

**What Do Filipino Gay Male College Students Want to Learn in Sex Education?**

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## **Abstract**

Using a learner-centered, mixed qualitative-quantitative approach, we explored the needs, experiences, and contexts of sexuality education of Filipino gay and bisexual male college students. A convenience sample of 121 self-identified gay/bisexual male Filipino college students answered a structured questionnaire asking them to rate 44 possible topics they would like to be discussed in a classroom-based college human sexuality class. Topics most wanted by gay/bisexual learners were sexual identity and orientation, love, body image, HIV/AIDS, gender roles, and friendship. Survey findings are grounded in the context of learners' experiences of sexuality education which we explored using a focus group with seven selected Filipino gay students. 219 suggestions made by respondents for improving sexuality education are also analyzed and presented as well as recommendations for further research.

## **What Do Filipino Gay Male College Students Want to Learn in Sex Education?**

Sexuality education has been defined as the “lifelong process of acquiring information and forming attitudes, beliefs, and values about identity, relationships, and intimacy” (National Guidelines Task Force, 1996). Sexuality education is not limited to discussions of sexual behavior, though both solitary and shared sexual behavior are important topics in the study of human sexuality. While experts may disagree on exact definitions of sexuality, most take the position that it is integral to the totality of each person and each culture, encompassing psychological, biological, cultural, political, historical, spiritual, and ethical dimensions (Bruess & Greenberg, 1996; Carroll & Wolpe, 1996). Human sexuality weaves together many domains, including sexual development, sexual health, gender and sexual identities, interpersonal relationships, body image, and gender roles.

Despite the seeming importance of sexuality and systematically educating people, especially children and young people, about sexuality-related matters, sexuality education remains an area of neglect and controversy (Allgeier & Allgeier, 1998; Carroll & Wolpe, 1996). Research on Filipino young adult sexuality has been explicit in stressing the need for a comprehensive educational framework that addresses gender and sexuality issues. One recommendation of the 1994 Young Adult Fertility and Sexuality Survey (YAFS-2), an oft-cited nationwide demographic survey of 10,878 young Filipinos conducted by the University of the Philippines Population Institute, was to establish school curricula that integrate sexuality and health information while being attentive to the needs of young Filipino women and men (Raymundo, 1999). According to the YAFS-II researchers, Filipino adolescents are “generally interested to learn about their sexuality and about intimate relationships” (p. 111).

Practitioners and theorists agree that effective sexuality education is that which is honest, realistic, and based on the needs of learners (Bruess & Greenberg, 1996). Because learning about sexuality occurs very early with the onset of gender socialization and extends across the lifespan (Allgeier & Allgeier, 1998), sexuality educators have to make sure the services they deliver are appropriate to learners' developmental levels and other characteristics.

These characteristics, according to qualitative research on young Filipino sexuality by Tan, Ujano-Batangan, and Cabado-Española (2001), include gender, age, class, and other specific variables such as being married, being a migrant, and being gay/lesbian.

Specifically, they argue that:

On the surface, homosexuality seems to be tolerated [in Filipino society] but our research shows that there is strong resentment of and discrimination against gay men and lesbians. Young gay men are particularly at risk because they are used sexually. There are few attempts to reach this population with information and education (p.116).

*Filipino gay/bi youth: Neglected learners?*

Young people who are gay, lesbian, or bisexual tend to be unseen and unheard across many domains, including education and research. This "invisibility" may be due to a number of factors, one of which is developmental: lesbian, gay male, and bisexual adolescents do exist, but few at that age self-identify as such. Savin-Williams (1995) reviewed more than a dozen studies on adolescent sexuality and found that many lesbian, gay and bisexual youth report same-sex attractions and behavior, but rarely recognize and

express their identity: “Relatively few adolescents who report same-sex attractions, fantasies, or activities acknowledge that they are gay, lesbian, or bisexual” (p.168).

Figures on Filipino gay youth are hard to come by, if they do exist. Findings from the 1994 YAFS-2, for example, show that 5.5% of sexually active Filipino male youth report having engaged in sex with other men (Balk, Domingo, Cruz, and Brown, 1999). Whether this is actually a conservative estimate or an inflated one (since male-male sex is not limited only to gay and bisexual men) is unclear. Also, given the high rate of non-response to this survey question (8.8% declined to answer), the 5.5% statistic seems extremely problematic.

More recent data from the 2002 YAFS-3 (Silverio, 2004) indicate that 1.3% of Filipino male youth report having had attractions to other males, while 14.9% of sexually active young Filipino men have had sex with another male. In addition, 2% of single Filipino men have gone “steady” with another man. Still the exact proportions of Filipino gay/bisexual youth in the general population seem unclear.

Nevertheless, psychologists, educators, and other social scientists agree that young gay people have specific needs that are often overlooked in the classroom (Besner & Spungin, 1995; Savin-Williams, 1995). Gay students deal with issues like growing up gay in a heterosexual world, lack of role models and social supports, prejudice, and discrimination while dealing with adolescent issues like other, non-gay students (Wilson, 1999).

### *Heterosexism: Denial and Denigration*

Another reason why gay/bi students may be hidden as learners is educators, students, and educational systems simply assume they do not exist. This belief and practice has been termed *heterosexism*, the ideology and view that heterosexuality is the fundamental

form of human sexuality and that it is good, natural, and normal (GLSEN, 2002).

Heterosexism can exist at the level of individuals (often called “homophobia”), of groups, and of institutions, including schools.

Heterosexist educational practice has been operationalized as occurring either as (1) denigration, including overt discrimination, anti-gay remarks, and other forms of explicit homophobia against gay and lesbian students and teachers, or (2) denial, the presumption that gay and lesbian sexualities and identities simply do not exist and that heterosexual concerns are the only issues worth discussing.

One illustrative study of heterosexism in the classroom, specifically the sexuality education classroom, was conducted in Scotland by Katie Buston and Graham Hart (2001). Based on systematic observations of 60 actual classroom sessions across 23 different schools, they found many instances of both denigration (including teasing boys about being gay, informing students that being gay was a disorder, and equating being gay with pedophilia) and denial of gay and lesbian experiences (such as defining sex as vaginal intercourse and talking exclusively about sexual relationships as being between females and males). This study is particularly notable because they were able to document clear instances of heterosexism in both forms, even though this was not the primary aim of their evaluation efforts.

Local empirical findings from a qualitative study on Filipino adolescents’ identity, sexuality, and health by Gastardo-Conaco, Jimenez, and Billedo (2003) similarly point to the difficulty young gay and lesbian Filipinos face in obtaining accurate, reliable, and meaningful information from sexuality education classes. Using focus groups and key informant interviews, a number of which were conducted with Filipino gay men, they found out that sex education classes were directed exclusively toward heterosexual students: “Gay

respondents complained about the heterosexual perspective or bias in these classes and lamented the lack of accurate information regarding homosexuality as well as of appropriate role models and scripts" (p. 99). This points to heterosexist modes of sexuality education, which discriminates against gay, lesbian, and bisexual students and is a disservice to other students as well, who also deserve accurate and reliable information about sexual diversity.

Bias against gay/bi students may also be found in the materials used in sex education. For example, one recently published book on sex education for Filipino college students (Fontanilla, 2003) features a chapter entitled "Homosexuality and Other Sexual Deviations" in which being gay was categorized together with prostitution, pedophilia, incest, and rape as forms of sexual deviance. Bisexuality is mentioned nowhere in the book, and the only other time gay/lesbian sexuality is referred to in the book is in the module titled "Common Sexual Myths and Fallacies" in which readers are reassured that oral-genital sex is "normal" for heterosexuals and is not a sign of "homosexual tendencies" (p.68).

*Learner-centered approach to education: Placing gay/bi students in the center*

Adopting a learner-centered approach to sexuality education may provide one possible means to address the problem of heterosexist educational practice while serving the needs of gay and bisexual students. Learner-centered education seeks to place the student at the center of the education process, thereby empowering students and responding to their concerns (AZ Learner Centered Education Project, 2003). Learner-centered sexuality education, with its participatory philosophy, has been touted by educators as an effective and meaningful means to promoting sexual health and responsible sexual decision-making among adolescents (Rudrauff, 1999). Such a program begins with a systematic, learner-

centered assessment of the social, educational, and psychological contexts from which students are coming, students like young Filipino gay men.

