

What's Missing?:
Discourses of Gender and Sexuality in Federally-Funded Sex Education

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to Beth Helena Intondi, without whom it would not exist.

Aunt Beth, thank you for making higher education accessible not only to me, but to a whole generation of our family. You make dreams come true.

It is a privilege to be your namesake.

I publish this, and all of my work, in your honor.

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Abstract of Dissertation

What's Missing?: Discourses of Gender and Sexuality in Federally-Funded Sex Education

This work performs a critical discourse analysis of federally-funded abstinence-only and comprehensive sex education curricula in order to understand how, through the implementation process, sex education policies construct gender and sexuality. Both the policy debates and the policy infrastructure revolve around the question of outcomes -- which approach to sex education is most effective? -- and as such, the policy landscape dichotomizes abstinence-only and comprehensive approaches and renders invisible the functioning of gender within them.

By examining the construction of gender and sexuality in six commonly-used, federally-funded curricula, (three abstinence-only and three comprehensive), this research demonstrates that, consistent with policy debates, what is included in the two types of federally-funded sex education is very different, but *what's missing* from these programs is more alike than the policy environment suggests. The curricula all fail to convey discourses of positivity around sex; similarity around gender; mutuality around relationships; and men's responsibility around parenting and sexual assault prevention. I therefore argue that, regardless of whether curricula are abstinence-based or comprehensive, they all fail to teach equitable, empowering versions of gender and sexuality.

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Table 1 Characteristics of the Curricula

Chapter 1: Introduction

In this project, I perform a critical discourse analysis of federally-funded abstinence-only and comprehensive sex education curricula in order to understand how, through the implementation process, sex education policies construct gender and sexuality. Both the policy debates and the policy infrastructure are designed around the question of outcomes -- which approach to sex education is most effective? -- and as such, the policy landscape dichotomizes abstinence-only and comprehensive approaches to sex education and renders invisible the functioning of gender within them. By examining the construction of gender and sexuality in the curricula, however, I find that these two programs are more alike than their dualistic context suggests. Consistent with policy debates, I find that what is included in the two types of curricula is often very different, but I also find that *what's missing* from the curricula is more alike than the policy environment leads us to believe. In the areas of sexuality, gender, relationships, and men's responsibilities associated with parenting and sexual assault prevention, all of the curricula are missing equitable, empowering messages that undermine dominant, disempowering notions of gender and sexuality.

In this chapter, I briefly introduce readers to the topic of sex education policy. I discuss sex education curricula as an important early stage in the process of implementing sex education policies. I discuss my methodological approach, critical discourse analysis, and I consider the importance of studying gender equity in sex education. Finally, I outline my findings and discuss the plan for this work.

Sex Education Policy in Brief

Although there is significant diversity among programs, researchers and policymakers typically conceive of curriculum-based sex education as belonging to one of two groups: abstinence-only education (AOE) or comprehensive sex education (CSE) (Kirby, 2007). Abstinence-only education teaches that sexual abstinence until heterosexual marriage is the expected standard for all human sexual activity. These programs do not teach about contraceptives unless focusing on their failure rates (SSA, 2007). The literature often refers to AOE programs as "abstinence education" or "abstinence-only-until-marriage" programs (DeLamater, 2007). For the purposes of this study, I use the term "abstinence-only education" or the acronym "AOE."

Comprehensive sex education programs teach that sexual abstinence is the safest choice for teenagers, while also emphasizing that sexually active teens use condoms or contraception when engaging in sex (Kirby, 2007). Comprehensive programs are also known as "theoretically based," "abstinence plus," or "HIV/AIDS risk education" programs (DeLameter, 2007). For the purposes of this research, I use the term "comprehensive sex education" or the acronym "CSE."

Between 1982 and 2011, the federal government spent over \$1.65 billion on abstinence-only education, while states spent an additional \$487.5 million in matching requirements, bringing total public expenditures on abstinence-only education to over \$2 billion to date (SIECUS, 2011). Federal funding priorities have shifted since President Obama took office, however, and now the bulk of federal expenditures flow to "evidence-based" programs, which are largely comprehensive in nature. Currently, \$50 million in

federal funds remain designated for abstinence-only programs, while \$190 million fund evidence-based sex education every year (SIECUS, 2011).

Debates over policies around these two approaches are fiery, contentious, and partisan-based. Outwardly, sex education policy debates revolve around the question of whether schools should teach teens about condoms. Liberals argue that contraception education keeps sexually active teens safe, while conservatives argue that this information undermines abstinence messages and encourages sexual activity. Obama-era "evidence-based" policy solutions evade the partisan debate, however, by funding programs that "work," regardless of whether they are abstinence-only or comprehensive-based. However, there is only one abstinence-based curriculum that has been able to demonstrate effectiveness (DHHS, 2011). Obama-era sex education policies have therefore failed to diffuse the policy debate because they are *in effect* comprehensive sex education policies.

While the debates over sex education have received a great deal of attention, little attention has been paid to the actual contents of the curricula in question. In this study, I explore this important element of sex education policy, and I compare the discourses of gender and sexuality reproduced in the two types of sex education that lie at the center of the dichotomous policy debates (Irvine, 2002; Luker, 2006). I compare the curricula funded through evidence-based programs (the CSE curricula) versus those funded through the remaining abstinence-only funding stream (the AOE curricula), and in that light I also compare curricula with evidence of efficacy (the CSE programs) versus those that have yet to prove their effectiveness (the AOE programs). Specifically, I focus on gender and sexuality in the curricula because this important element of sex education is

often silent in policy debates (Fields, 2008). At the outset of this project, research had established that differing values about gender underlie policy debates over sex education, but there was little information available about how gender functions in federally-supported sex education curricula (Fields, 2008; Luker, 2006). Likewise, research had established that vivid gender inequities permeated sex education programs of the 1980s (Fine, 1988), but there was scant research examining present day programs. Thus, I conducted this research in response to a gender-blind public discourse around sex education in order to understand how gender functioned in these contentious programs.

Sex Education Through The Policy Process

Public policy development involves multiple stages, including agenda setting, policy formulation, adoption, implementation, evaluation and feedback (McCool, 1995).ⁱ Here, I argue that the curricula are a valuable site for this analysis because they are an important early stage in the implementation process of sex education policies. Below, I briefly discuss the policy process and highlight the role that sex education curricula play in implementation.

Agenda Setting. Agenda setting is the first stage in the policy process and, according to Kingdon (1995), it involves shaping the issues or problems to which government officials, or those who make policy decisions (including voters), pay serious attention. Social constructionist approaches to policy research acknowledge that most policy problems do not simply "emerge" from the lexicon and make it onto the policy agenda. Rather, problems are often social constructions (Bacchi, 1999). In the area of teen reproductive health policy, for instance, advocates for unrestricted teen access to contraception selectively reported statistics about teen birthrates in order to produce an

"epidemic" of teen pregnancy in the hopes of garnering support of the 1978 Adolescent Health Services and Prevention and Care Act. The notion of a teen pregnancy "epidemic" continues to pervade the public imagination and, coupled with the notion of "children having children" (Fields, 2008), is still employed to validate present day sex education policies (Moran, 2000). Although the process of a social phenomenon becoming a problem worthy of political action is not always as intentionally orchestrated as the teen pregnancy epidemic, social constructionists point to the fact that policy problems are socially produced rather than discovered (Bacchi, 1996).

Formulation. How policy problems are constructed shapes the way in which policymakers formulate solutions to them (Bacchi, 1999). The problems identified influence the realm of solutions considered as well as they way in which the solutions are implemented. In terms of sex education policy, for instance, abstinence-only proponents conceive of the "problem" as being premarital sex among teens. Comprehensive sex education advocates, alternatively, view the problem as too-high teen pregnancy and STI rates (Moran, 2000). AOE supporters, consequently, advocate policies aimed at stopping teen sex, while CSE proponents advocate policies aimed at reducing risk, (which include stopping teen sex but also include contraception education).

Adoption. The next stage in the policy process is the adoption stage. This is the stage of the process of greatest concern to political scientists who study the strategies that politicians use to advance and their agendas. In the case of sex education, for instance, Doan & Williams (2008) argue that the passage of the Title V State Abstinence Education program as a rider on the 1996 welfare reform legislation resembled an advent in politics in which morality policies -- those concerned with attempts to regulate

morality through political means -- passed quietly through omnibus legislation. The authors refer to this practice as "stealth morality policy," and suggest that it represents a new era in morality policymaking.

Implementation. The next stage in the policy process is the implementation, and that is where I locate this work. Implementation involves the interaction between policies, which set goals, and the actions taken towards achieving them. It is the stage in the policy process in which policy goals are carried out, accomplished, fulfilled, produced, completed and subverted (Pressman & Wildavsky, 1973). Implementation is a complex, convoluted process involving the interactions between agencies, governments, "street level bureaucrats" (Lipsky, 2010) and citizens (Fields, 2008).

The implementation of sex education policies involves a process in which federal agencies provide funds for grant recipients to teach specific types of sex education (abstinence-only or "evidence-based"). Grantees, in turn, implement federally-sanctioned curricula in classrooms and community settings. Thus, two important, temporally distinct moments influencing the implementation sex education policies are (1) the curricula (2) the classrooms in which these programs are implemented.

In this project I study the curricula instead of the classrooms. I made this choice for two primary reasons. First, in studying the curricula, I was able to gauge the widespread tone of sex education policy at this point in U.S. history. While I was not able to interrogate the depth of implementation in the way that I would if I conducted ethnographic research in classrooms, I was able to consider the breadth of meanings communicated through federally-funded sex education programs across the country. This work examines curricula that are implemented in thousands of classrooms and

subsequently augments existing research that interrogates the inter-workings of sex education classrooms (Fields, 2008).

Surely teachers co-opt the curricula, and what happens in the curriculum does not necessarily mirror what happens in the classroom (Fields, 2008; Fine & McClelland, 2006). Yet, there is reason to believe that teachers stick fairly closely to the curricula in sex education classrooms because it protects them from parental scrutiny around the highly contentious topic of sex (Trudell, 1993). Teachers are required to implement the curricula they are given, and even though they sometimes subvert the curriculum, the contents of the curricula certainly influence the information that is shared in the classroom. Thus, this early stage in the implementation of sex education policy (the curricula) enables and restricts what happens in a later stage (the classrooms).

The second reason I studied the curricula was because the federal government plays a significant role in the creation and recommendation of sex education programs. Bush-era abstinence-only programs directly funded the development and dissemination of numerous abstinence-only curricula that are still in use today. Obama-era evidence-based programs do not fund the development of the curricula, but they require that grantees use a handful of curricula for replication programs, meaning that most grantees can only use the programs endorsed by the U.S. government (DHHS, 2011). However, aside from whether federally-funded sex education curricula teach about condoms, little was known about the messages communicated through federally mandated instructional materials prior to my research.

It is important for policy analysts to study implementation because "a close match between policy intentions and agency outcomes is the exception rather than the rule,"

(Yanow 1996, 202) and the study of implementation focuses on such incongruencies. As Yanow (1996, 207) states, "the study of implementation directs our consideration toward policy objectives other than those stated explicitly, and widen[s] the scope of evaluations to include . . . contextual meanings" (Yanow, 1996, 207). At the outset of this work I speculated that through implementation, federally-funded sex education programs communicate more than goal-oriented abstinence and/or contraception information. I posited that in addition to teaching about abstinence and/or contraception, federally-funded sex education curricula teach meanings about gender and sexuality, and that understanding these meanings is important policy knowledge.

Outcomes. The study of implementation is important to policy analysts because (1) implementation affects the outcomes of policies, and (2) the implementation process often communicates meanings that diverge from policy goals (Yanow, 1996). In terms of policy outcomes, it is important to study how federally-funded sex education programs teach gender and sexuality because the way in which they do so may contribute to the ability of sex education policies to meet their goals of reducing rates of sexual risk-taking, pregnancy and STIs. Research establishes that dominant constructions of heterosex increase sexual risk among all youth, and it follows that the degree to which sex education programs reproduce dominant constructions of heterosexuality may affect the ability of the programs to reduce sexual risk.

The power relations inherent in dominant discourses of sex privilege straight, white men in various ways over other groups (Hollway, 1984; 1989). In heterosexual relations, dominant discourses position women as sexually passive and discourage their sexual knowledge, assertion and desire, while simultaneously constructing men as

aggressive, experienced actors who are motivated by sexual conquest and promiscuity. The interaction of the two produces risky sexual scenarios for both genders (Bowleg, Belgrave & Reisen, 2000; Bralock & Griffin, 2007; Haffner, 1998; Ku, Sonenstein & Pleck, 1994). As Dworkin, Beckford & Ehrhardt (2007, p. 272) state:

This risk occurs...through...cultural norms that encourage passivity in women during sexual initiation and decision-making, by encouraging women to place the centrality of male pleasure at the center of sexual scenarios at the expense of safer sex needs, and by encouraging women to leave condom initiation and use to men. For men, traditional scripts place pressure on men to be the “knower” and “doer” in sex, and to engage in any and all sexual activity at all costs—activity that might ultimately hold high risk for HIV infection or transmission.

Dominant discourses of heterosex place everyone at risk, but they particularly position women as less powerful than men, resulting in their decreased autonomy in sexual experiences. Young women who more closely identify with hegemonic femininity report less relationship power than those who do not identify with traditional feminine values. This lessens their control over their bodies, decreases their ability to negotiate safer sex and places their bodies at risk (Miller, Exner, Williams & Ehrhardt, 2000). Likewise, men who closely associate with traditional masculine identities are more likely to engage in sexually coercive behaviors than men with less traditional masculine identities (Rapaport & Burkhart, 1984). In the context of heterosexual relationships, women consistently report experiencing less power over decisions regarding sex (Bowleg et al., 2000; Bralock & Griffin, 2007; Bruhin, 2003), while men often dominate decisions regarding the type, frequency, and nature of sexual practices (Carter, McNair & Corbin, 1999; Dixon-Mueller, 1993). Men's increased power frequently results in their control over sexual initiation and contraception use, placing women at great risk of sexual coercion, disease, and abuse (Blumstein & Schwartz, 1985; Gomez & Marin, 1996). In many cases women with very low relationship power even report agreeing to undesired

unsafe sex in order to maintain relationships, to avoid conflict or to prevent abuse (Amaro, 1995; Amaro & Gornemann, 1992; Gavey, 2005; Gomez & Marin, 1996).

Dominant discourses also privilege heterosexual identities, which justify the violence and victimization of LGBTQQ people at alarming rates. Heteronormativity normalizes heterosexuality in a way that pathologizes queer youth, and LGBTQQ teens are harassed, bullied, ridiculed and discriminated against by the educational system, teachers, and other students as a result (Goldstein, Rusell & Daley, 2007; Kumashiro, 2002).

It is important to understand how federally-funded sex education curricula impart such notions of gender and sexuality because education research in general, and sex education research in particular, indicate that the values transmitted in curricular contents influence students' attitudes, behaviors and wellbeing. Students report that in-school sex education is their primary source of sexual and reproductive health information, and 74% indicate that they rely on it for "a lot" or "some" knowledge (Kaiser, 2002). Education research indicates that students take in the ideologies expressed in educational materials in general, and that the messages communicated through sex education curricula in particular, influence students' attitudes (Campbell & Wirtenberg, 1980; DHHS, 2011; Kirby, 2007; Mathematica, 2007; Sadker & Sadker, 2005). In a meta-analysis of the literature on this topic, Campbell & Wirtenberg (1980) found that exposure to multicultural authors has a positive impact on students' attitudes towards non-white groups and that students exposed to non-sexist curricula engage in less sex role stereotyping than those whose curriculum relies on stereotypical gender roles (Campbell & Wirtenberg, 1980). Furthermore, Kosciw and Diaz (2005) found that the use of

curricula that is inclusive of LGBTQ issues and actors positively correlates with academic achievement and fosters psychological attachment to school among LGBTQ students. In addition, LGBTQ students residing in states with laws prohibiting inclusive curricula are more likely to be victims of verbal harassment because of their sexual orientation. They are also less likely to have in-school protections such as a Gay Straight Alliance, Internet access to LGBTQ community sites, or supportive faculty and staff members (Kosciw, Byar, Fischer & Joslin, 2007).

Sex education evaluation research in particular shows that students absorb the information presented in sex education programs. Numerous abstinence-only and comprehensive sex education programs have demonstrated a positive impact on students' knowledge and values regarding abstinence and condom use (DHHS, 2011; Kirby, 2007). Fewer of these programs affect students' behavior, however, though the three CSE programs that I examine in this project all have shown evidence of influencing teens' sexual risk-taking (DHHS, 2011; Kirby, 2007). Although these studies did not examine how the subtext of gender and sexuality in sex education influences students' attitudes and behaviors, this research establishes that students absorb the messages in sex education programs and that these messages sometimes translate into behavioral outcomes.

Thus, there is strong reason to believe that (1) dominant constructions of gender and sexuality contribute to students' risk levels, (2) that students absorb the at least some of the representations of gender and sexuality in sex education curricula, and (3) that the way curricula impart gender and sex may subsequently influence their ability to achieve the desired policy outcomes. To date, however, research has not demonstrated that

students absorb the representations of gender and sexuality in sex education programs, nor has it explored the linkages between curricular constructions of gender and sexuality and the overall outcomes of sex education. Thus, I make no causal claims in this work. I posit that the way in which sex education policies transmit meanings about gender and sexuality in sex education programs may affect their overall ability to achieve their goals, but I cannot substantiate this with empirical evidence. This linkage has been suggested by gender theorists for decades (Fine, 1988; Tolman, 1994), and this research may serve as a springboard for others looking to explore this issue in greater detail.

Meanings. The study of implementation is also important to policy studies because the meanings communicated through this moment in the process contribute to whether the government treats citizens equally. Schneider & Ingram (2008, 207) highlight the importance of studying the meanings conveyed through public policy when they state:

Policy affects citizens in many ways, most strikingly through the messages it imparts, both instrumental and symbolic. Through instrumental effects it shapes the distribution of valued goods and services. Through rhetorical claims attached to material policy, as well as that which is purely symbolic, policy signals who is important. The result is unequal citizenship.

Several studies underscore this notion and support the premise that the meanings transmitted through policies construct groups unequally and influence citizens' wellbeing. In their article, "Social Constructions in the Study of Public Policy," Schneider & Ingram (2008) point to 67 separate empirical projects that confirm that the norms communicated through public policies shape individuals' identities. The research is too extensive to fully explore here, but some studies of note include research by Joe Soss (2005), who found that the way welfare programs distribute benefits affects how citizens orient toward government and participation. Whether programs construct recipients as deserving or

undeserving affects both their attitudes about government as well as their likelihood of voting. Luna (2005) found that welfare mothers internalize negative constructions that they experience when they are in contact with welfare agencies, which influences how they interact with the agencies. Similarly, Stein (2001) found that the way educational policies construct groups of students affects how teachers treat students and how students think about themselves. Likewise, Chanley & Alozie (2001) found that the rhetorical benefits of anti-violence policies impact battered women more than the instrumental, material benefits of such programs.

For these reasons, I am interested in how federally-funded sex education curricula transmit meanings about gender and sexuality. As Schneider & Ingram (2008, 195) state, "When policies and institutions embed certain constructions and assumptions about people, they send powerful messages that become internalized and have long-lasting impacts on the identity, political participation, and beliefs of target groups." This is of particular importance because gender and sexuality are "contested meanings" and researchers can therefore not assume how they operate in the implementation process. As Yanow (1996) states,

When the validation of such qualities as identity and status are the underlying subjects of public policy debates, their implementation will likely be fraught with contested meanings and associated ambiguities. In this view implementation actions are not seen as exclusively instrumentally rational, in the sense of being goal-oriented, involving the conscious and deliberate adjustment of agency means to the realization of explicitly stated policy ends. At times they are expressive acts.

Women and LGBTQQ teens, who are afforded less power in dominant constructions of heterosexuality, disproportionately suffer from gender-based oppression and in the interest of promoting gender equality in general, and the equitable implementation of sex

education policies more specifically, it is of great import to understand how sex education policies construct meanings about gender and sexuality through the implementation of educational curricula.

Evaluation. Typically, rational policy analysis is not concerned with the meanings communicated through the implementation stage of the policy process. Rather, rational policy analysis focuses on the final two stages of the policy process, which include evaluation and feedback. Conventional policy analysis considers the question "what works?", and focuses on assessing whether policies meet their stated objectives. In the case of sex education, analysts have extensively evaluated both abstinence-only and comprehensive sex education programs and found unequivocal evidence that comprehensive sex educations are superior in reducing teen sexual risk behaviors as well as pregnancy and STI rates (Kirby, 2007; DHHS, 2011).

Feedback. In the idealized rationalist version of public policymaking, policymakers adopt the information learned from evaluation research and reconstruct policies based upon this new information. This is often referred to as "evidence-based" policymaking. The Obama-era Teen Pregnancy Prevention Initiative and the Personal Responsibility Education Programs are paradigmatic examples of this, as they redirected funding away from ineffective abstinence-only programs and towards programs with demonstrable results. In later chapters, I problematize the idealization of technicist approaches to policymaking and argue that the question "what works?" does not capture "how a policy means" (Yanow, 1996) and therefore does not facilitate the development of equitable sex education policies.

The six stages of policymaking I discuss here are idealized, imperfect and overly-rational (McCool, 1995). In reality, there is much more overlap between the stages I identified above, the steps are not mutually exclusive and the process is more multi-directional than linear. However, my purpose is not to interrogate models of the policy cycle. Rather, here I point to the important role that implementation plays in the policy process, and I highlight that this is the moment in the policy process to which this work contributes. Others have indicated that implementation is a vitally important, and often understudied, component of the policy cycle (Pressman & Wildavsky, 1973; Yanow, 1996), and here I seek to engage in its further investigation.

Method: Critical Discourse Analysis

In this project, I use a critical discourse analysis approach to interrogate how federally-funded sex education programs construct gender and sexuality. Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is a tool used in critical, interpretive and poststructuralist analyses to uncover linguistic sources of power (Marston, 2002). CDA is based in poststructuralist theories of language, which posit that rather than presenting a value-free depiction of reality, language and the discourses that it creates offer historically contingent, culturally dependent, subjective ways of understanding and experiencing the world. Discourses communicate core cultural values and give cohesion to collective beliefs by supplying society with basic stories that serve as cultural narratives. They act as models for behavior and they function to regularize the thinking of a particular culture during a particular time, providing the basic organizing principles for social action (Fischer, 2003).

Discourses are powerful sources of meaning making in society because they operate in a ubiquitous, omnipresent manner so that they appear as natural, essential, universal truths. As Fischer (2003, p. 73) states, "Discursive practices...are the widely held and oft-repeated interpretations of social conduct that produce and affirm behaviors. Over time these interpretations become unreflectively taken for granted; they are scarcely noted by the actors who employ them." Because discourses appear as ubiquitous truths, they become the vehicle through which members of society come to understand the external world and themselves (Fischer, 2003; Howarth, 2000; Fairclough, 1992).

Dominant discourses serve to create, maintain and reproduce existing power relations by normalizing hegemonic ideologies. Marston (2002, p.22) describes the relationship between social construction, discourse and power when he states, "We do not act on the basis of facts, but how these facts are represented. This is how hegemony, or the discursive face of power, operates. Hegemonic power works by convincing us that certain causes of action are both desirable and inevitable."

Critical discourse analysis aims to offer a vehicle for thinking outside of established hegemonies. By uncovering and reframing sources of power and inequality, critical discourse analysis facilitates alternative understandings and gives rise to new courses of action. Foucault (1988, p. 154) articulates the emancipatory potential of criticism when he states:

Criticism is a matter of flushing out that thought (which animates everyday behaviour) and trying to change it: to show that things are not as self-evident as one believed, to see that what is accepted as self-evident will no longer be accepted as such . . . As soon as one can no longer think things as one formerly thought them, transformation becomes both very urgent, very difficult and quite possible.

Thus, through exposing and challenging discursive sources of power, dominance, and inequality, critical discourse analysis facilitates liberation and social change (Fairclough, 1992 & 2001; Howarth, 2000).

In this sense, I analyze the construction of gender and sexuality through a critical discourse lens. In the interpretivist policy tradition, I study how meanings about gender and sexuality are reproduced in and communicated through the implementation of sex education policies (Yanow, 1996; Yanow & Schwartz-Shea, 2006). In the spirit of criticism, I particularly consider how the meanings conveyed in the implementation of sex education policies distribute power differently for women and men, straight and LGBTQQ students, and I uncover how the curricular reproduction of taken-for-granted notions of gender and sexuality fail to encourage gender equity (Bacchi, 1999; Marshall, 1997).

Gender Equity in Education

The way in which federally-funded sex education programs teach gender and sexuality is important in terms of gender equity in education. The principle of gender equity in education advocates a fair, just inclusive educational experience for all youth that is free from sexism, heterosexism, racism, classism, ablism, ageism, and other disempowering systems of power and oppression (Klein et al., 2007). Biases appear in many manifestations in curricular contents and examining, exposing, and eliminating these prejudices is a vital component of attaining overall educational equity (Apple, 2004; Sadker & Sadker, 2005).

Although the goal of curricular equity is to support equality among all students, equity does not necessarily mean treating all students equally. Rather, equity in the

curriculum involves accounting for the differential lived experiences of different groups of people. Gender equity in education subsequently involves accounting for gendered phenomena and addressing the fact that young heterosexual women, young heterosexual men and LGBTQQ teens experience differences -- within and among those groupings -- in their sexual realities. Equitable curricula, subsequently, are not gender-blind. To the contrary, they are gender conscious and, where appropriate, incorporate "equitable inequalities" to compensate for gender-based differences in lived experience (Marshall, 1997).

Federal involvement in educational equity began when Congress passed Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972, which prohibited sex discrimination in all educational activities that receive federal funding. The language of the legislation reads, "No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving federal financial assistance" (Nash et al., 2007). The Title IX legislation prohibits sex-based discrimination in almost all educational activities except for the curriculum.ⁱⁱ The original version of the law contained protections against the use of sexist curricula, but lawmakers omitted the protections because of potential interference with constitutional laws guaranteeing freedom of speech and with states' rights to make decisions about education (Nash et al., 2007). The National Organization of Women and other women's rights groups testified against the decision, arguing that curricular materials omitted women's history and experience and contained extreme sex role stereotyping, but their testimonies were overruled (Nash et al., 2007). The law does suggest, however, that federally funded institutions monitor curricular content and

eliminate sexist biases and stereotypes. However, the suggestion is not legally binding (Nash et al., 2007).

While Title IX provides the legal foundation for gender equity in education, Congress is responsible for providing programmatic support for the issue. However, although there are numerous federally funded gender equity programs, few focus on equity in the curriculum.ⁱⁱⁱ Subsequently, the federal government's role in the regulation or production of gender equitable curricula is virtually nonexistent. This occurs despite overwhelming evidence that curricular materials are rampant with stereotypes and biases (Sadker & Sadker, 1994) and that curricular biases negatively affect the academic performance, worldviews and wellbeing of both male and female, heterosexual and LGBTQQ students (Kosciw & Diaz, 2005; Sadker & Sadker, 1994). This important element of gender equity in education therefore falls through the cracks of federal policy, making it a critical area for researchers to address. In this project, I therefore consider federally-funded sex education in the context of gender equity and consider what equitable sex education curricula would look like. Specifically, I argue that an equitable sex education must address the highly gendered phenomena of teen pregnancy and parenting, sexual assault and violence against LGBTQQ youth.

Teen Pregnancy and Parenting. Teen pregnancy and parenting are decidedly gendered phenomena. Teen pregnancies are necessarily gendered, as they occur in young women's bodies, but young men, who enjoy a "privileged irresponsibility" around their sexual behavior and carework often do not share in efforts to prevent pregnancy or the consequences of childbearing (Boryczka, 2009). In the interest of dismantling these issues, equitable sex education curricula should address the gendered dynamics of

pregnancy prevention and parenting. Because sex education curricula seek to decrease rates of teen childbearing, doing so may also contribute to the overall efficacy of sex education policies.

Young people report that gendered expectations for sexual behavior mitigate safer sex practices and therefore contribute to young women's risks of experiencing unwanted pregnancies and contracting diseases. Eighty percent of teens report that carrying a condom makes them look prepared, but 73% percent feel that if a girl carries a condom, she looks "easy." Boys face the same stigma only 40% of the time. Young women, subsequently, are more likely to adopt a passive role in condom use, relying on boys for condom provision (Kaiser, 2002b). This occurs despite the fact that young women report being much more concerned about the consequences of sexual activity than young men (Kaiser, 2002b).

Further, teen parenthood is a highly gendered phenomenon. It is well-established that teen fathers are often absent from their children's lives and teen mothers frequently parent alone (Horn & Sylvester, 2002; NCPTP, 2011). In 2002, approximately 13% of young men under the age of 19 reported getting a partner pregnant and about 4% reported fathering a child (although these numbers are likely understated) (NCPTP, 2011). However, few of these fathers remained involved in their children's lives. Approximately 4 out of 5 children born to teen mothers are born outside of marriage or cohabiting relationships, and less than one fifth of unmarried fathers pay child support to teenage mothers through the formal child support system (Horn & Sylvester, 2002). Of those teen fathers who do pay child support, the majority pay less than \$800 annually (NCTPTP, 2011). The result of young men's lack of involvement in parenting is that

young women often parent alone, which is detrimental to the health, income and overall wellbeing of both young mothers and their children (NCPTP, 2011).

A gender equitable curriculum would address these disempowering phenomena by supporting young women's autonomy around contraception use and encouraging men's responsibility around pregnancy prevention and parenting. An equitable curriculum entails encouraging young men to take ownership of pregnancy risk and responsibility for contraception while also disrupting norms that stigmatize young women for initiating condom use. An equitable approach also involves offering women knowledge about contraception options that do not require men's participation so that they may protect themselves from unwanted pregnancies and diseases without having to face resistance or social stigma. If programs were effective in transmitting this information, it could also improve the efficacy of comprehensive sex education programs, which aim to increase contraception use and decrease rates of teen pregnancy and childbearing. Furthermore, federally-funded sex education policies that address young men's roles in parenting would underscore the Responsible Fatherhood Initiative, a \$10 million federal program that aims to increase men's roles in parenting (White House, 2011).

Sexual Assault. Sexual assault is another highly gendered phenomenon that requires treatment in equitable sex education. Men are almost entirely responsible for the existence of sexual assault, as almost 99% percent of rape and sexual assault offenders are men and 91% of their victims are women (RAINN, 2011). Contrary to popular beliefs, sexual assaults typically are not stranger-based crimes. Rather, most perpetrators

attack someone they know, and 73% of rapes occur in the context of established relationships (RAINN, 2011).

The prevalence of sexual assault is overwhelming -- especially in the lives of young women. By the time a young woman completes college, she has a one in four chance of having been a victim of sexual assault, and girls aged 16-19 are four times more likely than the general population to be victims of rape, attempted rape, or sexual assault (RAINN, 2011). This is a particularly important topic for sex education because many rapes are committed by high school aged men. In 2009, adolescent men accounted for 16% of total forcible rape arrests in the U.S. and 17% of those arrested for other sex offenses (U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2011).

For young women, the risk of sexual assault far outweighs the risks posed by most STIs and pregnancy. For instance, the chance of a young woman becoming a victim of sexual assault outweighs her *combined* risk of contracting gonorrhea, chlamydia, syphilis or becoming pregnant. In 2007, 0.65% of teenage women had gonorrhea, 3% had chlamydia, and 0.0015% had syphilis (Alan Guttmacher Institute, 2011). In 2006, 7% of young women aged 15-19 experienced a pregnancy (NCPTP, 2011). In comparison, 25% of college women report surviving rape or attempted rape in the years since their fourteenth birthday (One in Four, 2011). Thus, one of the single most dangerous sexual risks that a young woman faces is being sexually victimized by a man she knows.

Since the risk of sexual assault is so high for young women, undermining sexual assault in sex education not only contributes to an equitable curriculum, but it also contributes to its broader purpose of risk reduction. Since men, alone, can almost end the

phenomenon of sexual assault, equitable sex education curricula must focus on how perpetrators in particular can curtail this disturbing reality. Educating students about sexual assault prevention would not only underscore equity in sex education, but it would also support other federal policies aimed at curbing sexual assault, such as the Violence Against Women Act.

Violence against LGBTQ Youth. Furthermore, the victimization of LGBTQ teens is an important issue for equitable curricula to address. LGBTQ teens are significantly more likely to be victims of in-school harassment, violence, and discrimination because of their sexual orientation and gender expression than heterosexual teens. In a recent survey of LGBTQ high school students, three quarters of students reported experiencing verbal harassment in school, 38% reported experiencing in school physical harassment because of their sexual orientation, and 21.6% experienced physical harassment based on their gender expression. Approximately one-fifth of LGBTQ students report being victims of physical assault because of their sexual orientation, while 11.8% experience physical assault because of their gender expression. Overall, 64% of LGBTQ youth report feeling unsafe at school (Kosciw & Diaz, 2005). In-school victimization results in increased rates of suicide, substance abuse, sexual risk-taking and HIV exposure among LGBTQ teens (Bontempo & D'Augelli, 2002). An equitable sex education would therefore destabilize heteronormativity in curricular contents. It would undermine the victimization of LGBTQ youth and it would support other federal initiatives to reduce rates of in-school bullying (White House Blog, 2011).

Gender Equity in Sex Education. Thus, gender equity in sex education curricula is of great importance to women and LGBTQQ teens who disproportionately suffer from the lived effects of sexist, homophobic norms and cultural beliefs. In this work, I interrogate discourses of gender and sexuality in sex education curricula in the interest of contributing to the construction of equitable, effective sex education policies that support the development of healthy adolescent sexualities that are free from gender-based oppression and victimization. Education researchers have called this issue a "national blind spot" in education policy, and I therefore seek to make this issue more visible through this research (Sadker & Sadker, 1995).

Findings

Through critical discourse analysis, I find that federally-funded curricula teach much more than safer sex in comprehensive sex education and "no sex" in abstinence-only programs. Rather, I find that all curricula teach powerful messages about gender and sexuality, and that AOE and CSE programs reproduce patterned meanings about sex, gender, sexuality and responsibility. Consistent with the dualistic policy debates and policy infrastructure around sex education, I establish that the contents of frequently-used, federally-funded AOE and CSE programs are often very different. However, I also discovered that *what's missing* from the two types of curricula is more alike than the policy landscape leads one to believe. Through uncovering what's missing from sex education, I make visible the problematic constructions of gender and sexuality that federally-funded sex education programs present to students, and I argue that all of the curricula I examined fail to encourage gender equity.

In terms of sexuality, I find that abstinence-only and comprehensive sex education curricula teach about sex through a moral discourse in which married sex and the people who wait to have it are virtuous, safe and risk-free, while "premarital" sex and the people who have it are pathological, dangerous and diseased. The CSE programs, alternatively, construct sex through a risk reduction discourse that centers on the comparative threat levels that various sex acts pose. CSE programs present students with a less stigmatizing version of sexuality, a more nuanced account of sexual risk and greater information about safer sex than abstinence-only education programs. However, despite these differences, AOE and CSE programs are alike in that they both silence the positive elements of sexuality. They both fail to balance the discussions of sexual risk with accounts of sexual positivity, and they are both relatively silent around the positive, pleasurable, exciting aspects of human sexuality.

