and affection, there is very little literature on this area, particularly as it relates to youth. One exception is a study on communication received by boys about sex (Epstein & Ward, 2008), which suggests that boys are more likely to receive sex-positive message from their friends and the media than from other sources, but that they also receive some messages that are positive in tone from their parents. Other research suggests that parents are likely the earliest source of positive sexual

socialization (Lefkowitz & Stoppa, 2006), and some literature advocates for a more sex-positive tone in sexuality education (Dailey, 1997; Fine & McClelland, 2006). More research is needed to examine this emerging discourse and its implications upon sexual attitudes, experiences, and behaviors.

Embedded within these "positive sexuality" messages are a host of possible "sub-messages." Three are explored here: sex as something that is casual and free, sex as an expression of love and intimacy, and sex as a natural and egalitarian phenomenon.

Examining Diverse Attitudinal and Behavioral Outcomes

A second component of my expanded approach to assessing the contributions of school-based sex education is the inclusion of variables representing young people's sexual attitudes and lived experiences, reflected through examination of issues relating to sexual subjectivity and sexual coercion. Here the goal is to move beyond typical dichotomous assessments of sexual behavior to include attitudes and experiences. These outcomes are believed to be central components of sexual health and sexual communication (Fine, 1988; Fine & McClelland, 2006; Impett et al., 2006; Tolman et al., 2003).

Self-efficacy. The first of four constructs assessed is self-efficacy, which represents one's belief in his or her capacity to execute a given skill, determines how much effort an individual will invest in a given task (Bandura, 1986), and has received increasing recognition as an important predictor of health behavior and behavior change. In terms of sexual behavior, self-efficacy may affect feelings of ability to refuse sexual advances. Findings indicate that having a general sense of self-efficacy predicts perceived ability to say no to sex (Zimmerman et al., 1995). Condom self-efficacy has been found

to be the strongest predictor of change in sexual risk behavior for adolescent women (Sieving et al., 1997): adolescent women who had the highest level of condom use (and high self-efficacy) had the lowest levels of sexually transmitted infection (STI) risk behavior at 1-year follow-up. Youth who exhibited low self-efficacy (and more negative attitudes about condoms) were more likely to engage in casual sexual experiences and have more nonmonogamous partners. They were also likely to report a higher frequency of coercive sexual experiences (St. Lawrence, Brasfield, Jefferson, Allyene, & Shirley, 1994). Together, these findings suggest that self-efficacy may increase one's ability to choose encounters, obtain protection, and advocate for protected sex once the decision is made to have sex.

Although there is little research available on the specific effects of discourses on sexual self-efficacy, researchers suggest that a young woman's ability to be conscientious and present in her sexual encounters is linked with her sexual agency (Welles, 2005), and that traditional gender roles are likely to limit women's feelings of sexual efficacy or create gender role conflicts (Gavey & McPhillips, 1999). Findings suggest that the sexual double standard, in particular, may be in conflict with female sexual self-efficacy (Hynie & Lydon, 1995) and may thus compromise young women's feelings of agency in sexual situations. In addition, conversations about sexual subjectivity, a multidimensional construct that results in being the subject, rather than just the object of sexual desire (Tolman, 2002), are also worth mentioning here, particularly with regard to the development of young women's sexual identities, because sexual subjectivity may yield more satisfaction and safer outcomes.

Communication skills. A second and related set of consequences examined are

sexual communication skills. It is likely that feeling able to be assertive about one's sexual communication skills may be useful in maintaining clear boundaries, preventing unwanted experiences, and contributing to positive sexual encounters. The literature on partner communication and adolescent sexuality supports the idea that open communication yields positive outcomes. Communication practices have been found to be an important behavioral factor in the reduction of risky sexual behavior (National Institutes of Health [NIH], 1997), and good communication has been identified as critical in making healthy sexual decisions (Hulton, 2001). Female adolescents who are able to talk with partners about aspects of STI risk before (or without) having intercourse are significantly less likely to engage in high-risk sexual behavior (Sieving et al., 1997; Taylor-Seehafer & Rew, 2000), and adolescents who are more comfortable with safe-sex communication are more likely to use condoms (Troth & Peterson, 2000).

Little research has been conducted on the specific impact of the three targeted discourses on sexual communication in sexual encounters. However, studies have shown that gendered discourses, particularly the double standard discourse, may contribute to power discrepancies between women and men, specifically to increased female passivity and less communication in sexual situations (Crawford & Popp, 2003; Gavey & McPhillips, 1999; Hynie & Lydon, 1995). Studies have also shown that women who accept and endorse feminine notions in which they do not always feel comfortable being authentic and expressing their voice also tend to show less sexual agency (Impett, Schooler, & Tolman, 2006).

Rape myths. The third sexual outcome explored here is endorsement of rape myths. Rape myths are beliefs about behaviors or attitudes that may cause or contribute

to rape. These myths occur at both an individual and a societal level, and tend to support ideas that perpetrators are not entirely responsible for their actions, and that those who are raped are at least in part to blame for the situation (Sawyer, Thompson, & Chicorelli, 2002). They also tend to represent more traditional and less equal views about gender roles. Whereas little is known about how sexual socialization may affect rape myth endorsement, a few studies have found links between double standard ideologies and rape perceptions. For example, research has shown that when women initiate dates, they are perceived as more likely to engage in sex, and their rapes are rated as more justified (Muehlenhard, 1988). Women who initiate physical contact with men are also more likely to be perceived as responsible for being raped (Muehlenhard & McNaughton, 1988). Therefore, women who act more active sexually, running counter to dictates of the sexual double standard, may run the risk of sending messages that may be unintended, and potentially placing themselves in danger. Double standard ideologies in particular, which are likely to reinforce gendered power differentials, may contribute to these attitudes. Abstinence messages may also reinforce these power dynamics, because they rarely encourage sexual negotiation and draw a distinction between "appropriate" behaviors for males as opposed to females. Conversely, positive sex messages are more likely to be gender-egalitarian. Whereas these myths can exist on several levels, the current studies aim to explore rape myths on an individual level, examining individual endorsement of these ideas and links with other individual attitudes and experiences.

Coercion and unwanted experiences. A final set of sexual outcome variables in this study are those related to sexual coercion and unwanted experiences. It is unfortunate that coercion and negative sexual experiences are a regular part of heterosexual

encounters in adolescence. One study found that although 93% of teenage women reported that their first experience of sexual intercourse was voluntary, 25% of these women reported that it was unwanted (Moore, Driscoll, & Lindberg, 1998). Depending on definitions of sexual coercion, rates of college-age women reporting unwanted sexual experiences range between 16 and 21 percent (see Crown & Roberts, 2007 for a review.) Experiences vary for adolescent boys and girls. One study reports that as adolescents become more sexually experienced, boys report greater feelings of psychological control, while girls report less (Whitaker & Miller, 2000). In another study (Eyre, Read, & Millstein, 1997), adolescent boys endorsed the use of more coercive strategies to get sex, including pressuring/raping, getting someone drunk, lying, or physical threat, while girls endorsed more passive strategies, including hinting at sex or flirting (solicitation of sex or acquiescence), and also reported their likelihood to just let sex happen.

One reason that coercion may occur in sexual negotiations is a gender differential in power, socialization, and messages received. Tolman and colleagues argue that early gendered interactions between girls and boys are likely to "sow the seeds of violence" in interpersonal relationships later on (Tolman, Spencer, Rosen-Reynoso, & Porche, 2003). Early reinforcement of traditional gender dynamics, which often include power differences, may be replicated in later sexual interactions, in which young men exert more power than young women. These features are particularly salient in a society that offers males and females different understandings of sex, through communications such as the double standard discourse. For example, the belief that men always want to have sex and that their libido is unstoppable, while women do not, may contribute to unwanted (though not always coercive) sexual interactions (see Walker, 2000). Sexual abstinence

messages may also contribute to unwanted experiences: whereas abstinence messages advocate for the postponement of sexual intercourse in order to avoid unwanted outcomes (whether unwanted by the adolescents themselves or by authority figures conveying this message), these same abstinence messages may actually increase their risk because they generally offer little discussion about sexual negotiation or strategies. Abstinence messages also tend to be communicated more to young women than to young men, which may unintentionally communicate sexual double standard messages. Positive messages about sexuality should increase the likelihood that partners will be open with one another, and decrease the likelihood of unwanted sexual experiences.

It bears mentioning that unwanted (and coercive) sexual experiences may happen despite all precautions, and this study *in no way* intends to imply that those who experience sexual violence hold any responsibility for the actions of sexual perpetrators, nor that sexual coercion occurs only between men and women. However, research suggests that lack of preparation or difficulty communicating may increase one's risk in some situations, and that open communication may sometimes be protective. Although there are different types of nonvolitional sex, this study addresses unwanted experience and nonviolent coercion, rather than rape, incest, or other physical abuse. It also focuses on heterosexual interactions.

The Current Studies

This volume presents three studies. The first study is presented in Chapter 2 and explores links between sexual messages explicitly received from school sex education programs and the following dependent variables: sexual assertiveness and communication, sexual self-efficacy, inauthentic voice, endorsement of traditional rape

myths, and experiences of sexual coercion, both as perpetrator and as victim. In Chapter 3, the second study is discussed, which looks at the same dependent variables, but examines links with sexual socialization discourses that are often embedded in messages and conversations about sexuality, but are not always explicitly stated. Specifically, five discourses are investigated: sexual double standard, sexual abstinence, sex is casual and free, sex is an expression of love, and sex is egalitarian. Associations are examined between exposure to these discourses, as communicated by school sex education, and participants' sexual agency, coercion attitudes, and coercion experiences.

In Chapter 4, I discuss the third study, in which I conducted focus groups with first-year undergraduates and investigated their experiences with and perspectives on their own school-based sex education. The purpose of this qualitative study was to better understand what messages young people are actually getting in their sex education, to understand their feelings and perspectives on these experiences, and to center their voices (Allen, 2008; 2009).

The current studies focus on emerging adult college students. Emerging adulthood, the period of development between adolescence and early adulthood (or between ages 18 and 26) (Arnett, 2000) is regarded as a period of increased autonomy and risk-taking for many young people living in industrialized nations (Arnett, 2000). This is particularly true of emerging adults who attend college, as they are likely to delay entering the workforce and be financially dependent on their parents, but to live outside of the home with other peers their age, and have ample autonomy, financial resources, and social opportunities to take risks and experiment with things such as alcohol, drugs, and sex. They have also recently graduated from high school, so they are likely to be able

to recall their sex education experiences fairly easily, but to have some distance and perspective on them, as well.

Whereas the use of retrospective recall as a data collection method has not been without its critics, it has come to be recognized as a convenient and effective way to understand past learning and experiences and is used commonly in the understanding of youth learning and socialization as it relates to later experiences. Specifically, there exists a precedent for using retrospective accounts of sexual learning and experiences to understand sexual socialization (Rafaelli & Green, 2003; Rafaelli & Ontai, 2004), sexual attitudes (Bay-Cheng, Robinson, & Zucker, 2009), and sexual behaviors (Hutchinson & Cooney, 1998; Lehr, DiIorio, Dudley, & Lipana, 2000), specifically in college students. There also exists a precedent for retrospective work around school experiences (e.g., Abbas, 2002). Indeed, using a college freshman sample to study prior schooling experiences is likely to offer maximum diversity because the undergraduate students will be drawing on experiences from multiple towns and school districts.

Chapter 2

Study 1: Examining Links between Sex Education Content and Sexual Attitudes and Experiences

As identified in Chapter 1, most sex education research has evaluated program "effectiveness" in dichotomous behavioral terms, focusing mainly on onset of sexual intercourse, pregnancy, and disease. These outcomes are important but limited, and do not address the interpersonal experiences of young people. Sex education research has also conceptualized sex education programs based on title or label rather than content. Other areas of research have identified a number of attitudes and experiences that may be linked with later sexual behaviors and sexual health, including sexual agency and unwanted sexual experiences. However, sex education research has not explicitly explored connections between school-based sex education and these attitudes and experiences. This study addressed these gaps in sex education research by a) looking at the specific topics and content of received sex education rather than just the program labels; and b) utilizing dependent variables that more closely reflected participants' attitudes and subjective sexual experiences, with the goal of capturing more accurately how specific sex education messages were linked with sexual attitudes and behaviors.

My general expectation was that more information, as long as it was not focused on abstinence messages, would be linked to greater sexual agency and communication because students would be operating from a position of knowledge. For example, I

expected that messages providing more positive communications about sexual relationships and pleasure, messages providing "objective" information (about topics such as biology and contraception), or messages conveying the idea that there were multiple valid choices (e.g., lifestyle) would be linked with more agency and with less report of coercion. I expected that messages focusing on abstinence, which also often seem to convey a sense of danger, would be linked with less agency and more coercion. Based on the sexuality research literature, I expected gender to affect associations. I also anticipated that these connections would potentially be affected by participants' own status and experience, and therefore sought to explore the roles of gender and virginity status. I assessed virginity as a moderator because the literature indicates that emerging adulthood is often a time of sexual experimentation and loss of virginity (Arnett, 2000) and the literature also suggests that level of sexual experience is likely to affect participant experiences of sexual messages, attitudes, and behaviors (e.g., Somers, 2001). As such, I hypothesized the following:

H1: Higher levels of exposure to **relationships and consequences topics** would be correlated with: a) Higher levels of sexual agency; b) Lower rape myths endorsement and report of coercive experiences;

H2: Higher levels of exposure to **biology topics** would be correlated with: a) Higher levels of sexual agency; b) Lower rape myths endorsement and report of coercive experiences;

H3: Higher levels of exposure to **mainstream *and* alternative contraception topics** would be correlated with: a) Higher levels of sexual agency; b) Lower rape myths endorsement and report of coercive experiences.

H4: Higher levels of exposure to **lifestyle topics** would be correlated with: a) Higher levels of sexual agency; b) Lower rape myths endorsement and report of coercive experiences;

H5: Higher levels of exposure to **abstinence topics** would be correlated with: a) Lower levels of sexual agency; b) Higher rape myths endorsement and report of coercive experiences.

Research Question 6: How would gender intersect with receipt of sex education messages and with the dependent variables?

Research Question 7: How would level of sexual experience intersect with receipt of sex education messages and with the dependent variables?

Method

Participants

Data were collected from 335 undergraduates (57% female) aged 15 to 22 (M_{Age}=19), attending a large Midwestern university. By self-identification, the majority of the participants were White/Caucasian (73.4%), although 15.5% identified as Asian/Pacific Islander (API), 4.2% as Latina/o, and 3.9% as Black/African-American. Approximately half of the participants (52.2%) indicated that they had not had heterosexual vaginal intercourse; 41.2% indicated that they had. Ninety-eight percent of participants identified as exclusively or predominantly heterosexual.

Procedure

Participants completed a confidential, hour-long survey about formal and informal communication about sexuality in the winter of 2005 in partial fulfillment of a psychology course requirement (Psychology Subject Pool.) Participants completed the

survey on campus in a private setting, in groups no larger than 20, sitting far apart from one another, and were aware that they were allowed to skip any question they did not want to answer. All students signed written consent forms indicating that they understood these instructions.

Measures of amounts of sex education topics. Measures were created to assess amount of information received from schools. Topical information received from schools was measured in two different ways. First, participants were asked to identify how much information they had received from multiple sources concerning 18 issues related to biology, morality, and sexual health, on a scale of 0 ("Nothing") to 3 ("A lot"). Only amounts received from schools are discussed here. Next, participants completed 20 items asking how much information they had received in school over the course of their cumulative sex education about each of the following four topical areas: contraceptives (8 items), alternatives and lifestyles (5 items), sexually transmitted diseases (2 items), and abstinence (2 items). Ratings were made on a scale of 0 ("None") to 3 ("A lot").

I ran principal components factor analyses with varimax rotations to determine how these 37 individual sex education items were clustering. After entering all of the sex education items into a factor analysis, a scree plot indicated that there were between four and six factors emerging. I tried four-, five-, and six-factor structures, and found that the six-factor model was the best fit. This structure made the best sense conceptually because of the topics that emerged, and allowed for more separation of distinct topics than the four-factor structure. Thus, six subscales were developed: Relationship and Consequence Topics, which reflected such issues as self-care and dating norms (11 items, α=.88); Biology Topics, including pregnancy and menstruation (8 items, α=.84); Mainstream

Contraception Topics, which reflected issues commonly discussed in conversations about contraception, such as condoms, the Pill, and effectiveness of contraception (5 items, α=.90); Lifestyle Topics, including alternatives to sex and sexual orientation (5 items, α=.84); Alternative Contraception Topics, such as IUDs and the patch (6 items, α=.84), and Abstinence Topics (2 items, α=.70). Please see Appendix C for a full list of subscales and individual items.

Dimensions of sexual attitudes and experience were conceptualized into two categories: measures of sexual agency and measures of unwanted sexual experience. I also assessed endorsement of rape myths.

Measures of sexual negotiation. The Sexual Self-Efficacy Scale (Rosenthal, Moore, & Flynn, 1991) assesses perceived confidence in the ability to accomplish specific tasks related to contraception. Twenty items make up three subscales: ability to say no to unwanted sex, confidence in the ability to be assertive in achieving sexual satisfaction, and ability to purchase and use condoms. For this study, only the 5-item condom-use self-efficacy scale (α=.80) was used because I was not looking at sexual refusal skills, and because there was another sexual assertiveness scale already in common use in the lab in which I was working. (The idea of using the same assertiveness scale was appealing for consistency, and for ease of comparing samples in the future.) Participants were asked to respond to the following statement: "Indicate whether or not you think you <u>can do</u> each of the following activities, regardless of whether or not you are sexually active" (emphasis original) using a 5-point Likert scale ("very uncertain" to "absolutely certain"). Sample items included "Discuss using condoms and/or other contraceptives with a potential partner" and "Be able to buy condoms/contraceptives." A

mean score was computed across the items, such that higher scores indicated greater sexual self-efficacy.

Communication and assertiveness were measured by two established scales. Sexual assertiveness was assessed with the 25-item Hurlbert Index of Sexual Assertiveness (Hurlbert, 1991) in order to determine participants' agency in sexual situations (α=.90). Participants indicated how accurately each statement described them. Items included, "I communicate my sexual desires to my partner," and "I find myself doing sexual things I do not like." A 5-point Likert scale was used, anchored by 0 ("Never") and 4 ("All of the time"). After the necessary items were reverse scored, a mean score was created such that higher scores reflected greater sexual assertiveness. Participants also completed the Inauthentic Voice in Relationships subscale of the Femininity Ideology Scale (α=.70; Tolman & Porche, 2000). This scale assesses the extent to which individuals endorse the idea that being polite is more important than honesty when speaking with others. Although this scale was normed on women, it was used here with both women and men, following the work of Smiler, Ward, Caruthers, and Merriwether (2005). Participants indicated the extent of their agreement with each of 10 items (e.g., "I express my opinions only if I can think of a nice way of doing it") on a 6-point Likert-type scale, anchored by "Strongly disagree" at 1 and "Strongly agree" at 6. Several items were recoded, as directed, and mean scores were computed so that higher scores indicated greater preference for politeness over honesty (i.e., inauthenticity.)

Rape myths acceptance scale. The Burt Rape Myths Acceptance Scale (BRMAS) (α=.74; Burt, 1980) has been widely used since its development to assess acceptance of rape myths and is often associated with an increased acceptance of dating

violence, and the idea that victims are to blame for their predicament (Sawyer et al., 2002). The 11-item scale is anchored by 1 ("Strongly disagree") and 7 ("Strongly agree"). Items include, "A woman who goes to the home or apartment of a man on their first date implies that she is willing to have sex" and "Any healthy woman can successfully resist a rapist if she really wants to." After reverse scoring the necessary items, a mean score was created to reflect overall endorsement of "traditional" rape myths, such that higher scores indicated greater endorsement.

Unwanted sexual experiences measures. To provide an indication of coercive sexual experiences, the Sexual Abuse Exposure Questionnaire—Short Form (SAEQ; Ryan, Rodriquez, & Foy, 1992) was used. Participants indicated whether or not "anyone [has] ever talked you into or made you perform" each of 15 sexual acts (e.g., perform oral sex, been kissed in a sexual way) before and after age 14. They were asked to answer "yes" or "no." Scale scores represent sums and indicate the number of different sexual behaviors the individual has unwillingly experienced. Twelve of the 15 items were used (the remaining three did not reflect an experience of coercion.) Since we were interested in examining adolescent experience rather than childhood experiences (which were likely linked with other issues), only the variable representing the number of unwanted experiences after age 14 (α=.66) was included in our analyses.

I also utilized a modified version of the Sexual Experiences Survey scale (SES) (Koss & Oros, 1982) to examine desirability of sexual experiences. Four items measured whether people had experienced being sexually coerced (victimization experience). For example, "Have you ever had a sexual experience with someone even though you said no at first?" Five items also asked whether they had sexually coerced others (perpetration

experience). For example, “Have you ever had a sexual experience with someone even though they said no at first?” This was scored on a modified Yes/No scale. Participants could check off “No” (0), “Yes, kissing and petting” (1), or “Yes, sexual intercourse” (2). If participants checked off more than one box, I summed their score. The maximum possible score was 15. This produced two variables, one representing sexual victimization experience and one representing sexual perpetration experience.

Results

Preliminary Analyses

Descriptives of the dependent variables: Sexual attitudes and experiences.

These are discussed first because they are relevant to both Chapter 2 and Chapter 3. Descriptives for the sexual beliefs and experience variables are provided in Tables 1 and 2. Participants reported relatively high condom use self-efficacy and feelings of sexual assertiveness/ability to communicate. They reported some endorsement of rape myths and some inauthentic interactions, and a relatively low number of coercive experiences. Results of t-tests revealed significant sex differences for nearly all of these variables. Men reported significantly higher levels of condom self-efficacy and notably higher levels of sexual assertiveness than women. Men also endorsed traditional rape myths significantly more than women. Women experienced more victimization, and men were more likely to perpetrate an act of sexual coercion. T-tests were also conducted examining potential differences by level of sexual experience, and are reported in Table 2. Findings indicate that non-virgins reported higher levels of condom self-efficacy, assertiveness, and experiences of coercion than virgins, and lower expressions of

inauthentic voice. There was no difference in endorsement of rape myths between virgins and non-virgins in this sample.