### **Problem**

What do young Filipino gay men, then, want to learn in college-based sexuality education? The objective of our study was to explore the sexuality education needs of young Filipino gay men using a learner-centered approach. That is, instead of focusing on institutions or educators, we wanted to hear what young Filipino gay men in college want to learn in sexuality education – according to young Filipino gay men themselves. Specifically, our study aimed to identify particular domains of knowledge related to sexuality Filipino gay male students would like to see included in sexuality education. In addition to this main goal, we also expected to explore basic information on the formal sexuality education experiences of Filipino gay youth, their views and feelings about these, and their ideas about how to improve sexuality education.

### **Methods**

#### *Design*

Our study was built upon a combined qualitative-quantitative design using two strategies. First, a focus group discussion was conducted with selected Filipino gay male

college students to explore initial themes and insights into experiences of sexuality education as well as to provide a contextual basis for more structured data from our second method, a questionnaire-based survey. To reach a wider sample of Filipino gay and bisexual college students, we conducted questionnaire research to tap into the specific topics that they want to learn as well as to cull any suggestions they have for improving sexuality education.

#### *Focus group*

Participants. We invited nine participants, identified using personal social networks, to our focus group, seven of whom were able to join the discussion. All seven participants were currently enrolled, self-identified gay male students from three universities in Metro Manila, with a mean age of 21 years old. Participants' profiles are presented in Appendix B.

Procedure. The focus group was conducted on September 27, 2003 at a private office, with Eric Manalastas as the facilitator and Raymond Macapagal as note-taker/observer. Using a two-page discussion guide (Appendix A), the group delved into personal experiences of sex education, in and outside the classroom, ideas for change and improvement, and topics and approaches that could be incorporated in sexuality education. The discussion was tape-recorded with participants' consent and lasted a little over three hours, with good participation and animated exchange of ideas, counter-views, and even humor. Participants were thanked and presented tokens after the discussion, and a verbatim transcription of the focus group was used for data analysis.

#### *Survey*

Participants. One hundred twenty-one Filipino gay/bisexual male college students (mean age = 19.36, SD = 2.36) answered our questionnaire. This convenience sample, recruited using various social networks, was composed of students currently enrolled at

various institutions, both private and public, in and around Metro Manila. Most were Catholic ( $N = 98$ , or 81%), along with other Christian denominations, Islam, and agnosticism/atheism ( $N = 21$ , or 17%); two respondents did not specify their religious background. Most self-classified themselves as coming from middle-income level backgrounds ( $N = 74$ , or 61%), twenty-five as middle-high or high, nineteen as low or low-middle, and three with no response. About half of the respondents (52%) considered themselves “gay” ( $N = 63$ ), one-fifth as “bisexual” ( $N = 26$ ), and others as “discreet” ( $N = 22$ ), “transgender” ( $N = 2$ ), and various responses ( $N = 8$ ) like “confused.”

Questionnaire. For our self-administered questionnaire asking what learners would like to learn in sexuality education, we developed a list of 44 different topics for a college classroom-based sexuality education class. This list, presented in Appendix F, was based on three overlapping sources.

First, we consulted the list of topics in the second edition of the *Guidelines for Comprehensive Sexuality Education*, published in 1996 by the Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States (SIECUS). These 37 topics (see Appendix C) form a topical outline and overall framework for comprehensive sexuality education, which has been adapted and used in various cultures such as Brazil, Nigeria, Russia, the Czech Republic, Iceland, and the US. The topics are organized into six key content categories: Human Development, Relationships, Personal Skills, Sexual Behavior, Sexual Health, and Society and Culture.

Second, we examined the list of topics that emerged from our focus group, cross-referencing them with the SIECUS list. All 23 focus group-derived topics (see Appendix D) were judged to be adequately included or accounted for by the longer SIECUS listing, with an overlap with the latter by 59.4%. In addition, in line with observations made by focus

group participants that sexuality education is often centered on reproduction and other primarily heterosexual experiences thus rendering lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender issues invisible, we made a number of modifications to the combined listing, to “decenter” heterosexuality and increase the inclusion of LGBT concerns. Specifically, the topic of “Reproductive Anatomy and Physiology” was changed to “Sexual Anatomy and Physiology,” “Contraception” to “Contraception/Protection,” and “Reproductive Health” to “Sexual Well-Being.” Also, we decomposed the original topic “Sexually Transmitted Diseases including HIV Infection” into two separate topics: “HIV/AIDS” and “Other Sexually Transmitted Diseases” to see whether the two issues would be similarly judged or not. We also decided to highlight the “sexuality” of the topics by including the term “Sexual” to items that might have otherwise been interpreted as generalized, such as “Values” and “Communication.” This combined list was composed of 38 topics informed by both the SIECUS guidelines and our focus group.

Finally, we cross-referenced the combined list with the table of contents of a standard college human sexuality textbook *Sexuality and Gender in Society* (by Janell L. Carroll and Paul Root Wolpe, 1996). This text contains a total of 21 chapters (see Appendix E), reflecting topics that may be taken up in an introductory course to human sexuality at the undergraduate level. The combined list was judged to have good overlap with the chapter headings (15 out of the 21 chapters) and was augmented with six additional topics from the textbook (“Sex Research,” “Sex in Other Times and Places,” “Sex Education,” “Prostitution,” “Drugs and Sexuality,” and “Sexual Humor”).

We presented all 44 topics in the final questionnaire and asked respondents to rate how much they wanted to learn about each in a college sexuality education class using 5-point Likert scales with anchors of 0 = “Do not want to learn at all” and 4 = “Want to learn

very much.” To increase comprehension and comparability of items, we followed the procedure used by Lindley and Reininger (2001) in their study of voters’ support for the inclusion of various sexuality topics into the public school curriculum. For each topic, we developed short definitions to maximize comprehension and inter-respondent comparability. Final topics and their definitions are presented in Appendix F. Internal consistency reliability for this 44-item measure was high, with a Cronbach’s  $\alpha = 0.96$ .

In addition to the quantitative scores, respondents were given an opportunity to provide comments or remarks regarding each topic to explain their ratings. Also we asked learners to list up to three suggestions on how to make sexuality education more responsive to the needs of Filipino gay and bisexual students.

Pilot-testing. The questionnaire was pilot-tested with one gay male college student and one bisexual male college student, both from a public university in Metro Manila. Pilot test respondents found the instrument readable and comprehensible, if a bit lengthy, with good face validity.

Procedure. In order to reach Filipino gay/bisexual learners in college, we tapped into various personal and professional social networks, including students we knew personally to be gay or bisexual (openly or otherwise), gay faculty members from other schools who had access to gay/bisexual students, and heterosexual students and teachers who had similar contacts, creating a snowball convenience sample.

Respondents were given the self-administered questionnaires, in some cases to be taken home given the lengthy nature of the forms. For instances where we were able to personally supervise respondents fill out the questionnaire, it took about half an hour to accomplish. Tokens for participation were presented upon submission of questionnaires.

*Ethical considerations*

All names, identifiers, and personal information from both focus group and surveys were kept confidential, to safeguard participants' privacy. The focus group was conducted in a private location and participants were asked to respect everyone's right to privacy by keeping details of the discussion confidential. Focus group participants were informed as to the nature of the discussion and were asked for consent to tape-record, for purposes of transcription. Survey participants were informed, in the questionnaire cover letter, the nature of the research, including the requirement that they had to be gay/bisexual/etc. to join the study. Confidentiality was repeatedly assured, participation in the focus group and survey was voluntary, and researchers' contact information was provided for those who had any questions or other comments. Feedback about the findings of the study was also provided to a number of participants who signified interest in the results of their participation as well as in the project in general.

**Results and Discussion**

The following section is organized into three subsections. The first explores some themes and experiences of sexuality education of Filipino gay learners, based on our focus group. The second is a presentation of the topics Filipino gay students want to learn, according to our quantitative survey. And the third lists suggestions Filipino gay learners have for sexuality education.

*Contextualizing Filipino Gay Student Experiences*

According to our focus group participants, young Filipino gay students in high school may learn about topics related to gender and sexuality in subjects like religion (including masturbation, abortion, gay sexuality, and reproduction), biology (STDs, reproduction, pregnancy, childbirth, contraception), and even homeroom.

There appears to be at least two approaches used by educators in teaching students about gender/sexuality. One is a neutral, facts-ridden, and seemingly “objective” approach that does not advocate any particular moral or political position. For example, for the topic of contraception, one participant related how it was approached in his biology class in high school, a science high school outside Metro Manila:

**PJ:** They're just like putting the information to you na parang, This is it, ito 'yung types of alternatives kung ayaw n'yong magka-baby. Mga ganoon. 'Yun lang 'yung dini-discuss namin.