The two types of sex education curricula are also similar in terms of what is missing from discussions about gender difference. Abstinence-only curricula in this study teach that gender is about difference, and that difference is necessary and good. The curricula present oppositional versions of femininity and masculinity in which femininity is emotional, passive, responsible and relational, while masculinity, its complement, is logical, irresponsible, aggressive and detached. Alternatively, CSE programs emit an air of gender neutrality. Two of the three programs I studied rely heavily on non-gendered language and employ non-gendered characters throughout their pages, making it appear as if gender barely exists in their contents. Concomitantly, however, the CSE programs I studied do not challenge difference or contain lessons on gender neutrality or similarity. They do not discuss gender equality or provide space for

students to deconstruct gender difference. In that light, both curricula silence similarities among people, as they discourage students from thinking about how most *people*, regardless of gender, sexual orientation or gender identity, require similar things such as respect, love and communication.

Additionally, the curricula are similar in terms of what is missing from discussions about relationships and sexuality. Abstinence-only curricula teach dominant discourses of heterosex and reify outrageously extreme stereotypes about women's and men's sexualities. They severely stigmatize young women and they afford men the privilege of having unfettered sexual desires and ultimate irresponsibility around controlling them. CSE programs do not come close to reproducing this gendered caricature of heterosex, however they still subtly reproduce dominant discourses of heterosex and reify adversarial sexual interactions throughout their pages. Subsequently, both programs are virtually silent around a discourse of mutuality that constructs sex as a non-confrontational, co-creative experience involving equally powerful and agentic actors.

Additionally, the curricula in this project all afford men a privileged irresponsibility in the areas of teen parenting and date rape prevention. The abstinence-only curricula discuss teen parenting and debunk some longstanding rape myths, but their larger treatment of sex, gender and heterosexuality reproduces narratives that underscore sexualized violence and masculine irresponsibility around carework. Further, the AOE curricula do not sufficiently address the role of perpetrators in rape prevention and they therefore burden victims with the impossible task of preventing their own rapes. Alternatively, CSE programs ignore these gendered phenomena entirely. They do not

mention a word about either topic. Because both teen parents and sexual assault victims are overwhelmingly women, the negation of these issues places women at risk and underscores men's detachment to these issues. Writing young men out of these conversations creates the impression that sexual experiences and the responsibilities that come with them cannot be shared.

Implications

In this work, I argue that contrary to the political landscape around sex education, AOE and CSE programs both fail to teach healthy discourses of positivity around sex, similarity around gender, mutuality around relationships and masculine responsibility around sexual assault prevention and parenting, making for the discriminatory and often oppressive implementation of sex education policies. Prior to this research, the construction of gender and sexuality through the implementation of sex education policies had not received sufficient attention. Research had established the relative efficacy of the two approaches to teaching sex education (Kirby, 2007), but scholars and policymakers had neglected to interrogate the meanings conveyed through the implementation of such programs. Thus, in order to fully understand sex education policy, it was vital to uncover how gender and sexuality operate in this important stage in the policy process.

By highlighting the commonality among these programs and suggesting policy actions to ensure that the curricula incorporate equity, this research provides the foundation for the development of equitable, non-stigmatizing sex education policies. This work undermines the bifurcated policy debate and technicist attempts at interrupting it by arguing that "what's missing?" in terms of gender equity in the implementation

process is as important a question as "what works?" in sex education policy outcomes. Further, by calling technicist policy solutions into question, this project highlights the weaknesses of technicism in facilitating gender equality and the importance of integrating alternative epistemological perspectives into the discipline of Public Policy.

In the chapters that follow, I first provide a detailed look at sex education policy and I explore the literature around discourses of gender in heterosexual as well as in American culture at-large. Then, I discuss my research process, which included grounded theory, a methodological tool for empirically analyzing qualitative data. In the substantive chapters that ensue I discuss the missing discourses of positivity, similarity, mutuality and responsibility reproduced in sex education, and I conclude with an examination of how these missing discourses bear on sex education policy.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

In this chapter, I review the literature surrounding U.S. sex education policy. I begin with the history of American sex education and I highlight how sex education policy has shifted over time. I contrast Bush-era abstinence-only sex education programs with Obama-era evidence-based sex education policies, and I consider the policy debates surrounding them. In this chapter, I argue that it is important to understand the contents of sex education curricula, but that current research is lacking in this area. I discuss the literature surrounding the construction of gender and sexuality in sex education and in society at large and I highlight the broader cultural discourses that inform the contents of sex education programs.

History of Sex Education

American sex education began at the turn of the 20th century as a tool for combating prostitution, venereal disease (specifically syphilis), premarital sex, divorce, and men's sexual promiscuity. The American Social Hygiene Association, a group of medical professionals, academics and advocates, conceived of the idea as a way to counteract the gendered double standard for sexual activity that allowed men's infidelity and promiscuity with a single standard based on the perceived feminine qualities of sexual passivity and wholesomeness (Luker, 2006). By 1920, public institutions around the country adopted the Hygienists' version of sex education and the military began educating WWI troops as a strategy for protecting them against venereal disease, the federal government developed pamphlets for educating children and some public schools began teaching sex education courses (Luker, 2006; Moran, 2000).

From about 1920 until 1960, sex education courses taught the relatively consistent messages that premarital sex was immoral and unsafe but that healthy sexual relationships were a key element of marital success (Luker, 2006). In the 1960s, however, sex education programs started to shift to meet the changing cultural needs of the second sexual revolution. The Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States (SIECUS) and other organizations developed relatively non-moralistic versions of sex education that sought to help young people to develop healthy, positive, heterosexual sexualities, while providing frank information about disease in order to minimize sexual risk. Unlike earlier sex education, new programs did not condemn premarital sex, although one of its implicit goals was to encourage healthy heterosexual marriages (Moran, 2000).

Sex education curricula quietly became more liberal and less moralistic throughout the 1960s, as lessons about human sexuality became more scientific in nature. However, in 1968, debates over sex education broke out in Anaheim, California, (known in the sex education literature as the "Anaheim debates"), and laid the groundwork for the present-day sex education controversies. The disputes in Anaheim served as the impetus for the creation of a national network of conservative organizations opposed to 60's era sex education because of its non-moralistic stance. By 1969, battles over whether school districts should teach sex education began in over 30 states, while the U.S. Congress and 19 state legislatures were entertaining bills to prohibit or curtail sex education in public schools (Moran, 2000).

Despite mounting conservative opposition to sex education, liberal policymakers continued to advance relatively non-moralistic policies towards adolescent sexuality

throughout the 1970s. In 1973, the passage of Roe vs. Wade granted women access to abortion and, in 1978, the Adolescent Health Services and Prevention and Care Act granted access to contraception for unmarried teenagers. However, the liberalization of reproductive health policies came to an abrupt halt when Ronald Reagan took office in 1980. Soon thereafter, Congress passed the 1981 Adolescent Family Life Act (AFLA), which was the first federally-supported abstinence-only education program. In the same year, Republicans unsuccessfully tried to pass the Family Protection Bill which would have denied federal funds for schools whose sex education curricula challenged traditional gender roles and failed to condemn homosexuality (Moran, 2000).

Despite the 1981 passage of AFLA, public debates around sex education throughout the 1980s focused primarily on whether schools should teach students about sex. Conservatives opposed school-based sex education altogether while liberals supported the dissemination of value-free, factual information. However, when the AIDS crisis broke out in the late 1980s, the terms of the sex education debate changed permanently. Liberal and conservative policymakers came to view sex education as a public health necessity and by 1990, 41 states encouraged or required sex education, fifty states recommended or mandated school-based AIDS education, and the CDC began spending over \$80 million per year on HIV/AIDS education. As a result, public debates over sex education shifted away from *whether* schools should teach sex education to *what type* of sex education schools should teach. Advocates of comprehensive approaches argued that students needed value-neutral facts about HIV prevention in order to protect themselves, while prior sex education opponents argued that the value neutrality of sex education programs was the reason that adolescents were facing risks in the first place,

and that programs needed to enforce the (largely Christian) values of sexual chastity (Moran, 2000). Debates about the appropriate type of sex education broke out on school boards across the country, and over the course of the 1990s, there were between 500 and 800 local level sex education controversies (Irvine, 2002; Luker, 2006).

Throughout the 1990s, debates over the type of sex education that schools should teach remained largely contained to local school districts, but when George W. Bush took office in 2000, sex education debates began to figure prominently on the national scene. The Bush Administration tripled federal expenditures on abstinence-only education through its creation of the Community Based Abstinence Education program, making federal support for abstinence-only education much more visible and substantial than at any other point in U.S. history.

In large part, the sex education debates in the early 2000s revolved around the question of whether AOE programs worked. AOE supporters argued that programs that teach about contraception "implicitly condone sexual activity among teens" (Rector 2002, p.1) and that providing teenagers with information about contraception increases their levels of sexual activity, promiscuity, pregnancy, and disease. CSE proponents, on the other hand, posited that withholding information about contraception and disease prevention leaves teens ill-prepared to protect themselves should they become sexually active, placing them at higher risks for pregnancy and STDs/HIV transmission.

Evidence overwhelmingly weighed in on the comprehensive side of the debate (Kirby, 2007), but fights over sex education raged on nonetheless. In particular, two high-profile reports enflamed the national sex education debates during these years. In 2007, Mathematica Policy Institute, a non-partisan policy research firm, reported the

results of a federally-commissioned, experimentally-designed evaluation which found that AOE programs had no impact, positive or negative, on teens' behavior. Prior evaluation research had demonstrated the inefficacy of AOE programs as well (Kirby, 2001), but because this study was authorized and financed by the Bush Administration and conducted by a reputable, nonpartisan policy research organization, the policy community could not dismiss the results as partisan propaganda, although AOE proponents tried (Abstinence Association, 2007). Concomitantly, Rep. Henry Waxman of California publicized results of an evaluation of federally-funded AOE curricula which found that some of the most popular programs "taught gender stereotypes as scientific fact" and promulgated anti-homosexual biases (U.S. House Committee on Oversight 2004, p. 14). In 2006, Legal Momentum, a D.C. based women's policy research institute, published a study that corroborated Waxman's results (Legal Momentum, 2006).

Despite this information, the Bush Administration continued to support AOE programs, which incensed the liberal policy community. Professional associations, democratic policymakers and feminist academics overwhelmingly came out in support of comprehensive sex education approaches. Over 100 professional associations, including the Academy of Pediatrics, American College of Obstetricians & Gynecologists, American Medical Association, American Public Health Association, Institute of Medicine, and Society for Adolescent Medicine voiced their support CSE and advised against AOE programs (Bowen, 2007). In 2007, almost every candidate in the presidential primaries took a position on the type of sex education they supported (Bowen, 2007). Democrats unanimously supported comprehensive sex education, while Republicans unanimously supported abstinence-only sex education, and the Republican

Party included support for AOE as part of their national platform (GOP, 2008).

Furthermore, in 2008, democratic policymakers drafted the proposed REAL Act, which, although it didn't pass, would have guaranteed equivalent funding for CSE programs (SIECUS, 2009).

Additionally, members of the policy research community expressed support for comprehensive approaches. Feminist think tanks, including Legal Momentum and the Alan Guttmacher Institute, published policy briefs and op-ed articles condemning abstinence-only education and calling for policies that supported comprehensive sex education (Camp, 2007; Legal Momentum, 2008). Likewise, well-known sex education researchers vehemently advocated for the de-funding of abstinence-only education and the promotion of policies that support comprehensive approaches (Fine & McClelland, 2006).

When Barack Obama took office in 2008, however, the policy landscape changed. As part of a broader "evidence-based" social policy initiative, the Obama Administration redirected the bulk of federal funds for sex education away from abstinence-only approaches towards programs with demonstrable results. The Obama Administration commissioned its own Mathematica study, which completed a meta-analysis of recently published, rigorous sex education evaluation research and found that out of hundreds of sex education programs, only 28 show evidence of effectiveness, and 27 of them are comprehensive in nature (DHHS, 2011). The Obama Administration subsequently reformed sex education policy so that it primarily provides support for the replication of these programs.

Thus, although new policies are officially based on technical goals, in practice they are comprehensive sex education policies. Subsequently, the debate lives on. Republican senators have repeatedly attempted to de-fund Obama-era evidence-based sex education initiatives (National Women's Law Center, 2011), while liberals continue to abhor the one remaining abstinence-only funding stream (Boonstra, 2010).

Values. Obama-era technicist policy solutions have not ended the sex education debates because sex education controversies are more about intrinsic value differences than they are about program efficacy (Luker, 2006). Robert Rector of the Heritage Foundation illustrates this point in his response to claims of AOE inefficacy when he states, "The other spin I think is very important is not effectiveness, but rather the values that are being taught...Whether or not these programs work is a bogus issue" (Swenson, 2007). Luker (2006) explores value differences around sex education in detail in her book, *When Sex Goes to School*. Through her 20-year study of local-level sex education debates, Luker determines that two opposing groups drive the sex education controversies: "sexual conservatives" and "sexual liberals." "Sexual conservatives" support AOE programs because they believe that sex education should reflect traditional Christian values of chastity, self-control, and modesty. They view human sexuality as a dangerous threat to morality that can only be safe when contained within heterosexual marriage, and they want sex education to convey this message. Typically Christian conservatives, this group believes that men and women have naturally separate societal roles, and feels that exposure to information about the opposite sex undermines innate gender differences. They morally oppose masturbation, contraception, homosexuality, and abortion, and see the information provided through comprehensive programs as a

threat to the well-established social structures of gender, marriage, and family (Luker, 2006).

On the other end of the spectrum, Luker argues that "sexual liberals" support CSE programs because of their deep value structures as well. This group sees access to information as a human right and a precursor to good decision-making (Luker, 2006). They believe that sexuality is a natural, healthy part of being human, but they feel that marriage is only one among many lifestyle options. They are progressive in their views about gender, some of them identifying as feminists, and feel that sex education programs should focus more on the sameness between males and females than the differences between them. "Sexual liberals" see masturbation and homosexuality as unproblematic, natural expressions of human sexuality and they feel that contraception and abortion are viable reproductive health options that sex education programs should address (Luker, 2006).

Luker (2006) indicates that most people have multiple, conflicting views about sex education and that most Americans' views do not perfectly correspond with either the "sexual conservative" or "sexual liberal" camp. In addition, although many people have conflicting viewpoints, Americans are not evenly divided between Luker's two designations. Rather, most Americans support comprehensive approaches to sexuality education in some capacity (Irvine, 2002). AOE supporters represent a small, vocal minority of constituents who were remarkably successful in the early 2000s due to their effective deployment of discourses about teenage vulnerability coupled with unwavering support from the Bush administration (Irvine, 2002). Nationally centralized, tactical efforts enabled the AOE movement to capitalize on Americans' anxieties about teenage

sexuality by framing comprehensive sex education as obscene, evil, and even abusive. The Bush Administration supported such viewpoints and bolstered abstinence-only education regardless of opinion and evidence to the contrary (Irvine, 2002).

In this work, I argue that although Obama-era sex education policies have addressed the efficacy portion of the sex education policy problem, the values portion of the debate remains unaddressed. I argue that the incensed reactions from the liberal policy community over abstinence-only education are well-placed -- the contents of AOE programs are deeply problematic, especially when read through a critical gender lens. However, I also highlight that liberals' idealization of comprehensive sex education policies is misguided. While there is convincing evidence underscoring the efficacy of CSE programs, when considering gender equity as an equally important policy goal, these programs are not as idyllic as bifurcated debates lead one to believe.

Sex Education Policy

In this section, I examine federal sex education programs in greater detail. I include a discussion of the Adolescent Family Life abstinence-only program, which began under Reagan, the Title V State Abstinence Education, enacted during the Clinton Administration, and the Community Based Abstinence Education program, signed into law during the George W. Bush Administration. Although the Title V State Abstinence Education program is the only one of these programs that remains, I discuss these three initiatives in detail because they comprised the policy framework that gave rise to national sex education policy debates, they give a sense of the history of federal involvement in sex education funding and they dispel the myth that federal abstinence-only initiatives were a Bush-era creation.

Additionally, I outline the federal programs that provide support for comprehensive sex education. I include a discussion of the Center for Disease Control's Division of Adolescent and School Health program, which was enacted in the mid-1980s as an HIV prevention program and remains today. I discuss the newly-created, evidence-based Teen Pregnancy Prevention Initiative and the Personal Responsibility Education Program as well.

Broadly speaking, the bulk of funding in all of these programs supports states, schools and community groups that implement sex education curricula. The Community-Based Abstinence Education program is the one exception, as it also provided funding for abstinence-only publishers to develop, publish and disseminate AOE curricula. All of these programs prioritize funding for school districts or agencies in communities with relatively high risks of teen pregnancy, which in practice means that funds for both AOE and CSE programs are more likely to go to districts with high proportions of minority and low-income teens than other districts (Boonstra, 2010). Finally, all of these programs fund program evaluation efforts as well as grant administration, but by and large, these are programs that finance the implementation of sex education.

Abstinence-only Education. During the Bush years, expenditures on abstinence-only education funneled through three main funding streams: the now-defunct Adolescent Family Life (AFL) Demonstration and Community Based Abstinence Education (CBAE) programs and the Title V State Abstinence Education (AE) program, which is still intact.

Adolescent Family Life Demonstration Program. Federal support for abstinence-only education began when the Reagan Administration created the Adolescent Family Life (AFL) Demonstration program in 1981. The program provided \$209 million

in federal abstinence funds from 1981 until the Obama Administration discontinued its support in 2009 (SIECUS, 2011). The AFL program addressed issues related to teenage pregnancy and, among other things, provided funding for states and nonprofit organizations for the creation, implementation, and evaluation of AOE curricula and activities (CRS, 2004; DHHS, 2007c). AFL funded abstinence-only projects for up to five years, and funded projects typically focused on teenagers aged 9-14 in public schools, community organizations, or households (CRS, 2004). The proportion of the AFL budget dedicated to abstinence-only education and activities ebbed and flowed over the course of the program's evolution, however from FY 2005 to FY 2009, AFL allocated \$13.1 million per year to abstinence-only programs (SIECUS, 2011).

State Abstinence Education. Between the years of 1981-1996 AFL was the only federal program aimed at directly addressing teenage sexual activity, pregnancy or childbearing (CRS, 2004). However, in 1996 the passage of Title V, Section 510 of the Social Security Act as an attachment to the Personal Work Opportunity and Reconciliation Act (PWORA) greatly increased federal financial support for abstinence-only education. Title V, Section 510 created the State Abstinence Education (AE) program, which made \$50 million available per year in matching grants for states to provide or outsource abstinence-only education, mentoring, counseling and adult supervision to youth who are at risk of becoming pregnant outside of marriage. Title V, Section 510 state AE grants are formula grants awarded to states based on the proportion of low-income children in the state relative to the total number of low-income children in all states (DHHS, 2007b).

The Obama Administration initially discontinued funding for the Title V program, but Congress reinstated the program through a rider on the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act in 2010, and funding was continued at the same rate of \$50 million per year through 2014. Forty-three states and 3 U.S. territories have received funding through the Title V program (DHHS, 2007b), and because of the matching requirement, states spend an additional \$37.5 million on the AE program per year, bringing total annual public expenditures to \$87.5 million.

In addition to creating the State AE program, Title V Section 510 of the Social Security act produced a standardized definition for all federally funded abstinence-only programs. The law defines abstinence education as "any educational or motivational program that:

- (A) Has as its exclusive purpose, teaching the social, psychological, and health gains to be realized by abstaining from sexual activity;
- (B) Teaches abstinence from sexual activity outside marriage as the expected standard for all school age children;
- (C) Teaches that abstinence from sexual activity is the only certain way to avoid out-of-wedlock pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases, and other associated health problems;
- (D) Teaches that a mutually faithful monogamous relationship in the context of marriage is the expected standard of human sexual activity;
- (E) Teaches that sexual activity outside of the context of marriage is likely to have harmful psychological and physical effects;
- (F) Teaches that bearing children out-of-wedlock is likely to have harmful consequences for the child, the child's parents, and society;
- (G) Teaches young people how to reject sexual advances and how alcohol and drug use increases vulnerability to sexual advances; and
- (H) Teaches the importance of attaining self-sufficiency before engaging in sexual activity" (SSA, 2007).

Although the law did not stipulate the relative emphasis that grantees have to place on each point, with the passage of Title V in 1996, all grantees of all federal abstinence education programs had to abide by this definition of abstinence education.

Community-Based Abstinence Education. Although federal support for abstinence-only education began during the Reagan Administration and escalated during the Clinton years, abstinence-only education is largely recognized as a Bush-era policy because federal support for AOE increased dramatically under George W. Bush's leadership. In 2001, Congress created the Community-Based Abstinence Education (CBAE) program, which at its height in 2006, 2007 and 2008, comprised 64% of total federal expenditures on abstinence-only education (SIECUS, 2011). The CBAE program differed from the State AE program in that grants went directly to public or private entities, (including nonprofit and faith-based organizations as well as abstinence publishers), thereby bypassing the state in the funding process. One of the main goals of the CBAE program was to create community environments that supported adolescents' decisions to remain abstinent until marriage, so the implementation of all CBAE programs occurred at the community level (GAO, 2006). At its peak, 158 grantees received CBAE funding per year totaling about \$113 million annually (DHHS, 2007a). Funding for the CBAE program was dismantled when the Obama Administration passed the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2010 and redirected CBAE funds to the evidence-based Teen Pregnancy Prevention Initiative (discussed below).

Comprehensive Sex Education and Evidence-Based programs. The newly-created Teen Pregnancy Prevention Initiative and the Personal Responsibility Education programs primarily provide support for "evidence-based" programs, which are defined as

"program models for which systematic empirical research or evaluation has provided evidence of effectiveness" (NCPTP, 2010). Both abstinence-only education and comprehensive sex education, along with any other approach that is effective in meeting the agreed-upon goals, are technically eligible for funding under these Obama-era sex education initiatives.

Division of Adolescent School Health Program. Prior to 2010, only a small amount of federal funds trickled to comprehensive sex education through the Center for Disease Control's (CDC) Division of Adolescent and School Health (DASH) HIV prevention program, which began in response to the AIDS crisis in the mid-1980s, and funds state, local, and territorial agencies' efforts to develop and implement HIV prevention and health education for school-aged children (Kaiser, 2005). In 2000, approximately \$47 million was budgeted for CSE through the DASH program (Kaiser, 2002), but funding dropped to \$18 million in 2007 at the height of abstinence-only policies and remains minimal today (Kaiser, 2005).

Teen Pregnancy Prevention Initiative. The 2010 federal budget redirected funds allocated to the Community Based Abstinence Education program to the Teen Pregnancy Prevention Initiative (TPPI), which provides \$114.5 million for the provision, administration and evaluation of evidence-based sex education. The TPPI program allocates \$100 million to competitive grants for the provision of demonstrably effective, scientifically accurate, age appropriate sex education. Public and private entities are eligible for funding, and the program does not require matching dollars from grantees. Out of the \$100 million dedicated to sex education provision, 75% of TPPI funds are reserved for the replication of programs with evidence of efficacy. In order to qualify for

replication funds, grantees must demonstrate that the curricula they plan to implement "reduce(s) teenage pregnancy, behavioral risk factors underlying teenage pregnancy, or other associated risk factors," (DHHS, 2011). There are twenty-eight programs that meet this definition.

The remaining \$25 million dedicated to sex education provision under TPPI is for new, innovative programs that have not yet proven their effectiveness. This portion of the funding is reserved for "research and demonstration grants to develop, replicate, refine and test additional models and innovative strategies for preventing teenage pregnancy" (DHHS, 2011), and innovative, experimental and yet-to-be-evaluated programs (including abstinence-only programs) are eligible for federal support through this stream.

Additionally, TPPI provides \$10 million to the newly-created Office of Adolescent Health, located in the Department of Health and Human Services, for program administration. The Teen Pregnancy Prevention Initiative instructs the Office of Adolescent Health to centralize all federal pregnancy prevention activities and coordinate all of its efforts with the Administration for Children and Families, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and any other relevant offices at the Department of Health and Human Services. Furthermore, the initiative set aside an additional \$4.45 million for evaluations of teen pregnancy prevention efforts. These funds are also available for the evaluation of abstinence-only programs (DHHS, 2011).

Personal Responsibility Education Program. In 2010, Congress also funded the Personal Responsibility Education Program (PREP) as part of the health care reform legislation. Liberal lawmakers attached PREP as a rider to the health care reform

legislation in response to conservatives' resuscitation of the Title V State AE program through the health care reform legislation. PREP, however, receives \$75 million in federal funds, (\$25 million more than the Title V program) (NCPTP, 2011).

The PREP program, which is administered by the Administration on Children, Youth and Families (ACYF) provides funding for the implementation of curricula that educate teens on both abstinence and contraception as well "adult preparation" topics like healthy relationships, financial literacy, parent-child communication and decision-making. Like TPPI, the PREP program makes over \$55 million available annually in grants to states to replicate evidence-programs. It provides an additional \$10 million in grants to public and private entities to implement innovative prevention strategies and target services to high-risk youth. It reserves the remaining \$10 million for evaluation studies (DHHS, 2011b).

The Contents of Federally Funded Sex Education Curricula

The sex education policies I discuss above evidence an historical shift in the level of federal influence over sex education. Sex education (and education in general) is typically a state- or local-level policy issue defined by limited federal oversight. However, federal involvement in sex education policy reached unprecedented heights during the George W. Bush Administration, and it continues to increase today. National expenditures on sex education, which now total almost \$240 million per year, (TPPI and PREP together provide about \$189.5 million in annual funding, and the Title V State AE program provides \$50 million per year), are at an historical high, and the federal government's role in shaping the form and content of sex education has therefore reached unprecedented levels.

Yet, despite the increasing role of the federal government in sex education, questions about the contents of abstinence-only and comprehensive sex education programs persist. Luker (2006) established that the supporters of the alternative approaches to sex education hold very different values about gender, sex, marriage, and family, and that these value differences drive the sex education debates. Based on Luker's analysis then, one could assume that the values communicated through sex education curricula adhere to those of their supporters. However, there is insufficient evidence to sustain this claim. There is almost no federal oversight of the contents of federally funded sex education curricula, and the federal evaluations that do exist are limited to whether or not the facts contained in the curricula are scientifically accurate. Fact-based evaluations, however, do not expose the values and biases communicated through curricular contents (Harding, 1986), nor do they reveal what is missing. Additionally, the research around on this topic highlights the necessity for its further investigation (Fine & McClelland, 2006).

Federal Oversight. Federal oversight of funded sex education curricula is limited, at best, and the evaluations that do exist do not capture the values communicated through curricular contents. The Department of Health and Human Services' Administration of Children and Families (ACF), which oversaw the CBAE program and continues to oversee the Title V State AE program, did not require grantees of either program to submit educational materials to the agency until 2006. Rather, grantees were only required to submit a table of contents in the grant application process. In 2006, ACF began requiring CBAE grantees (but not State AE grantees) to submit their educational materials to ensure that curricula address all eight points of the federal definition of

abstinence education and that all materials are scientifically accurate. State AE grantees are still not required to submit educational materials to the agency, and ACF does not require grantees to conduct internal reviews of the curricula, although some states do so independently (GAO, 2006). In contrast, the Office of Population Affairs, which oversaw the AFL program, reviewed all curricula used by grantees. Again, however, OPA only reviewed these curricula for scientific accuracy.

Unlike most AOE programs, the CDC and the Office of Adolescent Health review all evidence-based CSE curricula. Again, however, federal curriculum evaluations are limited to whether the information provided is scientifically accurate and age appropriate. Like AOE evaluations, CDC and OAH oversight do not examine the values reproduced in programmatic contents.

Research. Despite the lack of federal attention to the substance of sex education programs, researchers have explored the messages communicated through federally funded sex education curricula, and studies indicate that both AOE and CSE curricula may be communicating troubling messages about gender and sexuality. Questions persist, however, about how gender and sexuality are represented in curricular contents. The bulk of academic research around the contents of sex education explored the messages communicated through the comprehensive sex education programs of the 1980s and 1990s -- a much different period in sex education history. To date, the most widely cited piece of academic work on this topic is Michelle Fine's 1988 ethnography of a sex education classroom in which she observed that "missing discourse of female desire" permeated discussions of teen sex. In the discussion that follows, I explore Michelle Fine's work as well as the other literature around the contents of sex education in detail.

In her study of comprehensive sex education in the 1980s, Michelle Fine (1988) found that three discourses dominated curricular depictions of teen sex: sexuality as violence, sexuality as victimization and sexuality as individual morality, which together resulted in a missing discourse of desire, especially for young women. Fine argued that sex education opponents in the 1980s constructed sex through a "sexuality as violence" discourse that positioned teenage heterosexuality as violent and coercive, and framed it only in terms of its sadistic outcomes such as abuse, rape, incest, and AIDS. This discourse constructed all teens as at being at risk, although it placed young women in particularly vulnerable positions. Because it constructed adolescent heterosex as an inherently violent act, adherents to this discourse believed that even *talk* about sex with teens was abusive (unless it occurred within churches or families). Therefore, similar to the "sexual conservatives" discussed above (Luker 2006), adherents to this discourse advocated for official silence on sexuality and called for the elimination of school-based sex education altogether in the early 1980s.

Concurrently, a discourse of "sexuality as victimization" permeated school-based sex education in Fine's research. Slightly less conservative than the sexuality as violence discourse, sexuality as victimization had (and continues to have) a much greater following and reaches far beyond the confines of sex education classrooms (Gavey, 2005). Sexuality as victimization focuses on the potential exploitation of young women by young men with uncontrollable sex drives. Subsequently, it stresses the need for young women to protect themselves -- to defend themselves against disease, pregnancy, and "being used" by their male counterparts. "Female adolescent sexuality is represented as a moment of victimization in which the dangers of heterosexuality for adolescent

women (and, more recently, of homosexuality for adolescent men) are prominent," Fine states (1988, p. 33). Within this discourse, classroom activities focus on saying NO!, abstinence-oriented role-playing and enumerating the physical, emotional and social risks associated with sexual activity. As Fine (1988, p. 35) states, "in exercises, role plays and class discussions, girls practice resistance to trite lines, unwanted hands, opened buttons, and the surrender of other 'bases' they are not prepared to yield." Unlike the sexuality as violence discourse, sex is not depicted as inherently violent within the victimization discourse, but young women (and sometimes young men) are positioned as the victims of young men's uncontrollable desires and learn about sex in terms of their vulnerability rather than their empowerment (Fine, 1988).

Fine also found that sex education programs reproduced a "sexuality as individual morality" discourse. She argued that sex education programs construct heterosexual encounters as tests of self-control, discipline and self-worth in which young women's ability to choose premarital abstinence is emphasized. This discourse is moralistic and condemnatory, and it values young women's decision-making only to the extent that they decide to abstain from heterosex until marriage. Thus, this discourse does not actually value women's sexual autonomy; rather it prescribes a behavior (premarital abstinence) and constructs it as the only responsible, respectful "choice."

Fine found that when the sexuality as violence, victimization and morality discourses coalesce in sex education, a "missing discourse of (female) desire" results. School-based sex education in her study barely discussed desire, pleasure, and sexual entitlement, especially in terms of women's sexuality. When students tried to interrupt the violence, victimization and morality discourses with positive conversations about

desire, Fine found that educators directed conversations back to "consequences" and sexual risk. Fine argued that by failing to acknowledge an active feminine desire, sex education curricula positioned young men as being constantly in search of desire and young women as constantly in search of protection. Where a genuine discourse of desire would "enable an analysis of the dialectics of victimization and pleasure" (Fine, 1988, p. 58) and would "release females from a position of receptivity by posing female adolescents as subjects of sexuality, initiators as well as negotiators," young women were instead denied sexual autonomy and positioned as potential victims rather than sexual agents.

Fine's missing discourse of desire has been highly influential in studies of gender and sex education, and other researchers have found evidence that underscores Fine's findings. For instance, Whatley (1987) discerned that popular films used in sex education classes located discussions of female adolescent development within a discourse of menstruation that focused on the capacity of the female body to reproduce. Conversely, discourses of essentialized pleasure depicted men's sexual development, framing it in terms of erections, ejaculation, and nocturnal emissions (Whatley, 1987). Trudell (1993) also found that when students initiated positive discussions of sexuality, teachers used discursive strategies to silence affirmative portrayals of youth sex, especially when speaking with young women.

Tolman (1994, 1999a, 2002) expounded on Fine's research and, through interview research with teenage girls, found close linkages between their levels of expressed sexual desires and the degree to which they believed they were sexually autonomous actors. Tolman argued that embodying one's sexual desire was an essential precursor to healthy

sexual decision-making, which determined young women's abilities to protect themselves in sexual encounters. She therefore posited that it is detrimental for sex education curricula to exclude positive discussions of female desire (1994, 1999b). Other researchers have underscored this point (Klein, 2007; Whatley 1992 & 1994).

Whatley (1994) furthered this analysis and observed that college-level sexuality textbooks stigmatized the sexual experiences in ways that are patterned by race and sexuality. She found that textbook discussions of healthy adolescent sexual development featured photographs of white teens, while discussions of sexual risk and danger featured teens of color. Moreover, she observed that the textbooks subtly othered LGBTQQ individuals by switching from the pronoun "we" to the pronoun "they" when discussing LGBTQQ sexualities (Whatley, 1994).

The academic research on discourses of gender and sexuality in sex education was virtually silent from the mid-1990s until 2006 when Fine & McClelland published the article, "Sexuality Education and Desire: Still Missing After all these Years." In the piece, the authors argue that public policies play an instrumental role in facilitating or limiting the development of healthy sexualities in young people because their identities take shape in response to the policy environment. The authors argue that policies that foster healthy sexual development are those that create opportunities for young people to: "(a) develop intellectually, emotionally, economically and culturally; (b) imagine themselves as sexual beings capable of pleasure and cautious about danger without carrying the undue burden of social, medical, and reproductive consequences; (c) have access to information and health care resources; (d) be protected from structural and

intimate violence and abuse; and, (e) rely on a public safety net of resources to support youth, families and community" (Fine & McClelland 2006, p. 300-301).

Fine & McClelland (2006) analyze federal abstinence-only education guidelines and contend that AOE programs stifle adolescents' sexual development because they push students to develop unhealthy normative relationships to their own and others' sexualities. The authors argue that the eight point federal definition of abstinence education (discussed above) necessarily lodges conversations about sexuality in discussions of fear and shame while simultaneously burying notions of desire and pleasure, thereby undermining the development of healthy adult sexualities. Additionally, they posit that federal abstinence guidelines construct communication barriers between youth and adults, romanticize heterosexual marriages and stigmatize and demoralize LGBTQ youth. Furthermore, because federal funding formulas target poor, minority school districts, the authors indicate that the burdens of unequal knowledge about reproductive health and sexuality fall disproportionately on women, sexual minorities, non-white students, and students with disabilities.

Additionally, however, recent research has pointed to potential problems with comprehensive sex education programs (DHHS, 2007b). A 2007 content analysis of CSE curricula indicated that nine widely-used CSE curricula barely mentioned the words "rape" or "date rape" in the contents of the programs. Six curricula did not mention the word "rape" once, and seven did not mention the phrase "date rape." In fact, the most that either term appeared in any curriculum was three times. This is a troubling omission given the fact that one in six women (16.7%) is a victim of sexual assault in their lifetimes, and young women aged 16-19 are four times more likely to be victims of

sexual assault than any other group (RAINN, 2011). In comparison, the programs mention the word "gonorrhea" with great frequency (seven times on average per program), and this condition affects only 0.57% of young women (Advocates for Youth, 2001). The curricula mentioned the phrase "HIV/AIDS" 234 times on average per program and, while not to diminish the importance of discussing HIV/AIDS in sex education, the condition affects 0.86% of American women (Kaiser, 2005). Furthermore, the terms "abortion," "IUD," "sexual orientation," "lesbian," "gay," "bisexual," or "transgender" were also almost nonexistent from the programs' content. This is strong evidence to suggest curricular silences surrounding LGBTQQ issues, contraception, and reproductive choice.

