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PhD Thesis

**YouTube, vlogs, and vlogging to teach and learn about sexual consent: A study of
youth practices and perspectives**

By

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Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	ii
Abstract	x
Résumé	xii
List of Tables	xiv
List of Figures	xiv
Glossary of Terms	1
Chapter 1: Introduction	3
Rationale	3
Context of the Study	6
Sexual Violence in the University Context	6
Sexualities Education Programming in Schools	9
Online Sexualities Education: Where Social Media Comes into the Picture	12
The Study Design and Research Questions	17
Organization of the Dissertation	19
Chapter 2: Literature Review	22
Sexual Discourses and Sexual Consent	23
Defining Sexual Discourse	24
How Sexual Discourses Impact Sexual Violence	28
Sexual Discourses, Sexual Violence, and Social Media	36
Sexual Consent Discourses	37
Criticisms of Postsecondary Sexual Consent Education	40
Media and Youth Meaning-Making	48
How Does Media Shape Meaning? From Semiotics to Learning Theories	48
Youth Participation on Social Media	56
Youth Participation in Sexual Discourses on Social Media	62
About YouTube and Youth Participation	66
YouTube Vlogs and Sexual Discourses	69
Moving Forward: Conceptualizing ‘good’ Sexualities Education	74
Critical Sexualities Education	74
Media in Sexualities Education	79
YouTube in Sexualities Education	81

Summary of the Chapter	84
Chapter 3: Methodology	86
Research Design	86
Epistemological Frameworks	88
Methodologies	90
Constructivist Grounded Theory.....	90
Arts-based Research.....	98
Evaluation	103
Positionality	107
Data Collection Methods	109
Qualitative Content Analysis	109
Interviews.....	113
Focus Groups and Workshop Transcripts	115
Workshop Artifacts.	120
Field Notes and Memos	123
Sampling	124
Selecting YouTube Videos and Vlogs	125
Selecting Vloggers	128
Workshop and Focus Group Participants.....	129
Analysis	130
Meeting the Requirements of Good Quality Research	135
Structure of the Presentation of Findings	137
Summary of the Chapter	138
Chapter 4: Presentation of Findings Part 1	139
Sexual Consent and Sexual Assault Vlogs: The Semiotic Work of YouTubers	139
Context of the Framework	141
The Different Social Semiotics Dimensions	148
The Ideational/discourse Dimension.....	148
The Affective Dimension.....	176
The Content Dimension	180
Audiences	189
Summary of the Chapter	192

Chapter 5: Presentation of Findings Part 2	193
Context of the Framework.....	195
Youth perceptions of vlogs and vlogging for sexualities education.....	200
Perceptions of the YouTube: Popular, Accessible and Risky.....	200
Perceptions of YouTube vlogs: Genre and Messaging.....	205
Perceptions of media as ‘Text’: YouTube and Vlogs in Higher Education.....	211
Perceptions of Media-Making: Learning Through Making, Encountering Technology and Choosing a Genre	215
Perceptions of Media-Making and Disseminating: The Self as Producer	223
Summary of the Chapter.....	228
Chapter 6: Presentation of Findings Part 3	229
The Workshop Evaluation	229
On Improving Participants’ Understandings of Sexual Consent.....	230
On Inspiring and Empowering Participants to Raise Awareness and Promote Change through Online Participation.....	233
Recommendations for Practice	238
Summary of the Chapter.....	240
Chapter 7: Discussion of Findings.....	241
Sexual Consent Vlogs: The Semiotic Work of YouTubers	241
YouTube Vlogs as Discursive Spaces	242
Affect and Sexual Consent Discourses	246
Engaging with the Scholarship	247
Why Vlog?	253
Engaging with the Scholarship	256
Audience Engagement with Vlogs.....	259
Framework 1: From Vlog ‘Texts’ and ‘Communities’, to ‘Vlog Spaces’ for Sexualities Education.....	263
Perceptions of YouTube Sexual Consent Vlogs as Sexualities Education Resources	264
Perceptions of the YouTube: Popular, Accessible and Risky.....	265
Perceptions of YouTube Vlogs: Mixed Views about Genre and Messaging	267
Perceptions of Media-Making: Learning Through Making, Encountering Technology and Choosing a Genre	269