**SR:** So walang stand?

**SJ:** Biology eh.

**PJ:** Mine-memorize lang namin kung ano 'yung mga ganyan.

**Facilitator:** So very factual. Lots of facts.

**PJ:** Oo.

**Facilitator:** Did they take any particular position?

**PJ:** Wala, 'yun lang. Sinasabi lang yung ganon. And then you just have to fathom everything for the examination week.

The other approach, more popular in Catholic high schools was a moralistic and proscriptive approach. Informed by Catholic sexual morality, this approach is basically sex-negative and places much emphasis on reproduction as the only legitimate justification for sexual behavior:

**SJ:** It's bad daw to masturbate.

**Facilitator:** Pati masturbation is bad?

**SJ:** Tapos I remember pinag-usapan namin about blowjobs. A married couple, tapos parang it's okay for the girl to give the guy a blowjob.

**JM:** Pero not just for the sake of oral sex itself.

**SJ:** Oo.

**JM:** Kasi nasasayang... What would be more acceptable would be to have sex na parang gusto mo magkaroon ng baby all the time.

**Facilitator:** For reproduction?

**JM:** Kasi there's something wrong [daw] if you want to have sex just for the sake of having sex.

This reproduction discourse, which privileges sex that results in pregnancy (i.e., penile-vaginal sex), also translates to standpoints on gay sexuality, which is after all by definition non-reproductive. When asked how the topic of being gay was discussed within this approach, the love-the-sinner/hate-the-sin discourse emerged:

**Facilitator:** What do they say about being gay?

**JM:** Na it's okay as long as you don't have sex.

**BR:** That's the stand of the Vatican.

**PJ:** Na-brought up lang siya as a sin.

**Facilitator:** It wasn't ever discussed?

**PJ:** Never discussed.

**BR:** In short it's like God loves the homosexual but condemns the homosexual act... You let the dog be a dog, but you don't allow him to bark. Pwede kang gay, pero bawal makipag-relationship or makipag-sex.

This idea of accepting gay persons but prohibiting sexual relationships and intimacies had at least one participant bothered:

**Facilitator:** So it didn't affect you at all?

**BR:** For me I had to rationalize things. Kasi parang first year, I was very open about my sexuality na bakla ako. So faced with these issues I had to rationalize na, 'yan 'yung sinasabi nila sa akin na God loves the homosexual but condemns the homosexual act. And then you try to think more about it. Parang, paano 'yun? You cannot..

**Facilitator:** Reconcile

**BR:** Hindi mo mahihwalay yung isang tao sa mga ginagawa niya.

When faced with such messages, a number of strategies could be employed to make personal sense of them. One is to disregard the information, along with judging the presented views as not applicable to the self, especially if the topic concerns sex vis-à-vis marriage:

**Facilitator:** How did you feel about those sort of messages?

**SR:** Pasok sa isang tenga, labas sa kabila [*laughter from all*]

**BR:** We're not concerned. We're gays! [*laughter from all*]

Notable too is the use of humor in the construction of such experiences, suggesting that the maintenance of a campy outlook in the face of what could otherwise be disheartening and restricting messages about sexuality helps gay students sail through such storms.

Other potential strategies for coping with less than ideal sex education are selecting and sifting through the messages for what may be applicable to the self, or simply appropriating the information to fit one's gay experiences:

**SR:** Kailangang i-process kasi 'yung information na dumarating sa amin, kailangan i-modify to fit our own lifestyle.

**Facilitator:** And how easy was it to modify?

**SR:** We learned by ourselves.

Social support was also an important resource for dealing with such messages. Friends, particularly gay friends, could be talked to. Guidance counselors at school were also potential supportive listeners for some, although others were wary.

**PJ:** I never talked to my guidance counselor

**Facilitator:** You never talked to your guidance counselor. Why not?

**PJ:** Kasi 'yung connotation ng guidance counselor parang, hala ka, iga-guidance ka! Kasi 'pag nag-aaway, pinapapunta sa guidance counselor. 'Yun 'yung image namin. Natatakot kami agad.

**TJ:** You have to be discreet when you talk to your guidance counselor about being gay or else.

**Facilitator:** Or else?

**TJ:** You get discriminated against for being gay. In my experience, my parents were called about my being gay... Let's put it in the right context. I was suspended kasi.

**Facilitator:** Okay. Pero how did that factor in, about being gay?

**TJ:** Parang pinasok lang. Parang, "You should observe your son more kasi kakaiba sya!"

Overall, gay learners expressed dissatisfaction about sexuality education in high school, both for its heterosexist bias and its restrictive philosophy.

**Facilitator:** How happy are you with what happened?

**SJ:** It's one-sided.

**Facilitator:** One-sided. To what side?

**SJ:** Heterosexual. Walang talk about anything else. Parang walang pwedeng mangyari. Nothing else happens. Parang, "sorry!" di ba? Parang wala kang alam.

**JM:** Sex education in high school fails the individual.

**Facilitator:** It fails the individual.

**JM:** Not just, I mean, I recognize na it's a valid concern na puro heterosexual issues, but on an individual level, it could also fail the person. Kasi 'yung nakuha namin, it was taught in a very moral way. So as an individual, nawawalan ka ng choice for protection, for sexual health. That's a very major concern also.

**Facilitator:** So it's not just about gay students in particular but about being a student. Or a sexual being.

**JM:** Exactly.

Classroom-based sexuality education in high school, according to gay learners, could be either lifeless and objective, or moralistic and prohibitive. Focus was on particular issues like reproduction, abortion, STDs, and masturbation, without much talk on other concerns, least of all concerns specific to adolescents developing gay and bisexual identities.

Similarly, sexuality education in college, it seems, comes in snatches, with topics related to gender and sexuality being discussed tangentially in various subjects like psychology, biology, creative writing, ethics, and education. Gay/bisexual identities and sexualities were touched upon in social science, psychology, theology (as a counterpoint to

heterosexual marriage), medicine, and law. Again, it appears that this spotty classroom-based sexuality education takes a backseat to other sources of sexuality information. It was pointed out in our focus group discussion that college represented such an opportune time to discuss and tackle sexuality in a dialogical, complex manner, given the relative maturity and greater openness of students compared to high school, suggesting that learners' developmental contexts play a crucial role in the design and implementation of sexuality education. Unfortunately, it appears that, from the point of view of gay students, this opportunity is seldom, if at all, taken advantage of.

How can sexuality be learned by Filipino gay men then, if not from classroom-based experiences? Knowledge, according to our focus group discussion, could be from direct personal experience, from lovers and sexual partners, and from observation of other people, including family members. Another important source of information is peers. Peers provide sexual knowledge with each other, knowledge that is "real" and perhaps more compelling than what is heard inside the classroom. And not merely transfer of information by actual sharing of experiences. When the discussion turned to experiences of watching porn with classmates, it was remarked:

**SJ:** Ako never ko 'yun nagawa pero alam ko, kasi siyempre 'yung mga kaklase ko, 'di ba, they would talk about it. Tapos feeling ko nga mas na-educate sila nang sila-sila lang. Kasi 'di ba, parang sharing ng experiences. Tapos I remember they would go out. Alam n'yo ba 'yung Happy? Happy 'yung pangalan ng place.

**SR:** Happy Sauna.

**SJ:** 'Yon. 'Dun sila nagpupunta. Tapos nagtatawanan sila after.

**Facilitator:** This was in high school?

**SJ:** High school, yes.

However, there is recognition that this peer-based “education” has serious limitations. Peers may provide very vivid information presented using shared meanings, but the adequateness of this information is, in hindsight, suspect.

**SJ:** Feeling ko we get more of the sex education from our friends.

**Facilitator:** From friends.

**SR:** Yeah, high school friends.

**JM:** Hindi rin siya apt to put it that way kasi feeling ko, not really sex education from your friends, but the mechanics of sex.

**Facilitator:** Parang socialization.

**JM:** Oo. Na parang tipong, ganito nangyayari `pag hahada ka. Pero hindi mo naman talaga nakukuha kasi kami-kami rin magkakasama. So since wala kaming formal na education about sexual health, anong makukwento naming sa isa't isa kundi, hoy, itong guy na ito sobrang laki, ang sakit. [*laughter from all*] `Di ba?

**SJ:** Pero I think yung experiences nae-enrich din naman kahit papano.

**Facilitator:** Kasi it's real.

**JM:** Yeah, but it's not a complete sort of education eh.

**SJ:** Kaya nga inadequate `yun.

Another source of sexuality knowledge is porn, in the form of magazines, videos, and on the Internet. One participant recounted watching porn in fifth grade with classmates:

**TJ:** We would go to our classmates' houses and there you have it.

**Facilitator:** Watch porn?

**TJ:** Yeah. Actually seaman yung mga fathers. Maraming ganoon. So, we could watch it.

The Internet has also grown to become a resource to mine for sexuality information, especially about specific sexual behaviors and techniques.