In her book, *Risky Lessons: Sex Education and Social Inequality*, Jessica Fields (2009) finds that abstinence-only and comprehensive sex education programs have more in common than dichotomized policy debates suggest. Fields does ethnographic research in three classrooms, (one abstinence-based, one comprehensive, and one progressive Quaker class), and argues that the income level of the community in which sex education takes place is more indicative of the inter-workings of sex education classrooms than the contents of the curricula. Fields posits that in low-income schools, teachers highlight the inevitability of teen pregnancy (and its disastrous results) regardless of whether the formal curriculum is comprehensive or abstinence-based. Conversely, she argues that classrooms in higher-income communities afford students greater latitude to explore both the risks and pleasures of sexuality. Fields argues that teachers in all classrooms encourage problematic modes of communication about sex, delegitimize women's sexual

subjectivities, fail to dismantle young men's dominance and marginalize LGBTQQ teens (Fields, 2008).

In her article, "Whose Responsibility? The Politics of Sex Education Policy in the United States," Jocelyn Boryczka (2009) sheds light on the contents of contemporary AOE and CSE curricula. Boryczka examines the contents of abstinence-only and comprehensive sex education programs and, like Fields, problematizes the dualistic context of sex education. She argues that the bifurcated political landscape of sex education masks the politics within sex education and deflects attention away from questions about how gendered distributions of responsibility should operate in political communities. Drawing on Hannah Arendt's (1968) theory of political responsibility, Boryczka argues that AOE curricula reflect notions of "personal responsibility," while CSE curricula illustrate "social responsibility." She offers a framework of "collective responsibility" to help to bridge the AOE/CSE divide.

In this project, I build on both Fields' and Boryczka's work. By examining curricula instead of classrooms, I provide a detailed look at the contents of the programs that guide teachers' practices. In the absence of an examination of the curricula, it is unclear how much the teachers in Fields' study exercised autonomous judgment over their classroom practices or how much they were simply reproducing the narratives in the curricula they were mandated to follow. This project helps to capture the messages contained within the instructional materials distributed to thousands of sex education teachers across the country. Additionally, I build on Boryczka's concept of "privileged male irresponsibility" around care work in abstinence-only programs (discussed in later

chapters). I employ this concept to inform my understandings of how AOE and CSE programs construct teen fatherhood and sexual assault prevention.

As evidenced above, prior to undertaking this work, I had clear reason to believe that both AOE and CSE programs convey problematic messages about gender and sexuality. Research established that discourses of heterosex disadvantage women and LGBTQ youth, while recent analyses of federal AOE guidelines posit that AOE programs are communicating repressive messages about gender and sexuality and that CSE programs silence issues that are important to women's health and educational equity. Despite the existing research, however, it was still necessary to study how discourses of gender and sexuality operate in federally funded sex education curricula. The majority of research on this topic took place in the 1980s or early 1990s, a period in sex education history defined by public terror over AIDS and the "epidemic" of teen pregnancy (Moran, 2000). Today's sex education programs, however, were born in a much different era. AIDS has become a manageable disease; teen pregnancy rates had been declining until recently; LGBTQ issues have gained legitimacy, visibility, and volume; women's and gender studies have advanced popular understandings of gender and sexuality; and public policies have shifted to include explicitly marriage-focused abstinence education alongside "effective" comprehensive sex education policies. The discourses employed in sex education curricula necessarily represent the social and historic context in which they are situated (Foucault, 1988; Moran, 2000), and in order to gain a deeper understanding of sex education it is necessary to re-examine it over time. Thus, in this project, I expand upon the research above and consider publicly funded sex education programs in their current context.

In large part, my findings corroborate Jessica Fields' (2008) expositions. I observe that abstinence-only and comprehensive sex education have much more alike than the policy context suggests, and like both Fields and Borczyk (2009), I problematize the notion of an abstinence-only/comprehensive divide. I add to both of their findings by examining the contents of the programs specifically mandated by the Title V State AE, TPPI and PREP programs, which is an important lens since these programs are sanctioned by the federal government. I argue that what is included in federally-funded AOE and CSE programs is, in fact, very different, but that what is missing from them is quite similar.

Cultural Discourses of Heterosexuality

In this research, I build upon the academic work I discuss above, but I also connect my analysis to broader discourses of gender and heterosex. Fine's analysis provides researchers with a snapshot of the discursive construction of feminine sexuality within sex education curricula, but in order to fully appreciate discourses of gender and sexuality in sex education, I felt it necessary to consider cultural discourses of gender and sexuality in feminist work generally. In this project, I specifically draw on the theory of heterosex developed by Wendy Hollway (1984, 1989) through her interviews with men and women in relationships. Hollway posits that heterosexual relationships are constructed through three dominant discourses: the male sexual drive discourse, the have/hold discourse and the permissive discourse. Although her theory was published in 1984, feminist scholars find that Hollway's discursive theory of heterosexuality continues to apply to mainstream conceptions of heterosexual relationships and many continue to use her work to frame their analyses (see, for instance, Gavey, 2005 or Potts, 2002).

Furthermore, because sex education and heterosexual relationships operate within broader cultural understandings of sex itself, in the pages that follow I also examine dominant constructions of heterosex. Dominant understandings of heterosex position it within an essentialist frame so that it appears as a natural, transhistorical and eternally unchanging biological imperative. The three discourses that dominate essentialist understandings of heterosex include the sociobiological/reproductive model of sexuality, the orgasm imperative and the coital imperative. I explore each of these in detail, and I examine how each interacts with Hollway's discourses to co-construct dominant conceptions of heterosexuality as well as heterosexual relationships themselves (Gavey, 2005; Potts, 2002). I consider each of these discourses as well as the interactions between them in order to understand how abstinence-only and comprehensive sex education (re)produce and/or challenge dominant discourses of heterosexuality in the chapters that follow.

Male sexual drive discourse. Both the sexuality as violence and sexuality as victimization discourses in Michelle Fine's analysis of sex education portray men as potential predators and women as potential victims of men's animalistic, uncontrollable urges. Fine does not explore constructions of masculine sexuality within her work, but the masculine counterpart to her analysis can be found in dominant conceptions of heterosexuality. Specifically, the work of Wendy Hollway (1984; 1989) illuminates this analysis. Hollway argues that a "male sexual drive discourse," which positions young men as always-already in the mood for sex, dominates mainstream understandings of heterosexuality. Within this understanding of sex, men's desire or "need" to have sex results from a powerful, insatiable, almost overwhelming biological drive. All healthy,

"normal" men are hypersexual -- they go to great lengths to have sex, sometimes even paying for it, and when they are not having sex, they are thinking about it and plotting for it.

Within the male sexual drive discourse, women's sexuality takes on a responsive role. Women (or women's bodies, or pictures of women's bodies) trigger men's desires and men act upon them by coming on to women. In turn, women's sexuality is reactive. They can either choose to accept men's advances and engage in sexual relations (although this choice carries the risk of being labeled a slut), or they may turn them down (and run the risk of being called a prude). Within this context, women do not initiate sex themselves and they do not seek pleasure in their own rite. Rather, women's sexual agency is limited to responding to men's sexualities instead of exploring and advancing their own. Thus, within the male sexual drive discourse, men's sexuality is positive and active -- they are the sexual "knowers" and "doers," owning the "sexpertise" (Potts 2002). Women's sexuality, likewise, is responsive and dependent. It is not entirely passive, as women are the "regulators" of sex, but it is not agentic and autonomous either. Rather, women learn about their sexuality within the violence and victimization discourses which emphasize their reproductive capacity and the potential dangers of sexuality rather than pleasure and independence. Conversely, men learn a version of sexuality that is active, desiring, and privileged to the status of a biological "need." Within this discursive frame, sex becomes something that is done by men to women, and women assume a passive sexual role unless they are regulating the encounter. When the sexuality as violence and victimization discourses converge with the male sexual drive discourse, the result is an

active, desiring masculine sexuality and a passive, receptive feminine sexuality. Men are the subjects of these discourses; women are their objects.

Have/hold discourse. Hollway (1984) also argues that a "have/hold discourse," which draws on the phrase "to have and to hold" used in Christian wedding ceremonies, defines dominant conceptions of heterosexuality. The have/hold discourse posits that women seek sex when they believe it will lead to monogamous, heterosexual relationships and children. Within the have/hold discourse, for women sex is a means to an end -- to build relationships with men. Women's rewards for heterosex are subsequently not embodied or sexual, rather they are "secondary gains" resulting from relationships, families and emotional fulfillment (Gavey, 2005). Thus, women will "give up" sex in return for love, commitment and relationships, while men will "give up" sexual freedom in return for women to care for them, both sexually and domestically. This discourse constructs women as relational, dependent, relatively asexual subjects, while men are detached, independent and highly sexual. Furthermore, the have/hold discourse teaches that women sometimes use their sexuality to "hook," "keep" or "trap" male partners. Men are well aware of this practice and learn to be leery of potential entrapment.

Permissive discourse. Alternatively, Hollway posits that a "permissive discourse" of heterosexuality arose in the 1960s and continues to challenge the male sexual drive discourse and the have/hold discourse, although it does not disrupt them entirely (1984; 1989). The "permissive discourse" grew out of the second sexual revolution and it asserted that women, too, have "natural" drives and urges. Within this discourse, men and women are constructed as autonomous, rational actors, free to have

sex at will. They are sexual equals, unconstrained by power differentials, who seek sex for their own pleasure. In this light, a "libertarian ethic" around sexual decision-making permeates the discourse of permissivity (Gavey, 2005).

Theoretically, the permissive discourse makes both subject and object position available to women and men. However, it has drawn much criticism from sexual liberals and conservatives alike who argue that it is not as egalitarian as it appears. Many feminists argue that the permissive discourse neglects to consider the cultural context in which heterosex takes place. The "libertarian ethic" obscures the gendered power differentials that organize heterosexual relations, and the gender neutrality of the permissive discourse is a front behind which the male sexual drive discourse, the have/hold discourse and the gendered double standards they construct operate as usual. Conservatives also challenge the permissive discourse -- albeit on different grounds. They argue that sexual permissivity marks a major loss for women because they can no longer expect traditional forms of exchange for sex (in the forms of love, commitment and marriage) that were theoretically available to them through the have/hold discourse. The rise of the permissive discourse resulted in women losing the morally-based grounds on which to refuse sex they do not want, conservatives argue, and such movements have therefore tried to re-introduce moral discourses for sexual refusal (primarily among young women) through abstinence-only education programs.

Discourses of Heterosex

The discourses discussed above provide a lens for understanding contemporary heterosexual *relations*, both inside and outside of sex education. However, heterosexual relations occur within socially constructed meanings of sex itself, and it is necessary to

understand cultural depictions of heterosex in order to fully appreciate dominant conceptions of heterosexuality. Three discourses of heterosex -- the sociobiological/reproductive discourse of sexuality, the coital imperative and the orgasm imperative -- define mainstream understandings of heterosex (Gavey, 2005; Potts, 2002), and it is to these that I now turn.

First, a sociobiological/reproductive discourse positions human sexuality as being primarily designed for functional, reproductive purposes. Heterosexuality is natural and inevitable, this discourse posits, because it is intended for the continuation of the species and heterosexual desire is therefore a basic biological instinct that demands satisfaction (Schwartz & Rudder, 1998). The sociobiological/reproductive discourse therefore positions sexual pleasure as secondary to the reproductive functions of heterosex, and within this understanding of sex, desire only exists to ensure that women and men will have intercourse and continue the species. Likewise, homosexuality is unnatural because it is reproductively unnecessary within the sociobiological/reproductive lens.

A coital imperative supports the sociobiological/reproductive discourse, as it posits that the main act of heterosexual sex is penile-vaginal penetration. Accordingly, "sex" begins with vaginal penetration and ends with male ejaculation (usually inside the vagina). Within this discursive construction of sex, coitus is privileged to all other sexual activities -- in fact, the coital imperative defines penile-vaginal penetration as "sex." Everything else is merely "foreplay." Further, anal sex, fellatio and cunnilingus do not count as "sex" within the coital imperative, which clearly illustrates its heteronormative presuppositions. Moreover, the coital imperative defines virginity, a weighty (and problematic) social status (Valenti, 2009).

A third discourse of heterosex, the orgasm imperative, slightly destabilizes the biological/reproductive discourse and the coital imperative by putting pleasure at the center of heterosex. Within the orgasm imperative, orgasm is the apex of sexual satisfaction in all sexual relationships -- it is the goal to which all other sexual activities lead. The orgasm imperative sheds light on female orgasms, which are not visible in the sociobiological/reproductive discourse or the coital imperative. However, it silences other sexual activities which do not necessarily lead to orgasm (such as kissing, massage, or other forms of sensual touching) from which women have long-reported experiencing sexual pleasure (Potts, 2002).

The discourses of heterosex described above work to uphold the aforementioned discourses of heterosexual relations and the gendered sexualities that they prescribe. The sociobiological/reproductive model of sex reifies the male sexual drive discourse, the have/hold discourse and the missing discourse of female desire because it posits that gender differences in sexuality (and in society more broadly) result from sexed roles in reproduction. "Men inseminate, women incubate," the story goes (Schwartz & Rudder, 1998). Men, subsequently, have a biological instinct to have as much unattached sex as possible -- in order to further the human species -- while women are biologically programmed to be sexually discerning. Because of the gestation time for human babies and the need to breastfeed infants, women "naturally" look for sexual partners who will provide for them while they care for children. Subsequently, women's sex drives are essentially lower and more oriented towards monogamy than men's. When viewed through this lens, the male sexual drive discourse and the have/hold discourse achieve the status of biological "facts," making alternative discourses seem "unscientific" and thus

difficult to advance. Likewise, the sexuality as victimization discourse and the missing discourse of female desire become plausible and likely.

The permissive discourse has challenged dominant conceptions of heterosexuality and the missing discourse of female desire by insisting that women, too, have sexual desires. The orgasm imperative underscores this position, making women's sexual pleasure and capacity to orgasm increasingly visible and destabilizing the idea of sexual pleasure as purely reproductive. However, women's orgasms still take on a subordinate role in heterosex. Men's orgasms are constructed as the summit of the heterosexual experience, while women's orgasms are optional -- they are a bonus, but are ultimately unnecessary to heterosex. Further, while the orgasm imperative makes female orgasm more visible, it functions alongside the coital imperative to silence other forms of sexual pleasure that women (and men) enjoy. The orgasm imperative also creates pressure for women to climax, and they often report performing fake orgasms to uphold male egos or to end a sexual experience (Gavey, 2005).

The feminist theories of heterosex depicted above rely on and reproduce differentiated versions of femininity and masculinity in which women and men appear as oppositional, complementary beings. To be a man means to not be a woman, and vice versa. In actuality, women and men are more alike than they are different, however, and there is much more variation *among* women and *among* men than there is between them (Kimmell, 2011). Yet, for hegemonic heterosex to continue to function, the illusion of difference must remain.

Like all dichotomous social statuses, gender functions to both privilege and oppress, and this happens within heterosex as well as in society at large. American

society values supposed "masculine" qualities over "feminine" qualities (sexual and otherwise), and gender-based oppression results. Therefore, when dominant discourses of heterosex construct gender through difference, they also reproduce gendered power differentials. As Lorber (1994, page 6) states, "The social reproduction of gender in individuals reproduces the gendered societal structure; as individuals act out gender norms and expectations...they are constructing gendered systems of dominance and power." Thus, gender is not only dichotomous social statuses, but it is also the power structure that is reproduced through them. Men's dominance and women's oppression are therefore the products of gender difference, which is reproduced and maintained through dominant discourses of heterosex.

Conclusion

Because the federal government's role in sex education is increasing, it is important for policymakers to understand the messages taught during the implementation process. As I established in Chapter One, discourses of gender and heterosex in sex education bear on the important issue of educational equity and they likely influence how teens think about sex, which has important potential implications for the overall efficacy of federally-funded sex education programs. Thus, in this project I examine the discourses of gender and sexuality in abstinence-only and comprehensive sex education programs in the hopes of destabilizing dominant, dangerous, restrictive discourses of gender and heterosex and supporting alternative, equitable understandings of gender and heterosexuality in the implementation of federally-funded sex education policies.

Interrogating what is missing from federally funded sex education illuminates the commonalities among programs in a way that examining what is there obscures. By

interrogating not only what the curricula say, but also what they do not say, I uncover that the discourses reproduced in federally-funded sex education curricula are more alike than the bifurcated policy debates and policy infrastructure convey. The question "what's missing?" illuminates what is lacking in terms of equity in sex education and it also suggests how sex education policies can shift so that their implementation supports the healthy sexual development of all students. Thus, in the spirit of Michelle Fine's famous work, by exposing what is missing from sex education curricula, I aim to foster the development of more equitable sex education policies.

Chapter 3: Grounded Theory

In this project I perform a critical discourse analysis of the most commonly used federally funded abstinence-only education (AOE) and comprehensive sex education (CSE) curricula using a grounded theory approach. In this chapter I discuss grounded theory, the methodological approach I used to facilitate the critical discourse analysis, as well as the details of my analytical process.

Grounded Theory

Currently, there is no clear, agreed-upon methodology for conducting a critical discourse analysis (Fairclough, 1992; Fisher, 2003). However, grounded theory offers a useful approach to CDA because it provides a framework for building theory about the meanings of qualitative data through empirically based, inductive analysis. Through the processes of gathering data, coding and memo writing, grounded theory researchers gain an intimate understanding of their data and incrementally build insights from the data upwards.

I chose to use grounded theory over another common approach to textual analysis, content analysis, because grounded theory allowed me to focus on the meanings communicated through the curricular contents. Content analysis typically uses quantitative methods to analyze language, and it is a useful tool if one is interested in counting the instances of words or phrases that appear in a given text and quantitatively analyzing the relationships among them^{iv}. However, content analysis does not offer much insight into the meanings communicated through the text. For instance, a content analysis could uncover how many times the word "condom" is mentioned in a program,

but it could not explain anything about how a curriculum discusses condom use. I was interested in analyzing how the curricula communicated meanings, and I therefore chose grounded theory over content analysis because it enabled me to focus on the meanings communicated through the data.

Grounded theory (GT) studies move through several phases of analysis, including: gathering data, coding, memo writing, and theory building (Charmaz, 2006). These phases can be successive in nature, although the analytical process is typically not linear (Charmaz, 2006). Rather, researchers simultaneously engage in data collection, analysis and theory development throughout the course of their projects. This process facilitates the development of new ideas, adding depth and richness to theoretical insights.

Gathering Data. Gathering data was the first step in my analysis. My data for this project are six commonly-used sex education curricula: three abstinence-only curricula and three comprehensive sex education curricula. I chose to analyze six curricula because, based on their length and the breadth of topics covered, I believed that this number would provide sufficient insight into discourses of gender and sexuality in popular sex education programs. I remained open to the prospect of including more curricula throughout the research, but ultimately determined that six curricula provided enough depth and breadth to develop rich insights about discourses of gender and sex reproduced during the implementation of sex education policies. The curricula consisted of between six and twenty lesson plans, teacher scripts, and educational materials for students such as in-class handouts, homework, and tests. Curricula ranged from roughly 75 - 450 pages in length.

The first step in my analysis was to identify the curricula for inclusion in the study, and I employed several criteria to identify the programs I studied. Foremost, I chose curricula that either (1) received federal funding through one of the three abstinence-only education programs or (2) are eligible to receive funding under the newly-created Teen Pregnancy Prevention Initiative and Personal Responsibility Education Program. Because of the different policy contexts surrounding abstinence-only and comprehensive sex education, I used different processes to identify the respective types of curricula, which I discuss below.

The remaining selection criteria that I employed were constant for abstinence-only and comprehensive programs. I was interested in curricula that are implemented in public schools, so I excluded all curricula designed for non-public school settings, such as community groups or churches. Next, because I was hoping to capture the widespread tone of sex education at this point in time, I chose curricula that were commonly-used in sex education classrooms across the country. Finally, I chose curricula that were topically diverse and theoretically interesting to this work. I discuss the details of my selection process below.

Federally-funded Abstinence-only Curricula. When choosing AOE curricula, my first step was to identify the curricula that received support through the three abstinence programs (AFL, Title V and CBAE). Two types of entities received public support through the three abstinence programs: (1) abstinence-only education providers (states, local education agencies and community organizations) and (2) abstinence-only publishers.

Data on the curricula used by abstinence-only education providers are not easily accessible. Grant procedures required applicants to list the curricula that they proposed to implement, but granting agencies did not compile or report this information. However, two separate, government-sanctioned research studies obtained approved grant applications from the CBAE program and identified the curricula that CBAE grantees used frequently, so I drew upon these two sources to identify AOE curricula for this study (GAO, 2006; U.S. Committee on Oversight, 2004).

One weakness of using the government reports referenced above to identify federally funded AOE curricula is that they only identified curricula used by grantees of the CBAE program. They did not identify the curricula employed by the Title V or AFL programs. However, the curricula used by CBAE recipients provide a good proxy for the curricula used by AFL and Title V grantees. CBAE was the largest abstinence program, (DHHS, 2007a), and the Government Accountability Office (2006) reported that there was significant overlap among the curricula used by grantees of the AFL, Title V and CBAE programs. In addition, there is no reason to assume that there is a systematic difference in curricular selection among grantees of the three abstinence programs, especially since I only included curricula suitable for public schools.

Both reports found that CBAE grant recipients employed a fairly homogenous group of AOE curricula. In 2005, CBAE grantees used 58 different curricula total, but at least half of them used one of only five different abstinence-only programs (GAO, 2006). In addition, in 2003 there were only thirteen curricula used by five or more CBAE grantees (U.S. Committee on Oversight, 2004). Thus, although there are many

abstinence-only curricula on the market, the list of commonly-used federally-funded curricula is fairly centralized.

I generated my initial list of potential abstinence-only curricula from the two studies discussed above (GAO, 2006; U.S. Committee on Oversight, 2004). My baseline list of AOE curricula contained the thirteen curricula contained in the 2004 report, all of which were included in the GAO study (2006).

The CBAE program also provided direct financial support to some abstinence publishers (the AFL and Title V programs did not provide funding to publishers), and all of the abstinence-only curricula I included were produced by publishers who received CBAE funding. I obtained data from publishers' 990 tax forms delineating the amount of federal support they received from the CBAE program, and reported this information in Table 1.

Comprehensive Sex Education Curricula. I identified the comprehensive sex education curricula for inclusion in this study by choosing programs with evidence of success. Although this research began before the Obama Administration enacted the evidence-based teen pregnancy prevention initiatives, because of policy debates around the question of "what works?" I chose programs with demonstrable results. Incidentally, these programs also qualify for funding under the TPPI and PREP programs.

I identified evidence-based curricula through two well-known and oft-cited meta-analyses of the sex education evaluation research: "Emerging Answers, 2007: Research Findings on Programs to Reduce Teen Pregnancy and Sexually Transmitted Diseases" by Doug Kirby (2007) and "What Works: Curriculum-Based Programs that Prevent Teen Pregnancy" by the National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy

(2010).^v Both reports conduct meta-analyses of the sex education evaluation research and identify the programs with the best evidence of effective results. The reports employ slightly different selection criteria to identify the "best evidence" programs, so I cross-listed the reports' findings and identified the curricula that both studies identified as effective, school-based sex education curricula. Eight school-based programs appeared in both studies, and I used these curricula for my short list of eligible programs.^{vi} All of these curricula were also found to be effective by the Department of Health and Human Services, and all of them are included in the Office of Adolescent Health's list of 28 programs eligible for replication funds under the TPPI and PREP programs.

As a result of my evidence-based criterion for inclusion of comprehensive sex education curricula, the AOE and CSE curricula that I selected for this project differ systematically in terms of evidence of efficacy. The CSE curricula have all proven to positively impact teen sexual behavior; the AOE curricula have not. One of the three AOE curricula included in this project, *WAIT Training*, was evaluated and found to have no effect on teen sexual behavior (Kirby, 2007), and the other two curricula, *Me, My World, My Future* and *Choosing the Best Soul Mate*, have not been evaluated to date. I could not eliminate this systematic difference because evidence-based AOE curricula do not exist. To date, there has only been one abstinence-only curriculum that has demonstrated any impact, positive or negative, on teen sexual behavior, but this program does not qualify for federal AOE dollars because it does not meet the eight point definition of abstinence-only education (Kirby, 2007; NCPTP, 2010).^{vii}

Popularity. My next criterion for curricular inclusion was wideness of use. One of my goals was to capture the widespread tone of commonly-used, publicly-supported

sex education at this point in U.S. history, and I therefore wanted to make sure that the curricula I studied reached the largest number of students possible. It was impossible to obtain systematic, reliable counts of the number of students reached by each curriculum, however (DHHS, 2007b; GAO, 2006). The federal granting agencies do not keep such records, and the curriculum publishers only do so sporadically. When available, I used distribution estimates from publishers as an approximation of curricular popularity. However, I regarded these numbers as potentially inflated because it seems that publishers have an incentive to overstate their distribution numbers in the interest of self-promotion. I reported distribution estimates from publishers in Table 1.

In addition to distribution estimates from publishers, I familiarized myself with the sex education evaluation research to gain a sense of which curricula have been in existence the longest, have been implemented widely and appear frequently in the literature. I found that there are only a handful of curricula that appear repeatedly in the sex education literature, and although I did not quantify this information, I used it to inform my understanding of the most popular AOE and CSE programs.

Diversity. I sought to include a diverse sampling of curricula, so I aimed to select only one curriculum from a given publisher. This was easy with the AOE curricula, as most publishers produce only one curriculum. However, CSE publishers are more centralized and one publisher, ETR, produces multiple comprehensive sex education curricula. I was reluctant to include two ETR curricula because I was concerned that they would contain homogenous messages. However, two ETR curricula (*Draw the Line/Respect the Line* and *Reducing the Risk*), closely met all of my other selection criteria. Specifically, they were in existence longer, and appeared to be more widely-

distributed than the other CSE curricula on my short list. I contacted the publisher and they assured me that the ETR curricula differ substantially and that the authors of the respective curricula do not overlap (D. Kirby, personal communication, 2010). I therefore chose to include two ETR curricula. In total, I included six different curricula by five different publishers (see Table 1).

Audience. I also included curricula aimed at diverse audiences. In terms of age, I included curricula aimed at three different age groups: younger teens (6th - 8th graders); older teens (11th and 12th graders); and high school students. I included one CSE and one AOE curriculum aimed at each respective age group. In addition, I included curricula aimed at "high-risk" teens as well as those aimed at general high school populations. I included two curricula aimed at low-income youth and one specifically aimed at African American youth (see Table 1).

Obtaining Curricula. Once I identified the curricula, the next step involved in my process was obtaining them. Private publishers develop each of the curricula and typically sell them to school districts for between \$160 and \$600. Some companies were willing to loan out research copies for free and, when possible, I obtained free copies. When publishers would not provide free research copies, I purchased the curricula. I received a \$2,000 research grant from the Myra Sadker Foundation that enabled me to do this.

I have no reason to believe that there were systematic differences between curricula that publishers provided for free of charge and those that publishers did not provide for free. Two of the companies that declined to provide research copies indicated

that they had done so before but had not received them back, so they changed their policy (ETR, personal communication, 2008; Teen-AID, personal communication, 2008).

Initial Reading. Once I identified and obtained the curricula, I engaged in the first step in my analysis -- the initial reading of the curriculum. During my first reading of the curriculum, I perused the hard copy and made notes throughout the text about my initial impressions, reactions and general themes. I wrote notes in the hard copy, and I followed these notes closely when I engaged in the more detailed coding phase of my analysis.

Scanning and Formatting. The core of a grounded theory study lies in coding the data, and qualitative researchers typically use computer software to facilitate this process. I chose to use the Nvivo 8 software program, which is often recognized as the industry standard in qualitative software products. The software was invaluable in enabling me to systematize the analysis.

In order to use the Nvivo 8 software, I had to import the curricula into the program. I was unable to obtain electronic copies of the curricula, however, so I had to digitize hard copies of the written curricula. The duplication company, Superior Glacier Document Services out of Washington, D.C., scanned all of the curricula with text recognition software and converted them into text files so that I could import them into Nvivo^{viii}. The text recognition software is very inaccurate however, so once I received the scanned curricula in the form of text files, I had to spend a significant amount of time formatting the text. Any time a page contained a non-textual element -- a graphic, table, or other illustration -- the scanning result was completely jumbled and I had to reformat (and often retype) the entire page. Because the curricula are aimed at youth, a large

proportion of the pages contain graphic elements, causing the text recognition to be very inaccurate and making the formatting a very time-consuming process. In addition, the text recognition software randomly failed to recognize certain elements of the text. For instance, in the *Choosing the Best Soul Mate* curriculum, the software did not recognize lower-case a's, upper case I's or any punctuation marks. Thus, I had to go through the entire curriculum and re-insert all of these characters.

Although formatting the scanned curricula was a painstaking process, I believe that it was ultimately beneficial because it made me even more familiar with the data. By the time I began formatting, I had already completed an initial reading of the curriculum so the formatting stage actually became a second step in my analysis. Although I was not intentionally making analytical judgments while I was formatting, I was implicitly familiarizing myself with curricular themes and making analytical notes throughout.

Coding. Once I gathered, scanned, formatted and imported text files of each curriculum into Nvivo, I began coding the data. I started by coding the abstinence-only curricula and then moved on to the CSE curricula. I segregated my analysis by curriculum type in the interest of familiarizing myself with the details of, and similarities and differences between, the respective types of curricula. I began with the AOE curricula because the policy environment for abstinence-only education was well-defined at the time I began this study in 2008. Sex education was a contentious issue in the 2008 presidential campaign, and I knew that sex education policy was likely to change if a Democratic president took office. This turned out to be a good choice, as the Teen Pregnancy Prevention Initiative was enacted in December, 2009, which dramatically changed the landscape of sex education policy.

Throughout the initial coding process, I created codes for each idea that I saw within the curricular contents, whether it was a word, sentence, paragraph or entire page of text. Codes typically included a word or phrase that represented a phenomenon that I saw within the data. During this phase, I was identifying "concepts" within the data, representing my first step in abstraction from the data to emerging theories (Corbin & Strauss, 1990).

The coding process is best illustrated through example. The following excerpt from *WAIT Training* (196) exemplifies the type of data that I coded:

Say, "A researcher had 3-year-old boys in a room with toy trucks. What do you think the boys did with the trucks? Allow for the class to guess, then explain that they crashed them into each other and made "boy noises and crashing sounds." Then ask, "What do you think happened when little girls were playing with the trucks?" Allow for the class to guess, then explain that they said, "Get in the truck, Honey, we're going to the doctor. It's not going to hurt." Girls are very relational.

After reading this passage, I coded every idea that came to mind. My codes for this passage included: "active boy," "aggressive boy," "relational girl," "girls are very relational," "feminine caretaking," "boy noises," "crashing sounds," "researcher," and "biological determinism." This process was an extremely detailed pursuit, and by the end of the analysis I created over 6,000 codes.

Upon completion of the initial coding of the data, I engaged in a focused coding phase, which helped me to articulate and develop the emerging "categories." In this phase I essentially coded the codes. I selected the most theoretically significant and/or common codes from the initial coding phase and made decisions about which codes made the most analytical sense and how they worked together to support (or refute) my emerging ideas (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). For example, in terms of the passage above, I

investigated "biological determinism" as a category. I realized that the curriculum's invocation of a "researcher" in its explanation of "boy noises" worked to substantiate the notion of biological determinism, and that this was an emerging theme in the abstinence-only programs.

I engaged in focused coding throughout the entire analytical process. However, I stopped and focused solely on this pursuit at two points: upon completion of the initial coding of the AOE curricula and upon completion of the initial coding of the CSE curricula. This enabled me to reflect upon the respective curriculum types and provided me with the opportunity to analyze similarities and differences among the curricula.

Throughout all phases of the coding process, I used the *constant comparative method* to understand emergent phenomena (Charmaz, 2006). I compared themes within, among, and across AOE and CSE curricula in order to fully understand all aspects of my emerging theories. This process helped me to identify information that supported, refuted or was just qualitatively different than my initial impressions of the phenomena at hand. The constant comparative method is central to grounded theory research, and was at the core of my analysis. For instance, I read the lesson entitled "Physiological Differences Between Men and Women" in the *WAIT Training* curriculum (200), and I noted how, by highlighting the "differences" between men's and women's bodies, the curriculum was subtly and consistently naturalizing gender differences. I compared this with my "biological determinism" codes and concluded that this lesson corroborated the idea that biological determinism was an important theme. Instances like these formed the core of my analysis.

Writing Memos. Throughout the analytical process, memo writing helped to move me from data collection towards theory development. The memo-writing process presented a space for me to analyze the concepts and categories that I identified through coding, and it helped me to explore the relationships between my codes. Sometimes my memos were only a few sentences long, other times they were several pages long. Regardless of their length, this process prompted me to analyze my emerging ideas and helped me to identify underdeveloped parts of burgeoning theories. It increased the level of abstraction of my ideas, as certain codes began to stand out and take form as theoretical constructs (Charmaz, 2006). In the example above, for instance, I wrote a memo about how the curricula seemed to be reifying men's supposed aggression and women's relationality through biology.

Building Theory. The use of the GT methodology allowed me to examine discourses of gender and sexuality as they operated in sex education curricula in a systematic manner. Throughout the analysis I examined whether sex education curricula reproduce discourses of gender and sexuality that had been previously highlighted in the literature; whether certain discourses or groups are privileged or silenced in the curricula; and whether the curricula contained new discourses of gender and sexuality. I did not, however, thoroughly engage the discourse literature until after I was done coding, analyzing and writing about the data on my own – a sequence that is squarely in line with the accepted practices of GT. I feared that if I delved too deeply into the literature beforehand, it would influence and limit the possibilities of what I saw in the data. To the contrary, I found that once I read the discourse literature, both the AOE and CSE programs correspond fairly closely with well-documented discourses of heterosex. In

some instances the curricula interrupt dominant conceptions of heterosexuality, and I highlight these instances in the pages to come. But, by and large the curricula reproduce the discourses of gender and heterosex that I discussed in Chapter Two. In terms of the example above, I found that my ideas about how the curricula reified dominant constructions of heterosex through biology were part of a broader sociobiological/reproductive discourse of heterosex (Potts, 2002), and I report these specific findings in relation to my arguments in Chapter Four.

Findings. As a methodological approach, grounded theory was beneficial for me because it kept me closely tied to the data. Any insights that I developed were closely linked to the curricula themselves, and I frequently returned to the data to confirm or dispel my ideas. In the chapters that follow, I discuss the findings of my analysis. Unlike a content analysis, I did not count the number of times a concept came up in the curricula, and I therefore do not illustrate the prevalence of ideas in terms of percentages or other quantitative measures. Rather, I present concepts that appear frequently in one or both types of curricula, and the quotations and selections that I present fairly reflect those concepts. I make note throughout the body of the text when any particular selection of material is unusual or does not conform to the typical patterns in the concepts I identified.