Perceptions of Media-Making and Disseminating: The Self as Producer	272
Framework 2: Youth Perceptions of Vlogs and Vlogging: Looking at Risk.....	274
Evaluation of the Workshop	276
Considerations for Practice: Time.....	278
Considerations for Practice: Choice.....	279
Considerations for Practice: Participation.....	280
Summary of the Chapter	280
Chapter 8: Conclusion	282
Contributions to the Field	284
Implications of the Study	290
Practical Implications.....	290
Research Implications	295
Limitations	299
Final Thoughts	301
Reference List	303
Appendix A: Ethics Approval	323
Appendix B: Profiling the Vlogs	324
Appendix C: Workshop 1 Participants' Profiles	334
Appendix D: Consent Form Workshop	337
Appendix E: Consent Form/Follow-up Reflection and Feedback October 2018.....	343
Appendix F: Consent Form Vloggers.....	345
Appendix G: Demographic Data Sheet	349
Appendix H: Workshop Design (Original).....	351
Appendix I: Workshop Materials (reflection, activity, feedback)	357
Appendix J: Workshop Design (after second workshop)	364
Appendix K: Other Recommendations.....	368
Appendix L: Interview Questions.....	371
Appendix M: Workshop PowerPoint (Final)	372

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Abstract

This inquiry examines young people's use and perception of YouTube vlogs (video logs) to express themselves and learn about sexual consent and sexual violence. Specifically, this dissertation explores the semiotic work of young YouTubers addressing these topics in their vlogs. I also investigate youth views of YouTube, vlogs, and vlogging for sexualities education online and in the higher education context. While a growing number of studies inquire about youth participation and discourses on YouTube, and to some extent their negotiations of their own gender and sexuality in these spaces, few scholars focus on YouTube vlogs and videos that tackle sexuality-related themes. Yet, the popularity of YouTube sexual consent vlogs in recent years calls for attention to the sexual discourses circulating within them. It also raises questions about the pedagogical application of YouTube vlogs and vlogging in sexualities education, which is an understudied area of research. This dissertation addresses this gap in knowledge, focusing on postsecondary consent education specifically. The current climate of sexual violence in university and college campuses and contemporary criticisms of anti-sexual violence initiatives in postsecondary education necessitates more research on the ways sexual consent is being taught to youth in this context.

This study draws from Constructivist Grounded Theory, arts-based and evaluation methodologies, and multimodal qualitative analysis, to collect and analyze data across two phases and contexts: 1) on YouTube, within 28 vlogs spaces; and 2) in university workshops with 18 participants. I present my findings through two frameworks grounded in my analysis of the YouTube vlogs and youths' voices and experiences. Framework 1

presents the complexity and diversity of sexual consent discourses in these multimodal semiotic spaces informed by vloggers and their audiences. My sample of YouTubers used attractive production strategies and share expressions of vulnerability in the process of communicating feelings and opinions; promoting dialogue, change and survivor-centeredness; responding to prompts; and overall educating and raising awareness about sexual consent and sexual violence. Framework 2 presents my participants' perspectives of YouTube vlogs and vlogging for sexualities education that reflects mixed feelings about the approach. They are informed by their perceptions of and experiences with the platform, the vlog genre, media-making and technology, personal preference, as well as feelings of vulnerability and towards risk. Finally, this study briefly presents the evaluation feedback on the consent education workshops informing this research. This dissertation offers several practical and research implications of the study to guide sexualities education scholars and teachers interested in YouTube, vlogs and vlogging.

Résumé

Cette enquête examine l'utilisation et la perception par les jeunes des vlogues YouTube pour s'exprimer et se renseigner sur le consentement sexuel et la violence sexuelle. Plus précisément, cette thèse explore le travail sémiotique de jeunes 'YouTubers' abordant ces sujets dans leurs vlogues. J'étudie également les opinions des jeunes sur YouTube, les vlogues et le vlogging pour l'éducation à la sexualité en ligne et dans le contexte de l'enseignement supérieur. Alors qu'un nombre croissant d'études se penchent sur la participation et les discours des jeunes sur YouTube et, dans une certaine mesure, sur leurs négociations sur leur genre et leur sexualité dans ces espaces, rares sont les chercheurs qui se concentrent sur les vlogues et les vidéos liés à la sexualité sur YouTube. Pourtant, la popularité des vlogues portant sur le consentement sexuel au cours des dernières années appelle l'attention sur les discours sexuels qui y circulent. Cela soulève également des questions sur le potentiel pédagogique des vlogues et du vlogging pour l'éducation à la sexualité, qui est un domaine de recherche sous-étudié. Cette thèse aborde cette lacune dans les connaissances en mettant l'accent sur l'éducation au consentement sexuel dans le contexte postsecondaire. Le climat actuel de violence sexuelle dans les campus universitaires et collégiaux et les critiques contemporains sur les initiatives de lutte contre la violence sexuelle dans l'enseignement postsecondaire nécessitent davantage de recherches sur la manière dont le consentement sexuel est enseigné aux jeunes dans ce contexte.