Sex education topics. The second set of preliminary analyses investigated sample and group means for the six sex education topics communicated by schools (see Table 3). Overall, participants reported receiving the most instruction about biology (2.51) and mainstream contraception (2.07). They also received some abstinence (1.44), lifestyle (1.41), and relationship (1.39) messages, yet reported receiving few messages about alternative contraception (.70). There were no differences in amounts received by gender (Table 3) or by level of sexual experience (Table 4).

Paired t-tests were run to evaluate differences between amounts received across these topics. Results indicated highly significant differences between nearly all pairs: participants received the highest amount of messages about biology topics, significantly more than relationship and consequence messages ($t(331)= -33.89$, $p<.001$); mainstream contraception ($t(334)= 10.96$, $p<.001$); lifestyles and alternatives ($t(332)= 27.28$, $p<.001$); alternative contraceptives ($t(333)= 46.61$, $p<.001$); and abstinence ($t(332)= 19.38$, $p<.001$). They also received significantly more on mainstream contraception topics than on relationship and consequence topics ($t(331)= -14.40$, $p<.001$); lifestyle topics ($t(332)= 15.37$, $p<.001$); alternative contraception ($t(333)= 35.65$, $p<.001$); and abstinence ($t(332)= 9.69$, $p<.001$). Participants also reported receiving more abstinence messages ($t(331)= -12.58$, $p<.001$); more lifestyle messages ($t(331)= 18.27$, $p<.001$), and more relationship and consequence messages ($t(330)= 16.60$, $p<.001$), than they did alternative contraception messages.

I also examined intercorrelations between sex education topics to see if receipt of one indicated receipt of other topics (Table 5). In most cases, topics were highly intercorrelated. The highest correlations were between biology and relationship topics, lifestyle and relationship topics, lifestyle and both mainstream and alternative contraception topics, and between mainstream and alternative topics. Abstinence topics, while correlated with some of the other topics, had the lowest intercorrelations. These high intercorrelations suggest that participants received clusters of sex education topics and that topics were interrelated, rather than discrete variables. Given these high inter-correlations and the general nature of my research questions, I first chose to investigate associations to sexual behavior via partial correlations rather than regression equations.

As the final set of preliminary analyses, I ran zero-order correlations between the dependent variables and the following 10 demographic sample characteristics: mother's education, father's education (these were a proxy for socioeconomic status), gender (being male), age, Asian ethnicity, Latino ethnicity, Black ethnicity, being raised in a single-parent home, religiosity, and being born in a foreign country. Results are provided in Table 6. Overall, findings indicate that gender (being male), being of Asian ethnicity, being religious, and being born in a foreign country were each linked with the dependent variables. Being male was associated with more higher condom self-efficacy, higher endorsement of rape myths, less experiences of general coercion after age 14, less experience of sexual coercion as a victim, and more experience of sexual coercion as a perpetrator. Being Asian was associated with less condom self-efficacy, less sexual assertiveness, higher rape myths endorsement, and less experiences of sexual coercion. Religiosity was associated with less condom self-efficacy, and being born in a foreign

country was associated with higher endorsement of rape myths, and more experience as a sexual perpetrator. These factors will be included as demographic controls in future analyses.

Testing Associations between Sex Education Messages and Sexual Behavior

I next examined whether topics covered in school related to the outcome variables. First, I ran zero-order correlations between sex education topics and the dependent variables. The significant results are summarized in Tables 7 and 8. Then I ran partial correlations, controlling for gender (except when dividing the sample by gender), Asian ethnicity, religiosity, and being born outside of the US. Because the trends remained remarkably similar between zero-order correlations and partial correlations, I discuss below results from the partial correlations, only (Tables 9 and 10.)

To address Hypothesis 1, I looked at links between relationship and consequence messages and the dependent variables. For the whole sample (top portion of Table 9 and/or 10) greater exposure to this topic was linked with lower levels of inauthentic voice, as predicted, and, unexpectedly, with marginally higher occurrence of sexual perpetration. By gender, relationship messages were not linked with any outcomes for young women. For young men, these messages were linked with significantly less inauthentic voice, as expected. However, relationship messages were also linked with more experiences of victimization and perpetration for young men. Examining outcomes by level of sexual experience (Table 10), I found that virgins showed a link between relationship messages and more experiences of coercion after age 14. Among non-virgins, greater exposure to relationship messages was associated with marginally higher levels of sexual assertiveness and less inauthentic voice.

To address Hypothesis 2, I examined effects of exposure to biology topics. There were very few links between biology topics and attitudinal and experiential variables in this sample. Although I hypothesized that biology topics would be linked with higher levels of sexual agency and lower levels of coercive experiences, the lack of effects of biology topics was not entirely unexpected. Biology is often presented as a factual and value-neutral set of messages, and is not necessarily integrated into sex education in the way that other topics may be. There is also likely variation in how biology is represented in different schools. However, as expected, biology topics were linked with marginally higher levels of sexual assertiveness and lower experience of inauthentic voice in young men. Exposure to these topics was also linked with greater sexual assertiveness and less inauthentic voice among participants with sexual experience. There were no associations between biology topics and attitudes or experiences related to sexual coercion.

To address Hypothesis 3, I looked at mainstream *and* alternative contraception topics, hypothesizing that they would behave similarly, but examining them as separate subscales to see if they behaved differently. For the whole sample, both mainstream and alternative contraception subscales were linked with more condom self-efficacy and assertiveness, and less inauthentic voice, as expected. However, mainstream contraception topics were also linked with notably higher experiences of victimization. By gender, women exhibited a few links in the expected directions, but associations among men were driving the data: exposure to both contraception topics was linked with more efficacy and assertiveness and with less inauthentic voice in young men. This was true for non-virgins, too. When the sample was divided by sexual experience, there were fewer significant links for virgins, although greater exposure to alternative contraception

topics was also linked with significantly higher levels of sexual coercion.

Hypothesis 4 proposed that lifestyle topics would be correlated with higher levels of sexual agency and lower rape myths endorsement and report of coercive experiences. Lifestyle topics operated as expected in all groups except in terms of sexual attitudes: they were linked with more self-efficacy and assertiveness, and less inauthentic voice, and were not linked at all with coercive experiences. The pattern of these findings did differ by group, however. Few findings emerged among the women and the virgins, but the existing pattern held strong among men and non-virgins. Finally, to test hypothesis 5, I tested associations between exposure to abstinence topics and sexual attitudes and experiences. Sexual abstinence topics had no associations with these dependent variables once the demographic controls were in place.

In order to examine the independent contribution of each sex education topic to outcomes, I ran regressions for each dependent variable, using the four significant demographic variables (gender-being male, Asian ethnicity, being foreign born, and religiosity) in all regressions, and using only those sex education topics that were correlated with the particular dependent variable in zero-order correlations. Looking at the sexual agency variables (Table 11), findings indicate that receiving input on alternative forms of contraception predicted greater condom self-efficacy, even after controlling for demographic variables and other significant topics. Asian ethnicity was linked with less sexual assertiveness in this sample, but sex education topics did not predict sexual assertiveness or inauthentic voice. For the sexual coercion variables (Table 12), findings indicate that being male, Asian, and religious were all linked with less

(reported) experiences of sexual victimization, but sex education topics had no effect on any sexual coercion variables.

Thinking further about how topics relate to one another. Because messages are not communicated to young people in a vacuum, but rather in the context of other messages, it was important to consider how messages might be working together. Accordingly, in order to further consider how sex education topics were clustering, I first conducted a principal components factor analysis of the sex education subscales with a varimax rotation to see how they loaded. All sex education subscales loaded onto one factor. Next, I conducted a K-means cluster analysis (after standardizing scores and randomizing data) to see how participants were clustering with respect to receipt of these sex education topics. After various iterations, I chose a 4-cluster solution because it best fit the data. Cluster 1 was comprised of participants who received low amounts of all topics; participants in Cluster 2 seemed to receive low amounts of all topics except abstinence topics, of which they received high amounts; Cluster 3 received high amounts of all topics; and Cluster 4 received very low amounts of all topics, with slightly higher amounts of biology and mainstream contraception topics. Differences in amounts of topics received were significant across all clusters (Table 13).

Dependent variables also differed across clusters (Table 14). ANOVAs indicated significant differences across clusters for the sexual agency variables (condom self-efficacy, sexual assertiveness, and inauthentic voice). Post-hoc Tukey tests revealed the following between-group differences: Cluster 1 (all low) reported significantly different amounts of all three sexual agency variables than Cluster 3 (all high), with high receivers of sex education topics expressing more sexual agency than low receivers. In addition,

Cluster 3 (all high) also had significantly different amounts of inauthentic voice than Cluster 4 (biology and mainstream contraception high), with global high receivers exhibiting more authenticity than those who received only high levels of biology and contraception topics. There were no group differences in attitudes about or experiences of sexual coercion.

Discussion

The research on school-based sex education is largely dichotomous and based on behavioral outcomes. Accordingly, the purpose of this study was to look more closely at the content of messages received in school sex education programs and try to discern impacts upon other attitudinal and experiential outcomes that are related to sexual health and well-being but are not commonly examined.

In terms of this expanded set of dependent variables, participants indicated feeling a high level of condom-use self-efficacy, and reported fairly low amounts of coercive experiences. These dependent variables were linked with demographic variables including gender (being male), Asian ethnicity, religiosity, and being born in a country outside of the United States. Being Asian and being born in a foreign country were correlated (r=.35) but not so highly that they seemed to be representing the same construct. Thus, both variables were used. It also bears mentioning that age was included as a demographic variable, particularly since participants were of different ages during their participation in these studies and during the time they received sex education. However, participant age was not significantly linked with any of the dependent variables, and was therefore not included as a control in later analyses. Non-virgins reported significantly higher feelings of self-efficacy, assertiveness, and coercive

experiences than virgins, whereas virgins reported more inauthentic communications. Again, these findings are not surprising, considering that those with more sexual experience will likely exhibit more sexual confidence, and are also likely to have had more experiences in general, some of which may be unwanted.

In terms of sex education topics communicated to students by their schools, there were no differences in amounts of messages received, either between male and female students, or between virgins and non-virgins. This makes sense, as diverse groups of students were in classes together, and likely receiving much of the same information and messages across groups. It bodes well for my analyses that these disparate groups recalled the same type of early instruction, and indicates that their recollections are not simply an artifact of their current status (e.g., virgins did not recall receiving more abstinence messages than non-virgins). However, there were differences in the content or types of messages recalled across the sample. As a whole, students recalled greater exposure to biology and mainstream contraception topics, and less exposure to alternative contraception topics.

As expected, exposure to different types of messages bore different connections to students' sexual negotiation skills and sexual experiences. Relationship and consequence messages were linked both with more sexual assertiveness and less inauthentic voice (as expected) and with more experiences of coercion (unexpected). It is possible that although receipt of messages about relationships, communication, and emotion encouraged young people to feel more assertive and authentic in their sexual communications, they may have also indicated to young people that they had been experiencing coercion, or communicating less effectively than they would like. In

addition, since relationship and consequence messages included some discussion of rape and unwanted experiences, which I thought would be protective, perhaps it was not. Since there is no temporal measure here, and these questions asked young people to report their impressions, this is not to say that receipt of relationship and consequence messages caused coercive experiences. Rather, another interpretation is that more careful consideration of these messages may have helped young people become more aware of and better identify the coercive experiences they were having.

There were very few links between biology topics and attitudinal and experiential variables in this sample, with the exception of marginal links with sexual assertiveness in young men and those with more sexual experience, and with less inauthentic voice in non-virgins as well. It is not that surprising that topics focusing on biology would not have many links with sexual attitudes and experiences, as they are often fairly neutral and factual in tone. (It would also depend whether sexually transmitted diseases were covered in these biological discussions.) However, it also stands to reason that biological topics would increase feelings of efficacy in initiators of sexual encounters (often men) and in those with more experience (non-virgins) while having fewer effects on those engaging in less sexual experiences. More knowledge might make actors in sexual situations feel more confident, while being possibly irrelevant to non-actors. It is also possible that men go into biology lessons knowing less than women, who are educated from an early age about issues such as menstruation and anatomy and tend to have more open conversations about personal topics such as these than do young men.

Contraception topics, both mainstream and alternative, were linked with greater condom self-efficacy and assertiveness, and less inauthentic voice, as expected. However,

mainstream contraception topics were also linked with more experiences of victimization. For men, both contraception topics were linked with greater efficacy and assertiveness and with less inauthentic voice. It is curious that men were driving the data when it came to contraception topics: however, again, it is likely that young women already had significant knowledge about contraceptives, as most birth control, with the exception of condoms, is taken or administered by the woman. This may have caused a ceiling effect for women, allowing less space for school instruction to be influential. When examined by sexual experience level, both types of contraception topics (mainstream and alternative) were linked with more efficacy and assertiveness and with less inauthentic voice in non-virgins, as expected. It is very possible that young people who are engaging in sexual activity are intuitively more likely to exhibit sexual self-efficacy and assertiveness, or have already developed these skills. There were fewer links for virgins, although both mainstream and alternative contraception topics were also linked with sexual coercion, a surprising finding. Virgins may associate hearing about contraception with pressure to have sex.

As expected, topics discussing lifestyle (including sexual orientation and alternatives to sex) were linked with greater self-efficacy and assertiveness, and less inauthentic voice, and were not linked at all with coercive experiences. All of these findings were in the expected directions.

One surprising finding is that abstinence messages had virtually no links with any of the outcome variables. This is interesting because abstinence has been a focus of many school sex education programs and has been touted as having many effects, both positive and negative. However, it is also important to note that the sexual abstinence scale was

the weakest of the subscales, with only two items, and also had a relatively low alpha. Perhaps a stronger abstinence measure would have produced more results. More research on the possible effects of abstinence messages would be beneficial. It was also interesting that a number of messages, not solely those discussing communication, were linked with a decrease in inauthentic voice (or an increase in authentic communication.) This is heartening, and suggests that perhaps people feel more comfortable being authentic once they realize there are "alternatives" out there.

Another interesting finding is that young men were driving the data with regard to sex education topics. One possible explanation might be that these topics are more novel for young men, since they seem to talk less with parents and friends about sexual education topics (Lefkowitz et al., 2004), and thus may have had greater effects. This is also an important area to examine further, since girls are studied far more than boys in the existing research. Additionally, there were more significant results for non-virgins than for virgins. Sexually active individuals may experience more effects in some areas than those who were less sexually experienced. Men may also be more sexually experienced than women. (A posthoc analysis revealed that 63% of men have had sexual intercourse, while only 50% of women have. However, there were still more women than men represented in the non-virgin sample.)

Regressions were run on each dependent variable that had yielded significant correlations with the sex education topics. Whereas there were few links between sex education topics and (sexual agency or sexual coercion) dependent variables in regressions, receiving information about alternative forms of contraception (forms of contraception other than condoms and the Pill) was linked with increased condom self-

efficacy. Perhaps more information about alternatives beyond condoms helped people to feel more comfortable with condoms in contrast.

Cluster analysis of sex education topics yielded a four-cluster solution. Two of the clusters were comprised of high receivers of information and two represented low receivers of information. In addition, one cluster received low amounts of most topics but relatively high amounts of abstinence topics (which is consistent with abstinence-only education), and one cluster received very low amounts of all topics, with slightly higher amounts of biology and mainstream contraception topics (consistent with cursory sex education which touches briefly on basic biology and contraception but little else.) ANOVAs revealed that participants who were exposed to higher amounts of various sex education topics reported higher sexual agency, which is consistent with other analyses suggesting that sexual knowledge is likely to be linked with sexual agency.

Overall, many significant connections emerged between sex education content and subjective sexuality. Exposure to content about issues including mainstream contraception, alternative forms of contraception, lifestyle and relationship topics was associated with participants' feeling more assertive, efficacious, and authentic. This was especially the case for men and those with sexual experience, two groups that are likely to be more sexually assertive and agentic. This is likely to be a benefit for potential sexual negotiations. However, it is of some concern that these messages did not increase feelings of agency in women, a finding that bears further investigation. Exposure to these topics was also linked with coercive experiences such that messages about sex being a relational (and potentially dangerous) experience were linked with experiences of victimization *and* perpetration in men, and general experiences of coercion after 14 in

virgins. Messages about coercion were also linked with coercion in virgins. Finally, abstinence messages produced no results, falling very much in line with findings by Kirby (2001; 2008) and by Santelli and colleagues (2006) who demonstrated few contributions of abstinence messages to sexual health. Thus by looking beyond program labels (i.e., comprehensive versus abstinence), this study becomes one of the first examinations of how specific sex education topics may be shaping sexual health and negotiation. These findings may also have implications for curriculum and program development.

Chapter 3

Study 2: Examining Links between Sexual Socialization Discourses and Sexual Attitudes and Experiences

As has been discussed in previous chapters, the extant research on sex education, although valuable in some ways, has proven to be both dichotomous and incomplete. The extant research has tended to focus on onset of sexual intercourse, pregnancy, and disease, important but limited outcomes, and to conceptualize sex education programs by title rather than content. In Chapter 2, I explored links between "intended" topics and messages in sex education and a variety of attitudinal and behavioral outcomes. I use the word "intended" because although not all actual messages *received* may have been intended, this study was conducted with the expectation that certain sex education topics were explicitly presented for learning (e.g. biology, contraception.) Results were mixed: contraception and lifestyle messages were linked with some sexual agency variables, and young men and more sexually experienced participants seemed to be driving the findings. However, there were also some unexpected results (such as a link between messages about mainstream contraception and increased report of sexual victimization in virgins) that suggested there were other things going on, as well.

Accordingly, my next step was to think more deeply about messages that may not have been intended, or at least, were not explicitly communicated, specifically, messages related to a sexual double standard, sexual abstinence, and sex as positive and egalitarian.

These sexual socialization discourses were discussed in detail in Chapter 1. Research suggests that messages communicating a sexual double standard, in which men are encouraged to show sexual desire but women are not (Tolman, 2002) may be linked with negative outcomes including sexual violence in later relationships (Tolman et al., 2003; Walker, 2000). Sexual abstinence messages may omit the teaching of important communication skills that may be protective, and may also convey a sexual double standard. Conversely, sex-positive and egalitarian sexual messages may be an important part of healthy sexual learning.

Based on work conducted in my psychology lab, which identified particular sexual socialization discourses as salient for adolescents and emerging adults, and based on the extant research, I identified five sexual socialization discourses to explore: sexual double standard, sexual abstinence, sex as casual and free, sex as an expression of love, and sex as egalitarian. In general, it was my expectation that gendered and restrictive messages would be associated with less desirable outcomes, and that more egalitarian and positive messages would be associated with more desirable outcomes. I also expected that gender and level of sexual experience would affect these variables. As such I hypothesized the following:

H1: Higher levels of exposure to **sexual double standard messages** would be correlated with: a) Lower levels of sexual agency; b) Higher rape myths endorsement and report of coercive experiences;

H2: Higher levels of exposure to **sexual abstinence messages** would be correlated with: a) Lower levels of sexual agency; b) Higher rape myths endorsement and report of coercive experiences;

H3: Higher levels of exposure to **messages that sex is casual and free** would be correlated with: a) Higher levels of sexual agency; b) Lower rape myths endorsement and report of coercive experiences.

H4: Higher levels of exposure to **messages that sex is an expression of love** would be correlated with: a) Higher levels of sexual agency; b) Lower rape myths endorsement and report of coercive experiences;

H5: Higher levels of exposure to **messages that sex is egalitarian** would be correlated with: a) Higher levels of sexual agency; b) Lower levels of rape myths endorsement and report of coercive experiences.

Research Question 6: How would gender interact with receipt of sexual socialization discourses and links with dependent variables?

Research Question 7: How would level of sexual experience interact with receipt of sexual socialization discourses and links with dependent variables?

Method

Participants

Data were collected from 335 undergraduates (57% female) aged 15 to 22 (M_{Age}=19), attending a large Midwestern university. By self-identification, the majority of the participants (73.4%) were White/Caucasian, although 15.5% identified as Asian/Pacific Islander (API), 4.2% as Latina/o, and 3.9% as Black/African-American. Approximately half of the participants (52.2%) indicated that they had not had heterosexual vaginal intercourse; 41.2% indicated that they had. Ninety-eight percent of participants identified as exclusively or predominantly heterosexual.

Procedure

Participants completed a confidential, hour-long survey about formal and informal communication about sexuality in the winter of 2005 in partial fulfillment of a psychology course requirement. Participants completed the survey on campus in a private setting, in groups no larger than 20, sitting far apart from one another, and were aware that they were allowed to skip any question they did not want to answer. All students signed written consent forms indicating that they understood these instructions.

Measures

Discourse measures. Using a 0-3 scale, in which 0 indicated "None" and 3 indicated "A lot," participants indicated the extent to which their parents, friends, and schools had communicated each of 60 sexual values. (Media and religious institutions were sources, as well, but these findings are not discussed here.)

After preliminary analyses, I ran a principal components analysis with a varimax rotation in order to understand the factor structure of the 60 school-based items and create new discourse factors. Eleven factors emerged initially, with four main factors coming through strongly. The first two were distinct factors, and emerged as a Sexual Double Standard factor (15 items; α=.92), and a Sexual Abstinence factor (10 items; α=.89). Since the next two factors included many overlapping items, I decided to run another factor analysis using just those items included in these two factors. A clear three-factor solution then emerged: one factor reflected the idea that Sex is Casual and Free (6 items; α=.81), another factor reflected the idea that Sex is an Expression of Love (4 items; α=.87), and a third factor reflected the idea that Sex is Egalitarian (5 items, α=.84). The remaining 20 items did not load clearly, strongly, or uniquely on a coherent factor.