The critique that ensues focuses on discourses within two *types* of sex education curricula (abstinence-only and comprehensive). I focus my analysis on these two types of sex education because public debates and federal funding organize around this either/or construct. Despite the fact that the TPPI and PREP programs do not restrict funding to a certain type of curriculum, the evidence-based requirement reinforces a bifurcated policy infrastructure.

However, because a curriculum is of a certain type does not mean that it is identical to all other curricula of that type. All of the abstinence-only curricula are not the same, just as all comprehensive sex education curricula are not the same; they each have unique focal points and idiosyncrasies. However, I have found that the curricula of a certain type are in fact similar in terms of the discourses they reproduce. Abstinence-only curricula *as a type* tend to reproduce certain constructions of heterosex, while comprehensive programs reproduce others. In the upcoming chapters, I concentrate on the discourses reproduced in the respective types of education and I focus less on the differences between the curricula within each type. Within the text, I am careful to specify when I discussing an individual curriculum, (for instance *Choosing the Best Soul Mate*), versus when I am talking about all the curricula of a certain type (abstinence-only education) so that the reader is not misled in my analysis.

Now, I turn to the findings of my analysis, and I argue that all curricula, regardless of their orientation, reproduce missing discourses of positivity around sex, similarity around gender, mutuality around relationships and men's responsibilities around parenting and assault prevention.

Chapter 4: Missing Positivity

In this chapter I argue that abstinence-only and comprehensive sex education construct sex both very differently and very similarly. Abstinence-only curricula construct sex through a moral discourse that teaches that "premarital" sex and the people who have it are dirty, dysfunctional and diseased, while marital sex and the people who wait to have it are pure, clean, honorable and virtuous. Conversely, comprehensive sex education programs construct sex through a detached, clinical, risk reduction discourse that highlights the comparative danger levels of various sex acts and encourages students to choose "safer" sexual activities over more dangerous ones. In this light, AOE and CSE programs construct sex very differently.

However, I also argue that AOE and CSE programs construct sex similarly in that both types of programs silence a discourse of positivity around sexuality. The curricula fail to define sex as a good, healthy, natural part of life and they neglect to encourage students to work towards a positive relationship with sexuality (Glickman, 2000). Instead, the curricula exude sex negativity and construct sex as dangerous, harmful and risky (Glickman, 2000).

In the forthcoming analysis, I first consider the construction of sex in abstinence-only education through a moral discourse that highlights the negative consequences of sex and stigmatizes those who have it. Next, I examine the construction of sex in comprehensive sex education through a risk reduction discourse that constructs sex as risk, neglects women-centered contraception options and silences and masculinizes the positive aspects of sexuality. I conclude with a discussion of how, although the two types

of programs represent sex very differently, they are alike in that they both construct sex negatively and fail to offer students a discourse of positive, healthy sexuality, which has implications for the development of equitable, effective sex education policies.

Morality in Abstinence-Only Education

The abstinence-only curricula in this project construct sex as a moral choice -- married sex and the people who wait to have it make the "right" choice, while nonmarital sex and those who have it make the "wrong" choice. The AOE curricula do not dedicate equal time to both sides of this dichotomy, however. These programs spend significantly more energy discussing why nonmarital sex is "wrong" and negative than exploring why marital sex is "right" and positive. This underscores a general tone of sex negativity in the curricula and severely stigmatizes sexually active youth. Additionally, the AOE programs silence a continuum of sexual risk and posit that there is no such thing as safer sex. This reifies the dichotomy between marital and nonmarital sex by presenting marital sex as always safe and nonmarital sex is always risky.

Married Sex/Premarital Sex. The AOE curricula do not entirely eschew the positive aspects of sex. In discussions of married sex, the AOE curricula idealize it, embrace it, and even construct it as abstractly pleasurable. For instance, *WAIT Training* (205) states, "Our objective is to... associate [sex] with the wonder, delight, thrills and passion that exists within the context of commitment and marriage. We want teens to have the BEST sex, which involves delayed gratification, character development and maturity so they can develop true intimacy in their relationships." Similarly, *Me, My World, My Future* (61) teaches that "sexual intercourse is a private and pleasurable way for married couples to show their deep love and commitment for each other."

The AOE curricula specifically highlight the positive elements of sex when constructing it in relationship to nonmarital sex. *WAIT Training* (283) teaches that "Married people have the best and most sex. . . . They lead more active sex lives than single people and married people also express higher levels of satisfaction with their sex lives than single or cohabiting people." Similarly, *Choosing the Best* (46) teaches that "Married couples report greater sexual satisfaction than either cohabiting or single [people]."

However, although the abstinence-only curricula allude to positive, pleasurable, fulfilling sex *within marriage*, the few quotations above illustrate both the frequency and depth with which the AOE curricula construct sex positively. The AOE curricula give a nod to the positive elements of (married) sexuality, but as I will illustrate below, abstinence-only programs dedicate most discussions of sex to the dangerous, deleterious elements of it. Furthermore, while the AOE curricula allude to sexual pleasure, the above quotations encompass the extent of these conversations. They briefly mention sexual "pleasure," "satisfaction" and "passion," but they only discuss these concepts in abstract, disembodied terms. The curricula contain no discussions of the details of human sexuality or the physicality of sexual pleasure and desire.

Conversely, the AOE curricula present students with vivid, grotesque, embodied illustrations of sex negativity. The AOE curricula in this project construct nonmarital sex through extraordinary discourses of disease, fear, dysfunction, shame and death. They highlight both its physical and emotional consequences in great detail and teach that its negative effects are deleterious and everlasting.

Each of the three abstinence-only programs dedicates multiple pages to sensationalist descriptions of STIs that highlight their worst case scenario outcomes in illustrative detail. For instance, the *Me, My World, My Future* curriculum uses vivid descriptors when discussing STI symptoms. "Foul-smelling vaginal discharge," "rupturing blisters," "persistent bleeding," "small, soft, fleshy growths" and "multiple ugly warty growths," are only a few of the dramatic phrases the curriculum uses to describe STI symptoms (199-267). Similarly, the *Choosing the Best* curriculum includes an "STD Slideshow" which contains gigantic close-up pictures of diseased genitals. The pictures detail a swollen, red, bleeding cervix, a scarred pelvis with a sutured fallopian tube, detailed genital warts on a penis, late stage genital warts on a woman's labia, herpes lesions on a penis and herpes lesions on a woman's labia that are so serious that she is unable to urinate and needs a catheter inserted into her bladder.

The AOE curricula enumerate the long-term consequences of STIs with similar vivacity. The curricula teach detailed lessons on the worst case scenario outcomes of diseases left untreated, including crippling, paralysis, heart disease, brain damage, blindness, sterility, infant death, hysterectomy, invasive surgery, radiation and death (*Me, My World, My Future*, 199-267). While these outcomes certainly do occur, the curricula focus on the worst outcomes of STIs, (for instance Syphilis-induced blindness, Herpes-related infant death and Chlamydia-induced Pelvic Inflammatory Disease), and provide minimal information on STI treatment options or realistic statistics on the rates of recovery from such infections.

The AOE programs also teach that nonmarital sex does such deep psychological damage to sexually active youth that it forever destroys their prospects of engaging in

healthy long-term relationships. For instance, *Me, My World, My Future* (206) teaches that nonmarital sex includes the following consequences:

- Negative effects on sexual adjustment — Premarital sex, especially with more than one person, has been linked to the development of difficulty in sexual adjustment. (Guilt has been found to be a pervasive problem in this regard.)
- Negative effects on marital stability — Marriage and family counselors report that those with more premarital sexual experience have, in future marriages, increased difficulty in relating on a deep interpersonal level with their spouse and an increased likelihood of marital instability.
- Negative effects on happiness — Premarital sex, especially with more than one person, has been linked to the development of emotional illness.
- Loss of self-esteem — Premarital sex is particularly destructive to self-esteem in girls. The self-esteem scores were lower in boys and girls who had a history of sexually transmitted diseases.

Thus, the curriculum teaches that nonmarital sex damages students' mental and emotional wellbeing, and these effects are likely to last a lifetime: destroying future sex lives, future marriages and future emotional stability. Students who have nonmarital sex are likely to be guilt-ridden, emotionally ill and lack self-esteem, and this is especially the case for girls, the curriculum teaches.

WAIT Training (154) makes a similar argument through metaphor. It instructs teachers to "Hold up a bottle of school glue and ask the students if it's a bonding agent. Then explain that nearly every bonding agent works best when used on a surface that is clean, dry and free of debris. This allows for a stronger bond. The same is true for the bonding power of sex." Thus, students who have not had sex are "clean" and "free of debris," while sex is dirty and sexually active teens are unclean and have lost their power to bond forever. The curriculum employs the following exercise to underscore this message:

Exercise 6: Spit in a Cup

1. Prior to class time, prepare 7 STD placards by writing each of the following words on a separate...sheet of paper:

- HPV (Human Papilloma Virus)
- Chlamydia
- Herpes
- HIV/AIDS
- Gonorrhea
- Syphilis
- Virgin

2. Ask 7 volunteers to line up side-by-side at the front of the class.

3. Distribute one placard to each volunteer...

4. Give the first volunteer in the line the plastic cup and ask him or her to spit in the cup.

5. Ask the student to pass the cup down to the next person in line, and ask the second student to spit in the same cup as well.

6. Continue down the line until everyone except the "VIRGIN" has spit in the cup.

7. When the "VIRGIN" receives the cup, say, "Now I want you to drink it."
TEACHER'S NOTE: *Do not let the student actually drink from the cup!* The purpose is to draw attention to nature of mixed body fluids. The "VIRGIN" says "no thanks" to the cup.

8. Hold up the spit cup and say, "Now isn't he smart? This is like what you put into your body when you have sex with someone whose sexual history is unknown to you. Think before you act!"

- *WAIT Training* (227 - 228)

Hence, like drinking a cup full of other people's spit, premarital sex is dirty and disgusting. This embodied, vivid exercise presents sexually active teens as necessarily diseased, and virgins as pure and clean.

As evidenced above, the AOE curricula teach that, unlike worry-free, idyllic married sex, nonmarital sex has horrifying consequences -- it ravages students' bodies, minds, relationships and futures. In contrast to married sex, which *Me, My World, My Future* (129) teaches has "few, if any, negative consequences," nonmarital sex is dirty

and diseased. Furthermore, the AOE curricula fail to mention that there are ways for sexually active teens to avoid the STIs listed in the "Spit in a Cup" exercise above because they construct safer sex as impossible. By law, abstinence-only curricula are only permitted to discuss condoms and other forms of contraception in terms of their failure rates if they wish to qualify for Title V abstinence dollars. However, the curricula I examined often go far beyond this legal requirement and present condom discussions in terms of fear, sexual harassment and death. The curricula's negation of the protective capacity of condoms obscures the gradations of risk that lie along the continuum between severely risky sex and very safe sex and reinforces the dichotomous construction of married and premarried sex as well as their sex negativity in general.

The following example from the *Me, My World, My Future* (215) teaches that condoms are ineffective in preventing deadly diseases and couches safer sex in a discourse of violent death:

If condoms and condom usage are not reliable, wouldn't relying on them be like playing the insane "game" of Russian roulette? A cartridge is loaded into one of the six chambers of a revolver. The first "player" spins the cylinder, points the gun to his/her head, and pulls the trigger. *He/she has only one in six chances of being killed.* But if one continues to perform this act, the chamber with the bullet will ultimately fall into position under the hammer, and *the game ends as one of the players dies.*

Relying on condoms is like playing Russian roulette. Condoms do not prevent pregnancy, STD's, or AIDS 100% of the time. The longer one relies on them, the greater the chance of failure. Even if the method had a 90% chance of success the first time, repeated acts compound the failure rate and a person's risk. *The longer one relies on them, the probability increases that a condom will fail and the "game" is over.*

The above example greatly exaggerates condom risks and presents nonmarital sex with a condom as violent and deadly -- like shooting yourself in the head. However, unlike Russian roulette, which has about a 1/6 likelihood of death if played once, (and close to a 100% likelihood if played six times), when used consistently and correctly, condoms are

98% effective in stopping the transmission of HIV/AIDS in relationships among infected and uninfected partners (Advocates for Youth, 2011). Thus, the inevitability of the "game end[ing] when one player dies" that the Russian roulette metaphor implies is a gross overstatement. Furthermore, unlike the proclamation that "the longer one relies on them, the greater the chance of failure," condom efficacy does *not* decline over time.

The abstinence-only curricula also employ fear, guilt and negativity to convince teachers that condom education is dangerous. In the below example, the curriculum equates condom education to sexual harassment:

Sexual harassment suits are possible when schools teach coed classes how to put condoms on a banana. If this was done in the work place, this may be considered sexual harassment. Rules that apply in the work place should also apply in schools. (Should the schools put taxpayers at this tremendous risk?)

- *WAIT Training* (36)

Another curriculum positions school-based clinics that distribute condoms as irresponsible, while simultaneously stigmatizing sexually active teens:

Realizations made clear in counseling can help open the way for postponing immediate physical gratification...Personal needs require personal solutions. Casually handing out contraceptives in these cases is like giving a hungry, starving child a diet pill. Momentarily the feeling of hunger goes away but the real cause of the hunger, the need for food, has not been met. It may appear to meet the immediate desire, but eventually will cause long-term damage if the true needs are not met.

- *Me, My World, My Future* (211)

In both of the above examples, the curricula invoke fear to convince administrators and teachers not to teach about condoms. *Me, My World, My Future* equates condom education with sexual harassment and likens it to "giving a hungry, starving child a diet pill," thus positing that condom distribution "will cause long-term damage" and implying that sexually active teens need counseling.

By constructing condoms and sex through discourses of death and dysfunction, the abstinence-only curricula negate the protective capacity of condoms and reinforce the dichotomy between marital and "premarital" sex. Likewise, condom conversations in abstinence-only education underscore the general sex negativity of the curricula and stigmatize sexually active youth. It is to their position in abstinence-only education that I now turn.

Sexually Active Youth. As evidenced in the example above that compares a sexually active teenager to a "hungry, starving child," the abstinence-only curricula construct sexually active teens through a shaming, stigmatizing, sex negative discourse. The programs I studied construct sexually active youth as delinquent, abused, undisciplined and otherwise dysfunctional people who have sex solely to meet unfulfilled needs. *Me, My World, My Future* (209-211) exhibits this in the following passage describing "premarital" sex:

Sexual attraction is a normal emotion. However, premarital sex is a function out of control, and much early adolescent sexual behavior is actually not sexually motivated! Many young people in their early teens use sex as a cry for help, as an act of rebellion, as a method of gaining peer approval, as an escape from one's life situations, as a self-destructive act, or in a misguided search for real love. This is a dysfunctional view of sexuality!

As the above quotation depicts, abstinence-only curricula pathologize "premarital" sex and the people who have it. It is a "function out of control" -- an abnormal behavior engaged in by teens with deep emotional problems. Unmarried teen sex is not a sexual act. Rather, it is a "cry for help," an "act of rebellion," a "method of gaining peer approval," a "self-destructive act," or a "misguided search for real love."

Similarly, *WAIT Training* (252) suggests that most teens who have sex are survivors of sexual abuse. It states, "sexually active teens characterize ... [sex] as the

only way to show love. Many sexually abused children will experience this. They have been sexualized by someone they loved and trusted and this became the norm to show affection." Additionally, one curriculum employs a classed, raced explanation for teen sex, "Sexual activity at young ages is more common among young people from low socioeconomic status families..." likening these students to "adolescents who smoke, use alcohol or other drugs, or have evidence of delinquency," (*Me, My World, My Future*, 100).

In addition, the AOE curricula warn teachers against providing sexually active youth with information about condoms and contraception because students are too irresponsible to handle it. *Me, My World, My Future* (205) states, "Only in the area of reproductive matters are medical services dispensed without parental permission. Information is given to all children based on the needs of the most physically developed and the most socially or sexually precocious. Those students who are least likely to have the self discipline to consistently bring a pencil to class are expected to consistently use contraceptives." Thus, sexually active teens are so irresponsible they do not even have the self-discipline to come to class with writing instruments -- how, then, could they use condoms?

Furthermore, one curriculum suggests that addressing sexually active kids' needs would create negative externalities for their non-sexually active classmates:

Remediation [for sexually active teens] should be available for those who, for whatever reason, deviate from the best choice, but it is absolutely essential that this be done in private individual counseling and not in the classroom. It is unwise and unfair to allow the sexually dysfunctional faction of students to set the standard for developing district-wide programs. Classroom discussions for these students may degenerate into sensational exhibitions creating negative peer pressure.

- *Me, My World, My Future*, (211)

While it is certainly important to offer students private counseling to deal with sexual dysfunction, the curriculum necessarily and problematically defines all sexually active students as dysfunctional. Furthermore, the suggestion that acknowledging sexual activity in classrooms would "degenerate into sensational exhibitions" paints a picture of sexually active youth that is deeply delegitimizing and stigmatizing.

Valorizing Virgins. Consistent with the marital sex/premarital sex dichotomy in abstinence-only programs, the AOE curricula construct virgins as the opposite of sexually active youth. Instead of being dysfunctional and irresponsible, the AOE curricula teach that virgins are honorable, responsible people with a host of positive character traits. "Valuable character qualities (e.g., self-control, perseverance, courage sincerity, good judgment) emanate from the freedoms of a premarital, sexually abstinent lifestyle," *Me, My World, My Future* (325) teaches. Thus, virginity is not merely a lack of sexual activity, but it is indicative of the quality of one's character: "Being a virgin is important, but the character qualities you develop by reaching the goal of having impulse control and staying a virgin until you are married are even more important," *WAIT Training* (231) states. Even more, one curriculum teaches that people who are virgins until they marry are less likely to cheat on their spouses because of the "type of character" that they possess. "Ask the students to brainstorm words that reflect the type of character that...young adult virgins probably possess, such as "patient," "goal-oriented," "self-controlled," "high expectations," "loyal," etc. Write those words [on the board] ...beneath the word "VIRGIN." It continues, "When this kind of person marries, are they less likely or more likely to cheat on their spouse? Right, they're less likely to cheat. Now isn't this the kind of person you want to marry?" (*WAIT Training*, 231).

In order to encourage students to remain virgins until marriage, all three AOE curricula encourage students to sign virginity pledges in which they vow to remain abstinent until marriage. Below is the pledge card provided by *WAIT Training* (151):

HANDOUT: PLEDGE TEMPLATE

MY PLEDGE

Because I want to protect the stability of my future marriage ...

Because I want to have fun and not worry

Because I am smart and know how to set boundaries. ..

Because I want to build my relationship in a healthy way ...

Because I don't want to compromise my values ...

Because I don't want to disappoint my parents. ..

Because I don't want to be disappointed,

I _____ pledge to myself
... to not get involved in drug and alcohol use, and in
premarital sexual activity.

Signed _____

Dated _____

The pledge above illustrates the general negativity through which AOE curricula construct sex, as it implies that "premarital" sex jeopardizes future marriages, compromises values, disappoints parents, and, like drug and alcohol use, is deeply unhealthy. Thus, by signing the pledge to avoid sex, one pledges to avoid devastating life circumstances.

The AOE curricula also make virginity pledges available to sexually active youth, who they encourage return to a "secondary virginity." *Me, My World, My Future* (209) explains, "Secondary virginity is not a physiological regaining. Rather, it is an attitude of having the ability to make a new decision. Teens who are disillusioned, who have been exploited by sexual abuse, or who want to start enjoying the advantages of abstinence can develop confidence in their ability to maintain self-control." The curriculum does not absolve secondary virgins of the consequences of their earlier indiscretions, however.

But they can "ease the pain of these consequences" as they go forward: "You may still have to face the consequences of your previous sexual activity such as destroyed relationships, sexually transmitted diseases, or an already conceived child, but the advantages of regained virginity may help ease the pain of these consequences," *Me, My World, My Future* (338) claims. Similarly, *WAIT Training* (231) suggests that sexually active teens recover their virginity immediately: "If you've been sexually active in the past, remember that today is a new day, and it's the perfect chance to start over. You did what you knew, and when you know better you'll do better! It is never too late to be a virgin from this day forward!"

Missing Positivity in Abstinence-Only Education

As evidenced above, abstinence-only curricula create a dichotomized version of heterosex in which married sex and the people that wait to have it are healthy, pleasurable and free, while "premarital" sex and the people that have it are dirty, dangerous and disgusting. Although the AOE curricula construct married sex as abstractly positive, the big message in volume, vigor and frequency is that sex is dangerous, diseased, dirty and deadly. Sex, is therefore a moral choice in which students choose between right and wrong, good and evil, purity and contamination, honor and dysfunction, health and disease. The moral discourse in abstinence-only education warrants healthy unmarried sexual relationships impossible and it severely stigmatizes those who engage in them. Further, it silences a continuum of sexual risk in which the line between safe and unsafe sex does not revolve around marriage, but rather "less risky" sexual behaviors, such as sex inside committed, monogamous relationships, exist on one end of the continuum and "more risky" behaviors, such as unprotected, promiscuous, dangerous sex, exists on the

other (Benetar, 2008). Additionally, the moral discourse in abstinence-only education idealizes married sex and silences instances of sexual danger within marriage, including marital rape. Further, it implies a "magic line" that one crosses on their wedding day in which sex moves from delinquent, sordid and filthy to romantic, pleasurable and loving.

The construction of sex in abstinence-only education places sexually active teens at risk by reifying the basis for the social stigma that surrounds sexually active youth. This disproportionately burdens young women who often pay a severe social price for their sexuality in the form of labels, harassment and bullying. It also denies students the information that they need to protect themselves from STIs, HIV/AIDS and unwanted pregnancies and potentially discourages condom use by understating their efficacy. Furthermore, it encourages negative beliefs around sexuality by silencing sexual positivity -- a key component of healthy sexual development.

Now, I turn to comprehensive sex education. I argue that CSE programs teach about sex through a value-neutral, clinical, risk reduction discourse that constructs sexual behavior as existing along a continuum of risk in which safe sexual acts exist on one end and dangerous ones reside on the other. In that light, CSE programs present sex in a far less stigmatizing and sensational manner than abstinence-only education. Their tone is clinical and detached, but CSE programs do not go as far as presenting sex as healthy and pleasurable either. Rather, CSE programs rarely discuss sex outside of risk, and in the rare instances that they do discuss sex positively, it is in the context of men's, but not women's, sexuality. Thus, I argue that, although CSE programs are less moralistic and stigmatizing, like abstinence-only education, CSE programs reproduce sex negativity and silence a discourse of sexual positivity -- especially for women.

Comprehensive Sex Education

Unlike abstinence-only education, the CSE curricula do not prescribe nonmarital abstinence as the expected standard for behavior. Rather, the CSE programs teach about sex through a risk reduction discourse that encourages students to choose low-risk sexual activities over high-risk ones. They teach that nonmarital abstinence is the safest (and therefore best) behavioral choice, but they also teach that in the event that students do not choose abstinence, they should reduce their risk by using condoms every time they have sex. The CSE programs in this project elevate condoms to the second best choice for reducing pregnancy and disease and, contrary to the connotations of the term "comprehensive," these curricula downplay other risk reduction options.

CSE programs teach that some sexual behaviors are safe, but they do not go as far as constructing these activities as healthy, normal or pleasurable either. For instance, the CSE curricula teach that some acts, like kissing or masturbation, are risk-free, but they typically do not discuss these acts as pleasurable, healthy, desirable, enjoyable or otherwise positive. Rather, the CSE curricula consistently connect sex to risk and marginalize desire and pleasure.

Risk Reduction. All three CSE curricula in this project construct sex through a risk reduction discourse that positions sexual subjects as equally powerful, rational actors, responsible for assessing their risk levels and making sexual choices based upon the relative risks that various acts pose. All three programs employ a traffic light metaphor to illustrate this concept. They each teach that behaviors that involve the exchange of potentially disease-carrying body fluids, such as unprotected sex or sharing used needles are "red light" behaviors, meaning that students should stop immediately

when approaching these activities. Similarly, the CSE programs teach that activities that could potentially involve the exchange of body fluids, such as vaginal, anal or oral sex with a condom, mutual masturbation and French kissing, are yellow light activities. They hold a moderate level of risk and should be approached with caution. The curricula also teach that activities that do not involve the exchange of body fluids, such as abstinence, hand-holding, talking on the phone, massage and self masturbation, are green light activities. They do not put students at risk and they can therefore proceed accordingly.

The curricula spend a great deal of effort encouraging students to choose green and yellow light behaviors as opposed to red light activities. They teach detailed information about HIV and STI transmission and go to great lengths to teach students to personalize disease risks. The curricula each contain fact sheets and quizzes on disease transmission, they include worksheets and activities on how getting pregnant or acquiring HIV/AIDS would change their lives, and they include games like "verbal intercourse," "AIDS Basketball" and "AIDS Jeopardy" that teach facts about HIV symptoms and transmission (*Be Proud, Be Responsible*, 47-62). The curricula also have students read stories about people living with HIV/AIDS, and *Draw the Line, Respect the Line* has an HIV-infected person come talk to the class to discuss life with the virus.

While the CSE curricula provide students with substantial information about STI risks and transmission, the tone is more detached and clinical and less moralistic and sensational than abstinence-only education. While AOE programs go into great illustrative detail to describe STI symptoms and worse-case-scenario outcomes, comprehensive sex education programs focus more on transmission and prevention than symptom description. Subsequently, CSE programs devote more space to teaching

students how they can reduce their risks of contracting diseases rather than exploring their consequences in vivid detail.

Additionally, CSE programs do not prescribe a standard for nonmarital sexual behavior. Rather, the CSE curricula present students with an individualized, libertarian sexual ethic that encourages students to make decisions about sexual behavior in terms of risk. *Draw the Line, Respect the Line* teaches that "you are the architect of your own destiny" (grade 7, p. 19). "Each person makes his or her own decision about where to draw the line," the curriculum states (grade 8, p. 21). Similarly, *Be Proud, Be Responsible* teaches that students should exhibit "proud and responsible" behavior, which it defines broadly as "protecting yourself by using a condom during sexual intercourse; abstaining from sexual intercourse when no condom is available; not using alcohol and other drugs; abstaining from sex altogether, if that is your choice; talking with friends, partners and family members about risk behaviors and encouraging them to protect themselves" (24). Thus, unlike the abstinence-only curricula, CSE programs do not construct sex as a moral choice and they do not specify where students should set sexual limits. Rather, they position students as rational actors who, as long as they choose to avoid high risk "red light" activities, make value-free decisions about sex.

Condom Education. In the interest of risk reduction, for students who are sexually active or who will be sexually active in the future, the CSE curricula include detailed lessons about condom efficacy, acquisition and use. The three curricula present students with meticulous, thorough facts about condom efficacy and they require students to discuss condom use with adults and peers in order to normalize talk about condoms. For instance, *Draw the Line, Respect the Line* requires students to call the Centers for

Disease Control to discuss condom efficacy with reproductive health experts. *Reducing the Risk* requires students to visit a family planning clinic and discuss contraception options with health care professionals. In addition, the curriculum requires students to go to a store, locate condoms, and report back with the names, prices and location of condoms. *Be Proud, Be Responsible* does not require students to do these activities, but it takes a unique approach in that it constructs condoms as "fun and pleasurable" (80) and encourages students to eroticize condom use. Likewise, all three of the CSE curricula include condom demonstrations in which teachers and/or students take condoms out of packages and put them on fingers or ceramic penises.

However, the CSE curricula do not include a "comprehensive" overview of safer sex options, contrary to the linguistic connotations of the word. Rather, the CSE programs are almost entirely condom-centric and neglect a great deal of information about the available reproductive health alternatives. The CSE curricula provide some information on birth control pills, Depo Provera and Implanon, which are all common, useful contraception methods for young women, but this information is severely limited compared to the focus on condoms. Additionally, the curricula are *altogether silent* on some of the most effective methods of pregnancy prevention, including female condoms, IUDs and Plan B emergency contraception. The CSE curricula do not mention a single word on these topics. This is a grave omission considering that Plan B prevents 95% of unwanted pregnancies when taken in the first 24 hours of unprotected sex and IUDs prevent 99% of unwanted pregnancies. Similarly, the CSE curricula are almost totally silent on dental dams, thereby offering students who perform cunnilingus no way of protecting themselves. Likewise, they do not mention the HPV vaccine, which is 97%

effective in preventing HPV, which is the single most prevalent STD affecting young people and poses a significant cancer risk to women in particular. Furthermore, the comprehensive sex education curricula do not mention a single word about abortion or adoption.

Therefore, despite the implications of the word "comprehensive," the CSE curricula in this study are only comprehensive in one topic: the role of condoms in reducing sexual risk. This has gendered implications because condom use is entirely dependent on men's compliance, while the myriad of other contraception and disease-prevention options available do not require men's participation. Condoms are superior to other methods of protection because they prevent both STIs and pregnancy, but condom-centered contraception education fails to provide young women with the information they need to autonomously protect themselves against pregnancy, disease and unwanted parenting.

Missing Positivity. The three CSE programs in this project construct sex and sex acts solely in terms of risk and offer scant images of sexual positivity, although they go about doing so slightly differently. One curriculum silences positivity entirely, one curriculum pathologizes sexual desire, and one curriculum discusses sexual pleasure primarily in terms of men's, but not women's, sexuality. I detail each approach below.

The *Draw the Line, Respect the Line* program contains no discussion of the positive elements of sexuality in the entire curriculum. Detailed discussions of disease transmission and pregnancy risks abound in its pages, yet the curriculum is entirely mute around the positive aspects of sexuality. It does not mention a word about the physical delights of sex, including desire and pleasure, nor does it mention the positive emotional

elements of sexual relationships. Although discussions of risk in this curriculum are less sensational than in the AOE curricula, in this way it is quite similar to the AOE programs I analyzed.

Reducing the Risk also silences positive elements of sexuality, although it takes this one step further and teaches that sexual desire, itself, is a risk. It teaches students that sexual thoughts and feelings are an "alert signal" that a "sex crisis" involving unprotected sex could occur. The curriculum teaches that if students experience sexual feelings, they must "develop a sound plan for avoiding having sex, getting pregnant or becoming infected." It states (95):

You may notice...alert signals long before the time that you are seeing the other person. For example, you may notice that you are being especially careful about the clothes you pick out, or especially anxious about what you will say and do, or maybe you can't wait to get to school, or you wear something different or special to school or out at night. If you know what *your* signs are and watch for them, you will have enough time to act and avoid unwanted sex, pregnancy or HIV infection. If you miss the signs, you will not.

Thus, the curriculum problematizes sexual feelings and thoughts, which are a normal, healthy, developmentally appropriate component of adolescent sexuality (SIECUS, 2010). In this example, students do not even have to be in the presence of potential partners for "alert" situations to occur. Just thoughts could lead to "getting pregnant or becoming infected." Additionally, it lists the following actions as "alert signs" (95):

- I get dressed up to look really sexy.
- I plan to get some beer to help loosen us up.
- I think about ways to be alone with him or her.
- I think about touching him or her.
- We touch "by accident."
- We talk about being alone at home.

In this list, the curriculum equates underage drinking, a potentially harmful, destructive behavior, with developmentally appropriate aspects of adolescent sexuality, including

sexual thoughts, fantasies, talk and touching. While it is certainly important to discuss desire in relationship to risk, the curriculum *never* discusses sexual thoughts, feelings or fantasies positively. It never normalizes desire or assures students that these are common, developmentally appropriate ways for adolescents to feel, but rather, only problematizes sexual feelings.

The *Be Proud, Be Responsible* curriculum also presents sexual positivity problematically, albeit in a much different way. The curriculum discusses sexual pleasure more explicitly than any other curriculum in this study, but does so only in terms of its relationship to condom use. It states, "It may be necessary to provide [students] with basic and factual information about sexual response in order to increase participants' willingness to use condoms and encourage the belief that using condoms can be pleasurable and fun" (127). Thus, consistent with its risk reduction orientation, the curriculum instrumentally employs a discussion of pleasure in order to encourage students to mitigate risk, but it does not discuss sexual pleasure as a valid, important, healthy, beneficial part of human sexuality in its own rite.

Additionally, the curriculum constructs sexual pleasure through a male sexual drive discourse and a missing discourse of female desire which subordinate women's positive embodied experiences of sex to men's. It begins its lesson entitled "The Basics of Sexual Response" (128) by reifying the heterosexist notion that sexual intercourse is something that men enjoy and women endure:

Many times sex ends up not being as much fun as it started out to be. Young men often reach orgasm faster than they want. Young women sometimes experience pain if it is their first time having intercourse and/or if they are not feeling aroused.

In this example, young men are necessarily aroused, while young women are likely to be in pain. Young men may climax quicker than they would like, but young women suffer. The lesson fails to problematize the notion of couples going forward with sex when women are feeling pain or "are not feeling aroused," and it disallows for the possibility of young men experiencing pain, not being aroused or being unable to maintain an erection.

It continues (128):

Although some guys may be uncomfortable with a young woman who is very assertive, most guys get very turned on if their partner touches them, especially if she touches his penis and strokes it. Applying lubrication directly on his penis will probably make him very excited. Then she can roll the condom on with a lot of lubrication inside and out. During this time, her own arousal level also will increase, preparing her vagina for a comfortable penetration. The lubrication will make it more comfortable for her and more slippery and exciting for him.

While the excerpt above makes women's pleasure visible, it is secondary to the experience -- she may get turned on while putting the condom on him, but that is a by-product of the act, not the center of it. Further, it underscores the notion that women are less sexually desirous by stating that lubrication makes sex "slippery and exciting for him" and just "more comfortable" for her. Additionally, the excerpt above reifies women's sexual passivity by acknowledging the belief that "some guys may be uncomfortable with a young woman who is very assertive" and simultaneously failing to call it into question. Thus, rather than destabilizing this disempowering version of gendered sexual interactions, it underscores it. Further, the excerpt above teaches that couples can overcome men's insecurity around assertive women if women do the work of turning men on. She is slated with the job of arousing him, applying lubrication and putting the condom on, while he, conversely, enjoys a "privileged irresponsibility" (Borczyk, 2009) -- he mustn't arouse her or even put the condom on himself.

Thus, in the example above *Be Proud, Be Responsible* constructs sexual positivity through foregrounding men's sexual pleasure and subordinating women's physical experiences of sex. This would not necessarily be problematic if it were one among many stories of sexual arousal that the curriculum tells. However, this story is the only perspective on sexual positivity and the curriculum reproduces it in many places. For instance, the following exercise instructs students on how to respond to a partner who believes that condoms "don't feel as good" and silences women's pleasure in the process:

Excuse: Condoms don't feel as good as the real thing. They aren't natural.

Response: Today's thin latex condoms feel really natural. Putting a drop of lubricant inside the tip of the condom might give extra feeling.

- *Be Proud, Be Responsible* (92)

In the example above, the curriculum is clearly speaking of men's pleasure -- putting lubricant "inside" the condom would not impact a woman's sensation level. In isolation, this is not problematic. However, the curriculum does not contain a parallel example where women are concerned about their loss of sensation and students are instructed to put lubricant on the *outside* of the condom. The next example, which again instructs students on how to address men's loss of physical pleasure as a barrier to condom use, underscores this point.

Excuse: When I stop to put it on, I'll lose my erection.

Response: Don't worry, I'll help you get it back.