Cette étude s'appuie sur le « Constructivist Grounded Theory », les méthodologies artistiques et d'évaluation, et une analyse qualitative multimodale, pour collecter et analyser des données à travers deux phases et contextes: 1) sur YouTube, dans 28 espaces vlogues; et 2) dans des ateliers universitaires avec 18 participants. Je présente mes conclusions à travers deux modèles fondés sur mon analyse des vlogues sur YouTube, et de la voix et de l'expérience des jeunes. Le modèle 1 présente la complexité et la diversité des discours sur le consentement sexuel dans ces espaces sémiotiques et multimodales éclairés par les vloggeurs et leurs publics. Mon échantillon de 'YouTubers' a utilisé des stratégies de production attrayantes et partage des expressions de vulnérabilité dans le processus de communication des sentiments et des opinions; promouvoir le dialogue, le changement et le centrage sur les victimes; répondre aux invites; et dans l'ensemble, éduquer et sensibiliser au consentement sexuel et à la violence sexuelle. Le modèle 2 offre un cadre pour comprendre les points de vue des participants sur les vlogues et vlogging pour l'éducation à la sexualité, reflétant des sentiments mitigés au sujet de l'approche. Ceux-ci sont éclairés par leurs perceptions et leurs expériences avec la plateforme, le genre de vlogue, la création et la technologie des médias, les préférences personnelles, ainsi que des sentiments de vulnérabilité et de risque. Enfin, cette étude présente brièvement le retour d'évaluation des ateliers d'éducation au consentement qui ont inspiré cette recherche. Cette thèse propose plusieurs implications pratiques et de recherche de l'étude pour guider les chercheurs et les enseignants en éducation à la sexualité qui sont intéressés par YouTube, les vlogues, et le vlogging.

List of Tables

Table 1. Methods and methodologies to answer research questions 1 and 2	96
Table 2. Structure of the presentation of findings	137
Table 3. Vloggers and vlogs in this study, with brief descriptions	142
Table 4. Ideational categories	148
Table 5. Vloggers talking about consent as mandatory	149
Table 6. Vloggers addressing affirmative and enthusiastic consent	151
Table 7. Vloggers addressing ‘no means no’	154
Table 8. Vloggers addressing incapacitation	156
Table 9. Evaluation of the March Workshop sessions	229

List of Figures

Figure 1. Map of Chapter 2	22
Figure 2. Map of research design	86
Figure 3. Research timeline	109
Figure 4. Sexual consent and assault vlogs: The semiotic work of young YouTubers	139
Figure 5. Laci Green’s examples of consent and non-consent	152
Figure 6. Dion Yorkie emotionally performs a spoken word piece; Meghan Hughes shares her emotional experience.	177
Figure 7. Laci Green’s living is an example of a bright backdrop	178
Figure 8. Youth perceptions of vlogs and vlogging for sexualities education	193
Figure 9. Mathilda uses tennis balls to exemplify consent for kids (left); Amalie role-plays with the bottom half of hers and another person’s face (right)	219

Glossary of Terms

Higher/Sexuality education: I refer to sexuality education in diverse contexts throughout this work. Higher sexuality education is a term borrowed by Appleton and Stiritz's (2010) work, and it refers to the growing numbers of campus-based prevention and education initiatives related to anti-sexual violence.

Rape culture: The term 'rape culture' refers to the ways that society condones and perpetuates sexual violence through harmful representations of gender and sexuality, rape myths, and the sexualization of violence (Buchwald, Fletcher and Roth, 1993). Rape culture is discussed in Chapters 1 and 2.

Vlog: Vlogs, or video blogs, are a popular genre of YouTube media. They generally involve a person (sometimes two) looking into a camera and speaking freely (without a script) about their opinions, interests, or lives. Burgess and Green (2009) remark, "Not only is the vlog technically easy to produce, generally requiring little more than a webcam and basic editing skills, it is a form whose persistent direct address to the viewer inherently invites feedback" (p.54). **Vlogging**, by extension, is the act of making and disseminating vlogs. More details about vlogs and vlogging are provided throughout the dissertation.