**JM:** I was just thinking na most of my education, most of my knowledge about sexual practices, I found it on the Net.

**Facilitator:** From the Internet, ilang percent?

**JM:** Marami. The rest... no, not naman the rest of it, but a big chunk. Sabihin nating 20 nakuha ko sa formal education, 40-40 from friends, and the other from the Internet.

**Facilitator:** The Internet.

**JM:** Kasi I grew in an age of websites like Oral.Org na they teach na parang, if you're trying to give a blowjob, better to have brushed your teeth at least six hours before giving head kasi may

lacerations. May microlacerations... I mean, sobrang nakakatulong siya at least for me since I'm active, I'm sexually active. So these are the tidbits of information na essential talaga.

The ubiquity of porn as well as students' early exposure to it, added to information obtained from peers and peer-shared experiences, seem to "preempt" classroom-based sexuality education, so that when a topic like sexual intercourse is finally tackled in class, it becomes uninteresting and the presentation quaint:

**TJ:** Para sa 'yo alam mo na. 'Yung mga nalalaman ko outside. 'Pag sinabi yan sa 'yo, alam mo na.

**Facilitator:** So you really learn more from your friends. So when you come to the class, it's just like you said, twice over. Kasi it doesn't even matter if it's right.

**TJ:** Kasi theories lang talaga, pero as to the outside application

**Facilitator:** That's what you get from friends?

**TJ:** Yeah.

This suggests that sexuality education, if ever does happen, is somewhat "late." Learners have already been reached by other sexuality information agents, possibly reducing the impact of classroom-based sex education in the process.

Notably absent from this list of agents is the family. Sexuality is rarely discussed informatively in the home, and being gay not at all.

**SJ:** We never talked about it.

**TJ:** It was avoided as much as possible.

**Facilitator:** It was avoided as much as possible. How?

**TJ:** Parang shhh. Pupunta kayo dyan, pero bigla nawawala. Biglang nagsisigawan na lang kayo. Ganun. Parang stop na.

**BR:** Ako it depends.. kung sinong kaharap ko.

**JM:** Hindi parentals.

An interesting avenue for building on one's sexual knowledge was educating others. Apparently, sexuality education is not necessarily limited to being on the receiving end. Gay

students have a number of opportunities to educate others about gay concerns and sexuality matters, including delivering speeches related to gay topics in Speech Class, choosing to write reports and assignments on LGBT concerns, acting as gay resource persons in class, and being participants in research conducted by other students on being gay or other gay-related matters. In fact, the role of the gay research participant is quite a commonplace experience, according to our focus group participants:

**SR:** Sobrang gasgas na ang topic ng homosexuality sa mga thesis, surveys, so our friends would come to us and do interviews, take videos. Parang nakakasawa na, pero siges na, ok lang, it's for them to better understand

**Facilitator:** And how do you feel about that?

**SR:** Syempre nakaka-annoy na palaging meron siya, pero it's good, at least they wanted to know more about...

**SJ:** Sa kin nakaka-flatter. Kasi we are being recognized.

**JM:** At nakaka-inform pa rin kayo.

**BR:** Parang nakakuwa na parang, ha! I can really inform you. It seems that you don't have any knowledge about being gay, now hear this. Minsan, you have a standard spiel [*agreement from all*] na parang ito 'yung issue, ito 'yung sagot mo. Sobrang dami. Nakakuwa that they are actually interested to know.

**SJ:** Yeah, mas open na silang lahat.

In sum, the contextual landscape of sexuality education for gay learners, as painted by findings from our focus group with select Filipino gay students, is marked by limited patches of discussion, emphasis on a limited handful of topics, underlying heterosexism, and a general unresponsiveness to learners' concerns. Within this backdrop, it appears that gay students develop their sexual understanding elsewhere, from personal experiences, from interactions with friends (but not really family), and from other contexts where they are in direct contact with sexuality via texts like porn and the Internet and via practices like participation in research.

*Sexuality Topics Gay Students Would Like to Learn More About*

After recognizing the possible contexts from which Filipino gay students are coming, we look at the main focus of the study: what Filipino gay students want to learn in sexuality education, based on their ratings of a list of topics we presented.

Average ratings for all the 44 sexuality topics were quite high, ranging from 3.02 to 3.65 using a five-point, 0 to 4 scaling (see Table 1 for ranked topics and ratings). This seems to suggest that overall, sexuality topics will be and are generally well received by gay and bisexual students. Further statistical analysis indicated that ratings were significantly different from each other,  $\chi^2(43) = 180.82, p < 0.001$ . The three most highly rated topics were “Sexual Identity and Orientation” (M = 3.65, SD = 0.80), “Love” (M = 3.58, SD = 0.87), and “Body Image” (M = 3.56, SD = 0.86). Other topics Filipino gay and bisexual male students would like to learn most about were “HIV/AIDS” (M = 3.51, SD = 0.91), “Gender Roles” (M = 3.50, SD = 0.91), and “Friendship” (M = 3.48, SD = 0.91).

Sexual identity and orientation was the most wanted topic, indicating that many young gay people would like more treatment of an issue that directly involves them, an issue that may not be getting sufficient discussion, if at all. One might expect that gay and bisexual students would already have more than enough knowledge about sexual identity and orientation and would be more interested in other topics, but apparently, this topic remains very much untouched. “During high school this was not taught because my teacher believed it wasn’t important at all” (18, public university) remarked one respondent, echoing results from our focus group, while another shared similar sentiments: “This wasn’t openly taught in high school. It was like, ‘It exists, but let’s not get into that’” (21, public). Sexual

**Table 1. Topics in Sexuality Education Ranked According to Preference**

<b>Rank</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Mean rating</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Skewness</b>
1	<b>Sexual Identity &amp; Orientation</b>	3.65	0.80	-2.52
2	<b>Love</b>	3.61	0.87	-2.50
3	<b>Body Image</b>	3.56	0.86	-2.27
4	<b>HIV/AIDS</b>	3.51	0.91	-1.75
5	<b>Gender Roles</b>	3.50	0.91	-1.84
6	<b>Friendship</b>	3.48	0.91	-1.93
7	<b>Other Sexually Transmitted Diseases</b>	3.47	0.91	-1.95
8	<b>Sexual Communication</b>	3.46	0.91	-1.99
9	<b>Human Sexual Response</b>	3.40	0.82	-1.34
10	<b>Sexual Decision-Making</b>	3.40	0.97	-1.76
11	<b>Sexual Well-Being</b>	3.39	0.93	-1.69
12	<b>Sexuality and the Media</b>	3.39	0.93	-1.62
13	<b>Dating</b>	3.39	0.97	-1.80
14	<b>Sex Education</b>	3.37	0.95	-1.46
15	<b>Sexual Anatomy and Physiology</b>	3.36	0.89	-1.27
16	<b>Sexuality, Society and Culture</b>	3.36	0.99	-1.40
17	<b>Interpersonal Sexual Behavior</b>	3.36	0.99	-1.66
18	<b>Sexuality Throughout Life</b>	3.35	1.02	-1.63
19	<b>Sexuality and the Arts</b>	3.35	0.96	-1.43
20	<b>Sexual Fantasy</b>	3.34	0.96	-1.50
21	<b>Protection/Contraception</b>	3.34	0.97	-1.51
22	<b>Sexuality and the Law</b>	3.33	1.00	-1.46
23	<b>Sexual Values</b>	3.32	0.90	-1.67
24	<b>Puberty</b>	3.32	0.94	-1.42
25	<b>Reproduction</b>	3.31	0.97	-1.26
26	<b>Sexual Diversity</b>	3.30	1.08	-1.56
27	<b>Help-Seeking about Sexuality-related Matters</b>	3.29	1.04	-1.52
28	<b>Sexual Assertiveness</b>	3.28	0.99	-1.39
29	<b>Sexuality and Technology</b>	3.26	1.02	-1.44
30	<b>Sexual Negotiation</b>	3.25	1.03	-1.31
31	<b>Marriage and Lifetime Commitments</b>	3.24	1.07	-1.63
32	<b>Sexuality and Religion</b>	3.23	1.16	-1.47
33	<b>Sexual Coercion</b>	3.23	1.06	-1.57
34	<b>Families</b>	3.23	1.06	-1.36
35	<b>Masturbation</b>	3.21	1.05	-1.28
36	<b>Sexual Humor</b>	3.20	1.12	-1.26
37	<b>Raising Children</b>	3.19	1.03	-1.33
38	<b>Sexuality in Other Times and Places</b>	3.13	1.16	-1.29
39	<b>Sexual Abstinence</b>	3.12	1.12	-1.26
40	<b>Drugs and Sexuality</b>	3.08	1.11	-0.95
41	<b>Challenges to Sexual Functioning</b>	3.07	1.19	-1.23
42	<b>Prostitution</b>	3.06	1.11	-1.10
43	<b>Sex Research</b>	3.05	1.19	-1.13
44	<b>Abortion</b>	3.02	1.24	-1.06

orientation and identity are arguably most directly relevant to young gay and bisexual students of all the topics on list. “We need to be educated [about this],” wrote one respondent (18, public), since the topic is “noticeably lacking in our current educational set-up” (19, public). Sexual orientation is “one of the most important areas of sex ed, especially for gay teens, [and] should be taken more thoroughly” (22, private). Others argued on the basis of how religious morality could cloud the discussion of being gay: “[Coming] from a Catholic background, I would appreciate and benefit from a nonsectarian supportive atmosphere [for discussion]” (24, public) and “Naku, dapat talaga may ganito lalo na sa atin na sobrang lakas ng influence ng religion sa pagtingin sa mga ganitong issues” (19, public).