- *Be Proud, Be Responsible* (92)

In order to calm men's worries about erection loss, the curriculum instructs women to promise to help their partners "get it back." Again, there is no problem with this scenario in and of itself. However, the curriculum fails to present a reverse situation where the

woman loses her lubrication as the result of condom use and the man promises to help her get it back.

Examples of androcentric condom conversations abound in the *Be Proud, Be Responsible* curriculum and, as evidenced above, in the rare instances that the curriculum does mention women's physical experiences with condom use, it still teaches that sex is something that women endure and men enjoy. For instance, the following worksheet, which teaches about the relative HIV risks of sexual activities, silences cunnilingus:

HIV Risk Continuum Worksheet

Behavior

1. Vaginal sex without a condom (red light)
2. Vaginal sex with a condom (yellow light)
3. Oral sex on a guy without a condom (red light)
4. Oral sex on a guy with a condom (yellow light)
5. Anal sex without a condom (red light)
6. Anal sex with a condom (red/yellow light)
7. Self masturbation (green light)
8. Mutual masturbation (yellow light)
9. Wet kissing (green light)
10. Dry kissing (green light)
11. Massage (green light)
12. Showering together (green light)
13. Romantic conversation (green light)
14. Sharing needles and syringes without cleaning them (red light)
15. Sharing needles and syringes and cleaning them correctly with bleach (yellow/red light)
16. Doing drugs but not sharing needles and syringes (yellow/green light)
17. Having sex with multiple partners and not using a condom (red light)
18. Having sex with multiple partners and using a condom (yellow light)
19. Having unprotected sex (no condom) with a person who injects drugs (red light)
20. Having sex with a person who injects drugs and using a condom (red/yellow light)
21. Having sex with someone who has had multiple partners without a condom (red light)
22. Having sex with a woman who is having sex with other women (yellow light)
23. Having unprotected sex with a man who is having sex with other men (red light)
24. Sharing eating utensils with someone who has AIDS (green light)
25. Touching someone who has AIDS (green light)
26. Currently abstaining but has had sexual intercourse (green light)

- 27. Never had sex (green light)
- 28. Body rubbing (green light)
- 29. Flirting (green light)
- 30. Sexual fantasy (green light)
- 31. Hugging (green light)
- 32. Having sex with only one person (monogamous) (Green/Yellow/Red Light - (depends on if both are uninfected or virgins and never share needles)

- Be Proud, Be Responsible (60-61)

As displayed above, the list contains thirty-two activities, but it fails to mention oral sex on a woman. This is a glaring omission given that the list includes activities such as hugging, sharing eating utensils and touching a person with AIDS and the fact that vaginal fluid does, in fact, carry HIV. It silences women's pleasure, heterosexual reciprocity with oral sex, and a significant portion of lesbian sex.

Additionally, the curriculum's glossary subtly silences women's bodies and pleasure. The list below contains all of the entries in the curriculum's glossary that discuss body parts or body fluids, and as evidenced below, the curriculum neglects to teach students about the clitoris:

GLOSSARY

Anus: The opening of the rectum that controls the release of waste (feces) from the body.

Ejaculate: To eject semen from the penis during orgasm.

Ejaculation: The spontaneous discharge of semen during orgasm.

Orgasm: A pleasurable feeling resulting from sexual stimulation.

Penis: The male sexual organ.

Rectum: The last portion of the digestive tract, just above the anus.

Saliva: The fluid produced in the mouth.

Semen: Whitish fluid ejaculated from the penis during orgasm that contains sperm, white blood cells, and fluid.

Vagina: The passageway in a female extending from the vulva to the cervix; is penetrated during vaginal sex.

Vaginal Fluid: Fluid that provides moistness and lubrication in the vagina; vaginal fluid may contain HIV in an HIV-infected woman.

Vulva: The entire outer region of the vagina.

- Be Proud, Be Responsible (147-150)

As depicted above, the glossary totally neglects the word "clitoris" in its word list, which silences women's capacity for pleasure. Further, it defines "vagina" passively as something that "is penetrated" rather than as a body part that actively participates in sex. In addition, it defines the words "ejaculate" and "ejaculation" exclusively in terms of men's bodies, while it does not link "vaginal fluid" to female orgasm, but constructs it as potentially infected with HIV. Conversely, the glossary links "semen" to male orgasm and does not present it as potentially diseased. Thus, consistent with its condom-centered lesson on sexual response, the curriculum's glossary subtly silences women's sexual pleasure and could create the impression that female bodies are more likely to be diseased.

Be Proud, Be Responsible is the only curriculum in this study that provides an embodied discussion of sexual pleasure, yet, as evidenced above, it discusses pleasure only in terms of condom use and it reproduces the male sexual drive discourse and the missing discourse of female desire in the process. It subordinates women's embodied experiences of sex to men's and silences women's bodies. However, the other two CSE programs entirely fail to acknowledge sex favorably, and one goes as far as constructing the exciting, developmentally appropriate sexual thoughts and feelings that most adolescents experience as dangerous and indicative of a looming "sex crisis."

Thus, the comprehensive sex education programs in this project construct sex through a risk reduction discourse that highlights sex negativity and silences sex positivity, especially for young women. While CSE programs do not stigmatize nonmarital sex with the same vivacity as abstinence-only programs, they also do not disrupt sex negative narratives and present sex as a healthy, normal, complex part of

human behavior that involves both risk and pleasure. *Be Proud, Be Responsible* offers the most explicit discussion of sexual pleasure, but it marginalizes young women's experiences in the process. Additionally, the CSE programs compromise women's ability to reduce their risks by failing to provide students with information about contraception and disease prevention options outside of condoms.

Policy Implications

Through the examination of this important stage in the implementation process of federal sex education policy, it becomes apparent that the AOE and CSE programs are more alike than the bifurcated policy debates and dualistic policy infrastructure imply. Both types of curricula silence a discourse of positivity around sex, regardless of whether they are comprehensive or abstinence-based. This has important implications for the healthy sexual development of all students, gender equity in education and the overall efficacy of publicly supported sex education programs.

Teaching about sex through a positive discourse involves presenting sexuality as a natural and healthy aspect of human life (ETR, 2011; SIECUS, 20010). Sex education beginning from this standpoint provides students with knowledge of anatomy, human sexual response, risk and all of their reproductive health options. It encourages respectful communication and the exchange of personal thoughts and feelings between partners, and it stresses the practice of safe and mutually consensual sexual activity. It encompasses risk, but it does not subordinate discussions of healthy pleasure, openness and communication to discussions of danger, fear and shame.

A positive relationship to sex is essential for the development of a healthy, balanced sexuality (Glickman, 2000), and since sex education is one of the most

important venues through which young people learn about sex (Kaiser, 2002), a missing discourse of positivity in federally-funded sex education can encourage students to develop an unhealthy relationship to sex. In the absence of an acknowledgement of the positive psychological and physical impacts of sexual expression, the curricula in this project miseducate youth, underscore fear and sexual negativity and silence the life-affirming, joyful aspects of human sexuality, regardless of whether the curricula are comprehensive or abstinence-driven.

This missing discourse of sexual positivity has particular implications for gender equity in sex education policy. Like in Michelle Fine's (1988) findings, the curricula in this study reproduce the absence of acceptable forms of desire for all youth, but especially for young women. Acknowledging that women's desire is an equally important component of sex and that women are capable of and entitled to pleasure is vital to women's empowerment and equality. The erotic is an important source of power (Lorde, 1984) and silencing its existence denies women a healthy, empowered sexuality.

Additionally, a missing discourse of sex positivity undermines efforts to end sexualized violence -- an important component of an equitable curriculum. When sex is constructed through a discourse of negativity, it becomes easy to blur the lines between rape and "just sex" because sex negativity accommodates the idea of rape as a sexual act (Gavey, 2005). If sex is normatively negative, the well-known rape apology that rape is motivated by men's needs for sexual release becomes plausible, and the antiquated myth that rape is sexy gains ground (Gavey, 2005). A missing discourse of women's desire and pleasure, coupled with missing clitorises, denies young women's sexual agency and therefore compromises young women's ability to protect themselves in sexual encounters

(Tolman, 2002; Whatley, 1994). However, when sex is constructed through a discourse of positivity, rape becomes something that is never sexy because it turns a normatively positive act into an act of violence (Macaulay Millar, 2008). It destabilizes arguments that rape is "just sex" as usual and it undermines the sexist myth that women "enjoy" being raped (Gavey, 2005). Therefore, in the interest of undermining sexual assault and promoting gender and sex equity in the curricula, federally-funded sex education programs should require that the programs implemented with federal dollars teach that sex not only has the capacity to be positive, but that it is normatively so.

Furthermore, in the interest of promoting gender equity in the curriculum, funded programs should include a full description of the available contraception options. As I discussed in Chapter One, young women often face social barriers to initiating condom use and, subsequently, condom-centric sex education is not enough to enable women to take control of their sexual health. In order to promote equity in sex education, sex education must address this gendered phenomenon. Programs implemented through federal policies should present students with a full account of safer sex options that includes Plan B emergency contraception, IUDs, the HPV vaccine and abortion. These options are tremendously effective in preventing pregnancy and HPV -- two conditions that disproportionately affect young women -- and are therefore vital in promoting women's autonomy in sexual risk reduction.

The implementation of abstinence-only and condom-centric comprehensive sex education curricula may actually undermine federal policy goals. The State AE, TPPI and PREP programs all aim to reduce STI and pregnancy rates, and encouraging women to autonomously protect themselves against pregnancy and disease supports these efforts.

However, the curricula all fail to include the realm of contraception options, which is an important moment of disjuncture between the goals of these policies and their implementation. Thus, in the interest of creating effective sex education policies, which is the central agenda of the TPPI and PREP initiatives, guidelines should be reconstructed to ensure that the curricula do not undermine policy goals during the implementation process.

Chapter 5: Missing Similarity

In Chapter Four, I posited that abstinence-only and comprehensive sex education curricula are alike in that they both silence a discourse of sex positivity around sex. Here, I argue that the curricula are also alike in that they both fail to offer students a discourse of similarity around gender. The abstinence-only curricula emphatically celebrate gender difference and teach versions of femininity and masculinity that are oppositional, complementary and, subsequently, disempowering (especially for young women and LGBTQQ students). The comprehensive sex education curricula, alternatively, are neutral towards gender -- they do not overtly teach difference, but they do not challenge it either, and in some cases they subtly reinforce it. Additionally, both types of programs bask in heteronormativity.

In this chapter, I argue that despite the fact that AOE and CSE programs take very different approaches to teaching gender, they both fail to challenge dominant, differentiated discourses of heterosex and offer alternative, competing narratives of similarity among women and men, heterosexual and LGBTQQ people. This has important implications for gender equity in sex education policy as well as the overall efficacy of such programs.

Abstinence-only Education: Gender is Difference, Difference is Good

The abstinence-only curricula in this study overtly, actively teach and celebrate gender difference. They teach that men and women are fundamentally oppositional beings with disparate needs, desires and motivations. The curricula construct women as passive, relational and relatively unsexual, while they construct men as aggressive,

detached and hypersexual. In addition, the contents of the AOE curricula are entirely heteronormative -- they altogether silence LGBTQQ people. Here, I first consider the construction of gender difference in abstinence-only education. Then, I turn to curricular depictions of femininity and masculinity more specifically, and conclude with an examination of heteronormativity in abstinence-only education.

Gender Difference in *WAIT Training*. The *WAIT Training* abstinence-only curriculum contains the most overt lessons on gender difference of any program I studied. Lesson Four in the curriculum is entitled "The Differences between Men and Women," and it begins with the following introduction (185):

Let's face it, men and women are different. Not just in terms of anatomy, but even in the ways they typically think and act in various situations. While the nature vs. nurture debate is likely to rage on for centuries, it's clear that men and women are not the same. We don't easily understand one another, but if the runaway success of the book *Men Are From Mars, Women Are From Venus* is any indication, we desperately want to.

...As this curriculum was being developed, we asked teens what they wanted to know. Girls wanted to understand why guys say they're going to call, and then don't call. Guys wanted to know why girls flirt and tease when they have no intentions of pursuing a physical relationship.

This unit is designed to cover these types of questions and explore the differences between men and women so that teens have the information needed to pursue healthier, more satisfying relationships with the opposite sex.

The curriculum (195) states that the objective of the lesson above is "To teach teens the research regarding the differences between men and women and to foster understanding, appreciation and communication between the genders." *WAIT Training* is the only curriculum in this project that teaches a distinct lesson on gender difference, but the

above account encapsulates how all three AOE programs frame lessons about gender, femininity and masculinity.

The abstinence-only curricula in this study teach that gender difference is a taken-for-granted part of life. "Let's face it, men and women are just different," the reasoning goes. The AOE curricula use this foundation to validate the male sexual drive and have/hold discourses: "Guys say they're going to call, and then don't," while "girls flirt and tease when they have no intentions of pursuing a physical relationship." The message is clear: young men are emotionally unavailable and only interested in unattached sex, while young women are interested in relationships and use sexiness (not necessarily sex) in order to lure men to them. Additionally, the curricula teach that if students recognize and uphold these differences, they will have "healthier, more satisfying relationships with the *opposite* sex."

The curriculum teaches the male sexual drive discourse and the have/hold discourse through a sociobiological lens that elevates them to the status of "facts" about human behavior. Immediately following the above lesson on gender difference, *WAIT Training* teaches students a long list of seemingly benign (and often untrue) anecdotes that have nothing to do with sex, relationships or reproduction in order to underscore the lesson that women and men are inherently different beings.

'Say, 'How about this: Without a backpack, how do guys carry their books? (demonstrate books under your arm). How do girls carry them? (demonstrate against your chest). No one had to teach you that, right? It's an innate behavior.'"
- *WAIT Training* (196)

Surely human beings are not born with natural, gendered book-carrying techniques, and this observation has nothing to do with sexuality or reproductive health, but the

curriculum lists numerous examples like it to naturalize the message that women and men are different beings. The following teacher scripts further illustrate this point:

Say, "OK, now I want everyone to look at their fingernails. (Pause). Did you notice that the girls typically look at their fingernails with an outstretched hand and the palm down (demonstrate). The guys, on other hand, usually look at their fingernails with their palm up and their fingers curled (demonstrate). That's just a fun example of how guys and girls tend to act differently.

Say, "Here's another fun one. When you ask a girl to look at the bottom of her shoe, girls tend to do this: (bend leg behind and point heel up). Guys on the other hand, often bend their leg in front of them like this (demonstrate).

- *WAIT Training* (195)

The angle from which one carries their books, gazes at their fingernails or checks their shoe bottoms is not an inborn trait, nor does it have anything to do with human reproduction or sexual health. Rather, these examples work to teach the sociobiological message that gendered humans are innately different beings -- a tenet that lies at the center of both the male sexual drive and the have/hold discourses of heterosexuality and silences notions of similarity among women and men.

In addition to the examples above, *WAIT Training* (200) teaches students a lengthy lesson on the physiological differences between women's and men's bodies that implicitly naturalizes gender differences. The lesson includes the below handout:

Physiological Differences Between Men and Women

- Women appear to have greater vitality. Normally, in the U.S., females outlive males by 3 to 4 years.
- Women's metabolism is usually lower than men's.
- Men and women differ in skeletal structure. Women have a shorter head, broader face, less protruding chin, shorter legs and longer trunks.
- Women have larger kidneys, liver, stomach and appendix than men, but smaller lungs.

- Women have several unique and important functions: menstruation, pregnancy and lactation.
- Women's hormones are of a different type and more numerous than men's.
- Women's thyroid gland is larger and more active: it enlarges during pregnancy and menstruation; makes women more prone to goiter; provides resistance to cold; is associated with her smooth skin and relatively hairless body and thick layer of subcutaneous fat.
- Women's blood contains more water and 20% fewer red blood cells. Since red blood cells supply oxygen to body cells, *women tire more easily and are more prone to faint.*
- On the average, *men possess 50% more brute strength than women.* (40% of a man's body weight is muscle: 23% for a woman)
- A woman's heart beats more rapidly (average 80 beats per minute vs. 72 beats per minute for a man). Women's blood pressure (10 points lower than a man's) varies from minute to minute, but she has less tendency toward high blood pressure, at least until after menopause.
- Women's vital capacity (or breathing power) is significantly lower than a man's. Women can withstand high temperature better than men because their metabolism slows down less.

Most of the physiological facts listed in the handout above have little to do with sexual health, reproduction, or any of the other objectives of typical sex education programs, but the curriculum teaches and tests students on this material nonetheless. By conveying these seemingly benign facts, the curriculum sets the stage for the broader message that, like bodies, socially constructed gender differences are natural, essential, immutable truths. Further, the list above subtly weaves in lessons of gender inequality. It perpetuates the notion that women are physically weaker than men by saying that they are "more prone to faint" and that men possess "more brute strength than women." It also presents women as "others" by listing most of the facts in terms of how women's bodies

deviate from men's, which are the norm (i.e. "women have larger kidneys than men...but smaller lungs," etc.).

The handout above also silences notions of similarity as it offers no room for students to discuss the physiological likenesses of men's and women's bodies. In fact, the curriculum warns students *against* recognizing similarity. "When we fail to recognize or remember that we operate with different systems, men and women easily find themselves hurt, angry and frustrated by the opposite sex," the curriculum states (185). "This can quickly deteriorate into relationship disillusion and disappointment. In order for us to live and work together better, we need to understand the unique differences of the sexes." Thus, *WAIT Training* teaches that recognizing similarity among women and men leads to pain, "anger, and frustration," and that students' relationships will be improved if they "understand the unique differences of the sexes" (185). The curriculum even suggests that students who recognize gender differences are more attractive to the "opposite" sex. "Challenge your students to think about how they might appreciate the differences. Ask them if they think that someone who understands and appreciates gender differences would be more attractive to the opposite sex," the lesson instructs (*WAIT Training*, 197).

Thus, the abstinence-only program discussed above not only teaches that gender is *about* difference, but also that gender difference is good and similarity is bad. Recognizing and upholding gender difference leads to better relationships, happier lives and better looks, the curriculum teaches. By implication, then, those who value gender similarities are less happy, less fulfilled and less attractive. Hence, through its overt statements and subtle implications, the AOE program above silences notions of similarity

among genders and cautions students against egalitarian understandings of women and men.

Femininity and Masculinity. The abstinence-only curricula I studied teach versions of femininity and masculinity that rest on the missing similarity delineated above. The AOE curricula are rife with side-by-side definitions of femininity and masculinity that construct women and men as contrasting, complementary creatures. They consistently present femininity as relational, emotional and passive and masculinity as rational, detached and active. The following example from the *Choosing the Best Soul Mate* (43) exemplifies this:

Guys

Communication Purpose: To REPORT information

Primary Emotional Needs: COMPETENCY, SELF-SUFFICIENCY

Feels Loved When: COMPETENCY is acknowledged

Feels Unloved When: CRITICIZED, rarely affirmed

Girls

Communication Purpose: To affirm RAPPORT while sharing information

Primary Emotional Needs: Being TOGETHER, QUALITY of RELATIONSHIP

Feels Loved When: FEELINGS are acknowledged

Feels Unloved When: Not LISTENED to, feelings not validated

As the above example illustrates, the curricula construct men and women as having mutually exclusive, oppositional interpersonal characteristics and needs. They present students with a caricature of masculinity and femininity in which young women are relational, dependent, emotional and needy, and young men are detached, independent, unemotional and autonomous.

Over and over again the curricula present a world in which women are almost exclusively driven by their feelings and their need to build relationships, while men, alternatively, are driven by their interests, adventures accomplishments. The following teacher script epitomizes this point:

Say, "A researcher had 3-year-old boys in a room with toy trucks. What do you think the boys did with the trucks? Allow for the class to guess, then explain that they crashed them into each other and made "boy noises and crashing sounds." Then ask, "What do you think happened when little girls were playing with the trucks?" Allow for the class to guess, then explain that they said, "Get in the truck, Honey, we're going to the doctor. It's not going to hurt." Girls are very relational.

- *WAIT Training*, (196)

In just a few sentences, this example encapsulates curricular constructions of women as compassionate, mature, responsible, empathetic and nurturing, and men as independent, detached, playful, competitive and aggressive. The AOE curricula imply that these gendered traits are innate and offer little room for students to explore similarities between women and men. In the above example, for instance, the invocation of young children implies that difference is present from childhood (or perhaps even birth), and is therefore likely unchangeable. Furthermore, the passage's summoning of the "researcher" gives it scientific authority and the phrase "boy noises" makes it seem as if children naturally make gendered sounds.

Additionally, the AOE curricula construct women and men as having very different needs in relationships. Because "girls are very relational," the AOE curricula construct women's wellbeing as tied to male romantic partners. Conversely, men's wellbeing is independent of their romantic relationships. The following story, "The Disappointed Princess," from the *Choosing the Best Soul Mate* curriculum (53) teaches this:

"The Disappointed Princess"

Once long ago there was lovely Princess adored by all who knew her. Many knights tried to woo her but she was unimpressed with any of the suitors. Then one day Knight in Shining Armor rode up to the castle. He was handsome and charming. The Princess fell in love with the Knight and they talked of marriage.

However problems soon emerged. . . . The Princess wanted to spend time talking about their future life together but the Knight was obviously not interested in listening. He preferred daily jousts with the other knights telling them about the battles he had fought and the treasures he had won. Each time the Knight returned from new adventure he would give the Princess wonderful gifts. When she tried to talk to the Knight, he would simply laugh gallantly, present her with gifts and say, "There will be plenty of time to talk when we are married. Let's enjoy these treasures together before I have to leave." The disappointed Princess thought maybe he will listen more after we get married.

One lonely day she rode her horse to nearby village...Soon after entering the village her horse began to limp terribly so the Princess found the local stables and called out for assistance. A rather plain blacksmith came to greet her. He kindly offered immediate help for her horse. He did not know that she was a Princess.

As he repaired the horseshoe they began to talk and talk and talk, so much so that the Princess spent the rest of the afternoon in the village. As sunset approached the blacksmith told the Princess that he wanted to see her again. Giving her a bouquet of flowers from his family's garden, he embraced the Princess. They agreed to meet the following day and the following day and the following day.

When the Knight returned home from his latest adventure and came to see the Princess she told him, "You needn't bother returning to my father's castle. I am no longer interested in marrying you." The next morning the Princess rode to the village to spend the day with the blacksmith. They fell in love spent happy hours talking about their life together eventually were married...and lived happily ever after.

Moral of the story: To win and keep a princess, expressing love through active listening and engaging conversation trumps gifts, activities and even looks.

"The Disappointed Princess" contains positive messages -- namely, that communication is more important than superficial things such as looks, wealth or status and that women needn't settle for emotionally unfulfilling partners. However, the egalitarian potential of "The Disappointed Princess" diminishes when read through a critical gender lens

In the story, the Princess "falls in love," yet the Knight remains emotionally unavailable and detached. In this well-known construction of heterosexual relationships, the juxtaposition of feminine emotional attachment and dependence versus masculine detachment and independence represents a power asymmetry in which men retain power by refusing to become emotionally vulnerable (hooks, 2000). The story criticizes this

behavior, yet it fails to challenge the assumptions that underlie it -- namely that men are detached and unemotional and women are relational and need romantic love to feel fulfilled. The lesson teaches that "The Princess wanted to spend time talking about their future life together, but the Knight was obviously not interested in listening. He preferred daily jousts with the other knights telling them about the battles he had fought and the treasure he had won." Thus, the story tells of stereotypical scenario in which she needs a committed heterosexual relationship, communication and marriage to feel fulfilled, while he needs same-sex friends, fun, independence and adventure. She is mature, responsible and future-oriented, while at his best he is playful, independent and competitive, preoccupied with "winning treasures" and having adventures, and at his worst he is violent and aggressive, preferring "daily jousts" and "battles" to companionship and communication. Ultimately, the princess falls for the gentler, more communicative man however the story presents a world in which rich knights enjoy increased autonomy, independence and latitude over their lives. Because American culture values detachment, self-sufficiency and competency over relateability, communicability and emotionality, such messages subtly underscore the social superiority of stoic masculinity.

Although the story above is ultimately designed to warn men about the dangers of non-communication (they may not "win and keep the Princess" if they maintain their careless, boyish ways), it simultaneously reifies the problematic discourse from which needy, dependent femininity and non-communicative, detached masculinity arises: the have/hold discourse. The story above teaches men how to better behave within the have/hold discourse and it teaches women what they can expect (or not expect) in relationships, yet it fails to challenge the discourse itself. The curriculum fails to present

a parallel story in which women are detached, playful and independent and men need emotional connection, future-orientation and communication, which would signal a competing, permissive construction of gender relations. Nor does it present a story in which both partners have the capacity to be rambunctious, competitive, loving and communicative -- a story of similarity. Rather, "The Disappointed Princess" provides instructions for men (and women) on how to better manage hegemonic masculinity within the have/hold discourse, therefore simultaneously reifying the discursive foundation upon which the aforementioned problems of detachment, non-emotionality and non-communication arise.

Furthermore, while "The Disappointed Princess" invokes the have/hold discourse to construct troubling versions of femininity and masculinity, its counterpart story, "The Knight in Shining Armor," which is directed at young women, is even more problematic:

"The Knight in Shining Armor"

Deep inside every man is knight in shining armor ready to rescue a maiden and slay a wicked dragon. When a man feels trusted and appreciated he is free to be the strong, protecting man he longs to be.

Imagine knight traveling through the countryside. He hears a princess in distress and rushes gallantly to slay the dragon and return the princess to the castle. He is an instant hero. Shortly thereafter, on his way back from trip, the knight hears his princess crying out again. Another dragon has attacked the castle. Just before the knight kills the dragon with his trusty sword, the princess calls out, "Don't use the sword it will take too long. This noose will work better!" and she throws him rope. As she tells him how to use the noose the knight obliges her and kills the dragon. Everyone is happy except the knight who doesn't quite feel like hero this time. He would have preferred to use his sword.

The knight goes on another trip but now he is depressed and feels unsure of himself. The princess reminds him to take the noose. As he returns, another dragon is attacking the castle. He rushes forward sword in hand but hesitates thinking maybe he should use the noose. In that moment the dragon breathes fire and burns his arm. In the confusion he hears his princess calling down "Use this poison instead, the noose doesn't work!"

The knight manages to poison the dragon but this time feels even less like hero. The princess went about her day as usual without seeming to notice the knight's heroic efforts.

On his next trip the knight hears maiden in distress in another village. Valiantly rushing to rescue her from the dragon, he hesitated and asked her, "Should I use my sword, the noose, or the poison?" The maiden answered, "Whatever you think is best. As long as it kills the dragon, I will be forever grateful!" He remembered how he used to feel before he met the princess and with a new surge of confidence he slays the dragon with his sword. All the townspeople rejoice and the knight is hero. The knight in shining armor never returned to the princess. Instead he stayed in the village where he eventually married the maiden and they lived happily ever after.

Moral of the story: Too much instruction and criticism can send the wrong message and cause your knight to feel unappreciated and unloved

- *Choosing the Best Soul Mate*, (52)

Unlike "The Disappointed Princess," "The Knight in Shining Armor" has few redeeming qualities. Rather, it teaches the dangerous and troubling message that women should be silent, passive and dependent, even in high stakes situations, like the above, when the princess' life is imperiled. The lesson teaches that if women aren't passive enough, they enfeeble men, and it employs the have/hold discourse to threaten young women into passivity. If you're not quiet enough, you will cause "your knight to feel unappreciated and unloved" and he will leave you for a more docile mate, the story warns. Thus, the curriculum simultaneously constructs women as "very relational" and as needing heterosexual relationships, and then uses this to threaten them into passivity -- if you're not quiet enough you will lose your main source of happiness -- your boyfriend. Further, it conjures well-known stereotypes of assertive, outspoken women as obnoxious nags.

Likewise, the story above employs a sociobiological discourse to teach that all men are entitled to dominance: "*Deep inside* every man is a knight in shining armor ready to rescue a maiden and slay a wicked dragon. When a man feels trusted and appreciated he is free to be the strong, protecting man he longs to be," the passage states.

This statement implies that heroic, violent masculinity and passive, complacent femininity are somehow natural because these traits exist "deep inside." The story underscores the male sexual drive discourse in that it teaches that men should be the heroic, protective, "knowers" and "doers" in every situation and that women should likewise be passive objects (and if they're not, men are entitled to leave). This places an exorbitant amount of pressure on young men, who can't possibly live up to the responsibility of perpetually being heroic experts. Further, when this logic is extended to sexual scenarios, which is not too far a logical jump as this is, after all, a sex education program, it becomes even more troubling. The story constructs women's agency as emasculating and threatening, even when the stakes are high, making a situation in which women claim sexual pleasure, require safer sex, or navigate their way out of sexual assault scenarios difficult to imagine. Further, both of the aforementioned fairy tales tell of violent, aggressive, competitive knights -- making the sexual assault risk seem even more possible.

The versions of active, detached, independent, aggressive masculinity and passive, relational, dependent, complacent femininity taught in abstinence-only education rest on a foundation of difference that breeds inequality. These limiting, differentiated versions of masculinity and femininity place all young bodies and minds at risk. However young women disproportionately bear the consequences of differentiated gender hegemonies. The dominant discourses of heterosex reproduced in abstinence-only education position young women as less strong, less logical and less independent while simultaneously positioning men as aggressive, unemotional and irresponsible, thereby affording young men power over women. This reifies young women's

vulnerability and provides the discursive foundation for coercive, abusive relationships and a "privileged masculine irresponsibility" around carework (Borczyk, 2009; Gavey, 2005).

Heteronormativity. The contents of all of the curricula in this study also exude heteronormativity. The abstinence-only curricula primarily reproduce heteronormativity through silence -- the three curricula are almost altogether mute on non-heterosexual sexualities. *WAIT Training* (6) lists "no gay bashing" as one of twenty-three *potential* classroom norms for teachers to establish, but that is as far as the curriculum goes in addressing homosexuality. *Me, My World, My Future* mentions homosexuality only three times in its four hundred and forty-two pages, and each time it does so pathologically: the curriculum lists "sexual preference" as a potential outcome of childhood sexual abuse (44); it lists HIV rates in terms of "homosexual and bisexual men" (251); and it teaches students that AIDS infection rates are difficult to measure because the "number of homosexuals" is declining (243). *Choosing the Best Soul Mate*, alternatively, is totally silent on homosexuality. Additionally, the curriculum vividly displays its heteronormative underpinnings when it gives teachers the following instructions: "SAY, 'Now I would like for each of you to pair up with a member of the opposite sex to go through the...exercise.' NOTE: In the event that there are an uneven number of guys and girls consider pairing two of the same sex with one of the opposite sex" (37). Thus, the curriculum would rather students simulate polyamorous heterosexual relationships than homosexual ones.

Further, the abstinence-only curricula not only fail to acknowledge LGBTQQ teens' experiences, but they also implicitly negate them through the construction of sex

and gender *as* heterosexuality. All of the examples of sex and gender in the AOE curricula imply heterosexual relationships and cisgendered bodies, thereby dismissing the experiences of LGBTQQ students. Further, the curricula's main criterion of abstaining from sex until marriage implicitly defines out non-heterosexual relationships because LGBTQQ people cannot marry in most states.

Now I turn to the construction of gender in comprehensive sex education curricula and I argue that unlike abstinence-only education, the CSE programs exude an air of gender neutrality -- they do not teach difference, but they do not challenge it either. Rather, they take a libertarian approach to gender and are almost totally silent on the topic. In addition, CSE programs frequently use non-gendered language and androgynous names, making it appear as if gender barely exists in their contents. However, I argue that the apparent neutrality of comprehensive sex education does not go far enough in interrupting difference discourses, and that like in society at-large, neutrality in CSE programs often provides a veil behind which difference and inequality reside.

Gender Neutrality in Comprehensive Sex Education: Silence, not Similarity

The *Draw the Line, Respect the Line* curriculum (Grade 7, p. 20) comes the closest to engaging students on gender when it asks if they "think pressures are the same or different for guys and girls." However, this is the sole time that any of the three CSE curricula directly engage students on the topic of gender. Other than this one open-ended discussion question, the three programs are altogether silent on the issue of gender difference or similarity.

The CSE curricula also use gender neutral language and gender neutral names throughout their contents, making gender far less visible than in AOE programs. Non-gendered words like "partner," "spouse," "couple" or "people" populate the pages of comprehensive curricula. For example, when discussing HIV risk, *Be Proud, Be Responsible* (93) states, "A *person* can look and feel healthy -- and still be infected." This statement highlights the fact that all people, regardless of gender, are at risk. Alternatively, a gendered version of the same sentiment may read, "*Men and women* can be look and feel healthy -- and still be infected." Although the implications of these two statements are virtually the same, the second makes gender visible, while the first example does not. CSE programs are much more likely to employ the former approach, while AOE curricula are more likely to use gendered language. Although this is not the case one hundred percent of the time, (the CSE curricula use gendered terms at times, while AOE curricula sometimes employ neutral words like "partner"), the CSE curricula use neutral language with much more frequency than the abstinence-only programs, and when coupled with curricular silence around gender, non-gendered language makes gender far less visible in comprehensive programs.

Additionally, the CSE curricula often employ gender neutral language and names in sexual negotiation scenarios. Sexual negotiation scenarios typically take the form of role-playing activities in which students must navigate safer sex or abstinence in the face of pressuring partners, and they are a central component of all CSE programs. Because CSE programs do not contain explicit lessons on gender, femininity or masculinity, sexual negotiation scenarios are one of the few places where gender becomes visible in comprehensive sex education -- the gendered (or non-gendered) characters in negotiation

scenarios reproduce and/or challenge gendered expectations about sexual behavior through their words and actions.

Two of the three CSE programs use neutrally gendered actors in negotiation scenarios, and characters take the form of both unnamed and androgynously-named actors. For instance, *Draw the Line, Respect the Line* (Grade 7, 159) uses unnamed people in its sexual negotiation scenarios and asks students to respond to situations like the following:

Situation 1: You go outside with someone you kind of like. That person starts to move toward you for a kiss. You aren't ready for a kiss and you feel uneasy.

Situation 2: You are at the movies with someone you really like. You are by yourselves in the back row. During the movie, this person starts to put his/her hand under your clothes. You're feeling unsure and embarrassed. You don't want to be touched that way.

Similarly, *Reducing the Risk* (153) states, "You've been going out with someone for 6 months and care for this person very much...Your partner asks you to get some protection..." Because of the neutral language in these scenarios, gender seems to disappear. Any person, regardless of gender could be the sexual initiator and any person could be the recipient of pressure, which is the central tenet of heterosexual permissivity - women, too, can initiate sex and men can resist it. Furthermore, neutrally worded interactions like the above could involve any combination of gendered people, including LGBTQQ couplings.

Reducing the Risk goes the farthest in the move towards removing gender however by employing gender neutral names for most of the characters in the curriculum. The ambiguously-named actors, "Lee," "Lee," "Ronnie," "Chris," "Pat," "Taylor," and "Bobby" populate many of the program's pages. The following role-playing activity exemplifies this:

Lee and Lee #1H

NARRATOR: Lee and Lee have been going together for 4 months. They're sitting on the sofa together, kissing and touching.

Lee: Don't, Lee. Please, stop.

Lee: Why?

Lee: I'm scared. We don't have anything to use for...protection.

Lee: Don't worry. We don't have anything to worry about.

Lee: But what if something happens? What if I get something like HIV?

Lee: Don't worry. You wouldn't get HIV. Kids like us aren't at risk! It's only hard-core kids that get HIV.