Youth: I employ the term 'youth' to describe people in their late teens to late twenties. This is standard in Canada, with governmental bodies situating 'youth' between similar age brackets: Statistics Canada determine youth are between the ages of 16 and 28 years old, while the Human Resources and Skills Canada classify youth between the ages of 15 and

24 (United Way of Calgary and Alberta, 2010). Many other agencies even extend the age to 30.

Chapter 1: Introduction

This study delves into the world of YouTube to examine how YouTubers, their video blogs (otherwise known as vlogs), and their audiences contribute to sexual consent and sexual violence discourses through their vlog content and approach. My work also investigates how youth¹ feel about using YouTube vlogs and vlogging as potential educational material and practice in sexual consent education, particularly within higher education settings.

In this chapter, I offer my rationale for this study, and provide the context that inspired and informed my research. I also briefly present the study design and research questions, before sharing the structure of the dissertation.

Rationale

My motivation to conduct this research on young vloggers and the media they produce was informed by both personal experience and the current North American climate. Specifically, I wanted to address the knowledge gap on YouTubers' work and the potential implications of vlogs and vlogging for sexualities education because of the current climate of sexual violence in universities, concerns around sexualities education at all levels of education, and my own interest in the growing popularity of YouTube sexual consent vlogs and videos.

¹ See my definition of youth in Glossary of Terms.

When I began my work as a sexualities education researcher and teacher eight years ago, teaching sexual consent to high school and university students felt challenging, inspiring, and transformative, but also frustrating. As a student, sexualities educator, and researcher on the IMPACTS² team actively involved at McGill University in Montreal, Quebec, I was keenly aware of the ubiquitous presence of sexual violence on campus and of the problems surrounding universities' educational responses to sexual violence. My concerns around postsecondary sexual consent education were exacerbated by the knowledge that young people were not receiving the sexualities education they needed in elementary and high school. At the time this study began, school-based (elementary, secondary) sexualities education in Quebec, Canada, was experiencing significant criticism for its inefficiency and ineffectiveness. To me, this context (explored further in the next section) reinforced the need to examine how we could effectively approach sexuality topics, especially sexual consent, in higher education to make up for the possibly absent or inadequate sexualities education in young people's previous schooling.

At the same time, my research and experience at the time suggested that YouTube plays an important role in teaching youth about sexual consent. Young people's use of social media to educate their peers about sexual violence-related matters is not new: social media platforms are popular tools employed by activists and survivors to share narratives, educate others, seek justice, and gain support (Powell, 2015; Salter, 2013; Sills, Pickens,

² IMPACTS: Collaborations to Address Sexual Violence on Campus is a SSHRC-funded research project that is primarily located at McGill University in Montreal, QC. It brings together an international team of scholars, artists and organizations seeking to understand and dismantle sexual violence in universities. For more information, see <https://www.mcgill.ca/definetheline/impacts/about-us>

Beach, Jones, Calder-Dawe, Benton-Greig, & Gavey, 2016). The growing popularity of YouTube videos on sexual consent, brought to my attention by my students and colleagues, prompted me to pay closer attention to young people's participation in this space. The prevalence and popularity of youth-produced online media that educates about sexual consent and advocates for consent culture such as YouTubers' Laci Green's and Hannah Witton's sexuality and consent vlogs³, which garner thousands of views, provided some indication that young people were both producing and consuming their own sexualities education resources on YouTube. While it was reassuring that these vlogs and videos may be addressing gaps in sexualities education with youth taking on the task to educate their peers about topics that may not be effectively addressed in schools, it also raised questions about the type of sexual discourses circulating within YouTube videos and vlogs. I wondered, if youth visit online platforms like YouTube to find out more about sexual consent, what messages do they find? What sexualities education takes place through this type of social media, and how are digital youth and their audiences participating in these spaces?

Moreover, motivated by the criticisms of sexual consent education initiatives on campus and young activists' alternative approaches through media, art, and YouTube, I also began to think about ways to revive universities approaches to higher consent education, to make it more meaningful and representative of youth realities. Having already

³ Laci Green is a celebrity vlogger in her twenties that has over a million subscribers. She specialized in talking about sexuality-related topics. Laci Green's homepage on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/user/lacigreen/about>. Hannah Witton is another celebrity vlogger with over 500,000 YouTube subscribers. She regularly posts about sex and relationships. Her profile is here <https://www.youtube.com/user/hannahgirasol/about>

begun to incorporate YouTube vlogs in my own sexualities education workshops, I asked myself, should sexualities educators in higher education meet youth in ‘their’ online realm, and integrate these social media practices and texts in our teachings? How would postsecondary students accessing and creating these vlogs feel about this type of approach?