Body image was another most wanted topic, suggesting that for many Filipino gay and bisexual college students, notions of the body and physical attractiveness are important points to discuss. “Sometimes I really don’t feel confident about myself” explained one respondent (17 yrs old, public) while others remarked that the topic should be included in sexuality education because it is a “rare topic for discussion” (20, public), because “learning about this will help people accept themselves and love their bodies” (24, public), and because “an understanding of this will not only help homos but will also give heteros a better look into how homos look at their [physical selves]” (22, private). Indeed, some research has shown that gay men report greater dissatisfaction with how their bodies look, compared to heterosexual men (Strong, Singh & Randall, 2000). Future research could look into this topic further, focusing on body images, body satisfaction and discourses of physical attractiveness among Filipino gay/bisexual men.

Relationship-related topics like love and friendships were described positively by some respondents:

“Of course, love is very important. I don’t know what to do without love” (18, public)

“Friendship helps us evolve as [a] person” (19, public)

Others pointed out that love was another topic that was usually “taught in the heterosexist point of view” (19, public). Respondents emphasized the need for “recognition of homosexual love” (17, public), which was best summarized by one student: “Sex ed curricula should recognize and portray the reality of same-sex relationships” (22, private). They articulated a basic need to understand the dynamics of love, particularly love that involves them:

“I want to learn the ways and means of loving, especially in a man-man relationship” (20, public)

“[I want to learn] how to love effectively in a same sex/gender relationship” (17, private)

Issues related to friendship were also requested, including rivalry among friends (“one of the most common problems homosexuals are familiar with,” 18, public), friendships between woman and gay men (“[I] was very confused when I first met my girl best friend,” 24, public), and friendships among men, in particular “relationships between a straight guy and a gay guy” (22, private).

HIV/AIDS was rated relatively high, despite a number of remarks made by respondents indicating that the topic had been taken up in school: “AIDS was discussed and with emphasis when I was in high school” (19, public). Others emphasized the importance of protecting the self against HIV/AIDS, thus the need for education: “One must be aware how to protect himself” (19, public); “Safety is essential” (18, public); and “To avoid them, you have to learn them” (20, public).

The topic of gender roles was also important for many respondents, who asked for “more in-depth discussions” (19, public). One student explained the importance of examining gender roles: “Mahalaga `ata ito kasi pwedeng i-discuss kung paano napapalaganap ang patriarchal views tsaka anong mga acts/activities ang pwedeng baguhin para mas maging sensitive” (19, public).

Least rated topics include “Sexual Abstinence” (M = 3.12, SD = 1.12), “Drugs and Sexuality” (M = 3.08, SD = 1.11), “Challenges to Sexual Functioning” (M = 3.07, SD = 1.19), “Prostitution” (M = 3.06, SD = 1.11), and “Sex Research” (M = 3.05, SD = 1.19). The topic respondents least wanted to learn more about was “Abortion” (M = 3.02, SD = 1.25). Comments like “not interested” (19, public), “this does not apply to me” (20, public), and “not applicable [to me]” (18, public), all made in reference to the topic of abortion, suggest that certain topics are lower on the list of gay students because these matters have arguably relatively lower relevance for gay people.

Topics were also collapsed into their seven overarching categories and mean ratings for each cluster were also analyzed (see Table 2). The cluster of “Human Development” was the most highly rated (M = 3.44, SD = 0.66), buoyed by the top two topics of Sexual Identity & Orientation and Body Image. “Methods of Knowledge” was the lowest rated (M = 3.21, SD = 0.90), suggesting that these topics may require extra motivation for students compared to other topics. Differences in ratings at the level of categories were also significantly different,  $\chi^2(6) = 14.552, p < 0.02$ . Categories showed good internal consistency, with Cronbach  $\alpha$ 's ranging from 0.58 to 0.90.

### *Suggestions for Sexuality Education*

Eighty-nine of the 121 survey respondents (74%) provided suggestions for improving sexuality education by answering the question “What else can schools, teachers, and other educators do to make sure sex education is responsive to the needs and interests of students, especially Filipino gay/bi/etc students?”

**Table 2. Sexuality Topics Arranged by Category**

<b>Rank</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Mean rating</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Cronbach's <math>\alpha</math></b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Human Development</b> Sexual Identity and Orientation Body Image Sexual Anatomy and Physiology Puberty Reproduction	3.43	0.66	0.79
<b>2</b>	<b>Relationships</b> Love Friendships Dating Marriage and Lifetime Commitments Families Raising Children	3.35	0.73	0.84
<b>3</b>	<b>Personal Skills</b> Sexual Communication Sexual Decision-Making Sexual Values Help-Seeking about Sexuality-Related Matters Sexual Assertiveness Sexual Negotiation	3.33	0.79	0.90
<b>4</b>	<b>Sexual Health</b> HIV/AIDS Other Sexually Transmitted Diseases Sexual Well-Being Protection/Contraception Sexual Coercion Abortion	3.32	0.74	0.82
<b>5</b>	<b>Society and Culture</b> Gender Roles Sexuality and the Media Sexuality, Society and Culture Sexuality and the Arts Sexuality and the Law Sexual Diversity Sexuality and Technology Sexuality and Religion Sexual Humor Sexuality in Other Times and Places	3.30	0.73	0.89
<b>6</b>	<b>Sexual Behavior</b> Human Sexual Response Interpersonal Sexual Behavior Sexuality Throughout Life Sexual Fantasy Masturbation Sexual Abstinence Drugs and Sexuality Challenges to Sexual Functioning Prostitution	3.22	0.75	0.88
<b>7</b>	<b>Methods of Knowledge</b> Sex Education Sex Research	3.21	0.90	0.58

We gathered a total of 219 suggestions and analyzed them inductively using the following procedure: We made an initial pass at the data, reading through the entire list of suggestions. We then examined a subset representing approximately one-fourth of the data, identifying possible themes independently of each other, thus generating two sets of categories. Afterwards we discussed the themes we each derived, consolidating them into a single working list, which contained seven themes. We subsequently tested and refined these categories with the rest of the data, using a sorting procedure that required us to judge and place each suggestion unit under a single theme.

After sorting all 219 suggestions, we gleaned ten themes that accounted for 97% of the data (six suggestions were incomprehensible and could not be meaningfully classified). These broad themes were: institutionalization efforts, overall openness, transcending religious positions, a non-heterosexist approach, teacher training and education, having gay teachers, improvements in course content materials, engaging pedagogical strategies, extra-curricular activities, and consultations.

### **1. Institutionalization efforts (N = 21 suggestions, 9.6%)**

Filipino gay and bisexual students believe that a macro structure that supports sexuality education in schools should be put in place. Some respondents remarked “Sana magkaroon ng sex education sa high school” (18, public) or simply, “Hold sex education classes” (19, public), suggesting that there are schools in this country that lack sexuality education curricula. It is hoped that, more than merely informing students, such classes would “teach people to be more open-minded” (18, private) and specifically “really enlighten each student about homosexuality” (18, public). Suggestions regarding the inclusion of sexuality education in school curricula range from simply reserving a couple of sessions

for discussion in related courses, to offering it as an elective, and for sex education to be part of the General Education program of schools. The suggested addition of sexuality education to the core curricula of schools would have the aim of reaching a larger audience, and not only young gay and bisexual men.