Lee: I've been scared of getting HIV for months...ever since you told me you and Ronnie didn't use ... well, you know... rubbers. I've heard about Ronnie.

- *Reducing the Risk* (31)

In the scenario above, Lee, Lee and Ronnie could presumably be any gender - women, men, transgender, transsexual, intersexual or gender nonconforming. The same is true of Chris and Pat in the following scenario:

...Pat has been putting some pressure on Chris to have sex, and they've started talking about it more. Pat is confused. On the one hand, Pat respects Chris's feelings and doesn't want to talk Chris into doing something Chris doesn't want to do. On the other hand, Pat doesn't think it's that important to wait for marriage. Their relationship has become a little tense. They argue more and Pat's talking more to other people and spending less time with Chris.

- *Reducing the Risk*, (201)

The non-gendered language and characters in these interactions challenge dominant, differentiated versions of gender and heterosex by quietly opening up the possibility of reversed discourses of heterosex in which young women initiate sex and young men say "No!," which is the central tenet of the permissive discourse of heterosexuality, and providing space for students to imagine LGBTQQ relationships in the curriculum. Yet, the responsibility is on the students to make these connections.

Despite the "work" that *Draw the Line*, *Respect the Line* and *Reducing the Risk* go through to "remove" gender from their contents, neither curriculum discusses its reasoning for this, even in the background notes directed at teachers. Further, none of the CSE programs mention a word about gender similarity, equality or acceptance, none of them use neutral names and language throughout the entire contents of their pages, and all of them fail to adequately include LGBTQQ people. Thus, although the CSE programs I studied appear to assume a neutral stance towards gender, the curricula stop short of overtly challenging dominant discourses of heterosex or teaching a discourse of gender similarity.

Heteronormativity. In addition, the CSE programs fail to dismantle compulsory heterosexuality. The *Be Proud, Be Responsible* curriculum comes the closest to including lesbian and gay students of any program in this study. The curriculum incorporates two same sex role-playing activities, in which students play the roles of Tyecia and Felicia or Gerald and Allen and consider safer sex options in lesbian and gay relationships. However, the curriculum locates these activities in the "Optional Activities" Appendix to the main curriculum after instructions on how I.V. drug users can clean dirty needles. Thus, although the curriculum briefly acknowledges lesbian and gay relationships, it isolates them rather than normalizes them. Additionally, the curriculum contains no direct lessons on or conversations about LGBTQQ sexualities or the tolerance of LGBTQQ people, and much of the other content in the curriculum reproduces the heteronormative male sexual drive and have/hold discourses (in fact, the two homosexual scenarios I mention above subtly reproduce hegemonic constructions of gendered sexualities -- a point that I explore in detail in Chapter Six). Additionally,

transgender, intersex and gender nonconforming students remain invisible in the curriculum.

Likewise, *Reducing the Risk* and *Draw the Line, Respect the Line* also fail to directly teach students about homosexuality or LGBTQQ people. As I discussed above, these two curricula theoretically allow for students to imagine LGBTQQ relationships in non-gendered sexual negotiation scenarios. This is an important point for LGBTQQ students, who often struggle to envision themselves in mainstream educational curricula (Syracuse, 2004), but the curricula otherwise do nothing to include LGBTQQ people or facilitate their acceptance. Additionally, all of the gendered interactions in these two curricula involve heterosexual couplings.

Policy Implications

As exhibited above, while the abstinence-only and comprehensive sex education programs implemented through sex education policies take very different approaches to teaching gender, they are alike in that they both fail to challenge difference or teach similarity. If one were to imagine a continuum of approaches to teaching gender, teaching difference might exist on one end, while teaching similarity and/or questioning difference might exist on the other. Abstinence-only education clearly resides on the difference end of the continuum, but, despite the bifurcation of the sex education policy debates and dichotomized policy infrastructure, CSE programs do not exist on the other. Rather, federally-funded CSE programs are perhaps a midpoint on the continuum -- approaching gender through silence instead of similarity; taking a libertarian stance rather than discussing gender accurately.

The missing similarity in federally-funded sex education programs has important implications for the overall equity of federal sex education policies as well as their ability to meet stated goals. In terms of educational equity, as I discussed in Chapter One, neutrality does not go far enough. Abstinence-only programs are deeply problematic, but the gender-blind approach of comprehensive sex education also does not foster gender equality. It minimizes the social context in which schooling takes place and overlooks the power relations that shape students' lived realities (Gilbert, 1996) and it ignores the pervasiveness of dominant discourses of heterosex and the disempowering hegemonies that they uphold. In a context where sexuality is anything but a gender neutral phenomenon -- young women bear the brunt of responsibility associated with teen parenting, young women are sexually assaulted at alarming rates, and LGBTQQ students are relentlessly bullied -- neutrality does not promote equity and therefore does not encourage equality.

As I discussed in Chapter One, a more promising approach towards encouraging gender equity in sex education involves "a theoretical commitment to working...within a framework of gender relations and the social construction of gender," (Gilbert, 1996). In the interest of educational equity, federal sex education policies should commit to this approach and require the curricula implemented as a result of such programs to draw attention to the social construction of gender difference and the disempowering circumstances it creates while simultaneously teaching alternative discourses of gender and sex similarity, mutuality and responsibility. Policies should require funded programs to interrogate the roles that gender and sex differences play in upholding disparate, unequal circumstances in students' sexual realities and they should disallow funded

curricula from reproducing heteronormativity. In the interest of teaching that all students have *similar* rights, *similar* responsibilities and *similar* entitlements to healthy sexual subjectivities free from victimization, disease, unwanted pregnancy and unequal divisions of labor, federal sex education policies should require the curricula that they implement to question difference or teach similarity.

Incorporating a discourse of similarity into federally-funded sex education curricula may also improve the effectiveness of federal sex education policies. As I established in Chapter One, differentiated constructions of gender and sexuality reinforce risky sexual scenarios for students of all genders and all sexual orientations (Gavey, 2005; Hollway 1984, 1989). Federal sex education policies aim to reduce sexual risks among youth, and it follows that the curricula they implement should dismantle sexual risk. One way of doing so is by challenging difference and accurately reflecting similarity.

Next, I turn to the construction of gendered sexualities and relationships in the curricula, which are constructed through a missing discourse of mutuality that rests on the missing similarity I delineate here. Again, I argue that although the abstinence-only and comprehensive sex education curricula are very different in how they present gendered sexualities, they are alike in terms of what is missing from discussions of sexual interactions.

Chapter 6: Missing Mutuality

The sex education curricula in this project teach gendered versions of sexuality and relationships that rest upon the missing discourse of similarity that I articulated in Chapter Five. All of the curricula I studied construct heterosexual negotiations as adversarial processes in which oppositional subjects with mutually exclusive agendas pressure and coax one another into doing things they do not want to do. In that light, all of the programs in this study fail to provide students with images of sexual relationships that involve interdependent, compassionate, equally powerful, equally empowered sexual subjects who co-create their sexual experiences. A discourse of mutuality is almost entirely missing from the pages of these federally-funded sex education programs.

Despite the absence of a discourse of mutuality across all of the curricula, the two types of sex education produce this silence quite differently. The abstinence-only curricula reproduce the male sexual drive and have/hold discourses vividly and directly -- they dedicate entire lessons to teaching hegemonic heterosex. Conversely, the comprehensive sex education curricula reproduce the male sexual drive and have/hold discourses implicitly and often behind a shroud of neutrality. As I established in Chapter Five, the comprehensive sex education curricula contain no direct lessons on gender difference (or similarity) and exude an air of neutrality around the topic. However, here I show that neutrality in comprehensive sex education is not actually neutral and that even when CSE programs "remove" gender, they still reify an adversarial model of sexual interactions. In this chapter, I first examine dominant discourses of heterosex in abstinence-only education. Then, I turn to comprehensive sex education. I conclude with a discussion of how a missing discourse of mutuality in federally-funded sex education

undermines gender equity in education and potentially mitigates the efficacy of sex education policies.

Gendered Sexualities in Abstinence-only Education

The abstinence-only programs I studied invoke dominant discourses of heterosex and teach gendered versions of sexuality that correspond with the relational, passive femininity and independent, active masculinity I outlined in Chapter Five. In this section I examine the gendered sexualities prescribed by the male sexual drive discourse and the have/hold discourse in abstinence-only education programs and I consider how dominant gendered discourses produce an adversarial version of sexuality that silences a discourse of mutuality in these programs.

The following example from *WAIT Training* (201) illustrates the vivacity with which AOE curricula reproduce the male sexual drive and have/hold discourses:

General Differences Between the Sexes

- A women's sexual drive tends to be related to her menstrual cycle, while a man's drive is fairly consistent. The hormone testosterone is a major factor in stimulating a man's sexual desire.
- A woman is stimulated more by touch and romantic words. She is far more attracted by a man's personality, while a man is stimulated by sight. A male is generally less discriminating about those to whom he is physically attracted.
- While a man needs little or no preparation for sex, a woman often needs hours of emotional and mental preparation.
- Harsh or abusive treatment can easily remove a woman's desire for sexual intimacy.
- Women usually have greater intuitive awareness of how to develop a loving relationship. Because of her sensitivity, she is initially more considerate of his feelings and the feelings of the people around her.

The handout above steadfastly reproduces the male sexual drive and have/hold discourses. Women appear as relatively asexual while men are always-already in the mood for sex. In this lesson, women need deep, emotional connections and take "hours of emotional and mental preparation" for sex, while men merely need visual stimulation and almost any woman will do. Later in the curriculum, *WAIT Training* (196) teaches the same lesson through metaphor: "When it comes to sex, men are like microwaves and women are like crockpots! Men respond sexually by what they see and women respond sexually by what they hear and how they feel about it. Men are usually aroused much more quickly than women," the curriculum teaches. At the end of the lesson, the curriculum tests students on the concept: "Sexually speaking, men are like _____," and, "sexually speaking, women are like _____," the quiz reads (*WAIT Training*, 301).

Additionally, as evidenced above, the AOE curricula teach that young women need intimacy and romance, while young men need physical fulfillment and release. She is stimulated by "personality" and "romantic words" and has an "intuitive" proclivity for "feelings", "sensitivity" and "relationships." Alternatively, he is "physically attracted" -- merely the "sight" of a woman turns him on. He is also intuitively less considerate of people's feelings and relatively unaffected by emotions. "Harsh or abusive treatment can easily remove a *woman's* desire for sexual intimacy," the curriculum states. Thus, by implication, men's sex drives are less affected by abuse (presumably because they are non-emotional and always-already in the mood for sex), and women are never abusive or violent.

The curriculum naturalizes these messages so that they seem to stem from hormones. "A women's sexual drive tends to be related to her menstrual cycle, while a man's drive is fairly consistent. The hormone testosterone is a major factor in stimulating a man's sexual desire," *WAIT Training* (201) states. Thus, it is because of hormones that his sex drive is unwavering and hers is inconsistent. The curriculum underscores this sociobiological message in a lesson, entitled "Oxytocin, Love's 'Crazy Glue'," which teaches that women "chemically commit" to their sexual partners:

Oxytocin, Love's 'Crazy Glue'

According to Hormonal Research:

- Oxytocin causes a woman to "chemically commit" to her sexual partner.
- Oxytocin works in conjunction with dopamine and serotonin, which are "the feel good" hormones
- Oxytocin is secreted when a person is sexually stimulated.
- When secreted, oxytocin causes nipple response, sexual arousal and orgasm in a woman.
- Oxytocin is secreted when women breast feed their babies. This is nature's way of solidifying the bond a mother has with her newborn infant.
- Oxytocin is secreted in a male's body, but much more so in a female's body.

Most People Don't Know That Oxytocin:

- Promotes touching
- Promotes bonding between mates, parents and children
- Is involved in the birth process, breast feeding and orgasm
- Decreases cognition and impairs memory
- Sensitizes the skin to touch
- Spikes at orgasm
- Causes uterine contractions during orgasm and childbirth
- Increases sexual receptivity
- Makes people more trusting

- *WAIT Training* (157)

The lesson above teaches that women (but not men) bond with their partners because of oxytocin, and are therefore virtually incapable of casual sex. Men do not have as much of this hormone, leading to their relative detachment and unfettered ability to have sex

with multiple partners: "Oxytocin is secreted in a male's body, but much more so in a female's body," the curriculum teaches. Oxytocin, therefore, makes women susceptible to men who will feign love to get sex because their brains and memories are less effective when they produce this chemical. It "decreases cognition" and makes them more trusting of potentially predatory sexual partners.

Thus, the abstinence-only curricula teach the gendered sexualities produced by the male sexual drive and have/hold discourses as biological facts. The curricula frequently refer to testosterone as the "male sex hormone" and estrogen as the "female sex hormone" while failing to mention that both males and females produce testosterone and estrogen, that women's testosterone receptors are more sensitive than men's (Fausto-Sterling, 2000) and that both women's and men's libidos fluctuate with their life circumstances. The curricula construct gendered sexualities that rest on the missing discourse of similarity I articulated in Chapter Five, and they connect gendered behavior to sexed bodies, thereby reinforcing the sociobiological message that differences are essential, immutable truths.

Missing Mutuality. Further, the AOE curricula teach that because of the "natural" differences between women and men, sexual negotiation is not a mutual process involving equally powerful actors with similar needs. Rather, it is an adversarial process based on the premise that "women give sex to get love and men give love to get sex" (*WAIT Training*, 201). Within this, sex is a transaction, and sexual negotiation is an adversarial process in which subjects competitively bargain for the externalized, disembodied commodities of sex and love (Macaulay Millar, 2008). In this version of sex, much like in an economic marketplace, each party wants something that the other

does not want to give and one's bargaining abilities depend on the power that they hold in the situation.

The curricula teach that because women have less potent sex drives, it is their responsibility to uphold the moral commitment to abstinence until marriage. If they fail to do so and mistakenly trade sex for love, the AOE curricula teach that they will be exploited by callous, sexually advantageous men who will fail to uphold their end of the bargain. For instance, *Choosing the Best* (46) teaches that "cohabitation often has a different meaning for each gender. Women tend to see it as step toward eventual marriage while men regard it more as sexual opportunity without the ties of long-term commitment." The following lesson, from the *WAIT Training* (69) curriculum, also underscores this message:

Teacher Script

"May I have a male volunteer?" (Introduce the volunteer and tell him we're going to pretend that he's going to have sex for the first time in front of us.) "I need you to get naked on your arm - so roll up your sleeve." (Hold up a long piece of tape). "This is your girlfriend. She's tall and thin and very transparent with her feelings." (Wrap the tape around his arm.) "Class, is it possible for this guy to marry this girl some day? Yes, it's possible, but is it probable? No. What's probably going to happen? That's right-he's going to break up with her at some point. And look at him; he's a nice guy with a great smile. He doesn't want to hurt her." (Ask the volunteer to now pull tape off his arm.) "Be gentle with her, you don't want to hurt her." (Ask the class to give the volunteer a hand as he returns to his seat.)

Again, the lesson above teaches that when young women give sex in the hopes of love and marriage, they get dumped instead. And, like the "nice guy with a great smile" above, young men do not mean to be cruel, but they can't be expected to be emotionally capable of mature relationships. They are detached, and only interested in sex.

Unfortunately, the lesson goes on to stigmatize and shame sexually active young women and normalize men's detachment. It continues (70):

Oooh, class, look at the tape now. What do you see? Our volunteer has left his hair, skin, cologne - even his DNA is on the tape! Yikes. Looks like she's going to need therapy!" (Call for another male volunteer and repeat the procedure. Then call for a third male volunteer and repeat it again.) "OK, class, what is happening to the bonding power of this tape? That's right, it's losing its power to bond. You need to know that when you have sex before marriage you are lessening your power to bond to your future mate. You are losing your sexual cement.

In the example above, the sexually active young woman (who is now in need of therapy) is forever damaged by her sexual misgivings. She is like a dirty, used piece of tape with disgusting remnants of the "hair, skin, cologne" and DNA of all her partners stuck to her forever. Not only is she hurt by premarital sex in the short term, but her "power to bond" to future mates is lost forever. Sex, is therefore missing any sense of positivity for her, while he is virtually unscathed. The curriculum *does not* provide a parallel example in which a young man is dumped by a careless woman and forever tainted, nor does it problematize his callousness. He's just a "nice guy with a great smile" enjoying his natural power, enacting his biological urges and walking away from sexual relationships with little consequence. She, alternatively, made a poor moral choice and is now a dirty, used piece of trash.

Thus, the AOE curricula present sexual negotiation as an adversarial process in which men want sex and women want love, but that men's desire for sex is more powerful than women's desire for love. All three abstinence-only curricula include lessons dedicated to helping teens differentiate between love and lust or infatuation, and in all three curricula, the takeaway message is the same: love is something that young women (but not men) desire, and this desire is irrational because love is virtually impossible for young couples. The "Love Test" from the *Choosing the Best Soul Mate* (12) curriculum illustrates this message:

The Love Test

The "Love Test" helps the student determine the difference between infatuation and genuine love.

SAY: In the Love Test you will distinguish between love and infatuation which may or may not lead to genuine love...Ask for two volunteers (one guy, one girl) who will be reading this page to the class.

SAY: After I read a test category (name of guy) will describe the infatuation response and (name of girl) will describe the love response....

Test: Time

Infatuation: We have been together for less than 24 months

Love: We have been together for 24 months or more

Test: Focus

Infatuation: I find I still am attracted to other people.

Love: I have not experienced feelings of attraction towards others.

Test: Trust

Infatuation: I experience some jealousy when he/she is with other people

Love: I have grown to trust him/her and do not experience jealousy

Test: Family and Friends

Infatuation: My family and best friends have not met him/her; or (if they have met) they have reservations about us.

Love: My family and best friends have met him/her and support our relationship.

By gendering the delivery of the "Love Test" questions, the activity subtly reifies both the have/hold and the male sexual drive discourses. Young women read the love descriptions, and therefore appear associated with love, while young men read the infatuation descriptions and therefore appear associated with infatuation. Furthermore, as evidenced in the test questions, the curriculum constructs love as very difficult to achieve: students have had to be in a relationship for over two years, never experienced jealousy, have no attraction to other people and have the support of their family and friends, among other things. These criteria seem nearly impossible for a young couple to attain. Furthermore, even if students score perfectly on the "Love Test," the curriculum merely suggests that it "*could be the beginning* of a love relationship" (12).

It is beyond the scope of this project to fully examine the construction of love within sex education curricula, but it is worthwhile to consider the fact that while the abstinence-only curricula potentially offer young women an active, desiring sexual subjectivity through the have/hold discourse (in which they desire and act upon their need for love), they simultaneously disempower this position by teaching that (1) young women's dreams of love are impossible, (2) even if they think they're in love, they're probably wrong, and (3) if they make the mistake of giving sex in exchange for love, young men will just dump them anyway and they will be forever tainted. Thus, although the curricula make an active subject position available to young women through the have/hold discourse, it is inherently weaker and more vulnerable than the position available to young men through the male sexual drive discourse.

Thus, the abstinence-only curricula in this project construct gendered sexualities through dominant discourses of heterosex that position women and men as adversaries. Heterosexual interactions appear as confrontational processes in which men desire sex with women, and pressure them for it, and women respond by either making the "right" moral choice and requiring abstinence or making the "wrong" moral choice and acquiescing to his pressures. The following role-playing activity from *WAIT Training* (245) exemplifies this depiction of heterosex:

But, He Loves Me Role-Play

Read the following scenario. Then complete some creative responses for person #2 that utilize strong refusal skills.

You're impressed with someone of the opposite sex. He is funny, articulate, drives a fast car and has lots of cash. You two have been "out" a few times and you are really beginning to like him. After a night out on the town, he takes you back to his home. His parents aren't there upon arrival. You start watching a provocative movie and nonverbally your date lets you know that he wants to

become "physical" with you. You don't want to engage in a physical relationship or have sex. Your date speaks first:

Person 1: Look, I really, really enjoy spending time with you. I'm so impressed with you, I want to show you how I feel.

Person 2: _____

Person 1: Come on, it's just part of a strong relationship.

Person 2: _____

Person 1: I feel the need for us to be closer. We need to take this relationship to a special level.

Person 2: _____

Person 1: Everybody else is doing it-this is just a natural display of our love for each other.

Person 2: _____

Person 1 : What are you ashamed of? Don't you love me?

Person 2: _____

Person 1: I love you, but you don't seem to love me in a similar way.

Person 2: _____

In this activity, the two actors have mutually exclusive, adversarial goals: he wants sex while she requires abstinence (although she is tempted by the prospect of him loving her). He is virtually unrelenting and doesn't listen to her multiple refusals -- the activity above contains six exchanges in which she presumably says "no" and he responds with increased pressure. However, the curriculum does not problematize the young man's pressuring. Rather it teaches that the young woman must learn how to regulate the encounter, as it requires young women to act out the role of "Person 2" in front of the class for peer critique. The AOE curricula contain *no* role-playing activities where women pressure and men must respond.

This construction of heterosex reifies rigid gender stereotypes that put all young bodies at risk, but particularly endanger young women (a point I explore at length in Chapter Seven). The curricula construct sexual negotiation as an adversarial process

which suppresses a version of partnered sex as a collaborative experience co-created by mutually powerful actors with similar desires. *WAIT Training* (page) gives a nod to mutual relationships when it states, "In a relationship both men and women need: affection, conversation, healthy communication, honesty, openness, safety, tenderness, kindness, commitment, companionship, admiration, support and the freedom to grow and change and express their ideas without judgment, sarcasm or condemnation." Yet, this message follows the long lesson on "General Differences Between the Sexes" that opened this chapter and its placement reveals the role that mutuality plays in the curriculum -- it is an afterthought; an addendum to the main curriculum if it is mentioned at all.

Comprehensive Sex Education

The CSE programs I studied do not teach gendered sexualities as overtly as the AOE programs I examined; there are no microwaves, crockpots or dirty pieces of tape in the pages of comprehensive sex education. However, the role-playing activities in comprehensive sex education programs subtly reproduce dominant discourses of heterosex and teach the adversarial model of sexual relations that results (Macaulay Millar, 2008). In role-playing scenarios, which are a central component of all CSE programs, gendered messages emerge through the words and actions of the gendered characters involved, and by and large these characters reproduce the male sexual drive and have/hold discourses. Additionally, because the objective of role-playing activities is to teach students how to refuse sexual pressure, they implicitly reify an adversarial model of sexual relations. In this section, I first discuss the function of role-playing activities in CSE programs. Then I consider the discourses of heterosex that such activities reproduce as well as the adversarial model of sexual relations that they normalize.

Gendered Sexualities and Role-playing Activities. One of the core objectives of all of the CSE curricula in this study is to teach students sexual refusal skills, and each of the CSE programs I studied centralizes lessons on sexual refusal. *Reducing the Risk*, for instance, lists the two primary purposes of the program as (1) teaching sexual refusal skills and (2) teaching students how to employ delay tactics to avoid sexual activity.

Lessons around sexual refusal in CSE programs typically take the form of role-playing activities in which students must maintain their sexual limits in the face of pressuring partners. Students typically act out these scenarios in front of the class (although sometimes they do so in written form). In these activities, students play the role of the pressured, refusing partner, and the teacher and their peers critique how well they employ various refusal tactics.

As I discussed in Chapter Six, role-playing activities are one of the few places in which comprehensive sex education programs make gender visible. The gendered characters involved in the role-playing scenarios reinforce and/or challenge dominant discourses of heterosex through the actions and words they perform. The CSE curricula reproduce multiple discourses of heterosex in these scenarios, but by and large they reproduce situations which rely on dominant constructions of heterosexuality -- young men pressure for sex and young women respond by requiring abstinence and/or condom use.

The very foundation of these role-playing exercises in CSE curricula is confrontational sex. *Be Proud, Be Responsible* (8) illustrates this presupposition when it states, "Mutual agreement and cooperation [around sex and condom use] can be difficult to obtain...Many partners will resist on any of several grounds...students need to practice

responding to partner objections...This curriculum will provide such opportunities, through the use of role plays...". Similarly, *Draw the Line, Respect the Line* (Grade 6, x) states, "students will encounter challenges to their limits...including coercion...and peer pressure," and it posits that role-plays help students develop interpersonal skills to maintain limits.

Role-playing activities in comprehensive sex education programs provide students with information on how to operate within pressure-driven sexual situations -- an important component of sex education programs (Kirby, 2010). However, the role-playing scenarios define sexual interactions in CSE programs, and offer no alternative to high-pressure sexual negotiations.

The following activity from the *Draw the Line, Respect the Line* (Grade 8, 143) curriculum illustrates how CSE programs reproduce hegemonic heterosex and the resulting missing discourse of mutuality:

Trina and Kashid have been going together for about a month. Trina is 13 and Kashid is 16. In her *Draw the Line* classes, Trina has decided that she will wait until she is older to have sex and will not let anyone touch her under her clothes. Kashid thinks maybe he should wait until he is older, but he isn't sure. . . .

One day Kashid invited Trina over to his house after school. . . .When Trina came over, they hung out for a while in the living room. Then Kashid put his arms around Trina and they began to kiss. They were both a little nervous at first, but pretty soon, Kashid was touching Trina through her clothing. Kashid was thinking, "Wow, this feels great. I can't wait to tell the guys." Trina was thinking, "I bet he really loves me. . . ."

In this example, Kashid takes on the familiar role of the sexual initiator, and experiences embodied, socially-approved pleasure, while Trina is not interested in the physicality of sex but is only concerned with him loving her. *Draw the Line, Respect the Line* does not balance this message by including a parallel activity where a young woman initiates sexual touching, is excited by the physical sensation of sexual activity and a young man

is inspired by the prospect of her love. Similarly, *Be Proud, Be Responsible* (104)

includes the following activity:

Role Play F: LINDA and JEROD

The goal of this role play is for Linda to convince Jerod into using a condom and that condoms can be fun and pleasurable.

LINDA

- You and your boyfriend, Jerod, have been sexually active for awhile without using condoms.
- You have just completed an AIDS education program called "Be Proud! Be Responsible!"
- You think about his past sexual life and your own past sexual life.
- Now you want to use condoms.
- You know that Jerod is stubborn and gets jealous very easily.
- You are afraid that he may think that you are cheating on him or even go and find a new girlfriend.
- You try to encourage him to use condoms.

JEROD

- You have never used a condom and don't want to.
- You have been having sex with Linda for awhile now.
- You believe that if someone uses a condom they must be doing something dishonest or dirty.
- You also believe that condoms are not natural and sex won't feel as good.

The above interaction employs the male sexual drive and have/hold discourses to construct Linda as the responsible sexual gatekeeper who is concerned with her sexual health and preserving the relationship, while Jerod is the aggressive, reckless decision-maker, who is concerned with his pleasure above all else. *Reducing the Risk* (159) reproduces a comparable scenario in the "My Kid Sister" activity listed below.

"My Kid Sister"

Directions: Imagine that you have a younger sister who is 12 years old. She tells you she wants to have sex with her boyfriend. You don't think she should have sex yet. Write what you would say to her.

Sister: He really wants me to and I love him.

You: _____

Sister: He is the cutest boy in school.

You: _____

Sister: I'm going to do it someday, anyway. What's wrong with now?

You: _____

Sister: He said he'd use a condom.

You: _____

Sister: We really love each other.

You: _____

Sister: If I lose him, I'll just die.

You: _____

In this reproduction of the male sexual drive and have/hold discourses, the young man wants sex and the young woman responds to *his* desires. Motivated by love, she is tempted to acquiesce, but her own sexual desires are nonexistent. Rather, her wellbeing is tied only to the relationship. "If I lose him, I'll just die," she dramatically states. Furthermore, this lesson subtly infantilizes teen women by implying that they should heed the same advice as a twelve year old.

The above role-playing activities enthusiastically reproduce the male sexual drive and have/hold discourses, which would not be as problematic if they were one among many potential interactions in the curricula. However, these scenarios are not balanced by alternative possibilities. The CSE curricula contain a few examples of women as sexual initiators and when they do, these examples still hint at dominant discourses of heterosexuality. For instance, *Reducing the Risk* (59) contains only one female sexual initiator in its pages, depicted in the "Your Friend's Ex-Girlfriend" activity below:

Your Friend's Ex-Girlfriend

Your best friend's girlfriend broke up with him. Now she seems very interested in going out with you. You like her, but you really don't want to go out with her because you have been going out with another girl and don't want to mess it up.

Girl: I haven't seen you for a while. Let's go out some night and do something fun.

Guy: I miss you, too, but I'm interested in someone else right now.

Girl: I just want to talk to you about some things.

Guy: I don't want to lead you on, but I'll be glad to talk.

Girl: Let's go check out a movie. We could go this weekend.

Guy: Sorry. I've already got plans to go out.

Girl: What about next Saturday night?

Guy: No, I really don't want to go out.

Girl: I guess we're not going to be friends, huh?

Guy: Well, I'd like to be friends, I just don't want to go out.

In this activity, the young woman initiates the interaction and is persistent about her wishes, which is contrary to hegemonic expectations for gendered behavior. However, she initiates a date, not sex, reaffirming her traditional relationship-building, asexual role. She wants to "check out a movie," "talk" and "be friends," but she does not want sex. Perhaps this is euphemistic talk for her sexual desires, but in no instance does she explicitly desire sexual activity. Thus, although her role as the initiator in this scenario provides a more permissive space for young women than the passivity typically prescribed by the male sexual drive discourse, it does not go as far as to afford her an active, desiring sexuality either. Her subjectivity is still constructed through the have/hold discourse, and relationships, not sex, are her primary priority.

Similarly, *Be Proud, Be Responsible* (106) includes the following interaction, which involves a female sexual initiator, but also normalizes the message that sexual interactions are infused with power asymmetries:

**Role Play H:
CHARLES and SHERYL**

The goal of this role play is for Charles to abstain from sex with Sheryl. . . .

CHARLES

- You know that many of the guys your age are having sex.
- Sheryl has been pressuring you to have sex.
- Sheryl is older and much more experienced than you are.
- You are scared and don't want to have sex.
- You want to talk to your partner about this instead of just avoiding it and acting macho in front of your friends.

SHERYL

- Your boyfriend, Charles, has been acting funny every time you start going further sexually when you are together.
- To you sex is fun.
- Sex would establish the two of you as a real couple.
- You are out alone with him.
- You try to convince him to have sex.

This scenario positions Sheryl as the sexual aggressor and Charles as the responder, which are positions contrary to those prescribed by the male sexual drive discourse. Yet, it constructs Sheryl as "older and much more experienced" than Charles, which subtly reifies the notion that power imbalances permeate sexual interactions. This is especially noteworthy because it is the *only* time that the curriculum mentions age in any of its role-playing activities, therefore sending the subtle message that for women to initiate sex, they are likely to be "older" and hence, more powerful, than their partners. Furthermore, the negotiation above contains hints of the have/hold discourse: Sheryl thinks sex "is fun" but she is also interested in it because it would establish them "as a real couple."

Additionally, even the rare lesbian and gay interactions in the CSE curricula, (which I discussed briefly in Chapter Five), reproduce dominant discourses of heterosex. The CSE curricula collectively provide two examples of non-heterosexual interactions,

and in these activities, gay men appear as hypersexual and aggressive, while the lesbian women appear as relational and communicative. Consider the following two activities:

GERALD and ALLEN

The goal of this role play is for Gerald to negotiate condom use with Allen while keeping his relationship.

GERALD

- You and your partner Allen have been getting very close.
- You have never had sex with him.
- You both have had sex with other men before.
- Allen has been pushing you to have sex with him.
- Allen has never used condoms.
- You want to have sex with him, but not without using condoms.
- You are concerned about HIV
- You decide to talk to Allen about your concern and insist that you use condoms.

ALLEN

- You and your partner Gerald have been getting very close.
- You have never had sex with him.
- You care about him and you want to have sex now.
- You have never used condoms before because they don't make sex feel good.
- Gerald is concerned about HIV and insists that you use condoms.
- You are offended and refuse to use condoms.

- *Be Proud, Be Responsible* (124)

In the example above, Gerald and Allen are very interested in having sex. In fact, the interaction above employs the phrase "have sex" six times -- more than any other negotiation scenario in the curriculum. The sexualization of the characters in this example is not problematic in and of itself, but when compared with the lesbian negotiation scenario, the curriculum's construction of gendered sexual behavior through the male sexual drive and have/hold discourses becomes apparent:

TYCEIA and FELICIA

The goal of this role play is for Tyceia to begin negotiating safer sex with her partner...

TYCEIA

- Recently you've realized that you may be bisexual.
- You've been sexually active with males in the past.
- Lately you've had strong feelings for a female on your softball team, Felicia.
- The two of you have been intimate, but mostly just kissing and touching.
- You can accept your bisexuality.
- You're not sure if you have to worry about STDs or HIV infection when two women make love.
- You decide to talk to Felicia about your concerns, particularly safer sex.

FELICIA

- You have become intimate with Tyceia, another player on your softball team.
- You've mostly just been kissing and touching.
- Tyceia has been intimate with males only in the past.
- You have been involved in other lesbian relationships for two years.
- She's concerned about STDs and AIDS and unclear on how diseases can be spread between two women or how to protect against them.
- You begin to wonder if she's worried she may be HIV positive.

- *Be Proud, Be Responsible* (123)

As evidenced above, the language used around Tyceia and Felicia's relationship is much more relational and desexualized than the language used in Gerald and Allen's interaction. The curriculum uses the phrases "become intimate," "been involved in ...relationships," "sexually active," and "make love" as euphemisms for the more direct phrase, "have sex," which it uses repeatedly in the men's example. In fact, the curriculum doesn't use the phrase "have sex" at all in the lesbian scenario. Thus, the curriculum subtly emphasizes the relational, emotional aspects of sex when discussing women's sexualities, and the physical, embodied nature of sex when discussing men's sexualities. Additionally, the gendered interactions above reproduce stereotypes about aggressive masculinity and passive femininity. Despite the fact that Allen and Gerald "care about" each other, they ultimately engage in a confrontational exchange in which

Gerald is offended and "refuses" Allen's request to use condoms. Alternatively, Tyecia and Felicia participate in a softer, gentler interaction. They "have feelings" for each other and communication, not aggression, is their relationship challenge.

Despite the fact that these two scenarios represent same sex interactions, the versions of masculinity and femininity that they teach correspond to those dictated by dominant discourses of heterosex. Gay men are hypersexual because the female sexual gatekeeper is no longer present, while lesbian women rarely have sex because the male sexual aggressor is no longer involved. If this wasn't enough, the curriculum's choice to locate Tyecia and Felicia on the "softball team" is indicative of the thread of sexual stereotypes running through comprehensive sex education programs.

Neutral Interactions. Additionally, as I discussed in Chapter Five, two of the three CSE curricula contain role-playing activities involving neutrally-named characters. Although these activities do not specifically teach students about gender or sex equality, they theoretically allow students to imagine heterosexual permissivity and the possibility of LGBTQQ relationships. However, although the curricula "remove" gender through neutral language and names, they still sometimes reproduce dominant discourses of heterosex and the adversarial model of sexual interactions that results.

The following activity from the *Reducing the Risk* (43) curriculum uses neutrally-named characters, but it turns out that the characters not actually ambiguously gendered, and the discourses reproduced are not actually neutral:

Lee and Lee #2

Lee: No, Lee. Stop.

Lee: Why?

Lee: I'm not ready for this. And besides, we would need to use something for protection and we don't have it.