The sexual double standard subscale focused on messages reflecting the idea that men are allowed and even expected to express sexual desire, but women should not. Sample items include "Men will say whatever they need to say to get a woman into bed" and "Men want sex, women want relationships." The 10-item abstinence messages subscale focused on messages endorsing waiting until marriage to have sex. Sample items include "Sex outside of marriage is a sin," and "Sex belongs only in married relationships." The 6-item Sex is Casual and Free subscale corresponded to DeLamater's (1989) recreational orientation to sexuality, and reflected the discourse that sex is casual and recreational. Sample items include "Having sex is just something fun to do" and "Having sex with someone should not necessarily imply your commitment to that person." The 4-item Sex is an Expression of Love subscale corresponded with DeLamater's (1989) relational orientation to sexuality, and reflected the idea that sex is serious, and appropriate within the confines of a loving relationship. Sample items include "Sex is best when the partners are in a loving and committed relationship" and "Partners should be intellectually and emotionally intimate before they are physically intimate." The final 5-item Sex is Egalitarian subscale reflected the discourse that sex is positive, natural, and egalitarian, and that both women and men may experience desire or initiate sexual encounters. Sample items include "Being sexual is a natural part of being human" and "Women have just as many sexual urges and desires as men."

I later ran a maximum likelihood analysis with an oblimin rotation using messages received from parents (the parent structure of variables), but the factor structures were virtually the same. (I also tried to run a maximum likelihood rotation based on the school structure; however, the school items did not have normal

distributions making it difficult to run a factor analysis on them.) Additionally, since parents are considered primary sources of sexual information, and there is a precedent in the field for doing so (e.g., Epstein & Ward, 2008). I thus used parent data to norm the factor analysis. The five subscales discussed above are analyzed here: a sexual double standard subscale, an abstinence subscale, a casual sex subscale, a subscale reflecting the idea that sex is an expression of love, and an egalitarian sexuality subscale. Individual subscale items are included in Appendix C.

The set of dependent variables were the same as in Study 1. However, they are described again here.

Measures of sexual negotiation. The Sexual Self-Efficacy Scale (Rosenthal, Moore, & Flynn, 1991) assesses perceived confidence in the ability to accomplish specific tasks related to contraception. Twenty items make up three subscales: ability to say no to unwanted sex, confidence in the ability to be assertive in achieving sexual satisfaction, and ability to purchase and use condoms. For this study, only the 5-item condom-use self-efficacy scale (α=.80) was used because I was not looking at sexual refusal skills, and because there was another sexual assertiveness scale already in common use in the lab in which I was working. (The idea of using the same assertiveness scale was appealing for consistency, and for ease of comparing samples in the future.) Participants were asked to respond to the following statement: "Indicate whether or not you think you <u>can do</u> each of the following activities, regardless of whether or not you are sexually active" (emphasis original) using a 5-point Likert scale ("very uncertain" to "absolutely certain"). Sample items included "Discuss using condoms and/or other contraceptives with a potential partner" and "Be able to buy condoms/contraceptives." A

mean score was computed across the items, such that higher scores indicated greater sexual self-efficacy.

Communication and assertiveness were measured by two established scales. Sexual assertiveness was assessed with the 25-item Hurlbert Index of Sexual Assertiveness (Hurlbert, 1991) in order to determine participants' agency in sexual situations (α=.90). Participants indicated how accurately each statement described them. Items included, "I communicate my sexual desires to my partner," and "I find myself doing sexual things I do not like." A 5-point Likert scale was used, anchored by 0 ("Never") and 4 ("All of the time"). After the necessary items were reverse scored, a mean score was created such that higher scores reflected greater sexual assertiveness. Participants also completed the Inauthentic Voice in Relationships subscale of the Femininity Ideology Scale (α=.70; Tolman & Porche, 2000). This scale assesses the extent to which individuals endorse the idea that being polite is more important than honesty when speaking with others. Although this scale was normed on women, it was used here with both women and men, following the work of Smiler, Ward, Caruthers, and Merriwether (2005). Participants indicated the extent of their agreement with each of 10 items (e.g., "I express my opinions only if I can think of a nice way of doing it") on a 6-point Likert-type scale, anchored by "Strongly disagree" at 1 and "Strongly agree" at 6. Several items were recoded, as directed, and mean scores were computed so that higher scores indicated greater preference for politeness over honesty (i.e., inauthenticity.)

Rape myths acceptance scale. The Burt Rape Myths Acceptance Scale (BRMAS) (α=.74; Burt, 1980) has been widely used since its development to assess acceptance of rape myths and is often associated with an increased acceptance of dating

violence, and the idea that victims are to blame for their predicament (Sawyer et al., 2002). The 11-item scale is anchored by 1 ("Strongly disagree") and 7 ("Strongly agree"). Items include, "A woman who goes to the home or apartment of a man on their first date implies that she is willing to have sex" and "Any healthy woman can successfully resist a rapist if she really wants to." After reverse scoring the necessary items, a mean score was created to reflect overall endorsement of "traditional" rape myths, such that higher scores indicated greater endorsement.

Unwanted sexual experiences measures. To provide an indication of coercive sexual experiences, the Sexual Abuse Exposure Questionnaire—Short Form (SAEQ; Ryan, Rodriquez, & Foy, 1992) was used. Participants indicated whether or not "anyone [has] ever talked you into or made you perform" each of 15 sexual acts (e.g., perform oral sex, been kissed in a sexual way) before and after age 14. They were asked to answer "yes" or "no." Scale scores represent sums and indicate the number of different sexual behaviors the individual has unwillingly experienced. Twelve of the 15 items were used (the remaining three did not reflect an experience of coercion.) Since we were interested in examining adolescent experience rather than childhood experiences (which were likely linked with other issues), only the variable representing the number of unwanted experiences after age 14 (α=.66) was included in our analyses.

I also utilized a modified version of the Sexual Experiences Survey scale (SES) (Koss & Oros, 1982) to examine desirability of sexual experiences. Four items measured whether people had experienced being sexually coerced (victimization experience). For example, "Have you ever had a sexual experience with someone even though you said no at first?" Five items also asked whether they had sexually coerced others (perpetration

experience). For example, “Have you ever had a sexual experience with someone even though they said no at first?” This was scored on a modified Yes/No scale. Participants could check off “No” (0), “Yes, kissing and petting” (1), or “Yes, sexual intercourse” (2). If participants checked off more than one box, I summed their score. The maximum possible score was 15. This produced two variables, one representing sexual victimization experience and one representing sexual perpetration experience.

Results

Preliminary Analyses

Tables 15 and 16 provide descriptives of the five sexual socialization discourses communicated during adolescence. I first examined how much each of the five discourses—sexual double standard, sexual abstinence, sexual freedom, sex as an expression of love, and sex as egalitarian—had been communicated by schools. The double standard, abstinence, and sexual freedom means were less than 1 (on a scale of 0 to 3), meaning that participants received very little of these discourses in school. They reported receiving slightly more (1.60) of the sex as expression of love discourse. They also reported receiving some of the message that sex is egalitarian (1.42). Paired t-tests were run to evaluate differences between these discourses. Results indicated highly significant differences between all pairs: participants received the highest amount of “sex as love” messages, significantly more than double standard ($t(331)= -19.84$, $p<.001$); abstinence ($t(332)= -16.93$, $p<.001$); sexual freedom ($t(331)= -22.50$, $p<.001$); and sex as egalitarian ($t(331)= 3.85$, $p<.001$). They also received significantly more egalitarian sexual messages than abstinence ($t(330)= -10.88$, $p<.001$); double standard ($t(329)= -17.85$, $p<.001$); and sexual freedom ($t(329)= -23.21$, $p<.001$). They received more

abstinence messages than double standard messages ($t(331)= -5.62$, $p<.001$) or sexual freedom messages ($t(332)= 9.55$, $p<.001$), and more double standard messages than sexual freedom messages ($t(331)= 7.62$, $p<.001$). No differences were found between boys and girls within discourses, nor between virgins and non-virgins.

I also examined intercorrelations between sexual socialization discourses to see if receipt of one indicated receipt of other discourses (Table 17). In most cases, discourses were highly intercorrelated. The highest correlations were between the double standard discourse and the "sex as casual and free discourse," between "sex as an expression of love" and sex as egalitarian, between "sex as an expression of love" and abstinence, and between "sex is casual and free" and sex as egalitarian. The lowest correlations were between the abstinence discourse and both "sex is casual and free" and sex as egalitarian. The many high intercorrelations suggest that participants received clusters of sexual socialization messages, and that many of these messages were interrelated, rather than discrete variables. Correlations between dependent variables and demographic variables were discussed in Chapter 2 and can be found in Table 6.

Testing Associations between Sexual Socialization Discourses and Sexual Attitudes and Experiences

Below I discuss the results for zero-order correlations run between sexual socialization discourses and attitudinal and experiential variables, by hypothesis. For each hypothesis, I discuss results for the whole sample, then divided by gender and level of sexual experience (addressing Research Questions 6 and 7.) Hypothesis 1 predicted that exposure to sexual double standard messages would be correlated with lower levels of sexual agency, and higher rape myths endorsement and report of coercive experiences.

Unexpectedly, receipt of double standard messages was not linked with any sexual agency variables. However, as expected, receipt of sexual double standard messages was linked with an increase in rape myths endorsement and more experiences of coercion, as both victim and perpetrator. Looking at the results by gender, for women double standard messages were still linked with rape myths endorsement and perpetration of sexual coercion, but not with being coerced. For men, receipt of these messages was linked with all four coercion variables. For virgins, receipt of double standard messages was linked only with increased general experiences of coercion since age 14, while for non-virgins, double standard messages were linked with increases in the other three coercion variables (rape myths endorsement, sexual victimization, sexual perpetration.)

Hypothesis 2 predicted that higher levels of exposure to sexual abstinence messages would be correlated with lower levels of sexual agency, and higher rape myths endorsement and report of coercive experiences. Unexpectedly, sexual abstinence messages were not linked with any dependent variables for the whole sample, nor when the sample was divided by gender. When the sample was divided by level of sexual experience, receipt of abstinence messages was linked with marginally more sexual victimization in virgins.

Hypothesis 3 predicted that higher levels of exposure to messages that sex is casual and free would be correlated with higher levels of sexual agency, and with lower levels of rape myths endorsement and report of coercive experiences. This set of messages was not linked with any sexual agency messages for the whole sample; when the sample was split by gender, there was a marginally significant link between casual sex messages and sexual assertiveness in young men. When the sample was split by

virginity status, casual sex messages were linked with marginally greater condom self-efficacy in young people who had engaged in sexual intercourse. Unexpectedly, messages that sex is casual and free were linked with *increased* endorsement of rape myths (trend) and increased report of sexual perpetration in the whole sample. There were no effects for women or men separately. By level of sexual experience, casual sex messages were (also unexpectedly) linked with increased endorsement of rape myths for non-virgins. For virgins, casual sex messages were marginally linked with increased experiences of coercion since age 14. For both virgins and non-virgins, casual sex messages were marginally linked with sexual perpetration.

Hypothesis 4 predicted that higher levels of exposure to messages that sex is an expression of love would be correlated with higher levels of sexual agency and with lower levels of rape myths endorsement and report of coercive experiences. As expected, "sex is an expression of love" messages were linked with more sexual self-efficacy for the whole sample, and marginally linked with sexual self-efficacy and assertiveness in men. These socialization messages were also linked with self-efficacy for virgins, and more assertiveness (and less inauthentic voice, marginally) for non-virgins. In terms of links between messages communicating that sex is an expression of love, and sexual coercion variables: there were no significant links for any group.

Hypothesis 5 predicted that higher levels of exposure to messages expressing that "sex is egalitarian" would be correlated with higher levels of sexual agency, and with lower levels of rape myths endorsement and report of coercive experiences. As expected, for the whole sample, "sex is egalitarian" messages were linked with significantly stronger feelings of condom self-efficacy and sexual assertiveness, and marginally lower

levels of inauthentic voice. When the sample was split by gender, these messages were still linked with self-efficacy for women and assertiveness for men. They were also linked with higher sexual assertiveness (and marginally, with less inauthentic voice) for non-virgins, and marginally with self-efficacy for virgins. With the exception of a marginal (and unexpected) link between these messages and experiences of coercion after age 14 in virgins, there were no significant associations between "sex is egalitarian" messages and the sexual coercion variables.

The next step was to run partial correlations, looking at links between the sexual socialization messages received by schools, and attitudinal and experiential outcomes, controlling for relevant demographic factors. For the whole sample ("all") I controlled for gender, being of Asian ethnicity, religiosity, and being born in a foreign country. All other partial correlations controlled for the same factors, with the exception of the ones split by gender, which did not then control for gender.

Tables 20 and 21show partial correlations for the whole sample, split by gender (Table 20) and split by level of sexual experience (Table 21). An examination of partial correlations for the whole sample indicated that many of the effects were diminished. The only links that remained were between sexual double standard messages and both rape myths and perpetration of sexual coercion (with marginal effects for experiencing coercion as a victim). This was somewhat consistent for women and men separately, with slight differences. For women, double standard messages were linked with rape myth endorsement and more experiences of perpetration. For men, double standard messages were linked with stronger endorsement of rape myths, and with stronger experience of sexual victimization. When the sample was separated by level of sexual experience,

similar trends emerged. With the exception of a marginal link between egalitarian sexual messages and general experiences of coercion in the virgin group, the only discourse linked with outcomes was the sexual double standard discourse. For both groups, the double standard discourse was linked with stronger endorsement of rape myths. For virgins, this discourse was also linked with general experiences of coercion, while for non-virgins, it was associated with increased experiences of sexual coercion as both a victim and a perpetrator.

In order to examine the independent contribution of each sexual socialization discourses to outcomes, I ran regressions for each dependent variable, using the four significant demographic variables (gender-being male, Asian ethnicity, being foreign born, and religiosity) in all regressions, and using only those sexual socialization discourses that were correlated with the particular dependent variable in the zero-order correlations. In terms of the sexual agency variables (Table 22), being male predicted more condom self-efficacy, whereas being Asian or religious predicted less. Being Asian also predicted less sexual assertiveness. Sexual socialization discourses did not affect sexual agency variables in this sample. However, in terms of the sexual coercion variables (Table 23) the double standard discourse did predict rape myths and experiences of coercion. Being male, Asian, or foreign-born all predicted increased endorsement of rape myths, as did receipt of sexual double standard messages. Being male and religious was each linked with fewer general experiences of coercion after age 14. Unexpectedly, receipt of sexual double standard messages was also linked with fewer experiences of coercion. Being male, Asian, or religious was linked with less experiences of sexual victimization in a dyadic setting, but sexual double standard messages were

linked with more. Finally, being male or foreign-born was linked with more sexual perpetration, while religiosity was linked with less.

Thinking further about how discourses relate to one another. In order to consider how messages might be working together, I conducted a K-means cluster analysis with standardized scores to examine sexual socialization discourses. I tried several iterations, and a 3-cluster solution emerged as the best fit. There appeared to be one "low" cluster in which receipt of each sexual socialization discourses was relatively low in comparison to the average (Cluster 2), and one "high" cluster, in which receipt of each sexual socialization discourses was relatively high (Cluster 3). Cluster 1 had a mix of results, with these participants receiving relatively high amounts of sexual abstinence and "sex is an expression of love" messages. Participants in Cluster 1 also received some messages communicating that sex is natural and egalitarian. ANOVAs indicated that clusters were significantly different from one another for each discourse.

Using these clusters to examine differences in sexual agency and sexual coercion variables, several significant differences emerged. ANOVAs revealed significant differences for condom self-efficacy, sexual assertiveness, rape myths endorsement, and sexual perpetration. Specifically, participants who received fewer messages overall (Cluster 2) identified lower rates of condom self-efficacy and assertiveness. Post-hoc Tukey tests revealed the following between-group differences: low receivers (Cluster 2) reported significantly less sexual assertiveness than high receivers (Cluster 3) and significantly more endorsement of rape myths than those who received more messages about abstinence and sex as an expression of love (Cluster 1). High receivers (Cluster 3) also reported significantly more sexual perpetration than those in Cluster 1.

Discussion

The current literature on school-based sex education is largely dichotomous and based on behavioral outcomes. Accordingly, the purpose of this study was to examine the effects of sexual socialization messages, which are not always clearly delineated in curricula, upon other attitudinal and experiential outcomes not commonly examined.

In terms of the implicit sexual socialization discourses received from schools, there were no differences in amounts of messages received, either between male and female students, or between virgins and non-virgins. Since diverse groups of students were in classes together, they were likely receiving information and messages across these groups. However, there *were* differences in the content or types of messages recalled. Participants recalled greater exposure in school to messages communicating that sex is an expression of love and that sex is egalitarian, and less exposure to messages that sex is casual and free, and to a sexual double standard. This is promising: perhaps schools are delivering some messages about the more positive aspects of sexuality. However, it is also a possibility that "sex is an expression of love" messages come through an abstinence lens. More research in this area would be welcomed.

What are the potential consequences of exposure to these discourses? The most striking finding was that sexual double standard messages were linked with attitudes about, and experiences of, sexual coercion. This was true when examining the whole sample, and when looking at groups by gender and by level of sexual experience. Interestingly, double standard messages, which tend to support more traditional

portrayals of gender (with men having more power and women having less) were actually linked with increased reports of victimization for men (who are more traditionally perpetrators) and sexual perpetration for women (who are more traditionally victimized). One possibility is that exposure to these messages encouraged young people to become more aware of these power differentials and to be reflective about their own experiences. It was also notable that sexual double standard messages affected virgins and non-virgins differently. For virgins, this discourse was linked with increased report of general sexual coercion since age 14. For non-virgins, this discourse was linked with increased rape myths endorsement, and increased experiences of sexual coercion in intimate encounters, both as victim and as perpetrator. Because non-virgins have had more sexual experiences overall than virgins, perhaps they were more affected by more current or recent sexual coercion variables.

In fact, there emerged a cluster of positive associations between all five of the sexual socialization discourses and a number of sexual coercion variables in the virgin group, some of which held in the partial correlations. This is an interesting trend. Although these links were expected for the double standard and abstinence messages, they were unexpected for the messages indicating sex as something positive. It is possible that virgins experienced these types of messages as pressuring (or coercing) in some way. Since these results are not causal, it is also possible that negative sexual experiences had influenced these participants not to pursue further sexual activity in the past, and that they perceived positive sexual messages as threatening or inaccurate. More research would be beneficial to explore possible psychosocial impacts, both positive and negative, of positive sexuality messages.

Overall, correlations illustrated similar trends in virgins and non-virgins, with more positive messages being linked with more sexual agency variables, and exposure to abstinence and double standard messages being linked with more sexual coercion variables. However, virgins and non-virgins seemed to respond to different "sides" of certain variables. For example, for virgins, the idea that sex could be an expression of love and intimacy might make them feel more comfortable about expressing their concerns about sexual safety (i.e., condom sexual self-efficacy); for non-virgins, this may be something they have already gotten comfortable with, but the idea of sex being an egalitarian and loving experience might be linked with their feeling more open about expressing their sexual desires and needs. More research is needed in this area.

For the whole sample, "sex is egalitarian" messages were linked with more feelings of sexual self-efficacy and sexual assertiveness. These results held somewhat when split by gender or sexual experience, though the associations became marginal or disappeared in partial correlations. It is heartening that at least the "direction" of effects is expected and desirable, despite weak effects, and that this message seemed linked with positive outcomes in all groups. Perhaps these messages are dependent on identity categories at this age. It would be interesting to examine other identity categories to be able to make sense of this important message that is being received from schools, based on these data.

It is surprising that the sexual abstinence discourse also revealed so few associations with both the sexual agency and the sexual coercion variables. However, participants also reported receiving fairly low amounts of abstinence messages from their schools. This is particularly interesting considering the emphasis on at least some

abstinence content by many school-based sex education programs. Corroborating the results of Study 1, and the findings of Kirby (2001; 2008) and Santelli and colleagues (2006), among others, it appears that abstinence messages were not as influential as hypothesized for this sample. It seems important to continue to explore possible effects (if any) of sexual abstinence messages received in sex education in order to better understand possible impact of this fairly widespread message.

Overall, links between sexual socialization discourses and dependent variables were minimal. Most of the links between sexual socialization discourses and attitudinal and experiential measures faded when placed in partial correlations controlling for demographic factors. Results may have disappeared in partial correlations for a variety of reasons. First, many of these hypotheses, although based on existing literature, were somewhat exploratory, which may explain some of the fading connections. It is likely that students of different ethnic, religious, or birth origin backgrounds are likely to be impacted differently by messages they receive from schools. This may be true of schools more than other contexts, because schools do not tailor individual messages or message delivery styles to individual students. (I compare this to messages received from parents and friends, which have been examined in my previous work (Levin, 2010), and which likely occur both over long periods of time, and often in one-on-one interactions which are likely more tailored to individuals.) In addition, some of the other discourses (e.g., sex=love, sex=egalitarian) may be more bound by issues of cultural context, such that contextual influences other than schools (i.e., family, peers, religious institutions) may be stronger purveyors of messages than schools. However, double standard messages (or at least the idea that men tend to have more power in many settings, including intimate

ones) may be somewhat more consistent with, or universal across, multiple cultural contexts, though their nuances may still vary.

Regressions provided information about the impact of individual variables. Even after controlling for relevant demographic variables (gender, Asian ethnicity, religiosity, and being born in a foreign country) receipt of sexual double standard messages predicted increased endorsement of traditional rape myths and experiences of sexual victimization in this college sample. This confirmed my hypotheses that double standard messages, which traditionally target different messages about sexuality to men and women, do affect sexual attitudes and experiences, including coercive ones. An unexpected finding was that sexual double standard messages also predicted fewer general experiences of sexual coercion after age 14. This finding is difficult to interpret and bears further investigation. This work is exploratory and it is particularly heartening (for research purposes) to see that sexual double standard messages are linked with poorer outcomes. However, these results are concerning in that implicit or unintended messages about gender and sexuality are likely to affect very real consequences in adolescents and emerging adults. Sex education teachers should be more aware of the messages they communicated to their students. These results may help shape or direct potential interventions for young people who have experienced sexual coercion.

Cluster analysis yielded a three-cluster structure for sexual socialization discourses. The clusters consisted of high receivers of discourses, low receivers, and those who received relatively higher levels of sexual abstinence and "sex is an expression of love" messages. The clustering of these two messages fit fairly well with my suspicions that these two types of messages were likely related. Sexual abstinence

messages often endorse waiting until marriage (or a committed relationship to engage in sexual relations; communicating that sex is an expression of love (as opposed to desire or independence, for example) seems an overlapping message.) Whereas these clusters provide somewhat limited information about the ways in which sexual socialization messages "cluster," and there may exist additional patterns, these three clusters provide a beginning, and help consider other ways of examining sexual socialization.

