



SEXACADEMY



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1.

NEEDFINDING METHODOLOGY

INTERVIEWEES



1 US high school student

Hear perspectives about high school sex ed.



3 international college students

Hear perspectives about college sex ed.



1 Domain Expert

Learn how experts view sex ed for different stakeholders.

THE QUESTIONS WE ASKED

For college students

- **When**, under what circumstances, and about what did they first have **confusions around sex**, relationships and sexual health?
- What is their **journey** learning about this topic? (read book, watch documentary, learned in school)
- **What was missing** when you were learning about sex ed? **What do you wish** you had that you didn't?
- **How** do you manage health, menstruation or obtain reproductive services?
- Do you have access to a doctor for sexual health? **Why**? What role did technology play for your learning process?
- **How does talking about sex feel like** in your household? Is sex a taboo in your house? When did it stop being a taboo? Do you think there can be a way to initiate conversations about sex in your household?
- **What topics** are they concerned about? Under what **circumstances**? **why**? how do they currently go about solving them?
- Was there a time when knowing less about sex ed caused you any harm or difficulties — or do you know anyone who went through something like this? What was it like? How did they deal with it?
- What are some challenges with regards to sexual health that you faced in a **conservative society**?

For domain expert

- What are the main ways/mechanisms of change that your organization provides sex education to children?
- What do you think is the most effective way? Why?
- What do you think is still missing in the sex-ed space?

“There are many human elements involved in sex, such as emotions and relationships with parnters.”

Leo

Chinese international student studying in a French college



“I don't think the need for the human element in Sex Ed can be replaced by technology”

Tasnuva Ashraf Umama

A college student studying Business in Bangladesh



"School is trying to teach kids what to think, not how to think. How to have more pleasurable sex is 'what to think'. Being able to discuss with parents, trade opinions, and open up the minds 'how to think'. The latter is definitely better"

Alexandria Vaughan

US high school student who is homeschooled



“Reproduction is merely a means to an end, but sex - there’s more to it: for example, there’s the emotional and cultural side of it.”

Zeyu Tang

A male student who has an interest in reproductive biology and studies in the UK



“I’d share with students how I wish to have someone who’d teach me this when I was young. And students tend to boo less after I share my story.”

Jiawei Hu

5-year sex ed teacher to 0-14 yr olds and trainer of hundreds of sex ed teachers



SAY

I learned about sex from an encyclopedia so I was not shocked as a child.

My parents did not answer my questions about sperm and ovum.

People do not know how to google right or tell verified answers from opinions.

There is a lack of impact assessment for sex ed.

My closest friends learned about sex from adult groomers when they were minors - tutors, cousins.

When parents don't teach you about sex ed, your first period can be emotional.

Some professionals themselves are sexist or homophobic. Our Facebook group used community reviews to vet against this.

It is hard to get recourse for catcalling. Many just want a platform to shout into and feel lighter.

It is hard to unlearn cultural misconceptions.

When anonymous posts were introduced, their use skyrocketed.

DO

Screenshared online forums about mental health and sex positivity they admin.

Angry when recounting how her middle school friends learned about sex from groomers.

Develops sex ed curriculum for teachers to go through self-paced modules.

For younger students, we use graphic novels and pictures for illustration.

For students in middle school, we do group activities, games, and videos for better learning experiences.

Kids cover their eyes immediately upon seeing sex-related images in sex ed classrooms.

"When there is warmth, confidence and understanding from the teacher, students start to open up"

When he talked about family's roles in sex edu, he had very little to say.

Shared his concerns about not having enough education at the intersection of emotional and sexual topics.

THINK

It is hard to unlearn cultural misconceptions.

Apps cannot change values about sex.

Without conversation and people, you cannot change behavior or preconceptions.

Kids cover their eyes immediately when you mention sex and sexual organs.

People need to learn how to negotiate against intimate partner harassment. Knowledge is half the issue.