Both inspired and intrigued by YouTube’s role in sexualities education, I noted that few researchers addressed these questions. I therefore established the following goals for this study: 1) to address a gap in the scholarship on the semiotic work of young YouTubers using their platforms and vlogs to inform others about sexual consent and sexual assault; 2) to investigate the use of YouTube vlogs and vlogging to teach about sexual consent in higher education; and 3) to offer practical recommendations for a sexual consent workshop framework based on participants’ feedback, for educators in postsecondary institutions interested in teaching about sexual consent using YouTube vlogs and vlogging.

Context of the Study

As mentioned previously, this study was inspired by the current climate in universities, issues with sexualities education in all levels of schooling, and the popularity of YouTube sexualities education media. The following sections elaborate on these contexts and further inform the rationale.

Sexual Violence in the University Context

When I began my research, sexual violence scandals involving university contexts proliferated across media. An incident in 2013 where three McGill football players were

accused of sexual assault by a Concordia student, and their case was later dropped, sparked outrage in the Montreal community (Fazioli, 2014). One year later, Emma Sulkowicz's performance of "Carry that Weight" made international headlines as the student lugged a 50-pound mattress across campus to protest her university's response to her sexual assault allegations (Smith, 2014). Soon, the media hummed with stories of sexual violence on campus and in Hollywood, and catalyzed debates around the existence of a 'rape culture'. The term 'rape culture' materialized in the 1970s, from the seminal work of Susan Brownmiller (1975) entitled "Against our Will: Men, Women and Rape" and the documentary "Rape Culture" (1975), produced by Margaret Lazarus, Renner Wunderlich and Cambridge Documentary Films. Buchwald, Fletcher and Roth's seminal work (1993) offers a popular definition of the concept:

It is a complex set of beliefs that encourages male sexual aggression and supports violence against women. It is a society where violence is seen as sexy and sexuality as violent. In a rape culture, women perceive a continuum of threatened violence that ranges from sexual remarks to sexual touching to rape itself. A rape culture condones physical and emotional terrorism against women as the norm. (Foreword)

Rape culture is entrenched in everyday media, actions, and news, in the jokes that trivialize rape, music that normalizes gendered violence, in the lenient treatment towards perpetrators, and in the prevalent beliefs that women and girls 'ask for it' (Ridgway, 2014).

The notion of a rape culture pervading postsecondary institutions' campuses is not new and has been addressed by Canadian student activists for decades (Canadian

Federation of Students, 2015). In the Canadian context alone, campus surveys investigating the phenomenon reflect that there is a significant problem (for Quebec survey statistics, see the ESSIMU report by Bergeron, Hébert, Ricci, Julien, Rousseau, Duhamel, & Kurtzman, 2016; and the IMPACTS report by Shariff et al., 2018). For instance, the survey reports produced by two university research teams primarily located in Montreal, QC- ESSIMU and IMPACTS- find that various forms of sexual violence are experienced on campuses and in classrooms, primarily affecting female students, LGBTQ youth, international students, and Indigenous persons. Several scholars contend that elements of campus culture, such as fraternities, binge drinking, and hook-up cultures that are popular in North American colleges and universities, create a potent backdrop for sexual violence amongst postsecondary students (Jozkowski, 2015; O’Sullivan, 1993; Shaw, 2016; Sweeney, 2014).

In many ways universities reflect the same patriarchal systems that pervade other traditional and longstanding societal structures such as the legal and government systems, which contribute to a culture where survivors of sexual violence might not feel protected or inclined to come forward. University cultures often perpetuate male-dominated discourses and institutional structures that silence and control women’s voices and behaviors (Burnett, Mattern, Herakova, Kahl Jr., Tobola, & Borsen, 2009; Carmody, Ekhomu, & Payne, 2009; Day, 1994; Eyre, 2000; Lundy-Wagner & Winkle-Wagner, 2013; Marshall, Dalyot, & Galloway, 2014; O’ Sullivan, 1993). Power dynamics and the profoundly patriarchal nature of academia make it difficult for women to speak out (Eller, 2016; Eyre, 2000; Marshall et al., 2014). Such an environment dissuades reporting unwanted sexual advances or behaviors, particularly when the victim is a woman. Additionally, when accusations are

made, the complexity of tenure, unions, and lawsuits render it difficult to deal with faculty accused of sexual misconduct with students or colleagues (Brown, 2015).