Low receivers of discourses reported significantly less sexual assertiveness than high receivers. This is consistent with the idea that more knowledge is linked with more agency. Low receivers also reported significantly more endorsement of rape myths than those who received more messages about abstinence and sex as an expression of love. This finding makes sense considering that participants who received relatively more messages about abstinence and love (Cluster 1) also received fewer messages about the sexual double standard and more messages about sex being egalitarian than low receivers (Cluster 2.)

These findings build upon Study 1 by illustrating that emerging adults are receiving some messages about gender, messages that may or may not be written into a curriculum or lesson plan, from their school-based sex education. For example, double standard messages (examined in this study) may be communicated as part of relationship messages (from Study 1). These types of messages in particular (or others received that were not measured here) may be implicit, or subtle, to a greater extent than curriculum-based messages communicated about sex education topics (such as biology or condoms). In fact, these messages may be more pervasive in some situations, since they are not always explicit, and thus, young people may not have a chance to actively accept, reject,

or even consider them. These messages are clearly linked with sexual attitudes and experiences in adolescents and emerging adults. This suggests a further need to speak with young people and try to understand the messages they were taking away from sex education, and to try to work toward the development of measures that more accurately measure the experiences of young people in sex education programs.

Chapter 4

Study 3: In their own words – Emerging adults discuss their sex education experiences

As the previous chapters have illustrated, the extant research on sex education has focused largely on statistical behavioral outcomes of exposure to school sex education, broadly defined (i.e., comprehensive vs. abstinence-based vs. none). With this dissertation I have therefore sought to expand the scope of attitudes and behaviors assessed, first by examining sex education receipt by topic, and then by looking at more subtle, less-studied sexual socialization discourses received from schools. I also chose to explore "outcomes" beyond what has been studied. Although some interesting results emerged, the data were somewhat limited.

Despite the limited associations revealed by the first two studies, and because of the striking findings that did emerge, the story seemed to be more complicated than originally surmised. After finding a connection between contraception and lifestyle messages and sexual agency in Study 1, and between double standard messages and experiences of coercion in Study 2, I was interested in better understanding how messages might really be conveyed to young people through their sex education. In particular, the findings related to double standard messages led me to believe that there were strong, if subtle, messages about gender norms being communicated.

Accordingly, I was interested in hearing from young people themselves about their experiences, and found it striking that youth voices are not well-represented in the literature. There are a few notable exceptions. Measor (2004) conducted focus groups with adolescents and found that gender is an important operator in the sex education young people receive. Allen (2008) also conducted surveys and focus groups with teens in New Zealand, based upon several important assumptions. First, adult-imposed sex education does not position young people as independent-minded sexual agents capable of making mature decisions. Second, traditional sex education takes a "preferably non-sexual" (Allen, 2009, p. 574) approach to teaching young people about sex as is part of adult and school culture (Allen, 2008; 2009), as well as focusing on rational and technical elements of sexuality. A youth-centered, sex-positive approach that allows for discussion of topics including relationships, pleasure, and emotions, stands in opposition to this. These are important contributions. However, there remain gaps in the literature on youth perspectives on their sex education, particularly in the United States, and particularly with regard to issues of gender.

Through my own informal conversations with undergraduates, and through pilot data collected in a psychology course, I found that several factors may affect students' sex education experiences, including type of school, teacher, and messages they may be receiving in other classes (e.g., religion, morality). I was interested in gathering qualitative data from students in order to better understand these experiences and perspectives, to help to make sense of the quantitative findings collected thus far, and to better understand nuances not easily captured through surveys.

Accordingly, the goal of this study was to talk with young people directly to investigate their own thoughts and feelings on this subject. Whereas quantitative research is beneficial for answering certain types of questions, qualitative methods can be useful when figuring out which questions to ask, and when exploring identity nuances such as gender differences and "unspoken messages." I decided to conduct focus groups with first-year undergraduates in order to better understand their experiences of sex education, in their own words. With this study I sought to gain a more nuanced understanding of students' meaning-making with regard to their sex education experiences.

Research Questions: My analyses were guided by the following research questions:

1. What do young people learn in their sex education programs?

2. How do youth feel about their sex education?

3. What are the processes by which youth construct meaning from their experiences of school-based sex education?

4. What are they getting from their experiences; how are they interpreting them?

5. What types of messages were they getting about sexual negotiation and communication?

6. What role does gender play? What types of messages did they receive, either explicitly or implicitly, about gender?

Method

Participants

Participants were 34 undergraduates (33 first-year, 1 second-year) at the University of Michigan, recruited through the Department of Psychology Subject Pool. There were 17 men and 17 women. The racial/ethnic breakdown was as follows: 23 participants identified as White or European, four as African-American or Black, four as

East Asian, one as South Asian, one as Latino (Mexican American), and one as Arab. All the participants identified as straight/heterosexual (one identified her sexual orientation as "open, but reserved for few"). Of the 34 students, 26 had attended public school, and eight had attended private school.

Procedure

Six focus groups were conducted with an ethnically and racially diverse group of first-year undergraduates (in groups of 5-6 students each; 2 all-female, 2 all-male, and 2 mixed-gender) at the University of Michigan, inquiring about their experiences and perspectives regarding their secondary sex education.

First-year students were chosen for a number of reasons. First, they come from a number of different school districts and types of schools. Second, many are on their own for the first time and may be experiencing more risk-taking and autonomy than in the past (Arnett, 2000). Finally, they are likely to have some perspective on their past sex education, but should still be able to recall it with some clarity.

Additionally, focus groups are an appropriate method to use for this particular research question. Focus groups are commonly used to explore sensitive topics such as sex (Frith, 2000; Hyde, Howlett, Brady, & Drennan, 2005; Robinson, 1999). They can be useful in that participants can challenge each other and explain themselves to one another, as well as compare and contrast experiences among themselves (Morgan, 1996; Morgan & Krueger, 1993). Many prompts come from the group itself, rather than the moderator. Finally, since sex education is largely a group-based experience, a group-based method was chosen. Additionally, use of this method "draws on a cultural

perspective of youth where young people are viewed as social agents who are active meaning makers in their own lives" (Allen, 2009, p. 397; see Allen, 2009 for a review.)

Ninety-minute focus groups were audio recorded with participant consent. All names used were participant-chosen pseudonyms, and participants were allowed to choose any pseudonym they wanted. Pseudonyms have no particular significance or meaning beyond this. Questions addressed participant experiences and perspectives regarding their overall impressions of their own sex education, including timing, content, tone, and gender-specific messages. They were also asked about communication, messages about relationships, and what they would change. It bears mentioning that, unlike in the survey, participants were purposely *not* asked about their own sexual experiences in these focus groups. While this would have been potentially interesting and useful data to have, the literature suggests that focus groups can be risky as well as informative (Hyde et al., 2005) and a decision was made that it was more important to protect the comfort, safety, and confidentiality of participants than to seek this information. Participants were also given demographic sheets on which they wrote their (pseudonym) name, age, type(s) of school(s) they attended, year(s) they received sex education, and type(s) of sex education (usually classified as comprehensive, abstinence-based, or biological.) Two interviewers were present for each session: myself and a trained note-taker. There were both male and female note-takers, but I made sure that each all-male group had a male note-taker who was leading the group alongside me, a White female. Each note-taker and I met briefly after each group to make notes and discuss prominent themes. Analytical memos were written after each focus group.

Analysis

All audio recordings were transcribed by research assistants, and then cleaned by either myself or a research assistant. Thus, every transcript was seen at least twice before analysis was even begun. I used an iterative method of open and focused coding (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995), using both themes from the literature, and allowing new themes to emerge from the data. I first read over all the transcripts, making notes about themes as I went. I then went back and looked at the transcripts again in a more focused way, pulling out themes and making notes about them, and then connecting themes and building categories, in an attempt to better understand youth perspectives.

Results and Discussion

Preliminary Analyses

Using the demographic sheets filled out by participants, I determined how many participants had received each different category of sex education: abstinence-based, biological, comprehensive, or a combination. Most people received some sort of biological information, either in a sex education or a health class, because nearly all types of sex education seem to incorporate biological information. Since most participants identified receiving biological information as part of their sex education, and because no one identified receiving just biological information, I focus here on the incidence of comprehensive and abstinence curricula. Out of 34 participants, 10 received only comprehensive messages, two received only abstinence, and the rest received a combination. Of the combinations, 10 received a combination of comprehensive and biological, two received a combination of abstinence and biological, and four identified getting all three types of messages. Three participants identified receiving a combination

of just abstinence and comprehensive. The only exceptions to these three options were the following responses: "really never had it," "puberty video," and "health." In total, 11 participants out of 34 identified receiving any kind of abstinence education. Of the 34 participants interviewed in focus groups, eight attended private schools (some of which were identified as Catholic or religious), and 26 attended public schools. However, there was no particular connection between the type of school and the type of sex education received.

Sex education classes varied as well, in terms of grade received, size and type of class, and teacher. See Table 27 for a sampling of the diversity of timing of instruction. Although for most participants, all students had to take some sort of sex education if it was offered, this was not always the case:

> Just to clarify, we did have a health class, but I tested out of it.
> (Molly, 18, public school, all female group)

Participants were also taught sex education by a variety of teachers, ranging from health to science to English to art. Their experiences also seemed to vary largely depending on the teacher who was teaching the course. Molly went on to explain what she had heard about health class:

> …Well, I think it depends on the tone of the teacher, because our health teacher was a little eccentric and it was definitely very open.

Another young woman had a different experience with her sex education teacher:

> …All the girls did not want to ask him because he was the basketball coach and he looked like he was more concerned about sports and what was going on outside of class.
> (Raven, 18, public school, all female)

A third student highlighted how even a change in teacher could completely change a sex education experience:

> …My regular teacher was a P. E. coach and he was awesome but our substitute was a parent who had been a professional golfer…in no way did she have the background to teach on sexuality so there were major inconsistencies…

(Jenna, 18, private school, mixed)

Sex education also lasted different amounts of time. Although most participants had sex education more than once between elementary school and high school, the timing varied greatly, and a few participants only had it once. Jennifer, an 18-year old female who attended public school, said, "We never repeated sex education after sixth grade." Timing of sex education also interacted with the teacher to create a unique experience. Maverick, a 19-year old male who had attended public school, said, "We had it with the gym teacher and just a quarter of the year." Roxanne explained:

> They separated the 8th grade into two health classes and everyone had to take it for half the year but with the art teacher…mine was just called health and it was everything. Sex ed was just a tiny portion of it…
>
> (Roxanne, 18, public, mixed)

Amy also had sex education in middle school, but her experience was very different:

> In 7th grade, our assistant principal was the health teacher and it was really awkward because no one really talked to him and we didn't know him and the class was structured as a lecture class in the auditorium with like your entire gym class.
>
> (Amy, 18, public, mixed)

In contrast to some of these logistical issues, participants also identified a number of attributes they liked about their sex education. Some elements they liked included open communication, candor, a forum in which to discuss issues, and a diversity of activities. Notably, this often had to do with the tone of the teacher, class, or program. For example, Wonder Woman, who attended Catholic school and received mostly abstinence education, said,

> For me it was…really open because I went to an all girls school and you become really close to all the girls around you. So it's…easier to talk about...Now that I think of it, not only did I get a lot of it in sex education and… health, but in my religion classes as well and morality and a lot of my other classes…it was…really open.
>
> (Wonder Woman, 18, private, all-female)

Wonder Woman's experience seemed somewhat unique in that she had conversations about sexuality across her classes, which she seemed to really enjoy. Jenna, who also attended private school but identified her sex education as comprehensive and biological, also appreciated the openness of her teacher, and the discussion format:

> My teacher was very realistic about sex education and…spoke in ways that were appealing to the students and…didn't try to be scientific…so that was really appealing and also it was never lecture-based, it was always a discussion so we never felt preached to or never felt that ideas were forced on us.
>
> (Jenna, 18, public, mixed)

Fred, who attended public school, also appreciated the tone set by his instructors:

> …The instructors were relaxed and open-minded. And…they provided…good information, accurate information.
>
> (Fred, 18, public, all-male)

Finally, Blair, a 19-year old who had attended private school, said: "I liked that at my high school they promoted safe sex over anything else." This was a slightly different response, but was consistent with the idea of treating students like adults rather than trying to control their behaviors.

Overall, participants seemed to appreciate being spoken to honestly and respectfully. They liked being spoken to in language they understood, being engaged in discussions, and being treated as if they had the ability to make their own decisions. This is useful information that corroborates Allen's (2008) study with youth in New Zealand, and could help inform future sex education interventions or programming.

Finally, based on participant reports, course content often seemed to vary depending on the ages of the students. As one student described her sex education:

> Definitely…the earlier years, it is more…biology based, and then like as you grow older like it becomes like more sex based and like sexuality all that kind of stuff and I just remember it being like completely different…

(Jazz, 19, public, mixed)

This was consistent with the experiences of many participants. Since many students had some sort of sex education more than once throughout their schooling, their experiences varied over the course of time and across ages at which they received instruction. However, students tended to discuss the most salient (and often, most recent) experiences unless the question specified, and often participants were asked to give overall impressions of their experiences.

Analysis

A number of themes emerged that will be discussed below. Please see Appendix F for a list of themes. The first theme underscores the types of messages participants received overall. Young people seemed to receive primarily one of two broad sets of messages: either factual information regarding biology, disease, and contraception; or information about sexual abstinence, relationships, and love. A second theme that emerged was a difference in messages recalled by (or aimed at) women and those recalled by (or aimed at) men: although young women seemed to get more messages about issues such as sexual abstinence, fear, and caution, young men received more messages about pleasure and about rape (i.e. don't do it). (To clarify, both men and women may have heard these messages if they were in coeducational classrooms; the distinction is on what was targeted to boys or girls.) Both men and women corroborated these differences. A third theme that emerged concerned unwanted sexual experiences and sexual coercion, and was a victim-perpetrator dichotomy that fell on gender lines.

Theme 1: "Comprehensive" versus "abstinence" information

Many participants reported receiving one of two different sets of messages: they got either "comprehensive" messages that included factual information regarding

biology, disease, and contraception, or they received "abstinence" messages that included information about sexual abstinence, relationships, and love. This divide between comprehensive and abstinence foci is consistent with much of the literature on American sex education (Kohler et al., 2008). There seemed to be fairly little overlap between these two "camps." For example, Brad talked about receiving mostly factual information:

> It seemed like everything was a diagram or… everything could be seen like a cross-sectional view where…you were looking…at different… body parts or even…on the molecular level where you actually saw…a sperm cell… fertilizing an egg. Which…I guess it's helpful if…you're looking for a more biological… definition of it. But… everything just seemed like it was a diagram, nothing really seemed like it was…real life.
>
> (Brad, 18, public, all male)

The experience Brad described includes receipt of detailed biological information about reproduction. However, he noted, this lesson seemed to have little to do with real life. Donnie Darko had a similar experience:

> I felt like my 9th grade one focused more on STDs and just like the like bad things about it and how to protect yourself. And then 7th grade one was just kind of more… biological…and everything like that.
>
> (Donnie Darko, 18, public, mixed)

Both Brad and Donnie Darko identified receiving both comprehensive and biological messages. While Brad recalls mostly biological information, Donnie Darko did seem to receive more information about "reality" and behavior. However, he notes that even the more realistic lesson is focused on disease and negative consequences of sexuality.

In contrast, Brian, who attended Catholic school, identified his sex education as exclusively abstinence-based:

> I went to a Catholic School so we were kind of…forced into thinking a certain way…So I didn't really like that cause it was pretty much abstinence only and that was the only way that you could go…they kind of talked about the emotional aspect cause that's part of the reason why they tell you to wait to marriage, because it's so emotional, it makes such a difference in the relationship.
>
> (Brian, 19, Catholic school, all male)

Wonder Woman, who also attended Catholic school, had a similar experience:

> …Each year we had to go through a different type of religion class and one of them was like based on relationships like with everyone, like your family. Like just people around you, like your boyfriend or your husband, and there they talked a lot about sex.
>
> (Wonder Woman, 18, Catholic school, all female)

Whereas Brad and Donnie Darko identified their sex education as comprehensive, Brian and Wonder Woman described their sex education as abstinence-only. (Wonder Woman actually identified on her demographic form that she had received all three types of messages in her sex education experiences.) Brad and Donnie Darko also identified their sex education as relatively clinical and biological. In contrast, both Brian's and Wonder Woman's experiences with sex education included significant talk about relationships and emotions. It is not that surprising that comprehensive and abstinence-based approaches to sex education would be presented somewhat distinctly. This is a generally supported finding in the literature. Specifically, it is not uncommon for Catholic schools to condone sexual abstinence until marriage (Shatz, 2008). The finding that abstinence-based programs are more likely to talk about love is fairly intuitive as well, since abstinence-based programs often encourage sexual intimacy in the context of emotional intimacy. However, one striking pattern identified was the idea that abstinence-only programs included discussion of intimacy and communication in their sex education, while programs identifying as comprehensive presented biological information, but little or no information about relationships. Whereas abstinence-only education may be problematic in particular ways, including an omission of particular health information (as discussed in earlier chapters), this finding that intimacy is discussed suggests that abstinence programs may address topics beyond just abstinence. It also suggests that the apparent abstinence-comprehensive dichotomy may not be as dichotomous as it seems. Participants who had received this type of training spoke favorably about it. In addition,

this finding also lends credence to the idea that messages about sexual abstinence and "sex as an expression of love" may be related in some ways.

These findings suggest a need for broader message delivery, so that youth may learn about biology *and* relationships, and for more consistency among messages conveyed to boys and girls. As Brian said: "I think there could be a way to…combine the two… Catholic school talked about the emotional factor and the other ones talked about the physical, so just kind of combine them and make it better that way."

Another recommendation that came through was a desire for more realistic or practical information (also identified by some students as something they had liked in their sex education.) Although many participants seemed to come away from their sex education with understandings of biological functioning and of the possible negative consequences of sex, they often turned to friends, media, or the Internet for more real questions, such as how condoms worked, or how to talk about sex. Participants also identified a desire for more consistency of messages across contexts. Perhaps it would be useful to include and integrate parents in sex education initiatives. Another recommendation would be to standardize the timing of sex education, as well as teacher choice and training. Although it may be unrealistic to expect teachers to teach only sex education, or to specialize, perhaps a certificate program would be useful in training teachers in some standardized way. An additional suggestion would be to incorporate either a peer education or a "mentor education" model in which older students might lead some sessions with younger students about the "realities" of sex.

Theme 2: Gendered messages about sex

When asked what types of messages girls and boys had received about sex, some

said that similar messages were conveyed to boys and girls, or did not know about particular differences. But other participants recalled that the messages targeted to boys and to girls were not always the same. Both men and women communicated that in school, girls had seemed to receive more messages about refusal skills, abstinence, fear and caution. One student felt girls were portrayed as more "fragile" than boys:

> I do think they kinda imply that women are more fragile regarding sex because it is more emotional for them in most cases where for guys it is not seen as…a big deal but it is seen as an accomplishment.
>
> (Kim, 18, public, all-female)

Another participant noted that girls were warned about pregnancy, at least implicitly:

> …One of the teachers had a poster in her classroom, and it said "don't let a hot date turn into a due date" and there was a picture of a baby. So I thought that was a little-bit one-sided because it was aimed at girls.
>
> (Molly, 18, public school, all-female)

Marlon identified hearing similar messages about girls avoiding sex:

> I mean for the girls it's just avoiding it. Stay out of situations that could lead to it basically…like if you're at a party make sure…you have friends that will take care of you and stuff like that.
>
> (Marlon, 18, public, all male)

Fred, who was in the same group as Marlon and also attended public school, added later in the same conversation:

> I remember it was right before Spring Break and the teacher was like, "Oh girls, be really careful on Spring Break. Always be in groups."
>
> (Fred, 18, public, all male)

Although Fred's quotation does not specifically talk about sex, he said this in response to a group discussion of how boys and girls were talked to in terms of safety. It seems clear from the context that the teacher was warning the female students about potentially predatory young men.

Raven recalled how her teachers delivered different messages to girls than to boys:

> They never really stressed…to the guys about abstinence…To the girls they were like, "You can stay abstinent" and stuff like that, but if the guys asked, they were just like, you know, wear a condom. And…for the girls it was like, you have condoms and birth control, but it was more so for the girls to just not have sex. To stay virgins.
>
> (Raven, 18, public school, all female)

Raven, who attended public school, was one of the few participants who categorized her sex education as including both comprehensive and abstinence-based messages. Interestingly, it does seem that both sets of messages were represented in her quote. However, it seemed that these messages fell along gender lines: while both genders were taught about birth control, girls were encouraged to abstain from sexual activity as well.

Whereas girls seemed to receive more pointed messages about being careful and abstaining from sex, messages aimed at boys often had to do with sexual freedom (as noted above) and sexual pleasure. Consider this comment from Roxanne:

> …They didn't do this for the girls. But…apparently for the guys… they… separated the class one day, and they brought in this guy who…was very just blunt with them and explained everything, like tips on sex…how to make sex better and all about…orgasms and everything for…girls…We didn't really get to learn anything like that at all. We just watched a movie in another room... But they said that was really cool, because he was…not telling them not to have sex, but explaining to them like all the good things about sex…we watched "Rent," the movie…even after we had already seen the play. Yea, I think [the teacher] said she was supposed to get us a speaker too but then she…didn't.
>
> (Roxanne, 18, public school, mixed gender)

Thus, in Roxanne's school, young men were not only given the laissez-faire messages offered to boys at many other schools, they were also taught specifically about pleasure.

It is also interesting to note that many observations about what information boys received were made by girls, and vice versa. This does not lessen the importance of the information – but it does provide an interesting vantage point. Young people may be able to provide more "perspective" on what the other sex got in comparison to what they received. Whereas this perspective may or may not be accurate, it may be helpful to hear, both because it is telling that young people focus on reporting what others got rather than

themselves (and may provide information in terms of assumed social norms.) This perspective may also be helpful in understanding how young men and women construct (accurate or inaccurate) expectations and understandings of one another.