Technology is good for only information, NOT for changing cultural norms..

Parents should talk about sex with a child.

Children should not be left alone with adults without supervision.

FEEL

Dissapointed about not having sufficient sex education

Dissapointed that most sex ed information is too scientific

Dissapointed that most sex ed information doesn't provide empathy

Sad that remote learning or scalable learning solutions are still missing.

Felt a sense of urgency and necessity when talking about sex education

Relieved after finding other people had similar experiences

Angry when recounting how her middleschool friends learned about sex from groomeres.

Understanding towards parents inability to talk about sex due to cultural norms.

Unfortunate that almost every teacher doing sex ed is woman, and male sex ed teacher is almost non-existent.

Happy to comfort people with troubling memories.

Skeptical about technology being too isolating for sensitive topics.

Tired at having to physically comfort many people with troubling memories.

2.

NEEDS, INSIGHTS, ANALYSIS

INSIGHT

Individuals lack the language to ask sex-related questions.

NEED

There should be assistance for people to clarify what their confusion is.

“People don’t know how to Google right. They struggle to phrase what they don’t know.”

INSIGHT

People lack the ability to distinguish trustworthy sources from opinions.

NEED

There could be a mechanism to help distinguish trustworthy sources.

“People can’t tell verified answers from opinions.”

“I do not like Quora discussion threads because anyone can answer. Reddit’s verified Ask A Doctor threads makes me trust them more.”

INSIGHT

Protection from shame reduces barriers to ask questions.

NEED

Protection from social shaming regarding sex related topics.

“When we introduced anonymous posts, it skyrocketed. However, people used it for basic questions that perhaps could be asked otherwise too. The shame around learning about sex was too great.”

“It was cool to be taught by parents because there was actually a relationship between me and my parents to talk to them about it. I can actually talk to my parents about that addiction and ask them to help me take myself off.”

INSIGHT

Sex is not just physical or biological to people, and they need more than just scientific information. People often need affirmation and listening so that their experiences and feelings are affirmed.

NEED

It is paramount to have human elements (such as enable rapport, trust building and allowing people to be heard).

“There are many humane things involved in a sexual relationship, such as interactions with your partner...I need to talk to a real person (about my questions on sex).”

“It is hard to get recourse for catcalling. Many just want a platform to shout into and feel lighter.”

“More than knowledge, people need the skills to negotiate against intimate partner harassment.”

INSIGHT

Curiosities, confusions and peripheral learnings of sex happen at early ages (primary school).

NEED

It's important to make sex ed accessible early on.

“I started learning about sex when I was in my 5 or 6 grade of primary school - from looking at pop-up porn windows when browsing the Internet.”

“Kids in upper primary / lower middle school would have started to watch porn or share pornographic media. They encounter sex related information at a young age, and often were misguided.”

INSIGHT

People have difficulty understanding unfamiliar topics in sex, and stories and analogies can help them better understand them.

NEED

Stories / analogies to understand unfamiliar topics.

“I think my college provides effective sex education. For example, we watched a video which conveys the idea of consent using the analogy of making & drinking a cup of tea.”

SUMMARY

What we know

- Start early
- Human, trust and rapport building
- Affirmation
- Importance of analogies and storytelling
- Personalized (age, methodologies, question spaces, cultural background)

Next steps

- Define our target user (age, teacher/student/parent).
- Finding out what are humans uniquely suited for in sex ed.



QUESTIONS?





APPENDIX



OTHER EMPATHY MAPS

More detailed ones we can't include in presentations

EMPATHY MAP (PARTICIPANT #2) - SAY

- Learning about sex is a gradual process, I've never learned anything in a systematic way.
- My sex education began in primary school, from pop up windows on webpages.
- In middle school, we learned about the biology of male and female bodies, but we didn't really learn much about healthy sexual relationships or contraception.
- There was a gap of sex education in high school, which is probably because the Chinese education system assumes that students won't have underage sex.
- I got sex ed in college orientation, but it's mostly about sexual harrassment.
- When I have a question about sex, I use two methods: one is search engines, and the other is medical service apps (eg: Dingxiang Doctor).
- I prefer to have sex ed in private. It could also be fun to learn with a group of people.