Lee: Being ready just means we love each other. You still love me, don't you?

Lee: Yes, but being ready means more than love. We're not ready if we don't have protection. I'm saying no to *getting pregnant* and to HIV.

Lee: Nothing's going to happen, Lee.

Lee: I know, because we're not going to do anything without using something -- no matter how much I love you.

Lee: We could handle having a baby. It would look just like you -- we could name it Lee. I think that'd be great.

Lee: (Laughs) Stop joking, Lee. I'm serious. I have no plans to become a parent while I'm still in high school

Lee: Listen, don't worry about *getting pregnant*. We can stop before anything happens.

The pregnancy risk in the above example makes it clear that Lee and Lee comprise a heterosexual couple. The first Lee worries about "getting pregnant," making it seem like this character is the young woman, while the second Lee appears to be the young man who encourages the first Lee not to worry and deploys a traditionally-gendered script to coax the first Lee into sex. "You still love me, don't you?" the second Lee asks. Given this reading, the scenario above sounds less like a gender neutral interaction and more like a reproduction of the male sexual drive and have/hold discourses. The first Lee, the young woman, is the more responsible, future-oriented sexual gatekeeper, while the second Lee, the young man, is the impulsive, desiring sexual aggressor. In this well-known heterosexual scenario, she is the one who says "No...Stop," while he exerts pressure. He employs the have/hold discourse and uses love to pressure her into having sex with him.

It is possible that my reading is incorrect; it is possible that the first Lee is the young man in the relationship who fully realizes his role in pregnancy and makes the linguistic choice to express his concerns in terms of himself "getting pregnant." However, this would be an extremely progressive linguistic selection for a young man. More likely, if a young man was worried about the risk of pregnancy, he would say "I am worried about *you* getting pregnant." Or, if he personalized the risk a bit more, he might say, "I am worried about *us* getting pregnant." But for him to linguistically own the pregnancy risk and say that he is worried about "getting pregnant" seems highly unlikely, especially since the curriculum does not explicitly teach this elsewhere in its pages.

Not all of the neutrally-worded scenarios in the curricula reproduce dominant discourses of heterosex. As I established in Chapter Five, many of them do, in fact, contain ambiguously-gendered actors. However, in all of these role-playing activities characters engage in adversarial interactions which reify oppositional versions of sexuality. The examples in Chapter Five illustrate the confrontational nature of neutral scenarios, as does the activity "A Small Party" from the *Reducing the Risk* (153) curriculum:

A Small Party

You've been going out with someone for 6 months and care for this person very much. There's going to be a small party at a good friend's house where you can be alone. Your partner asks you to get some protection before the party. You're not ready to have sex. Your partner says:

Partner 1: I guess you don't really care about me.

Partner 2:

Partner 1: I feel like a fool asking you. I never thought you'd act like this.

Partner 2:

Partner 1: Are you starting to see someone else?

Partner 2:

Partner 1: Well, I thought you'd really want to do it.
Partner 2:

Partner 1: What if I got the protection?
Partner 2:

Partner 1: This takes the fun out of going to the party.
Partner 2:

Partner 1: I guess it's not so important, right now.
Partner 2:

Even though the gendered bodies are "removed" from the situation above, Partner 1 and Partner 2 are still adversaries with competing goals, and the curriculum still reproduces a confrontational discourse of sex based on heteronormative discourses of sexuality.

Missing Mutuality in Comprehensive Sex Education. The three comprehensive sex education curricula in this study subtly reproduce the male sexual drive discourse, the have/hold discourse and the adversarial model of sexual relations that dominant discourses of heterosex prescribe. Unlike the abstinence-only curricula, the comprehensive sex education curricula do not directly articulate the male sexual drive and have/hold discourses within their pages, yet they still reproduce adversarial gendered interactions that correspond with dominant expectations for gendered sexual behavior: men initiate sex, women regulate it. Additionally, even when the curricula "remove" gender through neutral names and neutral language, they still construct sexual negotiation as a process involving actors with opposing goals, which mirror heteronormatively gendered activities.

Policy Implications

As evidenced above, through the implementation process, the Title V State AE and TPPI and PREP programs facilitate curricula that are both very different and very much the same. Although the two types of programs are wildly dissimilar in the degree

to which they reproduce dominant versions of gender and heterosex, AOE and CSE programs both construct gendered subjects as sexual adversaries and sexual negotiations as competitive bargaining processes. Typically, young men in both types of curricula pressure for unprotected, unattached sex while young women coax men into relationships, abstinence and/or condom use. Although a few counter examples exist, and some of the comprehensive sex education curricula "remove" gender through neutral language and neutral names, the gendered sexualities and negotiation scenarios in the curricula consistently present sexual interactions as adversarial processes involving utility-maximizing individuals who pressure each other through traditionally-gendered scripts.

The adversarial model of sex reproduced in both abstinence-only and comprehensive sex education curricula resembles what Macaulay Millar (2008) calls a "commodity model" of sex. In this version of heterosex, sex is like a commodity that is bought and sold in a marketplace. Women are the "sellers" of sex, looking to charge the highest price in terms of love and relationships, while men are the consumers of sex, looking for the most sex for the least "cost." Within this model, women and men are not constructed as partners. Rather, like self-interested economic actors, they are utility-maximizing adversaries. As the providers of the externalized, disembodied commodity of sex, women stand in between men and the commodity that they desire, but they are not valued as partners or co-creators of sexual experiences in their own rite. Conversely, constructed as the consumers of sex, men learn that they are entitled to sex, and that if they are persistent or cunning enough, they will get what they have worked for. Within this model, the value of sex derives from its scarcity, and sex early in a woman's sexual

history is therefore more valuable than sex later in her history (as evidenced in the "dirty tape" example above). This leads to the shaming and "devaluation" of sexually active women.

The commodity model of sex is so pervasive in American society that the idea that women "give it up" and men "get some" is deeply embedded in popular culture. In many ways, it "is" heterosex. However, this construction of sex is problematic for several reasons. First, the commodity model of sex reproduced in these curricula reifies women's passivity and silences their sexual subjectivities. Women's sexuality is restricted to gatekeeping activities (or upholding morality in abstinence-only education), and they are stripped of their autonomous sexual power. Their role is limited to deciding when and under what circumstances to provide access to the sex that men desire (Macaulay Millar, 2008). Women's own sexual desires are therefore secondary to men's in this model, if they exist at all, and in fact, because the scarcity principle renders sexually inexperienced women as more valuable than sexually active women, this model of sex fetishizes sexual innocence and discourages women's sexual autonomy (Valenti, 2009). It renders social stigma around sexually active women (but not men) possible, which results in harmful social and physical consequences for many women.

The adversarial model of heterosex in these curricula also limits young men's sexual subjectivities. By constructing young men as always-already desiring sex, the curricula silence men's authentic, autonomous sexual decision-making. Men who conform to this version of masculinity are less likely to be comfortable saying "No" to sex they do not want and to actively and mutually constructing the kind of sexual relationships they do want. Additionally, this version of heterosex validates stigma

against gay and lesbian people by constructing gay men as sex-crazed and gluttonous (because no gatekeeper is present) and lesbian women as relatively asexual (because no sexual initiator is involved).

The adversarial model of heterosex presented in the sex education curricula I studied undermines gender equity in the curricula because it discursively supports the gendered phenomenon of sexual assault. It normalizes confrontational sexual interactions, it diminishes women's sexual power and autonomy, and it teaches all people that women must say "No!" regardless of what they actually desire. Because women are required to say "No!" even when they mean "Yes!" (Tolman, 2002), hegemonic heterosex trivializes the meaning of "No!" As Filipovic (2008, p. 18) states, "Men are as well versed in the sexual dance as women are, and when they are fully aware that women are expected to say no even when they mean yes, men are less likely to hear "no" and accept it at face value." The idea that idea that, "she said no, but she didn't really mean it" serves as the basis for many acquaintance and date rape apologies (Gavey, 2005).

The adversarial model of heterosex described above renders mutual, collaborative sex an anomaly -- a deviation from the confrontational norm. But, if heterosex were constructed through a discourse of mutuality rather than a discourse of opposition and antagonism, many of the problems above would disappear. A model of sexuality constructed through a discourse of mutuality would normalize collaboration between sexual partners instead of competition among them, and sexual subjects, regardless of their gender, would appear as actors who are equally entitled to power, respect, enjoyment, autonomy and positivity. Sexual experiences would reflect a sense of shared engagement -- a sense of "we're in this together." Sexual interactions would still require

negotiation, but these negotiations would not be unequal, adversarial or coercive. Rather, like an artistic collaboration, sexual negotiation would involve the creative process of subjects building sexual experiences together (Macaulay Millar, 2008). It would involve partners communicating their likes, dislikes and preferences, and it would normalize the intimate, interactive nature of sex. Sex constructed through a discourse of mutuality would appear as something that is *normatively* creative, positive, enjoyable and respectful, rather than something that is normatively adversarial. In that sense, a discourse of mutuality rests on discourses of positivity around sex and a similarity around gender, and in the absence of these, mutuality is impossible.

Thus, while adversarial interactions are certainly one manifestation of heterosex, they are not all of heterosex, but the curricula in this project do not provide students with an alternative to adversarial relations. The CSE curricula teach students how to respond to confrontational partners, which is an important skill. But they also they fail to offer students a competing discourse of heterosex -- one that downplays confrontation. As a result, sex in the curricula "is portrayed...as something that men *do to* women, instead of as a mutual act between two equally powerful actors" (Filipovic 2008, 29).

At its very best, the absence of a discourse of mutuality in federally-funded sex education creates the impression of a gender segregated world in which young women are denied active sexual subjectivities and young men are denied the joys associated with loving, caring, mutually vulnerable relationships. Unfortunately, however, it would be remiss to assume that the loss of egalitarian relationships is the biggest cost of a missing discourse of mutuality. Rather, missing mutuality provides the "cultural scaffolding" for

sexual assault (Gavey, 2005) and absentee teen fathers -- points that I explore in greater depth in Chapter Seven.

The preceding analysis highlights the need for federal policies to address the representation of gendered sexualities in the curricula that they fund. Abstinence-only sex education curricula are so grossly inequitable it is hard to believe that these curricula are even legal in public schools, much less eligible for federal support through the State AE program. Furthermore, although CSE programs are not as visibly gendered, they still teach a "hidden curriculum" of sexism that undermines equity and efficacy goals (Apple, 2004). As I discussed previously, Title IX suggests that curricula that receive federal funds monitor programs for sexist contents, but this requirement is not legally binding. The evidence in this chapter illustrates that *all* funded programs should be required to comply with Title IX curricular equity principles. The preceding analysis also illustrates how the dichotomized, partisan sex education debate and policy infrastructure mask the functioning of gender in sex education and how technicist policy solutions fail to move us past the gendered phenomena of teen pregnancy and parenting and violence against women. In a democratic society, standards for all sex education must be rethought so that public support never goes to programs that teach sexist messages, regardless of whether programs "work." Additionally, because equity in sex education would disrupt the cultural norms that underscore adversarial heterosex, introducing a discourse of mutuality may actually improve the effectiveness of federally supported curricula.

Chapter 7: Missing Responsibility

In this chapter I examine the construction of two highly-gendered phenomena -- teen parenting and sexual assault -- in abstinence-only and comprehensive sex education. These two issues typically have little in common, yet I discuss them in tandem here because both rest on a foundation of "privileged male irresponsibility" that absolves men of attachment to these matters and underscores inequality and missing mutuality between women and men (Boryczka, 2009). I argue that all of the curricula reproduce a privileged male irresponsibility in these areas which reinforces the too-common trends of absentee teen fathers and violence against women.

In this chapter, I argue that both abstinence-only and comprehensive sex education curricula underscore privileged male irresponsibility around teen parenting and sexual assault, yet, as with their construction of sex, gender, and relationships, the two types of curricula go about doing so quite differently. The abstinence-only curricula in this study teach detailed lessons on parenting and sexual assault prevention but frame these issues as things that young women, but not men, are primarily responsible for. Alternatively, the CSE programs are entirely silent around teen parenting and sexual assault -- none of the three comprehensive curricula I studied mentions a single word about either topic. Although AOE and CSE differ in how they approach teen parenting and sexual assault, I argue that they both reify these too-common phenomena by reproducing the dominant discourses of heterosex that underscore them and leaving sexual coercion unchecked. This bears on the important issues of gender equity in sex

education policy as well as the role that sex education policies play in supporting other federal initiatives.

Teen Pregnancy and Parenting in Abstinence-only Education

The *Me, My World, My Future* (280) curriculum opens its discussion on teen pregnancy and parenting in seemingly gender-inclusive terms, stating that "teenage parenting poses great challenges for all concerned: the mother, the father, the child and society at large," yet it continues to write men out of these discussions, offering them a privileged irresponsibility in these areas. The below classroom activity highlights how the curriculum writes men out of teen pregnancy and parenting lessons:

As a class discuss four different scenarios:

- a 14-year-old girl who becomes pregnant
- an 18-year-old pregnant senior
- a 22-year-old unmarried pregnant woman
- a 22-year-old pregnant married woman.

Ask the students: How does this pregnancy affect the following:

- both the male and female in the relationship
- parents
- education
- future income
- the ability to care for the child?

- *Me, My World, My Future* (279)

While the activity above asks students to consider the impacts on "*both the male and the female in the relationship*," (279) it places young women, exclusively, at the axis of the conversation and it fails to ask students to consider a scenario where a young man becomes a father. Likewise, the curriculum discusses the responsibilities associated with teen parenting almost exclusively in terms of young women (286).

In cases where a young woman is faced with an unintended pregnancy, she may find crucial services (e.g., medical care, health education, nutrition, nutrition counseling, family counseling, education services, job-training, counseling) in maternity homes. Regardless of the decision a young woman finally

makes, these services improve her lot in life — and that of her child, if she decides to keep and raise that child.

The description above presents teen pregnancy as an issue that "a young woman is faced with," not as an issue that young *parents* are faced with. Likewise, the statement that "the decision that a *young woman* finally makes" may "improve *her* lot in life -- and that of *her child, if she decides* to keep and raise that child" ignores teen fathers altogether. Although some readings of the above statement could see the passage as empowering to young women because it highlights their autonomy over such choices, in neglecting to even mention young fathers, the statements above reify men's absence and irresponsibility and instead place the burden of these issues on young women.

The AOE curricula also absolve young men of the financial responsibilities and tribulations associated with teen pregnancy and parenting. *Me, My World, My Future* (281) states, "Without marriage, teen parenting becomes the responsibility of the young woman. She and her baby often face poverty because of low wages and lack of education or skills." Thus, lack of marriage, rather than the father's disengagement, results in her solo parenting, while "low wages and lack of education or skills," rather than lack of child support, cause her poverty. The curriculum reiterates men's privileged irresponsibility in this area again and again. In a discussion entitled "Financial Consequences of Teen *Parenting*," the curriculum (275) teaches that:

Fifty-two percent of the women on public assistance were teenage mothers, and 25 percent of the women at risk of receiving public assistance were teenage mothers. Women who had their first child between the age of 13 and 17 had an even greater likelihood of going on public assistance, and women on public assistance who were teenage mothers and worked for wages earned lower hourly wages, during each decade of their lives, than women on public assistance who were not teenage mothers.

Thus, the discussion above frames the "Financial Consequences of Teen *Parenting*" only in terms of teen mothers. It fails to mention anything about fathers' wages, paychecks or child support, thereby absolving young men of their responsibility and reifying the endemic problem of absentee young fathers who do not financially contribute to their children's lives (Ford School, 2011).

Likewise, the curriculum presents decisions around abortion and adoption strictly as women's issues. The *Me, My World, My Future* (289) curriculum writes young men entirely out of abortion conversations. The following excerpt on the emotional considerations of abortion illustrates this:

Emotional Consideration: The psychological effects of the abortion choice should also be considered. There are many factors that will determine whether or not a woman has difficulty living with this choice. These would include:

- Her knowledge of fetal development
- Her knowledge of abortion procedures
- The degree of pressure she received to abort (e.g., Was the decision truly hers or was it forced upon her by others?)
- Her parents' value system as well as her own.

While abortion decisions are ultimately up to young women, and I am certainly not arguing that it should be otherwise, the discussion above ignores men altogether. In fact, it gives voice to the values held by young women's *parents* over those of the young men involved in the pregnancy. Presumably the "degree of pressure she received" from "others" could be male partners, but it could also be parents, teachers, clergy or friends. Failing to include young men in these discussions implicitly absolves them of responsibility and connection to the situation and negates any real emotions they may have about the issue. Furthermore, it silences involved, responsible young men who disrupt the male sexual drive and have/hold discourses and partner with young women.

Curricular discussions of adoption also fail to include positive portrayals of young men. For instance, the following lesson focuses on how adoption agencies consider the needs of the teen *mothers* who relinquish their babies:

Most adoption agencies today are sensitive to the needs of the birth (relinquishing) mother. Most often, the mother has the right to place her child with a family which, in the mother's view, would best meet her child's needs. For example, a relinquishing mother could help choose a family of a particular faith, size, ethnic origin, and economic status. All of these decisions assure her that she is helping to provide the very best for her child in her special situation.

- *Me, My World, My Future*, (286)

Thus, the curriculum neglects to discuss teen fathers' involvement in adoption issues. It fails to mention men who take responsibility or who have an emotional attachment to giving a child up for adoption. The following excerpt illustrates this point with greater detail:

In the years ahead, her involvement in these decisions also allows her to reflect positively on her child's opportunity to grow and develop in a stable home environment. Adoption also allows a teen mother to return to an active lifestyle and to pursue her personal goals, after she has carefully considered the impact the baby will make on her life and the lives of the baby's grandparents.

- *Me, My World, My Future*, (286)

This statement reflects the assumption that the teen mother's "lifestyle" and "personal goals" alone would be disrupted by parenting and it makes no mention of this having an impact on a teen father's life. Furthermore, like the depiction of abortion, the above example considers the "baby's grandparents" while simultaneously writing young men out of the conversation. This absolves young men of all responsibility, denies them any emotional relationship to the situation and silences young men who disrupt dominant discourses and assume an active role in teen pregnancy and parenting.

In the instances that the curriculum does address teen fathers, it does so halfheartedly:

Teen Fathers

Teenage fathers are also affected by pregnancy. They can experience emotional trauma, may marry prematurely, and usually feel a sense of responsibility that may change the course of their lives. A teen father's educational plans and goals may be interrupted or changed to allow him to assume his responsibilities as a parent. Many states are now considering ways to require young fathers to help provide at least some care for their children.

Though the burden of teen pregnancy is much greater for young women, both parents frequently experience hardships that prevent them from realizing life's goals and from becoming the people they had hoped to become.

- *Me, My World, My Future*, (282)

In the above example, the curriculum engages teen fathers, but it does so with reservations. While it lists "emotional trauma," premature marriage and life course changes as consequences of teen parenting that young men "can" experience, it lists them as possibilities rather than imperatives. Also, it does not discuss these issues in any detail and it offers no opportunity for young men to delve into the implications of teen parenting in their own right. Further, it constructs teen fathers' involvement as much less than that of teen mothers -- "a teen father's educational plans and goals *may* be interrupted" because he may be required to provide "at least some care" for his child, the curriculum teaches. Alternatively, as evidenced above, a teen mother's life is likely to be physically, emotionally and financially decimated. Thus, while mentioning teen fathers in the above except, the curriculum sums up its overall message in the last paragraph -- "the burden of teen pregnancy is much greater for young women."

Additionally, the curriculum constructs teen fathers through their absence. For instance, in its lesson entitled "The Family Unit," the curriculum acknowledges that men are often missing from discussions of teenage pregnancy, but it then goes on to discuss them only in terms of how they are not there. The lesson (101) states, "Much of the talk

about adolescent pregnancy ignores males, except for the acknowledgment that they are 'perpetrators' of the outcomes....Males must be included in target populations for pregnancy prevention programs." However, it goes on to list only the following information about young fathers:

- Information about almost 40% of fathers of babies born to teenage mothers is missing from vital statistics. Close to 70% of the identified fathers in 1986 were over the age of 19 (not surprising since two-thirds of the teen mothers were between 18 and 19).
- Divorced men experience an average 42% rise in their standard of living in the first year after divorce, while divorced women (and their children) experience a 73% decline.
- In 1990, one out of four children was born without a legally determined father.

Thus, the lesson identifies the need to include men in these discussions, yet it discusses young men only in terms of how they are missing from vital statistics and missing from families. If, as the example suggests, data on 40% of teen fathers are missing, that means that data on the majority of teen fathers (60%) are available. However, it reports almost nothing on this 60% except for their age (70% of them are over the age of 19), and even this is expressed in terms of their relationship to teen mothers. The lesson then goes on to discuss men in terms of divorce and living standards, which it expresses in comparison to women and *their* children, thereby implicitly tying children to their mother and once again highlighting men's absence. Furthermore, the last bullet point emphasizes the 25% of legally unidentified fathers, while concealing the 75% of fathers that are identified.

The exclusion of young men from discussions about teen parenting neglects to acknowledge that teen pregnancy and parenting could be experiences that both partners engage in mutually. Silencing young men overburdens young women by reifying men's irresponsibility and detachment, placing the responsibility of teen parenting and the

consequences of dealing with an unwanted teen pregnancy on the young woman alone (or with the support of her family). This underscores women's sexual vulnerability; robs young men of a model of valid emotional responses for dealing with an unwanted pregnancy; and fails to provide young men with an example of responsible parenting. While this certainly reflects the reality of the situation faced by many pregnant and parenting teens, it also normalizes men's privileged irresponsibility and undermines their feelings about these issues. Now, I turn to the construction of sexual assault prevention in federally funded AOE curricula and argue that in this area, too, men enjoy a privileged irresponsibility.

Sexual Assault Prevention in Abstinence-Only Education

The abstinence-only curricula in this study offer students conflicting messages about men's responsibility in sexual assault prevention. In some instances, the AOE curricula debunk common misconceptions about sexual assault and teach that both men and women are responsible for assault prevention. However, in other instances abstinence-only programs reproduce dominant discourses of heterosex that contribute to men's privileged irresponsibility around sexual assault prevention and slate women with the impossible task of preventing their own attacks.

In some instances, the abstinence-only curricula directly acknowledge that dominant constructions of masculinity encourage violence against women, as evidenced in the following lesson from *WAIT Training* (258):

Date rape is partly the result of the way some men think they are supposed to behave with women. Many men think they should always be aggressive and in control. Some men see sexual intimacy as a competition-like game. As when competing in sports, some young men might feel that they must "win" at any cost. Even the slang of sexual conquest is similar to that of sports: men speak of "scoring" with a woman. According to one young man, the object of a date with a woman is to see how far he can get-to pressure her to get the most sex he can out

of her. This abusive attitude has nothing to do with sex; it is about power and control.

Above, the curriculum problematizes the aggressive masculine sexuality prescribed by the male sexual drive discourse and progressively connects dominant discourses of heterosex to sexual assault. However, this is the only moment that any of the curricula directly challenges the male sexual drive discourse. In other instances, the AOE curricula underscore dominant discourses of heterosex and allow men a privileged irresponsibility in sexual assault prevention that slates women with the impossible task of preventing their own attacks. The following handout on sexual assault prevention encapsulates this paradox:

Sexual Assault/Date Rape Information

What Women Should Know:

First, you have the right to:

- Dress as you please.*
- Change your mind at any time regarding sexual activity.
- Be treated with respect at all times.

And you have the responsibility to:

- Talk openly and honestly about your sexual expectations, wishes and intentions.
- Assert yourself-by standing up for your rights.
- Take an equal role in your relationships with men.
- Reject sexual stereotypes that define women as passive, weak and irrational even if he is the school "hunk."

* Remember, however, that provocative dress is disrespectful to the man you're with.

- *WAIT Training, (259)*

In one breath, the above handout appears empowering. It instructs young women to "reject sexual stereotypes that define women as passive, weak and irrational," and affords them equal rights in relationships. However, in the next breath, the curriculum denies women autonomy over their wardrobe choices. The curriculum doesn't teach that women

should consider their clothing choices in their own rite -- rather, it teaches that women should consider their clothing choices out of respect for their partners (presumably because other men will gaze at them if they dress provocatively). The curriculum does not contain a counterpart lesson instructing men to regulate their dress. Subsequently, the curriculum affords men a privileged irresponsibility over their desires and their clothing, while it slates women with the impossible double responsibility of controlling their own dress as well as the degree to which men objectify them.

Additionally, while clothing certainly communicates meanings (sexual or otherwise), and it is perhaps worthwhile for the curricula to discuss how students choose to present themselves through their attire, women's dress has long been used as evidence against them in cases of sexual assault (she was dressed provocatively, so she must have wanted it) and the curriculum comes dangerously close to reifying that longstanding rape myth. In fact the curriculum lists "dressing in revealing clothes" as a "red flag" demarcating someone who has difficulty maintaining sexual boundaries (*WAIT Training*, 239). The lesson provides *one* counter instruction to students, telling them to "Focus on verbal messages - Don't assume that because a person dresses in a sexy manner and/or flirts that he or she wants physical contact" (*WAIT Training*, 250). However, the overwhelming emphasis is on how young women can control the degree to which they are objectified: "Be aware -- Consider the messages you may be sending. People may assume that "sexy" clothing and/or flirtation indicate you want to have sex," *WAIT Training* (250) teaches.

In other instances, the abstinence-only curricula teach seemingly gender neutral messages about sexual assault, but they also subtly reproduce dominant, disempowering

discourses of heterosex in these discussions. The AOE curricula teach that sexual assault can happen to anyone, not just women, while simultaneously acknowledging that the majority of perpetrators are, in fact, men. "Be aware that both males and females have been encouraged to take a more aggressive role in pursuing physical intimacy. The responsibility and/or problems of date rape do not apply to just the guys or just the girls," *Me, My World, My Future* (46) states. Thus, the curriculum teaches the important message that rape happens to both women and men and sexual assault stems from aggression, not gender. This disrupts the decades-old myth that rape is a just a natural result of a male sex drive out of control, while opening up the discursive possibility for non-heteronormative sexual coercion. Problematically, however, the same curriculum also asserts that only men use physical violence and that only women use psychological manipulation. It continues, "Women are usually the victims of date rape, often due to physical force. But men can also be victims on account of psychological pressure" (46). This assertion renders the psychological pressure that women face from men, which is the dominant form of coercion in acquaintance rape situations, invisible (Gavey, 2005). Further, it reifies the notion that women aren't violent or physically aggressive, which subtly teaches the false message that women aren't strong enough to physically overpower men, which constructs women's bodies weak and, hence, rapeable, while men's bodies are more able to rape (McCaughey, 1997).

Additionally, the abstinence only curricula send mixed messages about whether rape is a victim's fault. Outwardly, AOE programs appear to denounce victim-blaming, but subtle counter narratives undermine this message. For instance, *WAIT Training* (260) states, "If you are a victim of date rape remember that it is not your fault. There is

nothing for you to feel ashamed or guilty about. You are not to blame." Likewise, it teaches that one retains their virginity if their first sex experience was a rape: "Virginity is something you give away freely; it cannot be taken from you. If you have been raped (or date raped), it is not your fault" (155). However, the curriculum undermines the strength of this message through its lessons on provocative dress (discussed above), which suggest that women can control the degree to which they are objectified, as well as its construction of drinking and drug use:

The danger of rape goes up whenever drinking or drugs are used by either person on a date. Because drinking and drugging lowers inhibition, a potentially violent partner is more likely to commit rape when under the influence. A girl doesn't give up the right to say "No" if she drinks, but, some partners will try to take advantage of an impaired date. And, since substance use affects judgment, a girl may find herself in a dangerous situation - alone with a boy and away from help - - because drinking dulled her awareness.

- *WAIT Training* (164)

Subsequently, while the curriculum teaches that rape victims are not to blame, it simultaneously sends the subtle message because she drank and "dulled her awareness," she found herself "alone with a boy and away from help" and is therefore partially responsible for her rape. This argument has long been used against women in rape trials, and it perpetuates the notion that if women put themselves in sexual situations, they are to blame if they get raped.

Similarly, the AOE curricula place the burden of assault prevention on rape victims. Consider the following handouts on acquaintance rape prevention from *WAIT Training*:

Handout: **Sexual Assault/Date Rape Information - Can Date Rape Be Avoided?**

Here are some practical steps you can take to help protect yourself from date rape:

- Communicate clearly-make it clear to your date how you expect to be treated. Let your date know you will not tolerate any kind of abuse.
- Avoid dangerous situations-avoid places where you'll be alone until you get to know your date. Double date or go to public places where you can get help if you need it.
- Be in control-try not to be helpless or "in debt" to a dating partner:
 - Have an alternate way home.
 - Don't think that you owe your date sexually just because he/she paid for the date.
 - Don't use alcohol or other drugs. These substances can severely hamper your ability to think clearly and act quickly if you find yourself in a dangerous situation.
- Be selective--think twice about going out with someone who:
 - often puts down men or women with comments such as, "girls are so stupid ..."
 - uses alcohol or other drugs
 - enjoys pornography
 - wants to be in control of where you go, what you do, etc.
 - is given in to angry, aggressive outbursts or extreme jealousy
 - uses physical force (squeezing, pushing, etc.)
 - drives recklessly, especially with you in the car

If the person you're already dating has these tendencies, discuss your concerns-make your feelings clear. If the person is impatient or refuses to discuss your concerns, you should question going any further.

-WAIT Training, (167)

While this lesson provides students with detailed, valuable information, it also constructs rape avoidance as something that potential victims can control. The curriculum *does not include* a similar lesson on how potential perpetrators can not rape -- rather, as in the above example, it teaches that victims bear the impossible responsibility for preventing abuse. *Me, My World, My Future* (46) similarly defines "prevention of a date rape" in terms of victims:

Prevention of date rape may include yelling, getting out of the car, going to a lighted public area, finding a phone and calling your parents, and again thinking escape and survive. You have the right to privacy, the right to say "No", the right to scream, yell, or make a scene, and the right to bite and hit an attacker. You have the right to privacy: such as closing the door while getting dressed, maintaining your own body space, and saying "no" to unwanted physical affection and touch.

Again, this is valuable information. However AOE curricula concomitantly provide scant information and confusing narratives on how perpetrators, who are the only ones who can prevent sexual assault, can *not* commit violence.

The following date rape prevention handout for men from *WAIT Training* (165) illustrates the confusing narratives around the role of perpetrators in rape prevention. At first, the curriculum tells men that they do not have the right to pressure others for sex, but in the next moment, it suggests that rape is the result of a male sex drive out of control. First, it states:

WHAT MEN SHOULD KNOW:

You do NOT have the right to pressure or force a woman to have sex, even if:

- You paid for her dinner or a night out.
- You've had sex with her before.
- She agrees to have sex with you then changes her mind.
- She dresses provocatively, flirts, or "comes on" to you.
- You think women enjoy being forced to have sex or want to be persuaded.

This message is important, and all students should hear it frequently. However, a moment later, the curriculum suggests that "momentum" can cause date rape:

Talk about how if you put a frog in a bucket of boiling water, it will immediately jump out. If, however, you put the frog in a bucket of cool water and heat the water gradually, you'll end up cooking the frog. The gradual increase numbs the frog to the impending "point of no return." Discuss how the same thing can happen to us physically if we rely on the way we feel to decide when to get out of a hot situation. Momentum can take over and cause unwanted consequences. This is where sexual activity and date rape can occur, so boundaries are really critical to develop and maintain.

- *WAIT Training* (156)

Thus, in one instance, the curriculum asserts that men do not have the right to pressure women to have sex, while in the next it suggests that date rape can happen as the result of "momentum." This evokes the antiquated, sexist myth that rape is a naturally-occurring phenomenon caused by uncontrollable male sex drives. The lesson should teach that rape is *never* just an act of momentum. Rather, it is *always* an act of violence, regardless of whether physical force or psychological pressure is the means of control. Additionally, the curricula should provide information for potential perpetrators on strategies they can use or support services they can access to acquiesce violent thoughts or tendencies.

Concurrently, all of the abstinence-only curricula construct sexual assault consequences as something that victims, but not perpetrators, experience. For instance, *WAIT Training* (166) provides the following information on the consequences of date rape:

Life After a Date Rape

Loss of trust

Date rape victims may lose their ability to trust people. They may also lose trust in their own ability to judge people's character.

Guilt

Though victims are in no way responsible for their attacker's behavior, they may feel shame and guilt, and even try to find reasons to blame themselves for the rape.

Depression

People who are victims of date rape are likely to be angry and depressed.

Fear

Fear of other people, of going out on a date and of being alone may be experienced. Date rape victims may even become fearful of people they know. A person may change their whole way of life, avoiding people and places.

Sexual Problems

A person's deep emotional hurt may impair their ability to relate to a sexual partner.

All three abstinence-only curricula include handouts like the above, enumerating the consequences of sexual assault for victims. However, none of the three curricula warn potential perpetrators about the consequences of committing a rape. They rarely mention the guilt, shame, remorse, depression, STIs, HIV/AIDS, pregnancy, jail sentences, retaliation or loss of a reputation that the perpetrator of a sexual assault may encounter. Thus, the construction of consequences as something that victims but not perpetrators face subtly lessens the seriousness of sexual assault while simultaneously failing to offer rapists (or potential rapists) a personal relationship to the crimes in a way that may deter their behavior.

As evidenced above, abstinence-only curricula provide confusing information about sexual assault prevention. On the one hand, the AOE curricula progressively attach sexual assault to dominant discourses of heterosex. Yet, on the other, AOE programs reify the dominant discourses upon which many sexual assaults rest and allow perpetrators (who are almost exclusively men) a privileged irresponsibility in prevention and slate victims (who are most often women) with the impossible job of preventing their own victimization.

Privileged Male Irresponsibility in Comprehensive Sex Education

The comprehensive sex education curricula are equally (or perhaps more) problematic around the issues of teen parenting and sexual assault, albeit on different grounds entirely. The CSE programs are *completely silent* around these two issues -- they do not mention a word about either topic in the contents of their pages despite the gendered realities of absentee teen fatherhood and violence against young women. Additionally, the CSE curricula underscore dominant discourses of heterosex that reify

men's privileged irresponsibility around sexual pressure and sexual assault prevention in their role-playing activities.

Teen parenting is deeply gendered phenomenon. As I discussed in Chapter One teen fathers are missing from their children's lives at alarming rates, and young women disproportionately bear the brunt of parenting responsibilities. Men's involvement in their children's lives improves the outcomes of all family members (NCPTP, 2011). However, despite this fact, the CSE programs in this study let the problem of disengaged, irresponsible, unavailable young men go unchecked.

Additionally, the CSE curricula fail to address sexual assault and leave sexual pressuring virtually unchecked in their contents. As I established in previous chapters, the CSE curricula rely heavily on role-playing activities, which subtly reproduce gender differentiated heterosex and reify adversarial sexual interactions. Additionally, however, these exercises, which are designed to teach students how to navigate pressure-driven situations, consistently position sexual subjects as the recipients of sexual pressure rather than as the sources of sexual pressure. They teach pressured partners a host of refusal and delay tactics to avoid unwanted sex, which is important information. But, the CSE curricula leave the role of the pressuring partner unexamined. This is evidenced in the following role-playing activity from the *Be Proud, Be Responsible* (102-103) curriculum:

Role Play D: YVONNE AND CARLOS

The goal of this role play is for Yvonne to talk Carlos into using condoms and convince him that using condoms can be fun and pleasurable.