Aside from this suggested “institutionalization of sex ed as a legit subject in high school and college” (19, public), other support structures like “an organization who will counsel [and] guide students, especially homosexuals” (17, public) are wanted. Some also noted the need for supportive, gay-affirmative guidance counseling for young people in schools. As discussed in the focus group, it has been the experience of gay students (or perhaps students in general) that the guidance counselor is associated with delinquent and problem students. This image of the guidance counselor may contribute to the problematization of gay identity in school settings, that being gay is something that has to be “dealt with” with and by these counselors.

## **2. An Overall Openness in Teachers (N = 45 suggestions, 20.5%)**

Teachers and educators, according to gay learners, need to be open about human sexuality itself. The students recognize that teachers “have biases and prejudices” (21, private) that have to be overcome when educating students about sexuality. “They have to set aside their perceptions and have to be open about...possibilities” (24, public), as one respondent put it. They ask that teachers and educators be “more open-minded” (18, public), “appreciative, considerate and understanding” (27, public), and “sensitive” (20, public). This much-needed “positive approach to sexuality” (20, private) would contribute to making “students feel that sex and talking about it isn’t taboo” (24, public). Learners asked that the topic of sexuality be demystified. That the subject matter be “discussed

scientifically without personal biases" (17, public) and treated "just like any other subject (Math, Science, etc.)" (17, private). In addition, one student asked to "not treat the topic of sex as a joke" (18, public). The fact that the largest number of the suggestions fall under this category points to how integral the role of the educator is in the sexuality education of students. The need for an open mind on the part of the teacher may not be an easy thing to expect of him or her, yet it is a responsibility that the teacher is challenged to take on, in order to successfully guide the students in managing their sexuality development.

### **3. Transcending Religious Positions (N = 6 suggestions, 2.7%)**

Educators are also urged to "stop being too conservative" (21, public) and "stop being slaves of the Church" (21, public), a reference to the Roman Catholic Church and its more conservative view of sexuality, including its construction of sex between men as a "mortal sin." These last two remarks may be based on the observation that much of the discussion regarding sexuality is "based on the teachings of a particular religion" (18, public). Teachers are seen as too centered on the Judeo-Christian view of sex that they fail to present all views informatively, and focus more on the Catholic position, with its restrictive and moralistic views, when lecturing about sexuality. The Roman Catholic Church's Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (1986, 1992, 2003) explicitly states that being gay is "intrinsically disordered" and that "the practice of homosexuality may seriously threaten the lives and well-being of a large number of people." Indeed, some research even shows that religious people manifest significantly higher levels of heterosexism than nonreligious and liberal people (Herek, 1987).

### **4. A Gay-Affirmative, Non-Heterosexist Approach (N = 37 suggestions, 16.9%)**

Aside from simply being open and not religion-centered about the topic of sexuality, the respondents go a bit further. They want teachers and educators to be gay-affirmative, i.e., being “free of bias towards heterosexuality” (19, public), being “open-minded toward sexual identity” (19, private), and becoming “more critical and sensitive to all things related to homosexuality” (21, public). A gay-affirmative stance begins with “recognizing that gays and bisexuals are marginalized by society” (19, private) and by “acting to change attitudes towards gay people” (19, public). This entails making “students understand that homosexuality is normal” (18, public), “enlighten[ing] the students that being gay is not bad or evil” (19, public), “discuss[ing] homosexuality in an unbiased fashion” (17, private), and “teach[ing] that homosexuality/bisexuality is a way of life, not a disease” (22, private). Students want their teachers, who are in a position of influence and credibility, to dispel common misconceptions and misperceptions about gay and bisexual people. Simply, respondents want teachers who are not prejudiced against gay students, teachers who will demonstrate support for them as gay individuals, in and out of the classroom.

##### **5. Teacher Training and Education (N = 11 suggestions, 5%)**

Students also cited a need to train sexuality educators in order to be more responsive to students concerns. First off, teachers should be well-informed regarding recent issues and findings concerning sexuality like “new sexual practices [and their] implications to health issues” and “current avenues for sexual interaction” (24, public). They have to have cutting-edge knowledge of the many new developments and phenomena in the field of human sexuality, as well as be constantly updated.

Educators should furthermore be trained on how to conduct a sexuality education class. This is so because there is a need to develop teacher skills for “responsible handling

of sensitive topics in class” (17, private). Many sexuality topics may be considered taboo such that even seasoned teachers may have a challenging time facilitating a discussion with students who are afraid or hesitant to talk about sexuality. Extra skill is needed when misconceptions, such as those concerning gay people, are raised by students themselves. Teachers require skills to effectively process and deal with such diverse and possibly biased views.

**6. Having Gay Teachers (N = 4 suggestions, 1.8%)**

Interestingly, a call was made to have “gay teachers for gay students” (21, public), in order to have teachers who can relate to gay students and perhaps serve as much-needed role models. It could be argued that no other kind of teachers would have more intimate and personal knowledge of LGBT issues than those who have an insider’s perspective – gay teachers themselves. Another respondent simply opined that “gay instructors would be great in teaching sex ed” (20, public), regardless of the sexual orientation or identity of students. This suggestion seems to be based on a general idea that educated gay men may be more open and informed about sexuality, so much so that they can and will be good sex ed teachers. A similar issue arose in the focus group, about the question of the sexual orientation of teachers of human sexuality, and it was pointed out that while educators who happen to be lesbian, gay or bisexual may have an advantage inasmuch as they can serve as role models for their LGBT students, sexual orientation of teachers was secondary to the requirement of being open, accepting, appreciative, and accurately informed of the diversity in human sexuality.

**7. Improving Content and Materials (N = 32 suggestions, 14.6%)**

The remarks in this category deal with the knowledge presented within the sexuality education class. Some students suggested more focus on certain general topics like “sexuality in culture and the arts” (18, public), “breaking down stereotypes” (18, public), and “safe sex, contraception and counseling for sexual assault/harassment” (19, public). Others want their teachers to zoom in on “gay/bi/etc. issues” (19, public) like “gay literature” (19, public) and “coming out to family and friends” (22, private), concerns that may be very central to young gay and bisexual people.

Another facet of this category involves the materials available for study. There is a perceived lack of up-to-date, appropriate, balanced and fair materials on sexuality. Gay students asked for “updated reading materials” (20, public) and “more books on this topic [of sexuality]” (19, private).

#### 8. **Engaging Pedagogical Strategies (N = 38 suggestions, 17.4%)**

In order for sexuality education to be more responsive to the needs of students, classes should be conducted in innovative, engaging ways. Classes, respondents believed, can be made more appealing, interesting and stimulating through:

- “visual aids” (17, private)
- “showing more liberated movies that tackle sexuality” (20, public)
- “multimedia exhibits” (21, public)
- “discussions (no holds barred) about sexuality” (19, public)
- “demonstrative explanations” (17, private)
- “[using] different media to express their ideas” (19, public)
- “activities so that one can relate” (19, public)
- “immersion sa mga centers” (19, public)

- “interactive discussion” (19, public)
- “[making] the subject funny” (17, public)

Respondents saw effective teaching techniques and methodologies as a means for making the subject matter more attractive, memorable, and meaningful for learners. Aside from these techniques, some students even suggested activities like urging “students to do a little research on the topic [of sexuality]” (20, public).

#### **9. Extra-Curricular Activities (N = 8 suggestions, 3.7%)**

Events outside the classroom were also seen as an effective means of enriching students’ sexuality education. “Symposia” (20, public), “awareness campaigns” and “gender sensitivity seminars” (18, public) are seen to be good modes of promoting a well-rounded sexuality education for students. Another respondent suggested that schools “provide venues for discussion” (20, public). Frequent discussion of issues regarding sexuality would inform and update people and facilitate interaction and exchange of ideas.

#### **10. A Consultative Philosophy (N = 11 suggestions, 5%)**

Respondents also deemed it important that learners be consulted regarding what they want to learn. Constant dialogues and “consultations like this one” (21, public) that involve stakeholders were suggested. Another wanted the questionnaire used in this study to be administered to students every school year. He did not specify whether the survey should be administered to gay/bisexual students only (as this study set out to do), although another respondent said that we should “make the scope of researches like this bigger to include not only gay/bi/etc., but the general studentry” (17, public). Thus, we

note here the wish of the students to be heard and put at the center of the education process, in consonance with the learner-centered approach to education (AZ Learner Centered Education Project, 2003). Another respondent also advised that “schools should also consult parents about their sexual values & what they want their children to learn about sex” (18, public), suggesting a need to respect and take into consideration not just learner-centered but also family-based approaches to sexuality education. Overall, gay learners seem to recognize and appreciate a more consultative, feedback-oriented philosophy of teaching sexuality.

In summary, our respondents had a lot of suggestions to share about how to improve sexuality education, from the level of institutions and curricula, to the issue of teacher openness, skills and support for LGBT students, to pedagogical matters like teaching methods and materials, to educational philosophy.