Whereas many participants expressed that boys were provided relatively permissive messages about sex (if any at all), one participant expressed a slightly different opinion:

> Sean Taylor: …It just seemed like…we never really got the same message in the end…
>
> *Interviewer: So what messages did you guys get?*
>
> Sean Taylor: …That we needed, like, to control ourselves.

Sean Taylor seemed to suggest that boys received messages indicating that they were doing something wrong, or that they were "out of control" sexually and needed to check these behaviors. These messages are elaborated upon in the next section.

Theme 3: Victim-perpetrator dichotomy

A third theme that emerged was a victim-perpetrator dichotomy that fell along gender lines. Participants talked about how women were often portrayed as victims of sexual violence, and men as perpetrators. Although this was alluded to in the previous theme, it occurred even more deeply, and focused specifically on rape. Young women discussed the types of messages they heard about rape:

> In all the examples they gave, they gave statistics about like how percentages of how many girls were raped in their life and that kind of thing, and not really anything about guys.
>
> (Kim, 18, all female)

This comment brings up two important themes. First, it indicates the pattern of teachers' bringing up rape as an issue that is relevant only to girls. Second, Kim's description of statistics and percentages is reflective of several participants' experiences, who discussed how they learned about rape in terms of statistics and horror stories, and statutory rape in

terms of appropriate and inappropriate age differences. Young women also continued to hear cautionary tales. As Chaka Khan explains:

> …They stressed that…most of the time someone rapes you, it's someone that you know…Like a lot of times girls get raped when they leave [a] party and they are a little drunk and they are walking down the street and there's obviously someone who knows they were in the party who is waiting for them…or they know so and so is done at the library at 12:30 every night so they wait... It's people that you know, and so they were really trying to enforce early signs. Like you know…if you're in a relationship with your boyfriend and he tried to kiss you or do something you don't like and you say no and he gets upset, that's an early sign…Really pay attention to these signs so that it doesn't get this far...
>
> (Chaka Khan, 19 (2nd year student), public, all female)

To hear Chaka Khan describe it, rapists were men who were likely to attack young women who were drunk and vulnerable, and to be lurking in wait. Rapists were also likely to be "someone that you know." Girls were warned to stay alert, look for warning signs, and not put themselves in unnecessarily dangerous situations.

Roxanne's school also alluded to the idea that girls were at risk. In response, they created a women's self-defense class:

> My school just offered this as…an extracurricular…a women's self defense class and…only girls could go to it and it was after [school] with a really cool…guy teacher…They also did…really open sex ed because…it was…an after school thing…Guys were not allowed in the room…The teacher would…freak out because he was teaching… all these different things about…how to not get raped and…what rape is and stuff. And I don't know, it was kind of weird that…guys were not allowed, because I feel like guys should be taught that too…
>
> (Roxanne, 18, public, mixed)

In the three examples presented above, schools seemed to be teaching girls about very real risks and even teaching them ways to protect themselves. Although these approaches are commendable, they seem to reify "differences" between men and women, and teach women that men are to be feared and not trusted. The self-defense teacher's forbidding boys from the class illustrates this dynamic further: boys are predators, and girls are victims. This separation may have also communicated to young women that while young men were to be feared, their presence in such a place was irrelevant, emphasizing the idea

that men themselves had little responsibility in this capacity—rather, it was a woman's responsibility to protect herself. The fact that the girls' self-defense teacher was himself male creates an interesting twist.

However, male participants in this study did hear messages about sexual coercion and rape. When asked what, if anything, they had learned about rape, young men had interesting stories to tell as well. Brad explained:

> We had…vocab[ulary] words… consent… coercion…stuff like that. And… most of it was directed…from the guys to the girls….it was mostly the guy's responsibility and most guys are responsible for rape and everything like that so…I thought it mainly scared the girls… from us a little bit…it sort of seemed like we were the worse…gender…out of men and women.
>
> (Brad, 18, public, all male)

Brad seemed to feel blamed, and possibly even put upon, to hear that the responsibility for coercing (or not coercing) fell to the guy. In another example, young men received messages about how they should not be rapists:

> *Interviewer: They did talk about rape?*
>
> Marlon: Yeah. Said it was real bad, and don't do it.
>
> *Interviewer: OK.*
>
> Marlon: And then they kind of like drew the line, you know…it's, wait until she says yes…
>
> Alex: Don't wait for her to say no, wait until she says yes.
>
> (All-male group)

Here is an example of a conversation that may have both positive and negative outcomes, in the opinion of this interviewer. First, it was communicated to these young men that rape was bad and they should not rape anybody. Further, it was communicated to at least two young men from different schools in this excerpt (and corroborated by others) that the appropriate way to interact with a female sexual partner was not to press her or keep going until she said no, but rather, to wait until she was clearly interested and had indicated as much. These are important messages that are being conveyed to young men.

These participants seemed to clearly understand that they were capable of raping someone, that they should not engage in this behavior, and that the clearest and most respectful way to engage with a partner would be to wait for her clear affirmation or interest.

Although there are many positive things to say about these messages, there are also some potentially concerning implications. First, telling a young man not to be a rapist could be useful but could also scare him. (In more extreme and frightening cases, it could also create a situation in which a young man might feel that he is invincible or beyond consequences.) Second, waiting for a woman to say yes, to express desire rather than request to stop, could be construed as a proactive and respectful position to take; however, it also could potentially place the woman in the traditional role of sexual gatekeeper, like many other sexual socialization discourses seem to do (Schleicher & Gilbert, 2005). Finally, this message still takes the position that the young man will be (or should be) the sexual aggressor in a heterosexual encounter.

This next excerpt presents a similar set of challenges. When the group was asked by the interviewer, "Do you guys feel that your sex education…affected the ways that you approach relationships or encounters and affects the way you think about stuff?" Jack responded:

> Definitely…I also try to communicate a lot with the girl and understand to make sure everyone is on the same page. And that probably is *because they told us we were going to rape someone and you always feel like a rapist*, and you want to make sure you are not actually raping anybody
>
> (Jack, 18, public, all-male)

Jack understood the message that he was capable of raping someone, and that the best way to make sure his advances were wanted was to communicate openly with his partner. However, in addition to being heteronormative (which seemed to be a theme in most of

the sex education classes I heard about; any non-heterosexual activity was discussed anecdotally and as an exception to the rule, if at all), this type of message again puts all the power in the man's court, suggests that he would be the one to initiate any sexual encounters, and places the woman in the traditional role of sexual gatekeeper. By not attributing any desire or initiative to the woman, it reproduces the very power inequalities it is likely trying to mitigate. In addition, Jack's comment, "They told us we were going to rape someone and you always feel like a rapist," seems to create a sense of fear, which, in small doses might be merely caution. However, if a young man fears his own power in a sexual situation, this is likely both to damage partner communication (let alone, mutual enjoyment) and to continue to reify power inequalities. In short, these messages seem like a good start, but on their own do not do much to improve heterosexual partner communication and openness.

Partner relations may be further strained by the "blame game." In the following excerpt, Sean Taylor explains how men are likely to be blamed in sexual encounters:

> Yeah, I'd say the whole rape thing, definitely…because… even now, if like two people are kinda drunk and they both say yes, it's the guy's fault and you can be taken to court and sued and stuff so that is always really worrisome.

Sean Taylor's comment about guys being blamed no matter the situation brings to the fore another issue. This concern with being blamed, while perhaps justified, does not necessarily contribute to healthy partner communication. It serves as an external (rather than internal) motivation. While any reason to not rape is a good one, of course, fear of punishment could be a concerning reason if it is the only one, because if taken away, there may be no reason not to rape.

When the conversation continued, Jack said:

> …Whenever I get drunk, I always tend to like, like I kind of get close to the girl, but by the end of the night, I try to get away from the girl. I am always scared of that since they taught us that.

Jack's comment about stopping himself illustrates the operationalization of this fear-based message, not necessarily a bad thing. One could rightly argue that being careful in one's interactions while under the influence of alcohol is wise. However, this fear seems to contribute to Jack not trusting himself. It also seems to come from an external place, where there is fear of being blamed rather than (just) fear of doing something wrong.

Sean Taylor continued:

> They definitely like really made it seem like the guy was the enemy like all the time…they would always say like "girls, like, make sure you report anything if you feel uncomfortable" but that would never say that to us…

Again, this participant seemed to describe a situation in which he felt not only blamed, but also wronged in some way. It sounds like he also felt as though his comfort and safety had not been taken into account. It seems that, to these young men, they were both treated unfairly, and themselves not protected from potential harassment. They seemed to suggest that these messages about males being aggressors were not only inaccurate, but at times also both unhelpful and offensive. Creating a situation in which young men feel wronged and unfairly blamed may be unhealthy for them, and may not contribute to healthy relationships and open partner communication. Again, this might be a situation in which bringing in peers or older students would be helpful in creating opportunities for open conversations.

Is Sex Education Creating a Backlash?

Many participants identified hearing fairly polarized messages about rape, in which males were the aggressors and females the victims. Participants shared a number of stories that made this researcher wonder whether these strong messages were creating

some sort of backlash. For example, Brad talked about having a sex education class with upperclassmen, and described this scenario in which rape was used as a joke:

> It almost seemed…humorous…like people would make jokes and stuff…about how…at a party or something they would…if they got…drunk, let's say, and then…another girl got drunk and they ended up doing something…how that… may be considered… humorous…in terms of rape…I guess if both weren't really consenting or if some guys were made fun of because they seemed like pushovers then…they'd be made fun of by other guys getting raped by a girl…it was mostly like upper classmen…taunting…the lower classmen or their friends, just… in a joking manner, but… some girls that are seen as …less attractive maybe. I don't know.

In this quote, Brad described how boys made fun of other boys for being forced into sexual encounters with and by "less attractive" girls. Although it is not uncommon for people to make jokes during uncomfortable conversations, nor am I implying that teaching young men about rape "caused" this behavior, it is interesting to note that high school boys would respond to a lesson about rape by teasing their friends about being raped by less attractive girls. One explanation is that these jokes were made to diffuse tension, not just about the topic, but also about the potential (purportedly undeserved) blame they felt. These jokes may have also been made to deny responsibility or hide a lack of empathy.

Jack also described a situation in which girls were harassing boys at his school:

> Girls were more of the problem at our school...sexual harassment in our school was usually the girls messing with the guys and doing inappropriate things because they didn't think they could sexually harass people, and so like, it was really bad and like a lot of the really nerdy kids were always really upset…There was this girl in my art class who would always walk up to this kid. He was like the shortest kid in the class and he was real scrawny and everything, and she would sit on his lap and try to make him get an erection and then make fun and point it out to everyone like "oh my God he's got a boner!" and stuff… it was pretty ridiculous, but you know that wasn't really ever addressed or punished either…

This excerpt illustrates another situation that could be related to the gendered messages received by students about gender and power. Whereas males were portrayed as sexual aggressors and females as victims, girls would sexually harass boys with no consequences. The reasons for this are unclear—did girls feel they could not get caught?

Was this behavior perhaps a way of acting out in reaction to hearing about how they were likely to be victimized, or even in reaction to feeling powerless? Again, learning about rape and sexual coercion, very real problems that need to be addressed, may not have been the explicit cause of these behaviors. However, these behaviors are concerning.

Jack felt that not only were boys not protected from experiences of sexual harassment, they were actually ridiculed if they reacted negatively:

> …They almost make it like it is "immasculine" for guys to ever have a girl doing something wrong with them. Like the guys will always be at fault and the girl is never to blame. And like, I don't know…If you're a guy, like if that kid were to ever complain about that girl, then he must be being gay or whatever. You know what I'm saying?
>
> *Interviewer: Did you get this from teachers or from other kids?*
>
> Jack: From everyone. Like even the teachers, they never made it a big deal. Like girls didn't do anything wrong so it's something that guys should want or something…

Although the literature on sexual socialization does discuss the female "sexual gatekeeper" role and the potential power imbalances it can create, Jack (and Sean Taylor) brought up a different set of concerns. Not only was an assumption made that girls could not be sexual harassers, an additional assumption was communicated here—that boys could not really be harassed by girls, because female sexual attention was always welcome. Both Jack and Sean Taylor seemed to feel that if a boy was to complain about being harassed by a girl, this behavior would be regarded as un-masculine, and to hear Jack describe it, possibly gay. (This suggests that homosexuality was not particularly well-covered here in his sex education lessons, either). Apparently both teachers and students corroborated this attitude.

These incidents may be consequences of the gendered "victim-perpetrator" dichotomy. The above quotes describe antagonistic relationships between boys and girls, in which real and imagined sexual coercion are used by one gender to taunt the other,

perhaps exacerbated by these types of messages. Regardless of whether sex education lessons are "causing" these situations, the messages they convey about gender (and particularly, about gender-based violence) do not seem to be contributing to egalitarian interactions or open communication. Rather, they seem to create imbalances of power and may reproduce gendered inequalities and bring new meaning to the term "battle of the sexes."

Conclusion

Findings suggest that youth receive a variety of messages in their school-based sex education programs. Whereas some messages may convey healthy, egalitarian, and open attitudes, or model or teach important skills, others are incomplete or inconsistent. Messages are often dichotomous, gendered, and heteronormative, and women and men often seem to recall receiving different, possibly conflicting, messages. This may contribute to differing expectations and miscommunications in later sexual interactions, and could lead to undesirable outcomes including marginalization, power dichotomies, and unwanted experiences. In some cases, messages may even have the opposite of their intended effects.

It seemed that some people were pleased with their sex education experiences. Participants discussed a number of strengths and attributes they liked about their sex education. Some were very pleased with their instructors, the openness of an instructor or classroom, the discussion of relationships and emotions.

One striking finding was the variation in the instruction that young people received. Almost regardless of curriculum label, participants received a number of messages about biology, abstinence, relationships and gender. Overall, there were two

broad clusters of information: either comprehensive, or mostly abstinence-based. Whereas "comprehensive" sex education offered a more complete picture of issues such as biology and contraception, it seemed that abstinence-based programs offered more discussion of relationships and intimacy. Participants' comments that they would have preferred to receive both sets of messages is telling and could be used to adapt programs. It is also heartening, as it indicates that young people are understanding the benefits of these sets of messages working together.

Messages were often gendered, with girls receiving more fear- and caution-based messages, and boys receiving more laissez-faire and pleasure-based messages. Girls were warned about rape, and boys were warned not to be rapists, in seemingly fairly one-dimensional and dichotomous lessons about sexual violence that seemed to reify gendered stereotypes about victims and perpetrators. These messages seemed to omit conversations about power, equality, communication, or desire. In some cases, acting-out behaviors suggested that these messages might even be creating a backlash. Indeed, in some cases young men noted male peers being harassed by girls and observed that the girls had no consequences for these behaviors. More research is needed to better understand how messages about rape are understood by and best communicated to young people in the context of sex education, and how to talk about these issues so that they open discussion rather than shutting it down. Furthermore, more attention paid to power dynamics in general might begin to combat the "reversal of power" that seems to occur in some schools, where girls harass boys with no consequences. These results also suggest a need to figure out ways to better bridge the fields of sex education and sexual violence prevention, two fields whose literatures remain surprisingly separate.

Chapter 5

Discussion

> "Sex education – 1. information about sex and sexual relationships that adults teach to young people, especially in school"
>
> (Macmillan Dictionary, 2010)

> "Sex education in the public school system can be concisely defined as the state providing information to youth in order to reduce harm"
>
> (Brough, 2008, p. 411)

> "…Condoms no more cause sex than umbrellas cause rain."
>
> (Kristof, *New York Times*, 1/10/2003)

Sex education is regarded in a number of different ways in our society, and its mention is often met with a quick or passionate reaction. It is notable that the first two quotes above, one retrieved from an online dictionary and the other from a scholarly article, identify sex education as information that is taught to young people either by adults or by the state (running counter to Allen's aforementioned notion of youth-centered sex education), and often, something which must be done to reduce harm. Whereas this (implicit or explicit) regulation of sexuality and sexual information remains in the background of much sex education in the United States, my approach to sex education research, and the approaches of my colleagues and mentors, allow for a broader spectrum of sexual information sources and experiences. Although I will discuss conceptual issues in more detail later in this discussion, these quotes serve as a reminder of the backdrop upon which I do this work.

The third quote above was published in a *New York Times* opinion piece in January 2003, at a time when sex education practices were widely contested in political arenas, and federal abstinence-only mandates were the order of the day. This statement was quite relevant when it was written seven years ago. However, it is striking that it is still extremely relevant today. Controversy around issues of sexuality education is far from resolved. Sex education has been a controversial issue in our society for a number of years, and the debate seems to have gotten more contentious than ever. Although people continue to argue about the "appropriateness" of discussing sex with youth, many questions remain about developmental appropriateness, health, safety, and social justice.

This quote is also relevant because it served in some way as an impetus for writing this dissertation. I have long been intrigued by abstinence-only education as a theoretical concept and as a practical application. This interest grew into a Master's thesis. While exploring the implications of abstinence education I became intrigued with issues of sex education *and* sex education research as well. Sex education is an intriguing phenomenon in itself, both because it is such a wide field with so many possible lessons, and because it seems to me difficult to teach human interactions, at least without some sort of practice component. In addition, sex education research is generally conducted in particular ways, and I found myself thinking about new approaches. As such, my Master's thesis grew into a new survey and project, which evolved over time and eventually has resulted in this dissertation.

An Overview

The three studies I presented here were intended to begin to provide new ideas about sex education research. The extant research suggests that schools tend toward one

of two major foci in sex education curricula: abstinence-only (generally focusing on encouraging young people to wait until marriage to engage in sexual relations) or comprehensive (which generally provides a more complete picture of sexuality, including discussion of biology and contraception.) With few exceptions, this body of research is itself somewhat dichotomous in its conceptualization of sex education and in its approach to researching "effectiveness." In contrast and in response, my dissertation focused on the influence of school-based sex education topics and messages, both explicit and implicit, upon youth sexual attitudes and experiences, including their feelings of sexual self-efficacy and assertiveness, and experiences of sexual coercion. My dissertation aimed to fill gaps in the literature by examining previously unexplored outcomes, through two quantitative studies and one qualitative one.

These studies incorporated several innovations, including the use of attitudinal and experiential outcome variables that addressed issues of communication and coercion, and a focus on program content and messages instead of program type, beginning with topics and explicit messages received in sex education (e.g. biology, contraception) and moving on to students' exposure to more subtle, implicit messages through examination of the sexual double standard, sexual abstinence, and positive sexuality discourses. I also conceptualized the issues of sexual coercion and unwanted sexual experiences as important and integral parts of sex education and sex education research, rather than as separate literatures. Finally, I spoke with young people directly in order to better understand the messages they received and their perspectives and opinions, and to reflect the true experiences of youth in these programs.

These studies revealed that young people can get information from their school-

based sex education in a number of ways, and that this information may have different effects and associations with sexual attitudes and experiences. In Study 1, participants reported receiving information about a variety of sex education topics, most commonly focused on biology and mainstream contraception. As expected, exposure to specific topics was indeed connected to their early sexual experiences. More specifically, exposures to contraception and lifestyle messages were related to increased expression of sexual agency, and exposure to contraception messages was also linked with experiences of coercion. Findings were particularly striking for young men, and for participants who had already had vaginal intercourse. This is consistent with some research suggesting that more messages about contraception may be linked with more sexual experience (Somers, 2001).

In Study 2, results were quite mixed, with some associations between positive sexuality messages and sexual agency variables. Most striking was the link between the double standard discourse and several experiences of sexual coercion, a link that held in regressions. Again, findings were most consistent for young men and non-virgins. These two groups are likely more sexually active (or aggressive) than their comparison group (women and virgins, respectively), and this dynamic may be contributing to stronger outcomes in these groups. Study 2 built upon Study 1 by investigating implicit messages communicated by sex education in schools, messages that could not be captured by a sole examination of sex education content.

Study 3 revealed that young people express a range of feelings about their sex education, and that many wish they had received a broader spectrum of messages and options. They also received messages that were strongly gendered in nature.

Additionally, my interpretation is that whereas sexual coercion was discussed in sex education, it may have exacerbated fear and mistrust of the "opposite" sex, in addition to creating a backlash, rather than helping young people feel more comfortable communicating and reading cues. Study 3 built upon Study 2 (and Study 1) by accessing more nuanced information, being able to clarify and ask follow-up questions to participant responses, and allowing participants to generate topics, rather than (or in addition to) the researcher and interviewers. This qualitative study provided new information that was not accessible through the surveys. Although the survey was able to capture whether participants learned about specific identified topics (i.e., rape, relationships, etc.), it was less good at capturing *what* they learned about these topics, particularly content that was specific to their experience.

This dissertation was framed as a mixed methods project, which is fairly common in the psychology and social work literatures. However, in addition to conducting quantitative and qualitative work, I also chose to go a bit further, and construct my dissertation a way which I hoped would move me incrementally deeper into what was really happening in sex education with each study. As such, Study 1 was a response to finding in the extant research unsatisfying studies comparing programs by label and outcomes by dichotomous behaviors. Thus, I decided to look beyond labels to content, and to look beyond sexual intercourse, pregnancy, and disease to a set of variables that more closely estimated young people's experiences and communication. In turn, Study 2 was a chance to go beyond explicit content areas to explore implicit messages that might be communicated through sex education (and to follow the distinction between "education" and "socialization" made by Shtarkshall and colleagues (2007). Finally,

Study 3 was a chance to go even further, beyond my own ideas and understandings of current research, to speak with young people themselves and hear about *their* experiences.

This approach was useful, in my opinion, because it gave me an opportunity to learn the topics as I went, and to inform each new study with the previous study's findings. It was also a satisfying process to move incrementally further into the topic and to use multiple sets of findings to complement one another. However, there were also drawbacks. For example, despite support within the extant research, the use of these particular dependent variables were somewhat exploratory. The discourses in Study 2, although established with adolescents and emerging adults when received from parents, were also fairly exploratory with regard to schools. Another approach would have been to conduct the focus groups after the first quantitative study, and to then conduct a second quantitative study with messages informed by the focus groups. This is still a study I would like to conduct (and a survey I would like to design) and is something I will think about for the future.