YVONNE

- You and your partner Carlos are in his living room with the lights down low.
- You are starting to get physical.
- You have just started to tell him that you want to use a condom.
- He begins to get angry.
- Your health is important to you and you want to protect yourself.
- You need to persuade him that sex can be just as pleasurable with condoms.

CARLOS

- You and your girlfriend Yvonne are at your place and things are getting intimate.
- She starts to discuss condoms.
- You get angry at her because you think she thinks you have been sleeping around and you haven't.
- You don't think condoms could ever be pleasurable.
- You believe that condoms will ruin the mood.

Facilitator Should Summarize Role Play D by saying:

Condoms don't have to ruin sex. Different techniques can make condoms use pleasurable and fun. It is important to talk about condom use ahead of time, before any touching or kissing begins. This will help reduce the chance that the person will get angry. The bottom line is for you to take responsibility and be comfortable and confident in your choice to be safe.

In this, and most, of the role-playing examples in CSE programs, women suggest condoms or abstinence and are met with men's resistance. Like the above example, in *all* of these instances the curricula instruct pressured partner (who is usually, but not always, a young woman) to use refusal and delay tactics to negotiate their way out of unwanted sexual scenarios. They do not instruct the pressuring partner (who is typically a man) on how to not be aggressive or not pressure women for unwanted sex. In the above scenario, the curriculum teaches that Yvonne must "take responsibility" for discussing condom use "before any touching or kissing" begins in order to prevent Carlos' anger. Thus, Yvonne, *who already took responsibility for her own sexual safety* by initiating condom use, must

now take on the additional, impossible responsibility of controlling Carlos' anger. Simultaneously, the curriculum affords Carlos a privileged irresponsibility and leaves his irrational aggression unchecked.

Role-playing activities in CSE consistently reproduce scenarios like the above and, although adversarial scenarios sometimes reverse the gender of the participants (women pressure men) or take the gendered bodies out of the situations (Lee and Lee navigate sex and pregnancy), the curricula consistently teach that is the recipients of sexual pressure who must deescalate unwanted, confrontational sexual interactions. This would not be problematic if the curricula offered complementary instruction on how students can *not* pressure and/or coerce others for sex, but the curricula completely fail to provide students with this information.

Of the three CSE curricula I studied, the *Draw the Line, Respect the Line* curriculum comes the closest to addressing the behavior of pressuring sexual partners by acknowledging that students must not only "draw the line" demarcating their own sexual boundaries but they must also "respect" others' sexual "lines." The curriculum states that one of its "underlying principles" is that: "Students who respect the limits of others will be less coercive. In addition to learning to overcome pressure, the curriculum also helps students avoid pressuring others. The theme of respecting others' limits is reflected throughout the lesson," (Grades 6, 7 & 8, xi). Unfortunately, the curriculum does not follow-through on the promise of carrying the "theme of respecting others' limits" through the lesson, and instead, like the other CSE programs, *Draw the Line, Respect the Line* focuses almost entirely on how students can resist sexual pressure.

In the absence of a conversation about sexual assault, the failure of the CSE curricula to address the role of pressuring implicitly awards potential abusers (99% of whom are men) a privileged irresponsibility in sexual assault prevention. When considering this within dominant discourses of heterosex, instruction on resisting pressure versus instruction that renounces pressuring corresponds closely with the male sexual drive discourse. The desirous male sexual aggressor enjoys a privileged irresponsibility, while the reactive female sexual gatekeeper incurs the impossible double responsibility of regulating her own and her partner's sexuality. Although the CSE curricula sometimes take the gendered bodies out of pressure-driven scenarios, the adversarial interactions and missing discourse of mutuality they reproduce nonetheless underscore this well-known story, which leaves sexual aggression unchecked and places women at risk.

Policy Implications

Through the implementation of abstinence-only and comprehensive sex education curricula that fail to adequately address teen parenting and sexual assault prevention, federal sex education policies preclude gender equity in funded programs and potentially undermine the goal of reducing teens' sexual risk. Additionally, through the implementation of curricula that reify men's privileged irresponsibility in fatherhood and assault prevention, federal sex education policies reproduce messages that are incongruent the Responsible Fatherhood Initiative and the Violence Against Women Act.

As I articulated in Chapter One, addressing gendered phenomena in education is foundational to gender equity. However, as I established above, both AOE and CSE programs fail to adequately address or dismantle the cultural foundation of absentee teen

fathers and sexual assault. Both types of curricula reproduce dominant, disempowering versions of gender and heterosex throughout their pages, which support the very existence of sexualized violence. Within abstinence-only education, unapologetic celebrations of dominant discourses of heterosex that naturalize aggressive, detached, hypersexual masculinity and passive, compliant, asexual femininity provide the cultural foundation upon which sexual assault rests. Dominant discourses of heterosex that position men as more powerful and more desirous than women in sexual (and non-sexual) scenarios, create interactions ripe for forcible sexual assault, regardless of what the AOE curricula teach about date rape prevention (Gavey, 2005).

Teaching students to resist sexual pressure in comprehensive sex education is valuable information, but the curricula fail to provide reciprocal instruction on how students can avoid aggression and *not* sexually pressure their partners. If curricula taught that sex was normatively positive and normatively mutual instead of normatively negative and adversarial, these messages would become common sense. However, as it stands, the curricula reify a privileged irresponsibility among offenders and slate victims with the impossible responsibility of not getting themselves raped.

While women's empowerment is an important factor in the struggle to end rape, it will not succeed without corresponding shifts in how women and men are taught to experience sexuality and gender (McIntosh, 2008; Macaulay Millar, 2008)). Teaching men not to rape involves holding them accountable for sexual coercion and addressing the disconnect between men who commit sexual assault and men who identify as rapists (Macaulay Millar, 2008). This requires accurately representing the reality of sexual assault, developing positive masculinities and teaching boys that rape does not

necessarily involve extreme violence. Rather, forcing, coercing or pressuring a partner to have sex, under any circumstances, is rape. Plenty of men are able to grasp the idea that sex should be entered into joyfully and enthusiastically and that an absence of "no" isn't enough -- enthusiastic participation should be the baseline requirement (Friedman & Valenti, 2008).

However, as I established in previous chapters, both types of curricula fail to present students with an active feminine sexuality. The negation of women's desire makes it possible and customary for men to pressure women for sex, and relentless pressure from male partners frequently causes women to engage in sex that they do not want (Gavey, 2005). Women who engage in unwanted sexual encounters as the result of unrelenting male pressure, consistently construct these experiences as victimizing and violating situations that "are not always clearly distinguishable from rape" (Gavey, 2005). Despite this fact, both types of curricula leave sexual pressure virtually unchecked and silence women's sexual desires in their pages.

Sexual assault as a social problem will not end until we shift our broader understandings of sex, gender and relationships, and the sex education curricula implemented through federal policies do not advance us towards that goal. Normalizing sex negativity through a missing discourse of positivity around sex, normalizing hypersexual masculinity and asexual femininity through a missing discourse of similarity around gender, and normalizing adversarial sexual relations through a missing discourse of mutuality lays the foundation for sexual assault. If instead, sex education programs normalized beliefs that sex should be a positive, pleasurable act engaged in by mutually powerful, desirous, pleasure-seeking people who similarly require respect and autonomy,

programs would send the message that rape is distinctive from normative, ideal sex because it takes a natural and ideally pleasurable act and turns it into violence.

The failure of funded programs to address these issues may undermine the overall policy goals of reducing teens' sexual risk. Reinforcing men's privileged irresponsibility undermines efforts to encourage young people to protect themselves from unwanted pregnancy, STIs and HIV, and leaving sexual coercers unchecked fails to protect students from sexual assault. Outside of sex education, federal policies acknowledge the importance of increasing men's roles in parenting and rape prevention, and constructing sex education around equity principles would reinforce the efforts of these important federal programs.

The Responsible Fatherhood Initiative (RFI), enacted by the Obama Administration, aims to address the "growing crisis of fatherlessness" in America and "to help show fathers the unique and irreplaceable role they play in their children's lives" (White House, 2011). One of its most monumental actions thus far has been the establishment of a federal interagency working group designed to investigate administrative barriers to responsible fatherhood and institutionalize support for men's roles in parenting (White House, 2011). Eleven federal agencies participate in the working group, including the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), which also administers sex education programs. As evidenced above, the federally-funded sex education curricula in this project are incongruent with responsible fatherhood. However in the absence of attention to the curricula implemented by federal sex education programs, the barrier posed by sex education remains invisible. Requiring funding agencies to interrogate the messages reproduced through the implementation process and

reforming sex education to include men's roles in parenting could therefore serve as "administrative actions" that agencies can take in the effort to institutionalize efforts that increase men's responsibility.

Likewise, the curricula implemented through federal sex education programs fail to support the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA). VAWA, which was authored by Vice President Biden and signed into law in 1994, provides billions of dollars in federal support to stop violence against women each year. The FY 2011 budget provides a record total of \$730 million to combat violence against women -- a \$130.5 million increase in funding from the previous fiscal year (U.S. Department of Justice, 2011). The Office on Violence Against Women funds 21 programs, one of which is aimed at "developing prevention strategies to stop violence before it starts" (U.S. Department of Justice, 2011). As I indicated above, men are primarily responsible for violence against women and in the interest of supporting VAWA's prevention efforts, federally funded sex education programs should also focus on encouraging men's responsibility in this vital issue.

Chapter 8: Missing Equity

"How would we change public policy if women really mattered? . . . This is a profound but seldom asked question by those who analyze or propose public policy. Why? Because women's lives are still large invisible in the professional schools, institutes and think tanks that address public policy issues. . . . If we seriously examine public policy through the eyes of women, we ask fundamentally different questions and discover quite different solutions."

- Longview Institute (2011, p. 1)

In this project, I highlight the commonalities between the two types of sex education curricula implemented as the result of federal sex education policies. I argue that although the policy community typically constructs these programs as dichotomous and oppositional, they are more alike than the policy infrastructure implies. What is included in frequently-used, federally-funded AOE and CSE programs is often very different, which is consistent with policy debates, but what is missing from the two types of curricula is more alike than policy conversations lead bystanders to believe.

Through the implementation process, sex education policies silence discourses of sex positivity, gender similarity, relational mutuality and masculine responsibility, regardless of whether they are evidence-based, comprehensive or abstinence-focused. The missing discourses in these programs affect all youth, but the disproportionate share of their burden falls on young women and LGBTQQ students, often from low-income communities. Below, I summarize the arguments I made in Chapters Four through Seven and I consider the impacts that these missing discourses have for public policy. Additionally, I briefly reflect on the limits of technicist policy solutions and I consider what critical policy research can add to the discipline of Public Policy.

Summary

In this work, I argue that the curricula implemented through the Title V State AE, TPPI and PREP programs reproduce a missing discourse of positivity around sex. The abstinence-only curricula construct sex through a moral discourse that valorizes married sex and the people that wait for it and stigmatizes nonmarital sex and the people that have it. Alternatively, the comprehensive sex education curricula construct sex through a clinical-sounding risk reduction discourse that positions sexual subjects as rational actors, charged with the task of reducing their sexual risks. Sex, subsequently, appears as a risk to be avoided in comprehensive sex education rather than an experience to be enjoyed.

Although the curricula construct sex very differently, they are alike in that they both silence a discourse of positivity around sex. Both types of sex education are steeped in sex negativity and are mute around the positive, healthy, pleasurable elements of human sexuality. *Be Proud, Be Responsible*, the comprehensive curriculum that comes the closest to constructing sex positively, discusses pleasure only in terms of condom use and prioritizes men's pleasure over women's. In fact, this curriculum leaves women's clitorises entirely out of the curriculum, underscoring a missing discourse of female pleasure across the programs.

The six sex education curricula in this study are also alike in that they fail to offer students a discourse of similarity around gender. Abstinence-only curricula celebrate gender difference and teach caricature-like versions of femininity and masculinity supported by vague allusions to scientific authority. AOE curricula teach a version of femininity that is passive, compliant, nurturing, emotional, responsible and asexual, and they teach a version of masculinity that is aggressive, detached, independent and

hypersexual. Conversely, the CSE curricula exude an air of gender neutrality. They almost never directly engage students on gender, and they use gender neutral language throughout their contents. One curriculum even "removes" gender from most of the curriculum through its use of gender neutral names. Gender neutrality in comprehensive sex education opens up the space for reversed discourses of heterosex (in which women initiate sex and men respond) and LGBTQQ relationships.

However, although CSE programs do not celebrate gender difference like their abstinence-only counterparts, they do not teach students about gender equality or deconstruct gender difference either. Rather, like abstinence-only curricula, CSE programs fail to offer students a discourse of gender similarity which would teach that women and men are similar beings with similar rights, needs and desires. Because difference is the foundation of inequality (Kimmel, 2009), similarity is an important component of equalizing power relations between women and men, LGBTQQ and straight people.

The curricula in this project construct sexual interactions and relationships in a manner that rests on a missing discourse of similarity. All of the curricula fail to offer students a discourse of mutuality around relationships and sexual interactions and instead reproduce adversarial heterosex. Abstinence-only curricula teach the male sexual drive discourse and have/hold discourses as scientific fact and convey a gendered version of sexuality summed up by the phrase, "Men will give love to get sex, and women will give sex to get love" (*WAIT Training*, 63). CSE programs do not directly teach these messages, but they still subtly reproduce the male sexual drive and have/hold discourses in the details of their contents. Gendered actors in role-playing activities in CSE

programs act out heteronormative scripts and the CSE curricula normalize adversarial sexual scenarios based in large part on the hegemonic expectations for gendered behavior. Thus, although the curricula are very different in how they construct gendered sexualities, both reproduce dominant, adversarial heterosexual relations. Together, the curricula fail to offer students a discourse of mutuality around sexuality. They fail to offer students an alternative to adversarial heterosex, and they neglect to present a version of sexual interactions in which actors are equally powerful, equally respectful, equally desirous, equally entitled, interdependent sexual subjects.

Finally, the curricula are alike in that they all fail to address the privileged irresponsibility that men enjoy around the gendered phenomena of carework and sexual assault prevention. The AOE curricula present teen parenting and sexual assault prevention as issues that women, but not men, are primarily responsible for, while the CSE curricula remain entirely mute on both topics. The failure of both curricula to address men's roles in these highly-gendered phenomena puts women at risk by failing to encourage masculine responsibility around parenting and failing to hold perpetrators responsible for sexualized violence against women, which undermine the Responsible Fatherhood Initiative and the Violence Against Women Act.

If these discourses were not missing from the curricula that are at the center of federally-funded sex education policies, the result would be sex education policies that concomitantly reinforce gender equity and reduce sexual risk. The foundation of these programs would rest on the premise that sexuality is a natural, normatively positive part of human existence. Programs would teach that sexuality carries risk, but it also brings about great joy and pleasure, and curricula would encourage students to develop an

understanding of both. Additionally, sex education programs would teach that all human beings are similar creatures with similar rights and similar needs. Programs would teach that in partnered sex, similar people co-create their sexual experiences based upon their needs, desires, likes and dislikes and they would reinforce the message that everyone is capable of experiencing pleasure and everyone is entitled to knowledge about their bodies. Programs would position all people as responsible for preventing violence and they would teach that victims are never the ones to blame for their own exploitation. Further, curricula would teach that everyone is responsible for the consequences of their actions.

This version of sexuality is not a revolutionary, progressive or perverse -- it is humane. It is equitable. Yet, all of the curricula in this project stop short of teaching a healthy, equitable version of sex. Comprehensive sex education curricula are far less egregious than the stigmatizing, degrading, sexist abstinence-only programs -- especially in terms of what is present within the CSE curricula. However, the biggest gender problems for CSE programs arise when considering what is missing. CSE programs eliminate women's pleasure, women's organs, many forms of contraception, LGBTQQ students and, one of the biggest sexual threats that young women face -- sexual assault. The gender-blind approach of comprehensive sex education, breaks down when considering that CSE programs subtly reproduce dominant discourses of heterosex and ignore the gendered phenomena of sexual assault and teen parenting. In these instances, actors deployed in the curricula are no longer equally powerful and lived experiences are no longer gender neutral. Thus, both the abstinence-only and comprehensive sex education curricula reproduce (at worst) and ignore (at best) disempowering, dangerous

gendered phenomena. Both programs stop short of challenging gender hegemonies that lead to sexual risk for all youth, but that particularly endanger young heterosexual women and LGBTQQ students.

Policy Implications

Bacchi (1999) posits that public policies have two types of effects: practical and discursive. Practical effects aim to measure the "impacts" of a program. Although this is often the focus of evaluation-oriented policy research, and it is the concentration of the TPPI and PREP programs, this is not the primary focus of this project. Rather, I am concerned with the discursive effects of sex education policies, which involves understanding how the images reproduced through the implementation of sex education programs impart knowledge that influences students' sexualities. To be sure, sex education is but one voice in the large, cacophonous choir of information and experiences that constitutes students' sexual subjectivities, and sex education, alone, does not sculpt students' understandings of sex. Yet, students report that sex education is an important source of information for them (Kaiser, 2002), and overwhelming evidence points to the fact that the messages communicated through policies in general (Schneider & Ingram, 2008), and sex education programs in particular (Kirby, 2007; DHHS, 2011), influence students' knowledge, behavior and wellbeing. It is therefore important to understand how sex education programs impart sexuality.

Feminist scholars have long illuminated how dominant constructions of women's sexuality, as passive recipients or responsible gatekeepers, compromises their wellbeing through discouraging their knowledge, assertion and desire and undermining their ability to agentially navigate sexual relationships (e.g. Gavey, 2005, Potts, 2002, Tolman,

2002). Likewise, dominant constructions of heterosex damage LGBTQ students' wellbeing by delegitimizing their sexual and gender identities and justifying violence against them. Furthermore, dominant constructions of heterosex limit heterosexual men's subjectivities by constructing them as barbaric sexual aggressors who are always-already in the mood for sex. This constrains their ability to deny sex they do not want, which places their bodies at risk, and it constrains their ability to express their emotions, which is psychologically damaging and limits their capabilities for carework.

However, while dominant discourses of heterosex *limit* young men, they do not oppress young men in the same manner that they do heterosexual women and LGBTQ students (Frye, 1983). Because heterosexual men enjoy the privileged subject position in hegemonic heterosex, they enjoy power over other groups and therefore have more latitude over their experiences.

Here, I argue that by failing to challenge dominant discourses of heterosex, the sex education programs I examined work to maintain men's dominance and women's subordination in heterosex. They fail to teach a version of sexuality that is normatively positive, which would undermine the existence of rape. They uphold women's missing desire (Fine, 1988), they censor contraception knowledge (even though CSE programs teach about condoms, they silence women-centered contraception options), they fail to dismantle gender difference and they reify adversarial heterosex. Furthermore, they fail to hold men responsible for their activities as, paradoxically, fathers and rapists. This leads to a culture that places women at risk. As Filipovic (2008, p. 25) states:

Sexual assault simply cannot be removed from its broader context, and as long as powerful people continue to promote a worldview that requires women to be second-class citizens - and as long as that view is bolstered by policies that literally subjugate women's bodies and by social codes that render women passive and men aggressive -- women will not be safe.

Currently, roughly \$50 million federal dollars funnel to abstinence-only programs each year, while approximately \$190 million route to comprehensive sex education programs. Federal involvement in sex education at this scale is a relatively new policy priority, as prior to 2000, federal investments in sex education were less than \$60 million annually. As I discussed in Chapter Two, for the first time in history, the U.S. has the potential for a non-dogmatic national sex education policy. The new TPPI and PREP programs mark the first federal foray into sex education that does not stipulate a certain form of sex education, but rather stresses efficacy over values. Yet, as I illustrate in this research, the "evidence-based" efficacy requirement of the TPPI and PREP programs does not make for gender and sex equitable curricula: technicism in the formulation stage of the policy process does not translate into equitable programs in the implementation stage.

U.S. sex education policies could learn from global reproductive health initiatives which often center on "gender integration." In development policy, gender integration "refers to incorporating strategies that promote gender equity at the programmatic level and take gender norms into account to compensate for gender-based inequalities" (IGWG, 2011). It involves considering gender throughout the *entire* cycle of the program process, including assessment, design, implementation and evaluation. Further, gender integration in development policy means "introducing corrective measures to increase equality" (IGWG, 2011) and incorporating strategies that take gender norms into account to compensate for gender-based inequalities. In this light, U.S. programs should take equity as seriously as they take efficacy - if for no other reason than the two issues are mutually reinforcing. A recent review of 25 reproductive health projects that

included a gender equity component showed that programs that incorporated a gender equity perspective resulted in greater family planning use, lower fertility, fewer adolescent pregnancies, greater contraceptive use, greater knowledge of HIV/AIDS prevention, greater condom use, lower STIs, greater knowledge of STI symptoms and greater clinic visits than programs that did not the (IGWG, 2009). Thus, integrating gender equity in U.S. sex education policy may also improve the effectiveness aims of the TPPI and PREP programs.

If U.S. sex education policy integrated gender into the policy framework, it would require Congress to discontinue the Title V State Abstinence Education program. The curricula funded through Title V do not come close to teaching equity or encouraging equality between women and men. However, the programs implemented through the Title V program cannot be reformed to meet these goals because the underlying definition of abstinence-only education (discussed in Chapter Two) precludes gender equity. By requiring silence around contraception, the Title V program necessitates the implementation of curricula that place all young people at risk, but disproportionately burden young women. Additionally, by teaching that marriage is the expected standard for all sexual activity, these programs silence LGBTQQ teens. These kinds of representations of gender and sexuality are in direct violation of Title IX and funding for these programs should be revoked immediately on the grounds that they are limiting and hazardous to all youth, and young women and LGBTQQ students particularly.

Second, policymakers would be required to incorporate equity concerns alongside efficacy in the TPPI and PREP programs. In the same way both the Bush and Obama Administrations commissioned the Mathematica Policy Institute to evaluate programs for

efficacy, federal funding streams should establish a commission of researchers with a gender-based expertise to evaluate programs for equity. This project establishes that an equitable strategy would involve teaching that sex is normatively positive, that women and men are similar beings with similar needs and the same rights, that relationships are normatively mutual, that everyone is responsible for the consequences of their actions, including teen parenting, and that perpetrators, not victims, are responsible for stopping rape. Equitable programs must therefore disrupt the cultural context of privileged male irresponsibility, violence against women and the victimization of LGBTQ people. They must mandate that programs provide students with "comprehensive" sex education information that includes more than condoms, but also includes women-centered contraception and STI prevention options including Plan B emergency contraception, the HPV vaccine and IUDs, abortion and adoption. However, more research is needed in the U.S. to establish what equitable sex education policies look like. This research offers a good start, but others should continue to explore this issue at length and develop programs based on the "best practices" of equitable, effective sex education curricula.

Further, funding agencies should consider "mainstreaming" a gender-conscious perspective into the policy landscape. A common strategy in the global reproductive health community, gender mainstreaming "broadly refers to the process of incorporating a gender perspective into policies, strategies, programs, project activities, all administrative functions, and the institutional culture of an organization (IGWG, 2009). In terms of U.S. policy, this would mean making sure that in sex education policies are aligned with other federal policy goals. Namely, it would ensure that programs are in accordance with Title IX, which recommends that federally funded curricula include

equitable content. Additionally, it would facilitate coalescence between the implementation of sex education policy and the Responsible Fatherhood Initiative, the Violence Against Women Act and federal anti-bullying initiatives.

Additionally, in the interest of both gender equity in sex education and improving the efficacy of federally-funded programs, researchers must continue to address the linkages between the representations of gender and sexuality in curricular contents, the development of students' sexualities and their resultant wellbeing. As I discussed in Chapter One, empirical research demonstrates that students absorb the ideologies expressed in education broadly (Sadker & Sadker, 2005) and sex education in particular (Kirby, 2007; DHHS, 2011). Yet, researchers have not empirically established how (or if) a hidden curriculum of heteronormativity in sex education influences students' sexual development. In the interest of developing effective, equitable policies, it is of vital import that researchers explore this issue further.

Finally, integrating a gender-sensitive perspective into the understanding of sex education policies involves a rethinking of how researchers approach the study of public policies. By focusing on efficacy over all other goals, conventional, evaluation-oriented policy research obscures and dismisses scholarship with gender-based concerns (Marshall, 1997) and ignores the importance of implementation in the policy process (Yanow, 1996). In many ways, the TPPI and PREP programs represent the "ideal type" of policymaking to policy analysts: policymakers discover a problem; analysts identify the most efficacious solution through rigorous research; and Congress funds the solution. Within this model of policymaking, social problems appear as issues that simply "emerge" from the lexicon, analysts appear as value neutral "scientists" and decisions

based upon "what works" rather than "irrational" value interests appear as good policy. However, while this model of policymaking is theoretically appealing, as this research demonstrates, it is deeply problematic when it comes to addressing the deeper processes that shape social issues as well as the discontinuities that arise through the policy process. This discovery/response ideal for policymaking suggests that social problems, (in this case teen pregnancy and STI transmission), are discrete phenomena which require tangible, simple "solutions." But, in this model, the social forces which underlie teen pregnancy and STI transmission -- the gender-based power differentials that exacerbate these problems -- go unnoticed and the anomalies of the implementation process disappear (Pressman & Wildavsky, 1973). As a result, as this research illustrates, federal policies fund programs that "work" in terms of reducing teen pregnancy rates, but they also fund programs that fail to produce equitable curricula for young women and LGBTQQ teens, which may actually undermine their efficacy.

Academic policy analysis often obscures these types of issues because rationalism in the policy process has become the hegemonic ideal. It determines what policy questions are relevant to ask and it dictates the appropriate methods for studying them. This model often (but not always) requires policy researchers to engage in the evaluation stage of the policy process and it demands that they use methods that produce measurable, tangible results. Rooted in epistemological post-positivism, mainstream policy analysis claims ownership over the definition of policy "science," and locates the rationalist policy analysis as the only "neutral," "scientific" approach to the study of public policies. Subsequently, the dominant technocratic policy ideal renders non-post-positivistic policy research that is concerned with policy effects other than outcomes

"non-science," and research such as this becomes disqualified from policy communities.

As Foucault (1980, 131) states:

Each society has its regime of truth, its 'general politics' of truth: that is, the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true; the mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish true and false statements, the means by which each is sanctioned; the techniques and procedures accorded value in the acquisition of truth; the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true.

The rationalist claim to truth is so ingrained that many policy scholars fail to question its validity.

Feminist policy research sometimes falls outside of the post-positive, technocratic policy ideal and it becomes regarded as unscientific "non-truth" in the way that Foucault delineates above. Because feminist projects are frequently concerned with examining and critiquing power, feminist social science engages criticism, embraces methodological plurality, challenges the status quo and, rather than valorizing "objectivity," it questions objective truth claims and incorporates the study of values and subjectivities. Feminist policy analysis values what is missing in public policies in addition to what is there, and in this case, traditional policy analysis cannot incorporate the realm of feminist concerns. As Marshall (1999, p. 69) states, "traditional policy analysis assumptions and methods will not suffice for examining areas of silence, taboo topics, hidden injuries, nonevents, and nondecisions," issues for which feminist are deeply concerned.

Subsequently, the preceding critique of the implementation of the TPPI and PREP programs not only provides evidence for the necessity of rethinking sex education policy so that it incorporates gender equity, but it also provides evidence for the rethinking of the epistemological foundation of conventional policy studies. The TPPI and PREP programs provide a textbook example of post-positivistic, technicist policymaking. In

fact, the TPPI and PREP programs come so close to embodying the technicist ideal that the Brookings Institution recently heralded these two programs as the best evidence-based social policymaking the U.S. has ever seen (Haskins & Baron, 2011). However, as this research demonstrates, post-positivistic evidence of efficacy does not guarantee democratic policy.

I conducted this research with the goal of developing work that helps to dismantle conventional, limited definitions of policy analysis. I advocate a rethinking of policy studies so that research standards do not revolve around value neutrality, but ground in solving social problems *and* enhancing democracy. In the words of Catherine Marshall (1999, p. 69) a re-envisioned policy analysis would "consider whether a policy will empower and democratize, and whether it will dispense goods to the 'have-nots' as much as they consider traditional questions such as whether a policy is efficient."

Although it does not necessarily seek to measure efficacy, critical policy research is not useless for policymakers. Critical, interpretive policy research can uncover the complexities and connections within issues that are obscured by neopositivist policy research, thereby offering policymakers a deeper understanding of the issues and policies at hand so that they may make better informed decisions (Thompson, 2001). This research highlights the complexities and connections between discourses of gender and sexuality, teens' reproductive health and sex education programs -- issues that prior policy analyses, based on the question of "what works?" failed to uncover, and issues that underlie both efficacy and equity concerns. Additionally, critical policy analysis serves to facilitate democratic policymaking by offering detailed policy descriptions of the meanings embedded in public policies, and making taken-for-granted sources of power

transparent to common citizens (Thompson, 2001). In this work, I show how, although programs "work," their implementation reproduces bias, underscores gendered power differentials and therefore undermines women's and LGBTQQ students' wellbeing.

Ball (1995, p. 266) posits that the value of critical policy analysis is that it develops theory and offers a way for thinking outside of conventional policy options. He states:

Theory is a vehicle for 'thinking otherwise'; it is a platform for 'outrageous hypotheses' and for 'unleashing criticism'. Theory is destructive, disruptive and violent. It offers a language for challenge, and modes of thought, other than those articulated for us by dominant others. It provides a language of rigour and irony rather than contingency. The purpose of such theory is to de-familiarise present practices and categories, to make them seem less self-evident and necessary, and to open up spaces for the invention of new forms of experience.

In Ball's terms, this work has created "a vehicle for thinking otherwise" about sex education policy. It offers a way to make sex education more equitable; a way to think beyond the AOE/CSE dichotomy in ways that technicist remedies do not capture and rationalist methods obscure.

Thus, despite the fact that in some ways, the dualistic policy debate is well-placed: comprehensive sex education programs teach about condoms, abstinence-only ones do not; many comprehensive sex education programs work, most abstinence-only programs do not, the dualistic policy discourses and infrastructure around sex education obscure commonalities among the programs - especially in the problematic ways that both types of sex education construct sex, gender, sexuality and masculine responsibility through the implementation process. In the interest of creating equitable, safe educational spaces that are a "location of possibility" (hooks, 1994, p. 207) rather than a location of oppression, I urge policy communities to consider how the contents of the curricula function in federal sex education policymaking. Policy analysts are necessarily

involved in the discursive construction of policy issues, and thus I aim to help discursively shift our understanding of sex education policy so that equity, in addition to efficacy, enters into the policy conversation.

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**Table 1
Characteristics of the Curricula**

AOE Curricula	Publisher	Audience	Setting	Federal Funding, FY06	Efficacy	Notes	Distribution	Availability
Choosing the Best Soul Mate	Choosing the BEST	Grades 11 & 12	School/community	\$1.3 Million CBAE Used by State AE grantees	program has not been evaluated		Curriculum has reached over 2 million students in 19 states	research copy
Me, My World, My Future	Teen-Aid	Low-income, high school aged	School/community	\$800,000 CBAE Used by State AE grantees	program has not been evaluated	In FY 2007, federal funds accounted for almost 100% of Teen Aid's budget	n/a	research copy
WAIT (Why Am I Tempted)	WAIT Training	Junior high - high school	School/community	\$600,000 CBAE Used by State AE grantees	program was found to be ineffective (Kirby, 2007)		Reaches 20,000 students per year	purchased for \$395
CSE Curricula	Publisher	Audience	Setting	Federal Funding, FY11		Notes	Distribution	Availability
Be Proud! Be Responsible!	Select Media	Grades 8-12	School/community	n/a		At the 3-month follow-up: adolescents participating in the intervention reported having significantly fewer female sexual partners and fewer days of vaginal intercourse and vaginal intercourse without a condom (prior 3 months), and were significantly less likely to report having heterosexual anal sex.	n/a	research copy
Draw the Line, Respect the Line	ETR	Middle School Students	Schools	n/a		At 1-, 2- and 3-year follow-ups (from program start): male adolescents participating in the intervention were significantly less likely to report both ever having sexual intercourse and having sexual intercourse during the previous 12 months.	n/a	purchased for \$160
Reducing the Risk	ETR	Grades 9-12	School	n/a		At the 18-month follow-up: female adolescents participating in the intervention who were sexually inexperienced at baseline were significantly less likely to report having had unprotected sex.	n/a	purchased for \$395

Endnotes

ⁱ There are several models of the policy process, which include anywhere from three to eight stages (McCool, 1995). Additionally, there are multiple criticisms of stage-oriented models of the policy process because they are deceptively linear, the categories are too discrete and the process appears more deductive than is actually the case (Sabatier, 2007). Some argue that the conceptual distinction between policy and administration is problematic in and of itself (Harmon, 2008). Here, I discuss the policy cycle merely to highlight the important role that implementation plays in the development of public policies (Lipsky, 2010; Pressman & Wildavsky, 1973; Yanow, 1996).

ⁱⁱ Protected activities include including recruitment, admissions, financial aid/scholarships, facilities and housing, course offerings and access, educational programs and activities, counseling, health insurance benefits and services, marital and parental status, athletics and employment assistance.

ⁱⁱⁱ Existing Federal programs to support gender equity in education include: The Women's Educational Equity Act, The Carl D. Perkins Career & Technical Education Improvement Act of 2006, the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE), USAID Women in Development program, the Millennium Change Corporation, the U.S. Department of Labor Women's Bureau and Job Training program, and the National Science Foundation's gender-based programs. The National Science Federation is currently the largest supporter of gender equity in education, dedicating \$40 million per year to gender equity projects (Nash, et al., 2007).

^{iv} I discuss a content analysis-based study of CSE programs in Chapter Two. For more information see DHHS, 2007.

^v In addition to the Kirby (2007) and National Campaign (2010) studies, the Centers for Disease Control provides an additional source of information on effective sex education programs in its *Compendium of Evidence-Based HIV Prevention Interventions* (2009). The *Compendium* contains a list of the HIV/AIDS prevention interventions with demonstrable behavioral results identified in the scientific literature through June 2009 (DHHS, 2009). The *Compendium* focuses on community-based HIV/AIDS prevention however, and it therefore does not include curricula designed for school-based implementation, making most of the curricula in the *Compendium* ineligible for inclusion in this research (DHHS, 2009). One curriculum that I included in this project, *Be Proud! Be Responsible!*, appears in the *Compendium* because it was designed for both community- and school-based settings.

^{vi} The eight curricula that appeared in both studies included: The Aban Aya Youth Project; Be Proud! Be Responsible; Children's Aid Society Carrera Program; Draw the Line/Respect the Line; It's Your Game...Keep it Real; Positive Prevention; Reducing the Risk; and Safer Choices.

^{vii} One recent study found that a theory-based abstinence-only curriculum delayed sexual initiation among young teens (Jemmott, et al., 2010). However, the curriculum differs substantially from the curricula funded by the three federal abstinence programs. Foremost, it did not teach that abstinence until marriage is the expected standard for human sexual activity; rather, it taught that teens should remain abstinent until they are "ready" to have sex. In addition, it did not teach a "moralistic" message (Jemmott, et al., 2010). Rather, it focused on the relationship between abstinence and disease and pregnancy prevention. This curriculum therefore did not meet the federal A-H definition of abstinence-only education and would not have qualified for funding under any of the three federal abstinence initiatives.

^{viii} Superior Glacier generously scanned all of the curricula for free.