#### *Filipino Gay Male College Students and Sexuality Education*

Results of our exploratory study on Filipino gay male college students reveal a number of important points.

- Filipino gay and bisexual learners are open to sexuality education and to learning about a wide variety of topics related to gender and sexuality.
- Filipino gay and bisexual learners would especially like to learn about sexual identity and orientation, love, body image, HIV/AIDS, gender roles, and friendships.

- The needs of Filipino gay and bisexual learners can be understood in the context of their experiences of classroom-based sexuality education, which may be limited and largely unresponsive to them as learners.
- Heterosexism, both denial and denigration, appears to exist in educational experiences of Filipino gay and bisexual learners.
- Filipino gay and bisexual learners construct their own sexual knowledge from a variety of sources and contexts, in which classroom-based sexuality education may not play a particularly big role.
- Filipino gay and bisexual learners have many ideas for improving the practice of sexuality education.

While caution should be made about the generalizability of the results given our use of a convenience sample as well as the exploratory nature of our study, we hope that the findings can serve as a springboard for future gender/feminist research that can look into heterosexism in educational settings using other methodologies like systematic observation and content analysis of materials as well as focusing on other populations like teachers and non-gay students. Research informed by a learner-centered perspective, based on our own experiences in conducting this study, allows for a more participatory, contextualized, and representative examination of processes and experiences in education.

In addition, the development of a sexuality research agenda that includes topics like body images, love and relationships, and sexual identities of Filipino gay and bisexual men is also recommended, so that our sexuality education efforts are grounded on a solid research base.

Finally, investigation of the experiences, needs, and contexts of lesbian and female bisexual learners is needed to complete the picture of sexuality education in relation to its diverse learners, towards the development of a sexuality education that effectively serves young Filipinos who are gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, or otherwise.

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## Appendix A: Focus Group Instrument

1. ORIENTATION
  - a. Welcome, background on the study
  - b. Confidentiality, especially about sexuality
  - c. Consent to record
  - d. Other guidelines: Speak loud, join discussion, take turns, ask questions
2. WARM-UP
  - a. Introduction: Name, college, course
  - b. How are your classes this sem?
3. SEX ED EXPERIENCES
  - a. Was gender, sex, or sexuality ever discussed in elementary?
    - Probe: Subject, content material, approach, teacher, personal reactions
  - b. Was gender, sex, or sexuality ever discussed in high school?
    - In what subjects?
    - What was taught? What wasn't? Was it lacking, enough, or more than enough?
    - Was the topic of being gay, gay relationships, gay sexuality, etc ever discussed? If so, how? (Probe for possible "othering")
    - How was the material presented? Who was the teacher?
    - Was the material accurate? Adequate? Balanced?
  - c. Was gender, sex, or sexuality ever discussed in college?
    - In what subjects?
    - Content material? Approach? Depth or scope of treatment?
    - Who were the teachers? How did they present the material?
    - Was the topic of being gay, gay relationships, gay sexuality, etc ever discussed? If so, how? (Probe for possible "othering")
    - How was the material presented? Adequate? Balanced? Applicable?
    - Classroom atmosphere: Open? Accepting or not?
    - Personal reactions: How much did you enjoy or not enjoy it? How comfortable or uncomfortable were you? Did you learn anything new? Useful?
    - Disclosure: Did you share anything personal about yourself during class? Or privately to the teacher? Were you out in class? Did this affect how the material was presented?
4. OTHER CLASS EXPERIENCES
  - a. Positive experiences as a gay college student
    - Have you had any particularly fun or enlightening classroom experiences?
    - Who are your role models from college? Any gay role models?
  - b. Negative experiences as a gay college student
    - Have you had any not so good classroom experiences?

- Have ever experienced homophobic remarks, etc? Have you ever felt being excluded or pinatamaan? How did you react/deal with these?
      - Were these experiences because of the teacher? The material? The students?
    - c. Overall assessment of sex education
      - Balanced? Good coverage of issues relevant to gay men?
      - What did you not learn in sex ed that you think you should have?
      - How much did sex ed contribute to your understanding of gender, sexuality, sex, etc? Aside from sex ed, where else have you gotten information about sex, gender, being gay, etc?
5. WHAT DO WE WANT?
- a. Given our past experiences with education, what do we want now?
  - b. What are the things that should be continued or done the same?
  - c. What do we want changed or added?
  - d. Content material: What topics do you want to included?
    - Fantasize: Imagine the perfect sex ed class
    - What questions would you like to be answered in these classes? Let's make a list
    - What is being taught? Which topics are being emphasized? (Probe domains: anatomy, behavior, gay issues, reproduction, morality)
    - Who is teaching? How is he or she teaching? (Probe: characteristics of an effective sex ed teacher including sexual orientation and level of self-disclosure)
    - What are the advantages of having a gay teacher? Disadvantages? Of a non-gay teacher?
    - Is this a separate class or integrated across the curriculum? A GE class? An elective?
  - e. Skills and Abilities
    - What skills or abilities would you like to learn in sex ed?
    - What how-to's would you like to learn? Let's make a list
    - Probe domains: safe sex, sexual health, sexual decision-making, sexual communication, sexual positions, sexual problems, etc
  - f. How would you like these classes to be handled?
  - g. What would we call this class? Course title, units, prereqs?
  - h. How would you feel about sex ed classes specifically tailored for gay men, bisexuals, etc?  
Would you take a class like that?
6. COOL-DOWN
- a. Summary: What we talked about
  - b. What do you enjoy most about being a college student in general and a college student with your special kind of sexuality in particular?
  - c. Thanks, applause

## Appendix B: Profile of Focus Group Participants

<b>Participant</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>University</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Course</b>	<b>High School</b>
JM	24	Public	2	BLI	Private – exclusive
TJ	18	Public	1	BA Socio	Private – coed
UL	21	Public	4	BS Psych	Public
PJ	17	Public	2	B SE (SpEd)	Public
BR	24	Public	3	MD	Private – exclusive
SR	22	Private – coed	2	MD	Private – exclusive
SJ	21	Private – coed	5	BS Psych	Private – exclusive

## **Appendix C: SIECUS *Guidelines* (1996) List of 37 Topics in Sexuality Education**

1. Human Development
  - (1) Reproductive Anatomy and Physiology
  - (2) Reproduction
  - (3) Puberty
  - (4) Body Image
  - (5) Sexual Identity and Orientation
2. Relationships
  - (1) Families
  - (2) Friendship
  - (3) Love
  - (4) Dating
  - (5) Marriage and Lifetime Commitments
  - (6) Raising Children
3. Personal Skills
  - (1) Values
  - (2) Decision-making
  - (3) Communication
  - (4) Assertiveness
  - (5) Negotiation
  - (6) Looking for Help
4. Sexual Behavior
  - (1) Sexuality Throughout Life
  - (2) Masturbation
  - (3) Shared Sexual Behavior
  - (4) Abstinence
  - (5) Human Sexual Response
  - (6) Fantasy
  - (7) Sexual Dysfunction
5. Sexual Health
  - (1) Contraception

- (2) Abortion
- (3) Sexually Transmitted Diseases including HIV Infection
- (4) Sexual Abuse
- (5) Reproductive Health

6. Society and Culture

- (1) Sexuality and Society
- (2) Gender Roles
- (3) Sexuality and the Law
- (4) Sexuality and Religion
- (5) Diversity
- (6) Sexuality and the Arts
- (7) Sexuality and the Media

## Appendix D: List of Topics Derived from the Focus Group

1. Saying no
2. Flirting
3. Sexual communication
4. Condom use
5. IUDs and pills
6. Self-checks
7. Sexual morality/ethics
8. Sexual responsibility
9. Internet sexuality
10. Sexual identity
11. Sexual health beyond reproduction & biology
12. Sexual pleasure
13. Defining sexuality and gender
14. Sexual behavior
15. Rape
16. Gender sensitivity/awareness (women's rights, men's rights, LGBT rights)
17. Abortion
18. STDs
19. HIV/AIDS
20. Sexual rights
21. Safe sex
22. Family planning/contraception
23. Family

**Appendix E: Chapter Headings of *Sexuality and Gender in Society* (Carroll & Wolpe, 1996)**

1. Sex in Other Times and Places
2. Theory and Research
3. Human Sexual Biology
4. Childhood and Adolescent Sexuality
5. Gender Roles
6. Love, Intimacy, and Communication
7. Sexual Orientation
8. Adult Sexual Relationships
9. Adult Sexual Behavior
10. Pregnancy and Birth
11. Contraception and Abortion
12. Challenges to Sexual Functioning
13. Sexually Transmitted Diseases and AIDS
14. Varieties of Sexual Expression
15. Power and Coercion
16. Morality, Religion, and Law
17. Sexuality Education
18. Prostitution
19. Sexual Images
20. Sexual Humor
21. Enriching Personal Sexuality