Having collected valuable and nuanced information in the focus groups, it would now be possible to go back and design a more detailed survey that might better capture messages about these topics. For example, focus group data could inform the development of a set of questions focused on gender differences specifically about sexual coercion. A whole section could be added about male "blame," a topic I did not know existed in sex education, nor in sexual violence prevention work. In addition, I would like to pay more attention to ways in which sexual double standard messages are communicated to young people, as they seem to have an association with sexual

coercion, as found in Study 2. Overall, in designing a new survey, I would pay closer attention to messages targeted specifically toward boys or girls, and try to capture these differential messages in the survey design.

Raising Questions As Well As Answers

Whereas these studies were executed to provide some answers, perhaps just as importantly, they were intended to begin to raise new questions, both about context and about what has been missing from sex education *and* sex education research. One traditional sex education research question, "What effects is sex education having on young people?" is still an important one, but the intent of this dissertation was to look at effects beyond the aforementioned dichotomous variables (i.e., onset of sexual intercourse, pregnancy, STDs) to better understand the contexts within which young people may be experiencing sex education and sexual encounters. This dissertation tried to reconceptualize the question, "What messages are young people getting from their sex education?" by looking beyond program titles to ask about content and investigate the presence of "unwritten" or implicit messages, and by looking at intersecting contexts and identities – in this case, gender and level of sexual experience. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, this work raised the question, "What sense do young people make of their *own* sex education?" a question that has been asked all too rarely and, to the knowledge of this author, not posed to an American undergraduate sample. It is my hope that this work will help to reconceptualize sex education research.

Exploring Conceptual Issues

Relatedly, there are several conceptual issues that I did not explicitly investigate in this dissertation, but nevertheless color the landscape on which the sex education

debate, as well as many other sexuality-related debates, takes place. One important issue is related to the fear of some that young people will take charge of their own sexual learning; it is the idea that we as a society do not know how to talk about sexuality, and as a result (or relatedly) we do not know how to talk to our children. The idea of young people being sexual, let alone active participants in (or contributors to!) their own sex education, flies in the face of the concerns of abstinence-only proponents, and makes many people uncomfortable. This idea, coupled with an oversexed media (possibly in response to a great deal of Puritanism) means that young people are more likely than ever to be confused or unprepared. This is concerning considering that the literature on sex education (e.g., Allen, 2008), sexual subjectivity (e.g. Tolman, 2002) and my own research support the idea that young people are more likely to be invested in whatever choices they make, and have better outcomes, if they are engaged and involved throughout the process.

Implicit in almost any discussion of youth and sexuality in the United States, and some other Western nations, is a heated ethical debate about how, if at all, we would like young people to develop sexual knowledge and identities. Most people agree that they would like children to grow up to be healthy and happy adults, which for many people (I daresay a majority) includes a healthy sexual identity. Proponents of the "positive sexuality" movement contend that sexuality should be viewed as a natural part of the human experience (Dailey, 1997). On the other hand, many do not want youth to engage in sexual activities before they are "ready" (the definition of which is also arbitrary), worry that frank discussion of sexuality will encourage youth sexual activity, and suggest that abstinence-only education is appropriate. In addition, adults are often generally

uncomfortable discussing sexuality at all, let alone with regard to young people. The ethical issues underlying school sex education are even more complex, because they go beyond the individual or family context into an institutional one that affects many. To quote Allen (2008): "sexuality education is a site of competing political interests comprising parents/caregivers, teachers, school management, educational policy makers, civil liberty organizations, conservative and liberal groups" (p. 574).

A related important issue is the idea of youth "readiness" for sex. The word "sex" is purposely vague – because it can mean a host of things, including sexual development, sexual identity, and sexual activity. These very different but related outcomes are often not differentiated in ongoing debates about sex education, and become conflated so much that people fear teaching young people about sexual development for fear this will seem tantamount to encouragement to engage in sexual activity.

Complicating the debate even further are notions of danger, which in this context include disease, pregnancy, and violence. Fear of these dangers, albeit justified to an extent, tend to create panic. Although abstinence-only education (and the hope that youth will wait to have sex) may seem the simple answer, current research suggests that abstinence-based strategies employed by sex education programs (as well as by some parents) to avoid these dangers, are often ineffective at best (e.g., Kirby, 2001; 2008). At worst, these strategies are actually linked with these dangerous situations, through the omission of factual information about contraception, negotiation, and open communication other than just saying "no." Additionally, the literature suggests (and my research corroborates) a gender and sexual double standard wherein these "fear and danger" messages are disproportionately communicated to girls, leading to a situation

where young women are left to be "gatekeepers," feel responsible for encounters, and fear sex, while boys receive fewer messages, are encouraged to experiment, and are given a "free pass" when they engage. These are also the same gender dichotomies that are likely to lead to victim-blaming attitudes in situations of heterosexual coercion or rape. (Further, these gender-differentiated messages detract from the quality of male-female communication, rather than contributing to healthy and egalitarian communication.) As I indicated in Chapter 4, I have also found through focus groups that even when young men are educated about rape, the messages they hear are often scary and blaming. This presents yet another ethical dilemma, that of how to educate youth about gender-based violence without blaming them or scaring them to the point that they feel unable to engage in healthy relationships.

My dissertation aimed to show that school sex education programs are communicating gendered messages, that they often omit information, and that youth are often confused by and dissatisfied with their school sex education. The participants in my studies who received abstinence messages did not feel they were well-prepared for the realities of navigating sexual encounters; those who got a "comprehensive" approach felt that their training was not quite comprehensive, but rather clinical and biological, and that issues of love, communication, and emotional connection were not broached. They seemed to feel that a combination of messages would go further in preparing young people for sexual situations.

Limitations and Considerations

As in any research, this set of studies had a number of limitations. First, the participant sample I used was a convenience sample of undergraduates at a large local

University. Whereas this population was actually quite appropriate for the research questions explored, since this set of questions pertains to emerging adults, this particular sample was relatively homogeneous, in terms of ethnicity, socioeconomic status (as measured by parental education), and sexual orientation. As such, it may not be generalizable to a larger population. This research would be strengthened by expansion to a more heterogeneous sample, and by comparative work done with a more diverse sample of emerging adults. This is something I hope to do in the future.

Second and relatedly, issues of education, race, culture, and socioeconomic status could be considered further, particularly in school or community-based samples. An intersectional perspective is critical to identifying how adolescents receive messages and interact with one another. As was evident from the research I presented, results did differ by gender and by level of sexual experience. Although there was not sufficient diversity with respect to ethnicity, socioeconomic status, or sexual orientation in this sample, it would be beneficial to examine these constructs in future research. It would also be useful to further examine issues of gender and power embedded within these messages, as results suggest a possible inadvertent reification of gendered power differentials may be occurring. Research is needed to further clarify the potential consequences of these messages in the context of federally mandated education programs.

Third, a discussion of causality, or rather, a lack thereof, is also imperative in considering the variables examined. Whereas I sometimes referred to the dependent variables in Studies 1 and 2 as "outcome" variables, I am aware that this term creates an assumption of causality or temporality that was not present. Since these studies were neither longitudinal nor historical in design, nor were many of the questions specific to

particular points in time, it is difficult to know "which came first" in many instances. To use one example, it is difficult to know whether receipt of double standard messages influenced experiences of sexual coercion, or whether experiencing sexual coercion affected recall of double standard messages. In this particular case, it is possible that even the participants would not have a sense of temporality with regard to these variables. These findings would be strengthened through use of a longitudinal or historical research design that could show temporal links between variables.

Fourth, it is also important to acknowledge a difference between what students were told and what they internalized. The survey administered in Studies 1 and 2 asked participants about messages they had received, not endorsed or internalized. This is a critical distinction, and perhaps future research should address this difference, including the relationships between information received and endorsed from different sources, and in different formats (e.g., formal, informal, individually, in groups).

Finally, the survey had other limitations as well. There were a large number of topics that were listed in the survey (e.g., self-care, dating) that were not clearly defined in the text of the survey. It is possible that these terms were understood differently by different participants, which may have affected the data and results. Future surveys should have more clearly outlined terms and definitions in order to standardize understanding of meanings. The survey was also designed to capture receipt of sex education topics in a variety of ways. However, whereas attempts were made to be comprehensive in lists of topics and timelines presented, these lists were researcher- rather than participant-generated. Future surveys could have at least some room for open-ended responses or participant-generated categories of sex education.

In addition, it is important to acknowledge that school is just one context within which young people exist, and to consider other sources of sexual information. In my previous work, I have found that parents are strong purveyors of sexual abstinence messages, and that youth receive more double standard and "positive sex" messages from their peers (Levin, 2010) than from parents or schools. Whereas the purpose of this dissertation was to investigate the school context specifically, it is important to consider that messages received from schools are working together with messages from other, potentially more influential, sources.

Implications, Suggestions, and Future Directions

Engaging social work and psychology. Adolescent sexual health and sex education are touchy subjects that are conceptualized in diverse ways and are complicated by many factors. They are also interdisciplinary by nature. Sex education is an issue relevant to several fields including psychology, education, public health, law, and social work, among others. Whereas the field of developmental psychology tends to focus on adolescent sexuality and sexual learning as a series of developmental processes, the field of social work has historically focused on related issues, including the prevention of teen pregnancy and intimate partner violence, but not on sex education, itself. Additionally, some argue that early teen pregnancy prevention efforts served to regulate female sexuality (see Odem, 1995).

Among other things, this research has illustrated that young people receive sex education at a wide variety of ages and grades. This, coupled with differences in development, both within and across individuals, is likely to create challenges. We know that boys and girls tend to develop at different rates physically, emotionally, and

cognitively. As such, teaching sex education to a fourth-grade class, for example, is likely to yield different responses across gender. In addition, each individual young person may have different rates of development in each of his or her domains (e.g., physical, emotional, cognitive.) Although it is nearly impossible to tailor school-based sex education to each individual student, more attention could be paid by the field of developmental psychology, both to messages communicated at particular points of development, and to improving the "match" (and reducing "mismatches") between developmental stage and messages communicated.

Some social work practitioners have argued that social work should focus more explicitly on issues such as gender-based youth violence and the related well-being of adolescent girls (Clark, 2001b) or on overall adolescent health (Clark, 2001c), and the issue of general adolescent health has received some attention from the social work community, in the form of a strengths-based toolkit (Clark & Whitaker, 2002) that includes sexuality as a small part. These are commendable steps. However, with few exceptions (e.g., Clark, 2001a), the issue of adolescent sexual health is rarely, if ever, addressed holistically as a social work issue, and to date, social work has not addressed an explicit commitment to adolescent sexual health generally or sex education specifically. Although adolescent risk and illness are compelling social justice issues and deserve attention, a gap remains. This dissertation attempts to begin to fill this gap, and tries to make the point that both psychology and social work can and should use empirical research to support the creation of an agenda explicitly committed to the engendering of adolescent sexual health as a global, inclusive, strengths-based concept that is worthy of our attention.

There has also been little attention paid to the overlaps between the field of sex education and the field of dating violence, nor have there been efforts, to my knowledge, to encourage them to "talk to each other." In my experience, these two fields are considered separate. However, as my dissertation has shown, these areas are interrelated and overlapping. Attention paid to discussion of rape or sexual violence by sex education programs may be cursory and one-dimensional. Even when it is beyond cursory, it is likely to fall into old gender stereotypes, and either reify existing power struggles, flip them (so that it seems like women have more power), or create feelings of fear and anxiety in both men and women. There have been notable efforts to address the complexities that exist around unwanted sexual experiences and sexual coercion, going beyond black and white notions of violent rape to explore more nuanced experiences of unwanted sexual encounters (e.g., Crown & Roberts, 2007; Sieg, 2007; Walker, 2000). However, these have not been conducted in the context of sex education research. It would be beneficial for sex education and dating violence prevention efforts to join forces and come up with more nuanced ways of communicating critical issues to young people.

This dissertation has shown that a multitude of messages received about sexuality and gender from schools may possibly make longstanding contributions to adolescent sexual development, health, and safety. This finding creates rich opportunities for future research and for social work intervention. Social work can intervene by implementing interventions with multiple sources (parents, friends, and schools), dispelling myths and gendered discourses, encouraging sexual agency and teaching communication skills, and creating interventions when unwanted outcomes, such as sexual coercion, do occur.

Whereas this study looked at sexual agency and negative sexual experiences, somewhat novel outcomes in the field of sex education research, it is important to acknowledge that these are just two of the many constructs comprising adolescent sexual health. More research is needed, including a further examination of how these discourses might interact or conflict. For example, if girls receive more abstinence messages and boys receive more positive sex messages, what are the implications when they interact? It is possible that some variables may mediate the relationship between other variables (e.g., rape myth endorsement could mediate the relationship between double standard messages and perpetration of coercion). The exploration of a potentially mediated model may be helpful in beginning to conceptualize how these many constructs may come together to create the experience of sexuality. It is also important to consider that adolescents are socialized within multiple environments simultaneously, and interact with a number of influential individuals including parents and peers, and to begin to conceptualize these processes in more inclusive and multifaceted ways. Assessing a more complex exploration of sexual messages, the sources from which they come, and possible interactions, will yield richer information about young people in context, and contribute to greater knowledge as well as more effective interventions and healthier outcomes.

In terms of social work policy, there is an increased need to advocate for more comprehensive sexual health programs, either in school or outside—and for more open communication about sexuality. Youth are being taught one overarching way to protect themselves—sexual abstinence—but are not being taught other ways, which may ironically make them more vulnerable to danger. Social work policymakers can lead efforts to change the sex education curriculum in this country to one that prepares

adolescents for all the possibilities they may face, and teaches them how to protect themselves in each situation.

Although some support exists for the teaching of sexuality as positive and egalitarian, few programs or sources actually address this or convey these messages. Social worker practitioners should intervene at multiple points and levels of the ecological system—with parents and families, youth and peers, and in schools and communities. Practitioners can work with adolescent boys and girls in single-sex or mixed-sex groups, or one-on-one. Family work could address parent-child communication, as parents are such a prominent source of sexual information (Darling & Hicks, 1982; DiIorio, Kelley, & Hockenberry-Eaton, 1999; Downie & Coates, 1999). Since gender is a compelling issue and potential risk factor, there is a specific need to work with boys and combat traditional socialization messages.

There may be many reasons why adolescent sexual health and sex education have not received explicit focus from the field of social work to date. Other pressing social justice issues abound, including intimate partner violence, teen pregnancy, child abuse, and poverty. All are dire social problems that are related to adolescent sexuality. Additionally, challenges abound: as discussed above, sex is a complicated topic that is often hard to talk about, and our society is mixed in terms of its desired outcomes for adolescent sexual health. However, the time has come to talk about adolescent sexual health as a strength and a goal in its own right, and to build a social work agenda around this issue that combines research, policy, and practice. Despite controversy about whether youth should be having sex or not, a controversy for which resolution is unlikely to emerge soon, social workers can still engender open communication, access to

information, and positive feelings about oneself and one's relationships. Perhaps they can even facilitate debates on these issues. The field of social work is already addressing related issues and using an ecological perspective. Social work practitioners, policymakers, and researchers should collaborate to increase knowledge and awareness in this arena. If partnered, these professionals can work towards an ecological approach to prevention and intervention from their respective angles, with the greater goal of improving adolescent sexual health, safety, and wellbeing. It is time to view adolescent sexual health as a social justice issue, a protective factor, and a goal for healthy development.

Programmatic suggestions. This dissertation yielded a number of suggestions for improvements in various areas of sex education. These suggestions come from myself and from participants interviewed. Comprehensive and consistent training of teachers who will be teaching sex education would likely provide greater consistency in and standardization of sex education messages, as well as increased comfort on the part of teachers, resulting in more effective teaching.

Relatedly, the assignment of particular teachers to teach sex education, or even the hiring of specific teachers to teach just sex education, would likely help to achieve similar goals as above, and would also increase consistency and illustrate a commitment to competent sex education. These goals could be further achieved by offering some sort of sex education programming each year in school. Involving peers or peer mentors, as well as family members, in these conversations, would like increase consistency across youth contexts and open doors for conversations. Finally, asking youth what they would like (or talking with parents of younger children about what they want for their children)

in terms of programming and skill-building could help researchers and practitioners begin to get a better conceptual understanding of what types of programming young people would respond to and parents could support.

Future directions. There are several directions in which I would like to take this work in the future. As discussed briefly above, I am interested in expanding the scope of this work by repeating these studies with a different emerging adult population, perhaps using a college-enrolled sample with very different demographic characteristics, in order to have a comparative sample. I am also interested in developing a new survey, informed by these studies and particularly by the focus groups, that includes (possibly) new discourses, new assertiveness scales, a new rape myths scale (either found or developed), and new sexual risk measures. I am also interested in continuing to understand the (possible) impacts of abstinence messages, and will seek new ways to access this information. Finally, it would be interesting to develop "messages" or "discourses" generated from sex education content (e.g., "Condoms don't always work"), perhaps in partnership with young people themselves, in order to investigate more specific messages that youth receive in their sex education classes.

My goal for my dissertation and for my research in general is to inform the development of more effective, and culturally and developmentally competent, sexual health prevention and intervention strategies and to promote healthy relationships among adolescents and emerging adults. Both my dissertation research and my additional community-based participatory research experience have prepared me to think critically about ways to do this, and to engage in applied participatory research with various groups. Accordingly, my planned next steps include collecting more data that investigates

effects of sex education upon sexual communication and coercion. Longer-term goals include developing and piloting an on-campus (or community-based) education and prevention program that addresses issues of sexual communication and safe relationships on college campuses and working towards the development of sex education curricula informed by my current and future research. Although issues of sexual health and development have received increasing attention in both research and media spheres, there is still debate about best practices in the field. Since college is a time of exploration, and much exploration happens particularly on college campuses, where students have increased autonomy and less supervision and are likely to engage in risk-taking behaviors (Arnett, 2000), college campuses provide a prime setting in which to explore sexual learning and sexual behavior, and work toward the prevention of adverse outcomes.

I plan to continue exploring these ethical dilemmas, and conducting more research and practice work with schools, community-based organizations, and families, to contribute to more knowledge about how these issues affect adolescent sexual health and well-being. It is my hope that this will be a first step, for me and for the field of sex education research, in bringing adolescent sexual health to the forefront of the fields of developmental psychology and social work. These goals are timely and should help us to better understand how sex education and other sexual messages affect young people throughout their development, work toward the development of more effective, culturally and developmentally competent, sex education programming that is inclusive of youth perspectives and experiences, and ensure we are doing all we can to help young people have safer and healthier relationships throughout their lives.

Table 1

Attitude and Experience ("Outcome") Measures – Descriptives and Comparison by Gender

	Outcome Measures				
		All[1]	Women[2]	Men[3]	Sex Differences
	Range	***M(SD)***	***M(SD)***	***M(SD)***	**T-test**
Self-efficacy – safer sex	1.00-5.00	3.92(.89)	3.84(.90)	4.04(.85)	-2.031*
Sexual assertiveness	0-4.00	2.45(.72)	2.39(.74)	2.52(.68)	-1.702+
Inauthentic voice	1.00-6.00	3.05(.67)	3.07(.67)	3.03(.68)	.436
Rape myths	1.00-7.00	2.41(.72)	2.25(.67)	2.62(.72)	-4.789***
General coerc. exp. after 14	0-15.00	2.13(1.91)	2.43(2.16)	1.71(1.41)	3.633***
Victim. exp. (intimate sit.)	0-12.00	1.23(2.10)	1.52(2.25)	.85(1.81)	2.966**
Perp. exp. (intimate sit.)	0-15.00	.82(1.70)	.49(1.01)	1.27(2.26)	-3.794***

Note. [1]*N*=322-331 [2]*N*=182-190 [3]*N*=138-142
***p<.001; **p<.01; *p<.05

Table 2

Attitude and Experience ("Outcome") Measures – Descriptives and Comparison by Level of Sexual Experience

	Outcome Measures				
		All[4]	Virgins[5]	Non-Virgins[6]	Experience Differences
	Range	***M(SD)***	***M(SD)***	***M(SD)***	**T-test**
Self-efficacy – safer sex	1.00-5.00	3.92(.89)	3.61(.96)	4.19(.72)	-5.988***
Sexual assertiveness	0-4.00	2.45(.72)	2.13(.73)	2.72(.59)	-7.606***
Inauthentic voice	1.00-6.00	3.05(.67)	3.16(.63)	2.93(.69)	3.050**
Rape myths	1.00-7.00	2.41(.72)	2.40(.70)	2.39(.71)	.039
General coerc. exp. after 14	0-15.00	2.13(1.91)	1.81(1.69)	2.34(1.95)	-2.586*
Victim. exp. (intimate sit.)	0-12.00	1.23(2.10)	.59(1.07)	1.77(2.54)	-5.556***
Perp. exp. (intimate sit.)	0-15.00	.82(1.70)	.30(.64)	1.26(2.15)	-5.615***

Note. [4]*N*=322-331 [5]*N*=131-138 [6]*N*=174-175
***p<.001; **p<.01; *p<.05

Table 3

Sex Education Topics Communicated to Women and Men by Schools

			All[1]	**Women**[2]	**Men**[3]	**Sex Differences**
	α	**Range**	***M(SD)***	***M(SD)***	***M(SD)***	**T-test**
Relationships & Consequences (11 items)	.88	0-3.00	1.39(.71)	1.37(.69)	1.42(.74)	-.536
Biology (8 items)	.84		2.51(.52)	2.51(.50)	2.51(.54)	.079
Main. Contra (5 items)	.90		2.07(.80)	2.03(.82)	2.13(.77)	-1.112
Lifestyles (5 items)	.84		1.41(.76)	1.35(.77)	1.50(.74)	-1.791+
Alternative Contra (6 items)	.84		.70(.67)	.73(.71)	.65(.62)	1.162
Abstinence 2 (2 items)	.70		1.44(.92)	1.47(.92)	1.41(.93)	.606

Note. [1]*N*=332-335 [2]*N*=189-191 [3]*N*=142-144
***p*<.001; ***p*<.01 ; **p*<.05

