

Exploring international best-practice pornography education

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- Please note that this presentation draws on work led by Maree Crabbe, and a journal article co-authored by Maree Crabbe and Michael Flood and currently under review.

Reminder: Pornography has effects

- Pornography has effects on attitudes and behaviours. (The jury is in.)
- Evidence from:
 - Correlational studies
 - Experimental studies
 - Longitudinal studies
 - Meta-analyses and reviews of these
- (See my summary and overview, Senate submission: <http://www.xyonline.net/content/harms-pornography-exposure-among-children-and-young-people-0>)

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Mediators of pornography's effects

- Four types of factor mediate the impact of exposure of pornography:
 1. The characteristics of the viewer
 - E.g., age, gender, maturation, sexual experience, pre-existing attitudes towards gender and sexuality
 2. The viewer's engagement with the material
 3. The content of the material
 4. The character and context of exposure
 - The duration and intensity of viewing, masturbation, the immediate context (whether voluntary or involuntary, and whether solitary or collective), and the wider cultural context

Will your 12-year-old, porn-using son become a rapist?

- Well, it depends on:
 1. What he brings to his pornography use
 - What are his attitudes towards gender and sexuality like? Is he already oriented towards sexual aggression?
 2. What he makes of the pornography he sees
 - Does he find it realistic? Desirable? Arousing?
 3. The content of the pornography he uses
 - How does it depict sex, bodies, women, men, their interactions, and so on?
 4. How he uses it, in what circumstances, and his wider social and cultural context

Beyond simplistic accounts of effects: the example of sexual violence

- Let's go beyond simplistic, deterministic, behaviourist, accounts.
 - E.g., regarding sexual violence and abuse
- Pornography is one risk factor, among many, for sexual violence perpetration.
- Integrative models: Pornography consumption is one factor, which combines with others, to predict men's sexually aggressive behaviour.
- Pornography increases the risk of sexual violence perpetration for some men much more than others.

Media headlines: Wrong and right

- Wrong:
 - "Porn responsible for massive increase in child sex crimes"
 - "Porn turns boys into rapists"
 - "Early sexualisation of kids blamed for rise in sex attacks"
- Right:
 - "Porn use increases the likelihood that boys will perpetrate sexual abuse"
 - "Porn feeds violence-supportive and objectifying attitudes"
 - "Internet porn contributing to sexual violence"

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Minimising the harms of pornography use

- Strategies:
 - Regulatory: legal & technological
 - Educational
- Education:
 - 'Pornography education', 'Porn literacy', 'Critical porn analysis'
- Pornography education:
 - education that seeks to support young people to critically evaluate and respond to pornography's influence in order to minimise its harms and equip them for relationships and sexuality that are safe, respectful, mutually pleasurable and consenting.

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At the intersections of violence prevention education, sexuality education, and media literacy

- Media literacy: the ability to access, analyse, evaluate, and communicate messages in a wide variety of forms.
 - Typically aim to help young people become informed, active participants in the communication process. E.g.;
 - To be more sceptical of media messages, and to find them less desirable
 - To know more of how media is produced, including its misrepresentations of reality, its 'myths' (e.g. about sex)
 - To look more critically and reflectively at media

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Why locate pornography education in schools?

- Pornography education aligns with existing school priorities
- School-based pornography education can reach broad audiences
 - Parents are important. But they also have constraints as sources of sexuality education.
- Schools can provide high quality pornography education
- Schools are a setting for pornography's impacts
- There is growing support for school-based pornography education

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Best practice in school-based pornography education

- A framework developed by Maree Crabbe, *In the Picture*
- 14 elements:
 1. A whole school approach
 2. A sound conceptual framework
 3. A tailored approach
 4. Based in sexuality education
 5. Builds student competencies
 6. Age-appropriate and sequential delivery
 7. Participatory teaching and learning approaches

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Best practice cont'd

8. A safe, inclusive, supportive learning environment
9. Sensitivity to inequalities of gender, sexuality and race/ethnicity
10. Skilled, well-equipped staff
11. Active engagement of parents as partners
12. Development of community partnerships
13. Support across the school organisation, culture and environment
14. Regular review and evaluation

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Best practice in school-based pornography education