## Appendix F: Final Sexuality Education Topics and Descriptions in the Questionnaire

1. **Sexual Anatomy & Physiology:** Describes the sexual and reproductive body parts of males and females and their functions; erogenous zones of the body; hormonal and biochemical processes.
2. **Reproduction:** Explains how conception, pregnancy, and childbirth occur; reasons for and against reproduction; assisted fertility, surrogate mothers, and other techniques.
3. **Puberty:** Teaches about physical, emotional, social, and sexual changes taking place during puberty and adolescence.
4. **Body Image:** Discusses feelings and views about the body (own and others'); attitudes, comfort and satisfaction about one's body; ideas of physical and sexual attractiveness and how they affect body images and self-esteem.
5. **Sexual Identity & Orientation:** Looks into being gay, lesbian, bisexual, and heterosexual; coming out and being in the closet; attractions toward people of the same or different sex; myths and misconceptions.
6. **Families:** Explores the variations and functions of families; impact of family on the individual and vice versa; family relationships, conflict, and functioning; love and sexuality within the family; family as socialization agent.
7. **Friendship:** Examines the development, maintenance and functions of friendships as interpersonal relationships; varieties of friends; influence of friends on decisions and actions; same-sex and opposite-sex friendships.
8. **Love:** Analyzes the nature of attraction, intimacy & love; theories of love & romantic relationships; patterns & development, varieties, problems, and skills in romantic relationships; unrequited love, jealousy, love vs sex.
9. **Dating:** Looks into dating as shared leisure time; activities and patterns in dating behavior; expectations, misconceptions, and responsibilities; heterosexual and gay/lesbian dating.
10. **Marriage & Lifetime Commitments:** Probes the psychological, social, cultural, and legal aspects of commitment, marriage, separation, and divorce; opposite-sex and same-sex unions and partnerships.
11. **Raising Children:** Explores the decision, responsibilities, and motivations behind child-rearing; varieties and styles of parenting; adoption, single and coupled parenthood, heterosexual and gay/lesbian parents; issues.

12. **Sexual Values:** Discusses values and how they influence sexuality; identification, examination, and use of values; developing respect and appreciation for diversity of values and beliefs of other people; sexual ethics.
13. **Sexual Decision-Making:** Includes developing skills related to making healthy, informed sexual decisions; obtaining and evaluating sexuality-related information for decision purposes; heuristics and considerations.
14. **Sexual Communication:** Teaches about the importance of effective communication in personal and sexual relationships; developing skills in communicating sexual feelings, desires, fears, and boundaries.
15. **Sexual Assertiveness:** Builds skills in asserting personal feelings and needs while respecting the rights of others; honesty, personal responsibility, and saying no; awareness of sexual rights and responsibilities.
16. **Sexual Negotiation:** Fosters skills related to solving sexuality-related problems or conflicts without using anger, guilt or intimidation; making judgments about benefits and trade-offs of sexual compromises and decisions.
17. **Help-Seeking about Sexuality Matters:** Develops awareness & skills in identifying sexuality-related problems & asking for help from family, friends or professionals like doctors, teachers, counselors, etc.
18. **Sexuality Throughout Life:** Teaches that sexuality is a natural, integral, joyful, and healthy part of life; sexuality development in childhood, adolescence, adulthood, and in later life.
19. **Masturbation:** Presents info on masturbation as expression of personal sexuality & as intrapersonal sexual behavior; facts & myths; masturbation across gender, sexual orientation, age, civil status.
20. **Interpersonal Sexual Behavior:** Provides info about the diversity of shared sexual practices from kissing and hugging to oral, vaginal, and anal sex; techniques and positions; heterosexual and gay/lesbian sex.
21. **Sexual Abstinence:** Discusses abstinence from sex as a method for preventing unwanted pregnancies and transmission of STDs; virginity and celibacy; expressing sexuality and achieving pleasure without having sex.
22. **Human Sexual Response:** Examines female and male human sexual response processes, including desire, arousal, orgasm; erection and lubrication; multiple orgasms; simultaneous orgasms.
23. **Sexual Fantasy:** Describes the variety, functions, and contents of erotic and sexual thoughts, daydreams, and fantasies; fantasy vs acting out.

24. **Challenges to Sexual Functioning:** Explores common problems like lack of desire, erectile difficulties, inadequate lubrication, difficulty in attaining orgasm; management and treatment.
25. **Protection/Contraception:** Discusses the importance of protection; methods and their pros and cons; family planning, abstinence, and emergency contraception; condoms and their correct use.
26. **Abortion:** Includes information about methods used in terminating pregnancy, legal issues, safety, the choice vs life debate; religious and ethical viewpoints.
27. **HIV/AIDS:** Provides information about the transmission, prevention, symptoms, and treatment of HIV/AIDS; myths and misconceptions; testing and support systems for HIV+ persons.
28. **Other Sexually Transmitted Diseases:** Presents info about STDs like gonorrhea, syphilis, chlamydia, herpes, etc. including transmission, prevention, symptoms, and treatment.
29. **Sexual Coercion:** Looks into power relations, molestation, rape, sexual harassment, sexual abuse, gender-related violence; theories, facts, and precautions; victim support; offender intervention.
30. **Sexual Well-Being:** Teaches about standards and practices that promote sexual health, how to conduct self-checks, caring for our sexual bodies, developing satisfying sexual interactions and relationships.
31. **Sexuality, Society and Culture:** Places gender and sexuality in the context of culture and society, including social norms, taboos about sex, cultural traditions, and sexual scripts.
32. **Gender Roles:** Analyzes socially constructed expectations and stereotypes of women, men, lesbians, gay men, etc; double standards; causes and effects of gender roles and stereotyping; androgyny.
33. **Sexuality & the Law:** Provides info about legal issues including age of consent for sex, incest, sexual abuse, sexual harassment, censorship, reproductive rights, sexual rights, legal protection, etc.
34. **Sexuality & Religion:** Discusses diversity of religious positions on sexuality; role of religious values in sexual decisions; religious standpoints on issues like reproduction and gay/lesbian sexuality.
35. **Sexual Diversity:** Examines the range of individual differences in sexuality; prejudice and discrimination based on sexuality; stereotypes; overcoming sexism and homophobia/heterosexism.
36. **Sexuality & the Arts:** Looks into sexual images in music, film, literature, painting, etc; erotic art as reflections of views about sexuality; the issue of erotica/pornography, misconceptions, and issues.

37. **Sexuality & the Media:** Examines how women and men, gay and straight, are depicted on TV, film, print, radio, ads, and the Internet; stereotypes in the media; choosing and analyzing media's treatment of sex.
38. **Sexuality and Technology:** Investigates how people use technology like the Internet to access, deliver, and mold sexuality; phone sex, text sex, cybersex, and other technology-mediated forms of sexuality.
39. **Sexuality in Other Times & Places:** Discusses diversity of views on sexuality across cultures and eras, sexuality in history, prehistoric sexuality, trends and changes in sexual thought and practice.
40. **Sex Research:** Explores the practice of research into sexuality, methods used in gathering data and building theories, ethical issues, validity and reliability.
41. **Sex Education:** Looks into the methods, rationale, goals, issues, effectiveness, and challenges of educating people about gender and sexuality.
42. **Prostitution:** Describes sex-for-pay, the different kinds of paid sex, sex workers, clients, cruising, possible risks, common locations.
43. **Sexual Humor:** Discusses the origins, varieties, and functions of "green" jokes, biro and hirit, sexual puns, innuendo, and sexist humor.
44. **Drugs & Sexuality:** Explores the use of aphrodisiacs, alcohol, and other drugs to improve sexuality as well as the issue of drug-related sex problems.

### Author Note

For purposes of the current research, the umbrella term “gay” was used to include individuals who self-identify as gay, transgender, *bakla*, and bisexual, as well as those with no particular self-labels (“questioning,” “unsure,” “no labels,” etc) and those who may not be out publicly (“discreet”), working with the assumption that these individuals may not fit into the prototypic male student targeted by traditional sex education. The use of the term “gay” is, of course, not without problems and certainly many other labels have been proposed and used in the literature (including “homosexual,” “non-heterosexual,” “queer,” “bakla” and “men who have sex with men”), but we opted to use “gay” because of its convenience as well as its use by many of our participants and by the greater LGBT community.

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