Table 4

Sex Education Topics Communicated to Virgins and Non-Virgins by Schools

			All[1]	**Virgins**[2]	**Non-Virgins**[3]	**Experience Differences**
	α	**Range**	***M(SD)***	***M(SD)***	***M(SD)***	**T-test**
Relationships and Consequences (11 items)	.88	0-3.00	1.39(.71)	1.35(.74)	1.40(.70)	-.511
Biology (8 items)	.84		2.51(.52)	2.54(.53)	2.48(.52)	-.993
Main. Contra (5 items)	.90		2.07(.80)	2.00(.83)	2.12(.78)	-1.302
Lifestyles (5 items)	.84		1.41(.76)	1.34(.74)	1.45(.77)	-1.292
Alternative Contra (6 items)	.84		.70(.67)	.64(.62)	.75(.72)	-1.424
Abstinence 2 (2 items)	.70		1.44(.92)	1.45(.93)	1.45(.91)	-.016

Note. [1]*N*=332-335 [2]*N*=137-138 [3]*N*=174-175
***p*<.001; **p*<.01; *p*<.05

Table 5

Intercorrelations between Sex Education Topics

	Relation./ Conseq.	Biology	Mainstream Contra	Lifestyles	Alternative Contra	Abstinence
Relation./Conseq.	1					
Biology	**.56*** **	1				
Mainstream Contra	**.37*** **	**.44*** **	1			
Lifestyles	**.55*** **	**.39*** **	**.50*** **	1		
Alternative Contra	**.39*** **	**.31*** **	**.55*** **	**.51*** **	1	
Abstinence	**.17** **	**.11***	.05	**.25*** **	**.12***	1

Note. *N*=330-333
***p<.001; **p<.01 ; *p<.05

Table 6

Zero-Order Correlations between Demographic Variables and Dependent Variables (Attitudes and Experiences)

	Sexual Self-Efficacy	Sexual Comm.	Inauthentic Voice	Rape Myths	Coercion after 14	Coercion – as Victim	Coercion – as Perp
Mom education							
Dad education							
Men	**.11***	.09+		**.26****	**-.19*****	**-.16****	**.23*****
Age							
Asian	**-.23*****	**-.20*****		**.22*****	**-.11***	**-.13***	
Latino					.10+		
Black							
Single parent home				-.10+			
Religiosity	**-.14***		.11+				-.10+
Foreign born				**.23*****			**.12***

Note. *N*=322-331
***p<.001; **p<.01; *p<.05

Table 7

Zero-Order Correlations between Exposure to Sexual Topics and Outcomes (Attitudes and Experiences) (All, Women, Men)

		Sexual Self-Efficacy	Sexual Comm.	Inauthentic Voice	Rape Myths	Coercion after 14	Coercion – as Victim	Coercion – as Perp
All[1]	Relation./Conseq.			**-.14***				.11+
	Biology							
	Main. Contra	**.19****	**.14****	**-.14***		.10+	**.11***	
	Lifestyles	**.13***	**.18****	**-.18*****				
	Alt. Contra	**.23*****	**.18****	**-.17****		.10+		
	Abstinence				-.11+			
Women[2]	Relation./Conseq.							
	Biology							
	Main. Contra					.12+		
	Lifestyles			-.13+				
	Alt. Contra	**.20****		**-.15***				
	Abstinence							
Men[3]	Relation./Conseq.		.15+	**-.21***			**.20***	.14+
	Biology		.15+					
	Main. Contra	**.33*****	**.34*****	**-.18***				
	Lifestyles	.16+	**.27*****	**-.24****				
	Alt. Contra	**.30*****	**.29*****	**-.22****				
	Abstinence							

Note. [1]*N*=320-331; [2]*N*=181-190; [3]*N*=137-142.
***p<.001; **p<.01 ; *p<.05

Table 8

Zero-Order Correlations between Sex Education Topics and Outcomes (Attitudes and Experiences) (All, Virgins, Non-Virgins)

		Sexual Self-Efficacy	Sexual Comm.	Inauthentic Voice	Rape Myths	Coercion after 14	Coercion – as Victim	Coercion – as Perp
All[1]	Relation./Conseq.			**-.14***				.11+
	Biology							
	Main. Contra	**.19****	**.14****	**-.14***		.10+	**.11***	
	Lifestyles	**.13***	**.18****	**-.18*****				
	Alt. Contra	**.23*****	**.18****	**-.17****		.10+		
	Abstinence				-.11+			
Virgins[2]	Relation./Conseq.					**.20***		
	Biology							
	Main. Contra						.17+	
	Lifestyles				.15+			
	Alt. Contra	**.19***				.14+	.16+	**.20***
	Abstinence							
Non-Virgins[3]	Relation./Conseq.		**.16***	**-.28*****				
	Biology		**.19***	**-.19****				.13+
	Main. Contra	**.18***	**.18***	**-.30*****				
	Lifestyles	**.17***	**.20****	**-.30*****				
	Alt. Contra	**.20****	**.16***	**-.22****				
	Abstinence				-.15*			

Note. [1]*N*=320-331; [2]*N*=130-138; [3]*N*=170-175.
***p<.001; **p<.01; *p<.05

Table 9

Partial Correlations between Discourses from Schools and Outcomes (Attitudes and Experiences) Controlling for Gender, Asian, Religiosity, Foreign Born

		Sexual Self-Efficacy	Sexual Comm.	Inauthentic Voice	Rape Myths	Coercion after 14	Coercion – as Victim	Coercion – as Perp
All[1]	Relation./Conseq.			**-.13***				.10+
	Biology							.09+
	Main. Contra	**.14***	**.10+**	**-.12***			.09+	
	Lifestyle	**.11***	**.16****	**-.17****				
	Alt. Contra	**.21*****	**.16****	**-.17****				
	Abstinence							
Women[2]	Relation./Conseq.							
	Biology							
	Main. Contra							
	Lifestyle			-.13+				
	Alt. Contra	**.18***		-.14+				
	Abstinence							
Men[3]	Relation./Conseq.			**-.22***			**.20***	**.17***
	Biology		.16+	-.14+				
	Main. Contra	**.28*****	**.29*****					
	Lifestyle	**.19***	**.25****	**-.25****				
	Alt. Contra	**.27*****	**.26****	**-.20***				

	Abstinence

Note. [1]*N*=313-320; [2]*N*=173-181; [3]*N*=132-135.
***p<.001; **p<.01; *p<.05

Table 10

Partial Correlations between Discourses from Schools and Outcomes (Attitudes and Experiences) Controlling for Gender, Asian, Religiosity, Foreign Born

		Sexual Self-Efficacy	Sexual Comm.	Inauthentic Voice	Rape Myths	Coercion after 14	Coercion – as Victim	Coercion – as Perp
All[1]	Relation./Conseq.			**-.13***				.10+
	Biology							.09+
	Main. Contra	**.14***	**.10+**	**-.12***			.09+	
	Lifestyle	**.11***	**.16****	**-.17****				
	Alt. Contra	**.21*****	**.16****	**-.17****				
	Abstinence							
Virgins[2]	Relation./Conseq.					**.21***		
	Biology							
	Main. Contra						**.18***	
	Lifestyle		.15+					
	Alt. Contra		.15+	-.15+		.14+		**.18***
	Abstinence							
Non-Virgins[3]	Relation./Conseq.		.13+	**-.28*****				.14+
	Biology		**.17***	**-.19***				**.17***
	Main. Contra	**.18***	**.16***	**-.28*****				
	Lifestyle	**.17***	**.20***	**-.30*****				
	Alt. Contra	**.21****	**.18***	**-.23****				

	Abstinence

Note. [1]*N*=313-320; [2]*N*=124-131; [3]*N*=162-166.
***p<.001; **p<.01; *p<.05

Table 11

Regression Analyses Testing Associations between Topics and Sexual Agency

	Condom Self-Efficacy	Sexual Assertiveness	Inauthentic Voice
STEP 1: DEMOGRAPHICS			
Gender (being male)	.10	.09	-.03
Asian ethnicity	**-.25*** **	**-.20*** **	.07
Foreign born	.04	-.01	.05
Religiosity	**-.14*** **	-.06	.11+
Adjusted R2	.075	.041	.011
STEP 2: Demographics & Discourses			
Gender (being male)	**.11***	.09	-.02
Asian ethnicity	**-.23*** **	**-.19*** **	.05
Foreign born	.04	-.01	.05
Religiosity	**-.13***	-.06	.10
Relationships and consequences	-----	-----	-.04
Biology	-----	-----	-----
Mainstream Contraception	.02	-.02	.02
Lifestyle	-.01	.10	-.10
Alternative Contraception	**.19****	.12	-.12
Abstinence	-----	-----	-----
Adjusted R2	.108	.066	.039
Change in ADjR2	+.033	+.025	+.028
F of Change	4.978***	3.705*	3.347*
F of final model	6.576***	4.140***	2.640**

Note. ***p≤.001; **p≤.01; *p≤.05, +p≤.06.

Table 12

Regression Analyses Testing Associations between Topics and Coercion Attitudes and Experiences

	Rape Myths	Coercion After Age 14	Victim Experiences	Perpetrator Experiences
STEP 1: DEMOGRAPHICS				
Gender (being male)			**-.18*** **	
Asian ethnicity			**-.16** **	
Foreign born			.05	
Religiosity			**-.13***	
Adjusted R2			.050	
STEP 2: Demographics & Discourses				
Gender (being male)			**-.18*** **	
Asian ethnicity			**-.15***	
Foreign born			.06	
Religiosity			**-.12***	
Relationships and consequences			-----	
Biology			-----	
Mainstream Contraception			.09	
Lifestyle			-----	
Alternative Contraception			-----	
Abstinence			-----	
Adjusted R2			.055	
Change in ADjR2			+.005	
F of Change			2.683	
F of final model			4.729***	

Note. ***p≤.001; **p≤.01; *p≤.05; +p≤.06.

Table 13.

Cluster Analysis of Sex Education Topics

	Cluster 1	Cluster 2	Cluster 3	Cluster 4	
	M(SD)	*M(SD)*	*M(SD)*	*M(SD)*	F
Relational & Pleasure	.58(.40)	1.65(.53)	1.98(.59)	1.31(.54)	94.213***
Biology	1.79(.57)	2.65(.31)	2.83(.21)	2.63(.31)	116.514***
Mainstream Contraception	1.27(.62)	1.67(.64)	2.87(.33)	2.24(.59)	114.375***
Lifestyles & Alternatives	.71(.46)	1.48(.60)	2.23(.60)	1.22(.54)	96.552***
Alternative Contraception	.83(.23)	.42(.35)	1.56(.68)	.54(.43)	129.395***
Abstinence	1.13(.90)	2.29(.51)	1.78(.97)	.88(.55)	62.378***

Note. [1]*N*=67; [2]*N*=70; [3]*N*=79; [4]*N*=113
***p≤.001; **p≤.01; *p≤.05; +p≤.10

Table 14.

Comparison of Dependent Variables by Sex Education Topics Clusters

		Clusters				
		1[1]	2[2]	3[3]	4[4]	F
	Range	*M(SD)*	*M(SD)*	*M(SD)*	*M(SD)*	
Condom Self-Efficacy	1.00-5.00	3.64(1.04)[a]	3.99(.78)[ab]	4.20(.72)[b]	3.87(.91)[ab]	5.211**
Sexual Assertiveness	0-4.00	2.28(.83)[a]	2.43(.67)[ab]	2.68(.69)[b]	2.42(.66)[ab]	4.263**
Inauthentic Voice	1.00-6.00	3.21(.67)[a]	3.07(.58)[ab]	2.81(.74)[b]	3.11(.64)[a]	5.061**
Rape Myths	1.00-7.00	2.28(.67)	2.52(.82)	2.29(.68)	2.47(.68)	2.246+
Coercive Experiences After 14	0-15.00	2.03(1.87)	1.94(1.72)	2.33(1.98)	2.20(2.02)	.614
Victimization Experiences	0-12.00	1.15(2.26)	1.00(1.96)	1.44(2.32)	1.29(1.92)	.591
Perpetration Experiences	0-15.00	.45(.76)	1.01(2.19)	.77(1.21)	.94(1.97)	1.606

Note. [1]*N*=64-67; [2]*N*=66-69; [3]*N*=76-79; [4]*N*=108-112
***p≤.001; **p≤.01; *p≤.05; +p≤.10

Table 15

Sexual Socialization Discourses Communicated to Boys and Girls by Schools

			All[1]	**Females**[2]	**Males**[3]	**Sex Differences**
	α	**Range**	***M(SD)***	***M(SD)***	***M(SD)***	**T-test**
Double Standard (15 items)	.92	0-3.00	.65(.63)	.65(.63)	.65(.63)	.083
Abstinence (10 items)	.89		.85(.61)	.86(.62)	.84(.60)	.372
Sex=Casual (6 items)	.81		.45(.56)	.40(.54)	.51(.58)	-1.749+
Sex=Love (4 items)	.87		1.6(.93)	1.66(.93)	1.53(.94)	1.194
Sex=Egalitarian (5 items)	.84		1.42(.87)	1.36(.89)	1.50(.84)	-1.474

Note. [1]*N*=329-334 [2]*N*=189-191 [3]*N*=142-144
*** *p*<.001; ***p*<.01 ; **p*<.05

Table 16

Sexual Socialization Discourses Communicated to Virgins and Non-Virgins by Schools

			All[4]	**Virgins**[5]	**Non-Virgins**[6]	**Experience Differences**
	α	**Range**	***M(SD)***	***M(SD)***	***M(SD)***	**T-test F**
Double Standard (15 items)	.92	0-3.00	.65(.63)	.63(.59)	.66(.67)	-.457
Abstinence (10 items)	.89		.85(.61)	.84(.61)	.86(.61)	-.259
Sex=Casual (6 items)	.81		.45(.56)	.43(.58)	.45(.55)	-.229
Sex=Love (4 items)	.87		1.6(.93)	1.6(.97)	1.62(.89)	-.210
Sex=Egalitarian (5 items)	.84		1.42(.87)	1.42(.85)	1.43(.90)	-.092

Note. [4]*N*=329-334 [5]*N*=136-138 [6]*N*=173-175
***p<.001; **p<.01; *p<.05

Table 17.

Intercorrelations between Sexual Socialization Discourses

	Double Standard	Abstinence	Sex=Casual	Sex=Love	Sex=Egal.
Double Standard	1				
Abstinence	.43***	1			
Sex=Casual	.67***	.13*	1		
Sex=Love	.43***	.52***	.30***	1	
Sex=Egal.	.49***	.20***	.51***	.55***	1

Note. *N*=330-334
***p<.001; **p<.01 ; *p<.05

Table 18.

Zero-Order Correlations Between Discourses from Schools and Outcomes (Attitudes and Experiences)

	Sexual Self-Efficacy	Sexual Comm.	Inauthentic Voice	Rape Myths	Coercion after 14	Coercion – as Victim	Coercion – as Perp
Double Standard				**.17****	**.13***	**.13***	**.16****
Abstinence							
Sex=Casual				.10+			**.13***
Sex=Love	**.12***						
Sex=Egalitarian	**.13***	**.14****	-.09+				
Double Standard			.13+	**.16***			**.20****
Abstinence							
Sex=Casual							
Sex=Love							
Sex=Egalitarian	**.15***						
Double Standard				**.19***	**.18***	**.27*****	.16+
Abstinence							
Sex=Casual		.15+					
Sex=Love	.14+	.16+					
Sex=Egalitarian		**.22***	-.15+				

Note. [1]*N*=321-330; [2]*N*=180-190; [3]*N*=136-142.
*** *p*<.001; ***p*<.01; **p*<.05

Table 19.

Zero-Order Correlations Between Discourses from Schools and Outcomes (Attitudes and Experiences)

		Sexual Self-Efficacy	Sexual Comm.	Inauthentic Voice	Rape Myths	Coercion after 14	Coercion – as Victim	Coercion – as Perp
All[1]	Double Standard				**.17****	**.13***	**.13***	**.16****
	Abstinence							
	Sex=Casual				.10+			**.13***
	Sex=Love	**.12***						
	Sex=Egalitarian	**.13***	**.14****	-.09+				
Virgins[2]	Double Standard					**.26****		.14+
	Abstinence						.15+	
	Sex=Casual					.16+		.16+
	Sex=Love	**.17***					.17+	
	Sex=Egalitarian	.16+				.16+		
Non-Virgins[3]	Double Standard				**.21****		**.16***	**.18***
	Abstinence							
	Sex=Casual	.14+			**.18***			.13+
	Sex=Love		**.15***	-.14+				
	Sex=Egalitarian		**.18***	-.14+				

Note. [1]*N*=321-330; [2]*N*=130-138; [3]*N*=170-175.
*** *p*<.001; ***p*<.01; **p*<.05

Table 20.

Partial Correlations Between Discourses from Schools and Outcomes (Attitudes and Experiences) Controlling for Gender, being Asian, Religiosity, Foreign Born

		Sexual Self-Efficacy	Sexual Comm.	Inauthentic Voice	Rape Myths	Coercion after 14	Coercion – as Victim	Coercion – as Perp
All[1]	Double Standard				**.21*** **	**.13***	**.13***	**.16****
	Abstinence			.10+				
	Sex=Casual				.11+			.10+
	Sex=Love							
	Sex=Egalitarian		.10+					
Women[2]	Double Standard				**.19****			**.20****
	Abstinence							
	Sex=Casual				.13+			
	Sex=Love							
	Sex=Egalitarian							
Men[3]	Double Standard				**.22****	.17+	**.26****	.17+
	Abstinence							
	Sex=Casual							
	Sex=Love							
	Sex=Egalitarian		.16+	-.14+				

Note. [1]*N*=313-321; [2]*N*=173-181; [3]*N*=132-136.
*** *p*<.001; ***p*<.01; **p*<.05

Table 21.

Partial Correlations Between Discourses from Schools and Outcomes (Attitudes and Experiences) Controlling for Gender, Asian, Religiosity, Foreign Born

		Sexual Self-Efficacy	Sexual Comm.	Inauthentic Voice	Rape Myths	Coercion after 14	Coercion – as Victim	Coercion – as Perp
All[1]	Double Standard				**.21*** **	**.13***	**.13***	**.16****
	Abstinence			.10+				
	Sex=Casual				.11+			.10+
	Sex=Love							
	Sex=Egalitarian		.10+					
Virgins[2]	Double Standard				**.19***	**.25***		
	Abstinence							
	Sex=Casual					.14+		
	Sex=Love							
	Sex=Egalitarian					.16+		
Non-Virgins[3]	Double Standard				**.25*** **		**.16***	**.19***
	Abstinence							
	Sex=Casual							
	Sex=Love							
	Sex=Egalitarian		.14+					

Note. [1]*N*=313-321; [2]*N*=123-132; [3]*N*=162-166.
*** *p*<.001; ***p*<.01; **p*<.05

Table 22.

Regression Analyses Testing Associations between Discourses and Sexual Agency

	Sexual Self-Efficacy	Sexual Communication	Inauthentic Voice
STEP 1: DEMOGRAPHICS			
Gender (being male)	**.12***	.09	
Asian ethnicity	**-.25*****	**-.21*****	
Foreign born	.03	-.01	
Religiosity	**-.13***	-.07	
Adjusted R2	.076	.047	
STEP 2: Demographics & Discourses			
Gender (being male)	**.11***	.08	
Asian ethnicity	**-.23*****	**-.19****	
Foreign born	.04	-.01	
Religiosity	**-.14***	-.08	
Double Standard	-----	-----	
Abstinence	-----	-----	-----
Sex=Casual	-----	-----	
Sex=Love	.02	-----	-----
Sex=Egalitarian	.07	.10	-----
Adjusted R2	.077	.052	
Change in ADjR2	+.001	+.005	
F of Change	1.196	2.831	
F of final model	5.464***	4.457***	

Note. ***p≤.001; **p≤.01; *p≤.05, +p≤.06

Table 23.

Regression Analyses Testing Associations between Discourses and Coercion Attitudes and Experiences

	Rape Myths	Coercion After Age 14	Victim Experiences	Perpetrator Experiences
STEP 1: DEMOGRAPHICS				
Gender (being male)	**.27*** **	**-.20*** **	**-.18*** **	**.23*** **
Asian ethnicity	**.16** **	-.11+	**-.16** **	
Foreign born	**.17** **			**.16** **
Religiosity	.06	-.11+	**-.13***	-.10+
Adjusted R2	.136	.050	.050	.078
STEP 2: Demographics & Discourses				
Gender (being male)	**.27*** **	**-.21*** **	**-.18*** **	**.23*** **
Asian ethnicity	**.20*** **	-.08	**-.14*** **	
Foreign born	**.15** **			**.15***
Religiosity	.04	**-.12***	**-.14***	**-.11***
Double Standard	**.19*** **	**-.13***	**.11***	.12
Abstinence	-----	-----	-----	-----
Sex=Casual	-----	-----	-----	.03
Sex=Love	-----	-----	-----	-----
Sex=Egalitarian	-----	-----	-----	-----
Adjusted R2	.168	.063	.059	.090
Change in ADjR2	+.032	+.013	+.009	+.012
F of Change	12.929***	5.619*	3.864*	3.187*
F of final model	13.734***	5.331***	4.943***	6.290***

Note. ***p≤.001; **p≤.01; *p≤.05; +p≤.06

Table 24.

Cluster Analysis of Sexual Socialization Discourses

	Cluster 1	**Cluster 2**	**Cluster 3**	
	M(SD)	***M(SD)***	***M(SD)***	**F**
Sexual Double Standard	.56(.34)	.19(.25)	1.50(.53)	316.376***
Sexual Abstinence	1.07(.56)	.48(.37)	1.07(.65)	51.280***
Sex=Casual and Free	.27(.29)	.12(.25)	1.20(.50)	267.325***
Sex=Expression of Love	2.23(.57)	.69(.59)	2.06(.64)	239.551***
Sex=Egalitarian	1.66(.69)	.71(.63)	2.15(.57)	141.510***

Note. [1]*N*=121; [2]*N*=127; [3]*N*=81
***p≤.001; **p≤.01; *p≤.05; +p≤.10

Table 25.