Universities across North America and the US have struggled to quickly and effectively implement policy and educational programs to raise awareness about sexual violence and consent, and to respond to reported incidents (Quinlan, Fogel, Quinlan, & Taylor, 2017). Yet, as I explore in Chapter 2, consent education in postsecondary contexts remains a contentious issue (Jozkowski, 2015; Muehlenhard, Humphreys, Jozkowski, & Peterson, 2016; Shafer, Ortiz, Thomson, & Huemmer, 2018). Ongoing criticism related to the content and approaches in university campaigns and programs indicate a need for further research on better practices.

Sexualities Education Programming in Schools

While sexual violence continues to be a pervasive problem on postsecondary campuses, the problematic realities of sexual health programming in elementary and high school suggest that young people may not be receiving the comprehensive sexualities education they need to engage in healthy relationships prior to attending college or university.

School-based (elementary and high school) sexualities education programming in the province of Quebec, where I am located and this study is grounded, has been undergoing a crisis for the last two decades. In 2001, the Quebec Education Program removed sexuality education from the curriculum, and the topic became a ‘broad area of learning’ to be included in the classroom wherever and whenever educators felt it was

applicable (Duquet, 2003). As a result, youth across Quebec received disproportionate amounts of sexuality education, when programming was offered at all (Otis, Gaudreau, Duquet, Michaud, and Nonn, 2012). Sexualities education in Quebec remains controversial and fragile; still little is known about its re-implementation following a recent pilot study of a new provincial program (MEES, n.d.). The problems in Quebec mirror those across many schools across Canada and the US⁴: in several cases, sexuality education is either not being offered, or when it is, programs are neither comprehensive nor inclusive (Lamb, 2010; Manduley, Mertens, & Sultana, 2018). This prompts the question whether, and what, they are learning about sexual consent and sexual violence.

Moreover, while comprehensive programming is increasing popular across Canadian schools and internationally, there are still barriers that prevent young people from receiving this type of education in elementary and high schools. Thomas and Aggleton (2016) argue that sexualities education “needs to be comprehensive, clear and focused, up-to-date, inclusive, developmentally appropriate, sensitive to community values and designed to engage with the behaviours and needs of a diverse range of young people” (p. 23). A comprehensive approach to sexualities education generally promotes the healthy sexual development of young people, as this type of programming typically encourages safer sexual behaviors, and provides individuals with the skills and knowledge they need to engage in the latter (Kirby, 2007). Comprehensive sexuality education programming for

⁴ Each province in Canada approaches sexualities education differently, and each contend with individual issues. For example, sexualities education programming in Ontario has encountered a lot of resistance since the shift in government, and several aspects of the previously progressive curriculum have been withdrawn (Gollom, 2018).

older youth and adults can help individuals with their relationships, their parenting, and their sexuality (Green, 2017). And important to this context, this approach emphasizes the importance of communication and consent in healthy relationships. Yet, several factors can prevent young people from receiving comprehensive sexualities education, such as schools' adherence to more conservative values and the vulnerability of school-based programming to the political climate.

Ideologies are deeply embedded within sexualities education programming, affecting what is taught to young people. In her review of the literature on education policies worldwide, Tiffany Jones (2011) developed a 'sexuality education discourse exemplar' showing four broad trends of sexual discourses that emerge in education programs and policies: conservative, liberal, critical and postmodern. Briefly, liberal programs aim to develop the sexual knowledge and identities of youth, while critical and postmodern approaches encourage them to deconstruct hegemonic structures of sexuality and gender and to effect change. However, conservative programs take "an authoritative approach [and inculcate] students with the dominant values, beliefs and practices of the time," (p.136) which in turn leads several programs to cast a sexual ideal that silences and excludes those youth that live outside the margins. Conservative programming is problematic for women and girls, Fine (1988) argues, because it ignores the 'discourse of pleasure', and instead features sexual activity as violent, morally reprehensible, and a form of victimization. This is still a popular approach to sexualities education, particularly in the United States (Lamb, 2010). Whether a comprehensive or conservative approach is adopted often depends on the political climate, which in turn affects funding and curricula; for

instance, when the new Ford government was elected, the comprehensive Ontario curriculum was repealed in favor of a conservative approach (Star Editorial Board, 2019).

The implications of these realities are that students arriving in postsecondary contexts likely possess very different levels of knowledge of, and varied attitudes towards, sexuality and gender, and by extension, sexual consent and sexual violence. I believe that problematic sexualities education in elementary and high schools reinforces the need to understand and strengthen the educational responses to sexual violence in alternative contexts, such as colleges, universities and online spaces.