EMPATHY MAP (PARTICIPANT #2) -DO

- Shared a story about a friend who was pressured into having a risky sexual intercourse with a stranger.
- Shared his concerns about not having enough education at the intersection of emotional and sexual topics.
- Talked about his reasoning of why there was a gap of sex education in high schools - China teaches sex as a means of reproduction, and thus it only talks about the biological mechanism between the sperm and the egg.

EMPATHY MAP (PARTICIPANT #2) -THINK

- Most of the public content is based on heterosexual relationship. It would be **good to cover homosexuality and other sexual orientations**.
- For younger kids, the best time to give sex ed is when when they start having sexual desire and are curious about topics like masturbation.
- People naturally search things. So a good tool would be an inclusive, credible search engine for sex ed.
- The search tool should have contents that are tailored to the user's specific needs and will **empathize** with the user, like a **mentor**.
- What's missing is **information about how to conduct safe sex**. There are many humane things involved in a sexual relationship, such as **interactions with your partner**.
- Some dating apps provide info about contraception, but they are not very sufficient or credible.

EMPATHY MAP (PARTICIPANT #2) - FEEL

- Worried when talking about his friend engaging in risky sexual behavior.
- Dissapointed about not having sufficient sex education and having to figure out most things on his own.
- Felt a sense of urgency and necessity when talking about sex education in China.
- “He could have accessed some information beforehand, such as he shouldn’t be pressured by ‘norms’, and to have have his own pace in a sexual intercourse”
- Want to have a more personalized tool.
- “I want to feel like the app also provides a section where I can talk to a real person, like a counselor.”
- Dissapointed that most sex ed information are too scientific and don’t show empathy.

EMPATHY MAP (PARTICIPANT # 5)

Say

- "I believe my parents' approach to sex ed is more beneficial to learning compared to the intake of social media or media in general (having that sexual aspects) could be a negative impacts on today's generation"
- "The school should only teach the biological aspect, and leave the relationship aspects to parents."
- "It was cool to be taught by parents because there was actually a relationship between me and my parents to talk to them about it. I can actually talk to my parents about that addiction and ask them to help me take myself off."

Think

- Sex has biological, emotional, social, and religious aspects.
- Schools should only teach the biological aspect.
- Talking to her parents about her confusions (such as addiction to porn) is a good way to resolve them.

Do

- Shared stories of how she reacts to unwanted sexual advances in summer.
- Shared topics she discusses with friends (positions, oral sex).
- Shared her experience being once addicted to porns, and how she solved that problem with her parents.

Feel

- Worried when thinking about how her younger sister's innocence might be impaired if she came across porns.
- Happy and proud about being able to learn about sex from her parents.
- Objections against kindergartens teaching kids sex and giving them vibrators.

EMPATHY MAP (PARTICIPANT # 1861)

Say

- See next slide for details

Do

- Screenshared online forums about mental health and sex positivity they admin.

Think

- Thinks technology is only good for information but not for changing mindsets.
- Parents should talk about sex with a child.
- Anonymity can make it hard to beat the taboo of discussing sex openly.
- For medical matters, professional voices should be louder
- It is important to teach adolescents how to say no.
- Children should not be left alone with adults without supervision.

Feel

- Angry when recounting how her middle school friends learn about sex from groomers.
- Fearful about naming and shaming in her online forums.
- Understanding towards parents inability to talk about sex due to cultural norms.
- Happy but tired at having to physically comfort many people with troubling memories.
- Skeptical about technology being too isolating for sensitive topics.