1. A whole school approach
 - An overarching principle for this work
2. A sound conceptual framework
 - A positive approach to sexuality
 - An understanding of and responsiveness to diversity
 - A human rights framework
 - A harm minimisation approach
 - A strengths-based approach
3. A tailored approach

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Best practice in pornography education

4. Based in sexuality education
5. Builds student competencies
 - Analysing social, cultural and societal influences on identity & wellbeing. (Including critical evaluation of pornography and its influence)
 - Communicating and interacting for wellbeing
6. Age-appropriate and sequential delivery
 - Foundational learning: Teach general competencies, without content on pornography
 - Integrated learning: Materials on pornography are part of broader learning activities
 - Specific learning: Focused discussion of pornography

Best practice in school-based pornography education

7. Participatory teaching and learning approaches
8. A safe, inclusive, supportive learning environment
9. Sensitivity to inequalities of gender, sexuality and race/ethnicity
 - Pornography use, attitudes, and impacts are highly gendered.
 - Challenge sexism and gender inequalities
 - Use single-sex and mixed-sex groups in sequence?
 - Address sexualised racism and stereotypes of of same-sex sexualities

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Best practice in pornography education

10. Skilled, well-equipped staff
 - Pornography education should be taught by teachers, as part of a whole school approach
 - Other staff need training and support too
11. Active engagement of parents as partners
12. Development of community partnerships
13. Support across the school organisation, culture and environment
14. Regular evaluation and review

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Pornography education in practice

- Two broad groups of pornography education resources:
 - Programs focused on pornography
 - Materials addressing pornography within other curricula, typically relationships and sexuality education
- Very few existing resources meet the 14 standards of best practice
- But: The program *In the Picture* comes closest

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In The Picture – Resourcing schools to address pornography's influence

- Comprises a framework, guidelines, and a toolkit of curricula and resources
 - Includes resources for educating students, developing policy, equipping staff, developing parent and community partnerships, creating a supportive school context, and evaluation
- Has various strengths:
 - Grounded in a strong conceptual framework
 - Has a very well designed curriculum
 - Practical and thorough
- See <http://www.itstimewetalked.com.au/about-us/reality-risk/>

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Educational appeals or 'hooks' for young men (and young women)?

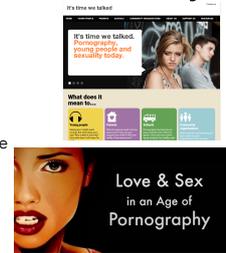
- Porn as unrealistic
- Porn as sexist
- Porn as degrading. Versus respect for girls & women
- Porn as teaching bad sex
- Porn as turning males into bad lovers
- Porn as controlling or influencing them for commercial reasons. Vs being independent and in control (Crabbe 2014: 122-23)

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The broader project: *Reality & Risk: Pornography, young people and sexuality*

- Education resources for young people, schools, community organisations, etc.
 - Website, "It's time we talked"
- Advocacy and training across a range of sectors
- Engagement in public discourse and debate (including two documentary films)
- Input into government curricula



Does pornography education work?

- There is encouraging evidence from impact evaluations of:
 - Violence prevention education (including respectful relationships education)
 - Sexuality education
 - Media literacy programs
- We need robust evaluations of pornography education

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Some dilemmas & challenges

- Engaging young people as agents, while recognising social relations and structural inequalities
- Addressing sexual harm without reinforcing sex negativity
 - We need progressive ethical frameworks that are sex-positive, respectful of sexual diversity, and responsive to sexual abuse and exploitation
 - Let's be anti-sexist, not anti-sex
- Supporting sexual diversity
- Negotiating sexual explicitness e.g. in a school context
- Better and worse pornography?

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Conclusion

- Pornography education is a key strategy with which to minimise the harms of pornography exposure among children and young people.
- To be effective, it must meet standards for best practice.
- More widely, we must strive to build a gender-just and sexually ethical culture.

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Further reading

- The harms of pornography exposure among children and young people (Flood, Senate submission, 2016): <http://www.xyonline.net/content/harms-pornography-exposure-among-children-and-young-people-0>
- Young Men Using Pornography (Flood, book chapter, 2010): <http://www.xyonline.net/content/young-men-using-pornography>
- Bibliographies of key academic works on pornography: <http://www.xyonline.net/content/26-pornography>