Online Sexualities Education: Where Social Media Comes into the Picture

While schools might not be meeting the sexualities education needs of young people, online platforms are providing young people with alternative opportunities to access and to learn about sexuality from a variety of sources like websites and pornography (Attwood, Barker, Boynton, & Hancock, 2015; Boies, 2002; Simon & Daneback, 2013). While some scholars (Omori, Zhang, Allen, Ota, & Imamura, 2011; Peter and Valkenburg, 2011) express concerns over exposure and consumption of sexually explicit materials for both younger and older audiences, others contend that digital media platforms are the 21st century sexuality education tools. Deborah Levine (2007), for example, highlights the range of information one can find online, and also draws attention to some of the benefits of learning through digital platforms, arguing that “the Internet levels the playing field and removes the shame or embarrassment that some people may have about sexual issues. The Internet allows us all to be novices and experts at the same time” (p.56). And research

suggests that social media platforms specifically are changing the role of the Internet in sexualities education, as young people can take a more active role public pedagogy by sharing their sexual knowledge, perspectives, and narratives (Attwood et al., 2015; Manduley, et al., 2018; Sills et al., 2016).

However, youth participation online, in general and in relation to sexualities education, continues to inspire debates amongst researchers. There is a wide scholarship on youth digital participation that investigates the latter as ‘socio cultural practice’, as digital citizenship, and within more specific digital participation frameworks (Literat, Kligler-Vilenchik, Brough, & Blum-Ross, 2018). The participation of 21st century youth in online spaces has yielded some celebratory discourse about the potential of the internet for education and civic engagement. Bruns (2008) argues that young people today are active ‘producers’ of meaning, both consuming and producing media texts. Embracing their dual role of producers and consumers, Jenkins et al. (2009) express that many young people are creating participatory cultures where they engage in ‘participatory learning’ and participatory politics’. That said, Literat et al. (2018) warn that a critical framework is needed to avoid lumping youth and participation in set categories. They argue that participation varies across aims, actors, intensities and contexts. Thus, the type of participation taking place in online spaces cannot be assumed, but rather, should be critically examined.

The diversity of perspectives on youth participation (which I explore more widely in Chapter 2) and the popularity of online and youth-led platforms informing their peers and

other audiences about sexuality topics speaks to the necessity for further research on the ways in which youth communicate on various platforms about sexuality topics. While a growing number of scholars are investigating young YouTuber's practices (see below), little is known about YouTubers vlogging about sexuality, and specifically, sexual violence and consent.

The YouTube Context. I focused on the YouTube context in this study because it is both a popular and controversial social media site. YouTube is the leading social media platform in Canada (Powell, 2015; Statista, n.d.). When I accessed the site in June 2019, YouTube⁵ boasted about an audience of over one billion users worldwide. The platform advertises, '18 to 34 year olds are watching', suggesting that it is particularly enjoyed by this population. While popular, YouTube can be a contentious platform. The site's description reads: "Our mission is to give everyone voice and show them the world". The platform's marketing, combined with the rise of celebrity YouTubers, gives the impression that YouTube can launch an everyday person to stardom (Burgess and Green, 2009). Its statement of values expresses the company's beliefs in "freedom of expression, freedom of information, freedom of opportunity, and freedom to belong". YouTube is especially renowned for its 'Do-It-Yourself' (DIY) and vlog cultures (Burgess and Green, 2009), which are shaped by young people's media-making and community-building practices. Users who upload videos still need to abide by community and copyright guidelines; should these be breached, YouTube can warn them to withdraw their material from the site,

⁵ The YouTube site sometimes changes its statistics. These were posted in June 2019 via this link : <https://www.youtube.com/yt/about/press/>

remove their access rights to YouTube, and even terminate their account in more extreme cases. While Burgess and Green (2009) describe YouTube as an ‘aggregator’ rather than a producer of content, YouTube’s (n.d.) active involvement in user production and the company’s vested economic interest suggests that its role extends beyond simply providing a repository space.