EMPATHY MAP (PARTICIPANT # 1861) - SAY

- I felt curious but not shocked because I read about sex from an encyclopedia.
- My parents did not answer my questions about sperm and ovum.
- People do not know how to google right or tell verified answers from opinions.
- I do not like Quora discussion threads because anyone can answer. Reddit's verified Ask A Doctor threads makes me trust them more.
- My closest friends learned about sex from adult groomers when they were minors — tutors, cousins etc.
- It is hard to unlearn cultural misconceptions.
- I don't think an app can change values about sex. You need people and conversations for that.
- More than knowledge, people need the skills to negotiate against intimate partner harassment.
- When parents don't teach you about sex ed, your first period can be emotionally draining.
- When we introduced anonymous posts, it skyrocketed. However, people used it for basic questions that perhaps could be asked otherwise too. The shame around learning about sex was too great.
- Some professionals themselves are sexist or homophobic. Our Facebook group vetted against that by reviews in comments.
- It is hard to get recourse for cat calling. Many just wanted a platform to shout into and feel lighter.

EMPATHY MAP (PARTICIPANT YUZE TANG)

Say

"I couldn't help wondering about it (why did this feeling (sexual arousal) begin? Why did I have ejaculation?) and had dreams sometimes."

"I learned more about sex (in the biological sense) when I developed deeper interests in biology and learned more about reproduction"

"Reproduction is merely a means to an end, but sex - there's more to it: for example, there's the cultural side of it."

Think

He thinks the sex edu system in some areas of China provides sufficient knowledge but not in other areas

He thinks sex is more than reproduction

He thinks his college provides effective sex edu

He thinks his college (Imperial College London in the UK) has a very different approach to sex edu from what he received in China

Do

He was a bit hesitant to talk about the first time when he had confusions about sex

When he talked about family's roles in sex edu, he had very little to say

He smiled and laughed a little when he talked about sex edu in his college (one [video](#) conveys the idea of consent thru making/drinking a cup of tea))

Feel

He felt nervous/confused when he first had sexual arousal bc he wasn't sure if that was normal
He felt relieved after searching on the internet and found other people had similar experiences

EMPATHY MAP (PARTICIPANT # 1 - DOMAIN EXPERT JIAWEI HU)

Say

- "When booed by the students, I tried to look calm and poised, say it's ok that you guys have doubts about talking about sex, but it is completely normal and beneficial to talk about it."
- "I'd share with students how I wish to have someone who'd teach me this when I was young. And students tend to boo less after I share my story."
- "Kids in upper primary / lower middle school would have started to watch porn or share pornographic media. **Older kids are not necessarily better mentors** because the information they know might be misleading".
- "We really want to **scale** our teaching, but find it **resource constraints** to do so."
- "After fourth or fifth times teaching the kids, they started trusting me more and come with their loads of questions."

Think

- **Differential methodologies** of presentation suit different groups.
- **Impact assessment** for sex ed is needed for scaling sex education adoption. Parents and schools need to know what the specific impact is for them to want to give this to their kids.
- **Openness about sex is important** for effective teaching.
- **Building rapport and trust** with students is paramount to merely passing down information.

Do

- Kids **cover their eyes** immediately upon seeing sex-related images in sex ed classrooms.
- **Teaching methods:** "for students in younger ages, we use graphic novels and pictures for illustration. For students in middle school, we do group activities, games, and combine them with videos for better learning experiences".
- **Develops sex ed curriculum** for teachers to go through **self-paced modules**. The training contents are paired with **assessments** of the teacher's **learning outcomes**.

Feel

- **Awkward** in sex ed classroom as a teacher when doubted by the students why such "shameful" topics are discussed.
- **Sad** that remote learning or scalable learning solutions are still missing.
- **Unfortunate** that almost every teacher doing sex ed is woman, and male sex ed teacher is almost non-existent.

INSIGHT

Some topics that surfaced across most interviews are: intimate relationship, saying no, normalizing biological experiences (periods, masturbation, etc).

NEED

It's helpful to give information on those topics.