Comparison of Dependent Variables by Sexual Socialization Discourse Clusters

		Clusters			
		1[1]	**2**[2]	**3**[3]	**F**
	Range	***M(SD)***	***M(SD)***	***M(SD)***	
Condom Self-Efficacy	1.00-5.00	4.03(.80)	3.77(.95)	4.01(.85)	3.139*
Sexual Assertiveness	0-4.00	2.51(.69)[ab]	2.31(.80)[a]	2.56(.60)[b]	3.499*
Inauthentic Voice	1.00-6.00	3.04(.64)	3.06(.65)	3.04(.75)	.028
Rape Myths	1.00-7.00	2.24(.65)[a]	2.46(.75)[b]	2.56(.73)[b]	5.621**
Coercive Experiences After 14	0-15.00	2.10(2.03)	1.98(1.88)	2.45(1.80)	1.447
Victimization Experiences	0-12.00	1.19(2.02)	1.11(1.99)	1.54(2.41)	1.056
Perpetration Experiences	0-15.00	.56(1.21)[a]	.80(1.84)[ab]	1.25(2.04)[b]	4.024*

Note. [1]*N*=118-121; [2]*N*=122-125; [3]*N*=77-80
***p≤.001; **p≤.01; *p≤.05; +p≤.10

Table 26.

Demographic Characteristics of Focus Group Participants

FG #	#	Name	M/ F	Age	Race/ Ethn.	Relig.	Sexual Orient.	Where from	Type school	Grade had SE	Type*
1	1	Brian	M	19	White	Catholic	Straight	Farm. Hills, MI	Private Catholic	5-7	A
	2	Alex	M	18	White	Jewish	Straight	Farm. Hills, MI	Public	5, 7	C
	3	Fred	M	18	White	Unitarian	Straight	Beverly Hills, MI	Public	6, 11 8 (UU)	C
	4	Marlon	M	18	White	None	Straight	E. Lans., MI	Private	4-7	C
	5	Dean	M	18	White	Christian	Straight	Wyandotte, MI	Public	5, 8, 9	CB
	6	Brad	M	18	Mex. Amer.	Roman Catholic	Straight	Irvington, NY	Public	9, 11	CB
2	7	Amy	F	18	Asian	None	Hetero	Northbrook, IL	Public	5, 7, 10	C
	8	Donnie Darko	M	18	White	Roman Catholic	Straight	Shelby Twp, MI?	Public	7, 9	CB
	9	Maverick	M	19	White	Jewish	Hetero	Woodcliff Lake, NJ	Public	7, 11	CB
	10	Bruce Wayne	M	18	Arab	Muslim	Hetero	Rochester Hills, MI	Public	4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 11	C
	11	Stacy	F	18	Asian	None	Hetero	Rochester Hills, MI	Public	4, 5, 6	AB
	12	Roxanne	F	18	Euro.	None	Hetero	Garrison, NY	Public	8, 10, 5 (mom)	ABC
3	13	Mitch	M	18	White	Roman Catholic	Straight/ Hetero	E. Grand Rapids, MI; Dobbs Ferry, NY	Public	9, 10, Middle?	CB
	14	Santana Moss	M	18	Black – AA	Baptist	Hetero	Detroit, MI	Private	5?	Really never had it
	15	Phil	M	18	White	Jewish	Hetero	Briarcliff Manor, NY	Public	10	CAB
	16	Jack	M	18	White	None	Straight	Cleveland (Ashtabula), OH	Public	6-8 (3 times)	CA
	17	Roy Hobbs	M	18	White	Jewish	Straight	Jericho, NY	Public	7-10	C
	18	Sean	M	18	White	Catholic	Hetero	Burke, VA	Private/	6	CAB

		Taylor							Religious		
	19	Shawn Joe	F	18	AA	Baptist	Hetero	Detroit, MI	Public	9	Health
	20	Kim	F	18	White	Jewish	Hetero	Portage, MI	Public	5, 6, 7, 8, 12	C
	21	Molly	F	18	South Asian	Muslim	Hetero	Bloomfield Hills, MI	Public	8 (once)	Puberty video
	22	Wonder Woman	F	18	White	Catholic	"Open but res-erved for few"	Bloomfield Hills, MI	Catholic private	9 – sex ed HS all yrs - relig	CAB
	23	Raven	F	18	AA	Pentacostal	Hetero	Detroit, MI	public	9	CA
	24	Jack 2	M	19	White	Christian	hetero	Marshfield, ? Kalamazoo, MI	Public	5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11	CB
	25	Essence	F	18	Asian American	Non-denom Christian	Straight	Troy, MI	Public	5, 6, 9	BC
	26	Jenna	F	18	White, Jew.	Jewish	Hetero	Tampa, FL	Private	9, 12	CB
	27	Jazz	F	19	Asian (Thai)	Buddhist	Straight	Glenview, IL	Public	8, 9, 10	CB
	28	Frank	M	19	White	Protestant	Straight	Battle Creek, MI	Public	6, 7, 8	CA
	29	Chaka Khan	F	19 soph	African	AME	Hetero	Detroit, MI	Public (perf. arts)	8, 9	A
	30	Blair	F	19	White	Jewish	Hetero	NYC	private	5, 9, 11, 12	CB
	31	Jackie	F	18	White	Catholic	Hetero	Troy, MI	Public	B+	C
	32	Michelle	F	18	White	Jewish	Hetero	Briarcliff Manor, NY	Public	7, 8, 10	C
	33	Jennifer	F	18	White	Lutheran	Hetero	Laingsburg, MI	Public	6	C
	34	Riley	F	18	White	Catholic	Hetero	Dearborn, MI	Private/ religious	7, 9	AB

Note: A=Abstinence, B=Biology, C=Comprehensive

Table 27.

Sample of Diversity of Timing of Sex Education Instruction

	Grade(s) Received Sex Education								
	4th	**5th**	**6th**	**7th**	**8th**	**9th**	**10th**	**11th**	**12th**
Marlon	X	X	X	X					
Dean		X			X	X			
Brad						X		X	
Amy		X		X			X		
Maverick				X				X	
Alex		X		X					
Roy Hobbs				X	X	X	X		
Sean			X						
Shawn Joe						X			
Kim		X	X	X					
Chaka					X	X			
Jenna						X			X
Blair		X				X		X	X
Jack			X	X	X				

APPENDIX A.

Sex Education Survey Measures

WHERE DID YOU LEARN ABOUT SEXUALITY?

For each of the following topics, please indicate how much "information" (i.e. facts, attitudes, or values) was communicated to you about the issue from each of the following sources. Only rate the amount of information, not your endorsement of the information.

3 = a lot 2 = some 1 = a little 0 = nothing

EXAMPLE:

	Mother	***Father***	***Friends***	***Media (magazines, TV, movies)***	***School Sex Ed/Health Class***	***Religious Institution***
Condoms and other birth control	0	2	1	2	3	0

If you had received some information on this topic from your friends and from magazines, a lot from health class, but hardly anything from your parents, or TV, you might answer as in the example above.

	Mother	**Father**	**Friends**	**Media (magazines, TV, movies)**	**School Sex Ed/ Health Class**	**Religious Institut.**
Sexual intercourse						
Abortion						
Abstinence						
Anal sex						
Condoms and other birth control						
Dating norms and expectations						
Fertilization/ conception						
Homosexuality						
Menstruation						

Necking and petting						
Oral sex						
Rape/dating violence						
Pregnancy						
Sexuality as something positive and natural						
Sexually transmitted diseases						
Taking care of yourself emotionally						
Avoiding unwanted sexual experiences						
How to talk to a partner about sex						

CUMULATIVE SEX EDUCATION IN SCHOOL

1. How much information did you receive about the following forms of contraception?				
	None	**A little**	**Some**	**A lot**
a) Condoms				
b) Pills				
c) Patch				
d) IUDs				
e) Dental dams				
f) Rhythm method/ withdrawal				
g) Norplant				
h) Depo Provera				
i) Advantages of the various contraceptive methods				
j) Disadvantages of the various contraceptive methods				
k) Effectiveness of the various contraceptive methods				

2. How much information did you receive about:				
	None	**A little**	**Some**	**A lot**
Alternatives to sexual intercourse?				
Alternative lifestyles/sexual choices?				
HIV/AIDS?				
Other sexually transmitted diseases?				
Different sexual orientations and choices?				
Counseling/someone to talk to?				
Gender (such as transgender issues?)				
Waiting until marriage to have sex?				
Taking an abstinence pledge?				

APPENDIX B.

Sexual Agency and Sexual Coercion Measures

Sexual Self-Efficacy Subscale

Please indicate whether or not you think you can do each of the following activities, regardless whether or not you are sexually active. Please rate your degree of confidence in your ability to do each activity using the following scale:

1	2	3	4	5
Very Uncertain				Absolutely Certain

1. _____ Discuss using condoms and/or other contraceptives with a potential partner.

2. _____ Carry condoms around with you "in case".

3. _____ Discuss with a partner use of condoms for HIV/AIDS protection when other means of contraception are already being used.

4. _____ Be able to buy condoms/contraceptives.

5. _____ Discuss precautions with a doctor or health professional.

Sexual Assertiveness

This index is designed to measure the degree of sexual assertiveness you have in relationships with a typical partner, either casual or long-term. Please answer each item as accurately as you can by placing a number from the scale below by each question. If you feel that a particular item does not apply to you at this time, please write "**NA**" (not applicable).

0	1	2	3	4	NA
Never	Rarely	Some of the time	Most of the time	All of the time	Not applicable

1. _____ I feel uncomfortable talking during sex.
2. _____ I feel that I am shy when it comes to sex.
3. _____ I approach my partner for sex when I desire it.
4. _____ I think I am open with my partner about my sexual needs.
5. _____ I enjoy sharing my sexual fantasies with my partner.
6. _____ I feel uncomfortable talking to my friends about sex.
7. _____ I communicate my sexual desires to my partner.
8. _____ It is difficult for me to touch myself during sex.
9. _____ It is hard for me to say no even when I do not want sex.
10. _____ I am reluctant to describe myself as a sexual person.
11. _____ I feel uncomfortable telling my partner what feels good.
12. _____ I speak up for my sexual feelings.
13. _____ I am reluctant to insist that my partner satisfy me.
14. _____ I find myself having sex when I do not really want it.
15. _____ When a technique does not feel good, I tell my partner.
16. _____ I feel comfortable giving sexual praise to my partner.
17. _____ It is easy for me to discuss sex with my partner.
18. _____ I feel comfortable in initiating sex with my partner.
19. _____ I find myself doing sexual things I do not like.
20. _____ Pleasing my partner is more important than my pleasure.
21. _____ I feel comfortable telling my partner how to touch me.
22. _____ I enjoy masturbating myself to orgasm.

23. _____ If something feels good, I insist on doing it again.

24. _____ It is hard for me to be honest about my sexual feelings.

25. _____ I try to avoid discussing the subject of sex.

Inauthentic Voice Scale of the Femininity Ideology Scale

Using the scale below, please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with each of the following statements:

1	2	3	4	5	6
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree a Little	Agree a Little	agree	strongly agree

1. _____ I would tell a friend she looks nice, even if I think she shouldn't go out of the house dressed like that.

2. _____ I express my opinions only if I can think of a nice way of doing it.

3. _____ I worry that I make others feel bad if I am successful.

4. _____ I would not change the way I do things in order to please someone else.

5. _____ I tell my friends what I honestly think even when it is an unpopular idea.

6. _____ Often I look happy on the outside in order to please others, even if I don't feel happy on the inside.

7. _____ I wish I could say what I feel more often than I do.

8. _____ I feel like it's my fault when I have disagreements with my friends.

9. _____ When my friends ignore my feelings, I think that my feelings weren't very important anyway.

10. _____ I usually tell my friends when they hurt my feelings.

Rape Myths Acceptance Scale

	Strongly disagree			Neutral			Strongly agree
1. A woman who goes to the home or apartment of a man on their first date implies that she is willing to have sex.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. Any female can get raped.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. One reason that women falsely report a rape is that they frequently have a need to call attention to themselves.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. Any healthy woman can successfully resist a rapist if she really wants to.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. When women go around braless or wearing short skirts and tight tops, they are just asking for trouble.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. In the majority of rapes, the victim is promiscuous or has a bad reputation.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7, If a girl engages in necking or petting and she lets things get out of hand, it is her own fault if her partner forces sex on her.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. Women who get raped while hitchhiking get what they deserve.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9. A woman who is stuck-up and thinks she is too good to talk to guys on the street deserves to be taught a lesson.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10. Many women have an unconscious wish to be raped, and may then unconsciously set up a situation in which they are likely to be attacked.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11. If a woman gets drunk at a party, and has intercourse with a man she's just met there, she should be considered "fair game" to other males at the party who want to have sex with her too, whether she wants to or not.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12. If someone at first says, "No" to kissing, petting, or sex, but eventually agrees, this is consensual.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Unwanted Experiences*

This set of questions is about some very personal things-they are about sexual experiences you may have had. To be more specific, they are about experiences in which the other person was older and you were young or experiences that made you feel uncomfortable or that you had no control over, like if you were forced to do something you didn't want to do, or felt like you couldn't just say "no".

Please indicate which of the following experiences you had before age 14 AND after age 14.	Before age 14		After age 14	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
1. Has anyone ever talked to you about sex in a way that made you feel uncomfortable?				
2. Has anyone ever "flashed" you or exposed their sexual parts to you?				
3. Has anyone watched you while you were dressing or using the bathroom, in a way that made you feel uncomfortable?				
4. Has anyone ever talked you into or made you watch sexual acts like masturbation or intercourse when you didn't want to?				
5. Have your private parts been touched by another person in a sexual way when you did not want them to?				
6. Has anyone ever rubbed his/her sexual parts against you when you didn't want them to?				
7. Has anyone ever talked you into or made you touch their private parts (breasts, genitals) when you didn't want to?				
8. Has anyone ever talked you into or made you have sexual intercourse when you didn't want to?				
9. Has anyone ever talked you into or made you have anal intercourse when you didn't want to?				
10. Has anyone ever talked you into or made you perform oral sex on them when you didn't want to?				
11. Have you ever experienced someone performing oral sex on you when you didn't want them to?				
12. Has anyone ever talked you into or made you pose for sexy or suggestive pictures when you didn't want to?				
13. Has anyone ever talked you into, or made you have sex with them or someone else for money?				
14. Has anyone ever kissed you in a sexual way when you did not want them to?				

15. Has anyone ever talked you into or made you participate in sexual acts other than these when you didn't want to?				

***Used only experiences after age 14**

Modified Sexual Experiences Survey

Please check off all that apply.

	NO	YES, kissing or petting	YES, sexual intercourse
1. Have you ever had sexual contact with another person when you both wanted to?			
2. Have you ever had another person misinterpret the level of sexual intimacy you desired? If yes, who: ___My current boyfriend/girlfriend/partner ___My ex ___A friend or colleague at work ___A new acquaintance (e.g., in a disco) ___An unknown person ___Other (please indicate):_____			
3. Have you ever obtained a sexual experience by saying things you didn't really mean?			
4. Have you ever had a sexual experience with another person when s/he didn't really want to because s/he felt pressured by your continual arguments?			
5. Have you ever been in a situation where you became so sexually aroused that you could not stop yourself even if other person didn't want to?			
6. Have you ever obtained a sexual experience with someone by giving them alcohol or drugs?			
7. Have you ever had a sexual experience with someone even though **they** said no at first?			
8. Have you ever had a sexual experience when **you** didn't want to because you felt pressured by someone's continual arguments and pressure?			
9. Have you ever been in a situation where another person became so sexually aroused that they could not			

stop themselves even if **you** didn't want to?			
10. Has anyone ever obtained a sexual experience with you by giving **you** alcohol or drugs?			
11. Have you ever had a sexual experience with someone even though **you** said no at first?			

APPENDIX C.

Sex Education Topic Subscale Items

Relationships and Consequences
Oral sex
Homosexuality
How to talk to a partner about sex
Necking and petting
Taking care of yourself emotionally
Dating norms and expectations
Anal sex
Sexuality as something positive and natural
Avoiding unwanted sexual experiences
Abortion
Rape/dating violence

Biology
Sexually transmitted diseases
Pregnancy
Fertilization/conception
Menstruation
Condoms and other birth control
Sexual intercourse
Other sexually transmitted diseases
HIV/AIDS

Mainstream Contraception
Effectiveness of the various contraceptive methods
Disadvantages of the various contraceptive methods
Advantages of the various contraceptive methods
Pills
Condoms

Lifestyles and Alternatives
Different sexual orientations and choices
Alternative lifestyles/sexual choices
Gender (such as transgender issues)
Alternatives to sexual intercourse
Counseling/someone to talk to

Alternative Contraception
Norplant
Depo Provera

IUDs
Dental dams
Patch
Rhythm method/withdrawal

Abstinence
Waiting until marriage to have sex
Taking an abstinence pledge

APPENDIX D.

Sexual Socialization Discourse Items

Double Standard Subscale

33. Men want as much as they can get on a first date.
48. Men will say whatever they need to say to get a woman into bed.
26. It is up to women to limit the sexual advances of men and to keep men from "going too far."
42. Men are most interested in women as potential sex partners and don't want to be "just friends" with them.
28. In dating, the goal for men is "to score" with as many women as they can.
6. Men want sex, women want relationships.
14. Men think about sex all the time.
25. It's difficult for men to resist their sexual urges.
36. In order to catch a man, a woman should not be too friendly or available, but should play "hard to get."
32. It is worse for a woman to sleep around than it is for a man.
4. Men lose respect for women who sleep with them too early in a relationship.
15. It is unsafe for a woman to be alone with a man she does not know well.
53. It's a man's nature to have a roaming eye.
10. It is better for a woman to use her "feminine charm" (e.g., flirting, body language) to indicate her interest indirectly than to express it directly.
34. Men should be the initiators in romantic relations and should be the ones to ask women out.

Sexual Abstinence Subscale

16. Sex belongs only in married relationships.
9. Sex outside of marriage is a sin.
19. You should abstain from sex until marriage to avoid getting pregnant or getting someone pregnant.
43. People who have sex before marriage typically regret it later.
17. People who have premarital sexual relations risk bringing shame to the family name.
56. Abstinence is the best policy. Just say no.
18. It is inappropriate to masturbate or touch yourself for sexual pleasure.
1. The primary goal of sexual intercourse is to have children.
8. Oral sex is dirty.
7. It is not appropriate to hug and kiss your partner in front of members of your family.

Sex is Casual and Free

3. Having sex is just something fun to do.
11. College is a time for sexual exploration.
12. No sexual act should be considered immoral as long as both parties are consenting adults.

29. Having sex with someone should not necessarily imply your commitment to that person.
37. It is better for men and women to have diverse sexual experiences before they get married.
39. Having sex should be viewed as just a normal part of dating relationships.

Sex is an Expression of Love
5. Sex should be a deep and meaningful expression of love between two people.
23. Partners should be intellectually and emotionally intimate before they are physically intimate.
30. The decision to have sex is serious and should not be taken lightly. With it comes a lot of responsibilities.
31. Sex is best when the partners are in a loving and committed relationship.

Sex is Egalitarian Subscale
38. Women have just as many sexual urges and desires as men.
44. The human body is nothing to be ashamed of.
50. Being sexual is a natural part of being human.
57. It is perfectly acceptable for women to make the first move and to ask men out directly.
58. Only you can know when you are ready for sex.

APPENDIX E.

Focus Group Interview Protocol

Sex Education in Schools - Focus Group Questions

Introduction
Introduce self, study, confidentiality, self-care, consent forms

Overall
2 things you liked about your sex ed; 2 things you didn't.

(My sense is that this will generate a fair amount of discussion, but I plan to have a number of probes handy…)

--How would you describe your sex education?
--What was the program like?
--What kinds of things did you hear in sex ed?

Tone
How would you describe the tone?

- *(Ex:* Sex is negative and scary? Sex is natural? Positive? Etc. Open? Secretive? Sheepish?)

Probes:

- Who did you have lessons with? (i.e. co-ed, single sex, multiple grades, particular classes)
- Were there differences between what boys and girls learned?
- How did people respond in the lessons? (comfortable, giggling, etc.)
- How did you feel being there? Asking questions?
- How realistic were they? (The teachers? The discussions?)

Relationships
Did you get any messages about how men and women are supposed to act in relationships? (i.e. gender roles, etc.)

To what extent did you talk about relationships or communication?

- *Probes:* Communication? Negotiation? LGBTQ? Relationships? Coercion? Danger? Assertiveness?

- Was anything said about different types of relationships (homosexual, etc.)? Cultural differences?

- Do you feel like your sex education affected the ways you approached relationships or encounters? How?

Conclusion

- Magic wand - What, if anything, would you have changed? If you could change one thing…
- If you could emphasize one thing to remember…

INTERVIEW/FOCUS GROUP TIMELINE

0-10:00	Introduce myself and notetaker Explain that this is a focus group about sex education Explain that we don't want to get too personal / importance of self-care / etc. Read and sign consent forms Make name tents with pseudonyms Fill out demographic sheets (with pseudonyms)
10:00-15:00	Intro group members, go around and say "names", age/year, where went to high school
15:00-25:00	Give out index cards On one, write 2 things liked about sex education; on other, 2 things didn't. Discuss.
25:00-45:00	Relationships section
45:00-65:00	Tone section
65:00-80:00	Magic wand question
80:00-90:00	Last thoughts? (Can this be shorter?)

APPENDIX F.

List of Focus Group Themes

Theme 1: "Comprehensive" versus "abstinence" information

- Participants seemed to receive either factual information regarding biology, disease, and contraception; or information about sexual abstinence, relationships, and love

Theme 2: Gendered messages about sex

- Messages about issues such as sexual abstinence, fear, and caution seemed to be targeted toward young women; messages about pleasure and about rape (i.e. don't do it) seemed targeted toward men.

Theme 3: Victim-perpetrator dichotomy

- Women tended to be portrayed as victims of sexual violence, and men as perpetrators
- **Possible "Backlash"**
    - Sexuality seemed to be dichotomized and create gender antagonism → there was no space or language for boys to reject sexual advances; nor for girls to be blamed for harassment

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