Regardless of its DIY look, YouTube is inherently commercial. YouTube algorithms determine what videos appear at the top of search lists, thus controlling who is seen and heard (Bishop, 2018; Burgess and Green, 2009; Caron et al., 2016). Bishop’s (2018) work clearly highlights the detrimental effects of algorithms, arguing that the platform selects and prioritizes the videos that prescribe to the values they embrace, “YouTube intentionally scaffolds videos consistent with the company’s commercial goals and directly punishes noncommercially viable genres of content through relegation and obscuration” (p.71). She also contends that YouTube algorithms and services manipulate content producers to create videos that fit their criteria of quality and potential for popularity. With YouTube’s commercial interests and values surreptitiously driving the media content of the platform, the site thus becomes a contentious site of discourse. Safety is also a concern on YouTube, as social media platforms provide spaces where ‘technology-facilitated sexual violence’ like trolling and cyber-harassment frequently occurs (Henry & Powell, 2016), and where rape culture is often mirrored.

Youth-produced YouTube Vlogs about Sexual Consent. In spite of its challenges, YouTube serves as a popular platform for advocacy and discussion about

sexual consent. YouTubers such as Laci Green and Hannah Witton, Jack and Dean, and Just Between Us, are well-known, and their vlogs about sexual consent and sexual violence have amassed thousands over viewers and comments.⁶ Vlogs are also a popular genre amongst DIY YouTubers. Molyneaux, O'Donnell, Gibson, and Singer (2008) define vlogs as “a form of online publishing, allowing everyone with web access and simple video production tools - for example, a computer and a webcam or a cell phone with video capabilities - to create and post content” (p.2). In recent years, the work of youth vloggers using their YouTube platform and vlogs to discuss sexuality-related topics has attracted the attention of youth, the public, and scholars (Hautea, 2017; Johnston, 2017; Leeming, 2015; Powell, 2017). However, in spite of growing scholarship on youth practices on YouTube (e.g., Caron, 2017; Lange, 2014; Jenkins, Ito & Boyd, 2016; Raby, Caron, Théwissen-LeBlanc, Prioletta, & Mitchell, 2018), there is still a dearth in research on the ways youth use their YouTube videos and vlogging practices to discuss and raise awareness about sexual consent and sexual violence (Garcia & Vemuri, 2017; Johnston, 2017; Manduley et al., 2018).

The complexity of youth participation online, the nature of YouTube, and the popularity of this platform as a sexualities education resource for young people who may not be receiving comprehensive sexualities education elsewhere calls for a better understanding of what they are saying and how they are participating on YouTube about sexual violence and sexual consent. This knowledge gap strongly influenced the first

⁶ These vloggers are included in my study. Details on their profile and videos can be found in Appendix B.

research question in this study, which investigates the semiotic work in sexual consent vlogs on YouTube.

Bringing YouTube to the classroom. The popularity of YouTube, sexual consent vlogs, and vlogging, combined with the need to reimagine sexualities education in higher education, may also indicate that scholars need to further explore how and whether sexualities educators should bring YouTube sexual consent vlogs and vlogging practices to higher education classrooms. There exists a solid body of literature around media and sexualities education advocating for the inclusion of media analysis and production when teaching sexuality topics (Bragg, 2006; Giroux, 2006; Manduley et al., 2018; Neustifter, Blumer, O'Reilly, & Ramirez, 2015). Research on media and digital literacy programs oriented towards sexuality education, such as *Media Relate* (Grahame, Bragg, Oliver, Buckingham, & Simons, 2005) or *Take It Seriously: Abstinence and the Media* (Pinkleton, Austin, Cohen, Chen, & Fitzgerald, 2008), suggest that teaching media literacy skills successfully aids youth to be critical of media messages and inform their knowledge about sexuality. Yet, few scholars have explored the potential of YouTube, vlogs, and vlogging in sexualities education classrooms or workshops (Manduley et al., 2018). It is namely for this reason that the second and third research questions guiding my work seeks to explore how youth perceive these in the contexts of sexual consent education.

The Study Design and Research Questions

I was inspired by the concept of 'bricolage' (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000) to build my research design, a process that involves 'quilt-making' with various methodologies to gain

critical insight on an issue. This study combines Constructivist Grounded Theory (Charmaz, 2006, 2014), Arts-based (Mitchell & De Lange, 2011) and Evaluation methods (Newby, 2014), and multimodal, qualitative content analysis (Altheide & Schneider, 2013; Bryman, 2004) to investigate the meaning-making processes and texts of youth vlogging about sexual consent on YouTube, and youth perspectives of vlogs and vlogging as tools for a critical sexualities education. I also share participants' feedback on a media-education-based sexual consent education workshop. Findings are grounded in my analysis of 28 sexual consent and assault YouTube videos produced by teenagers and young adults, 928 audience responses in 20 of these videos, interviews with three vloggers, a three-part workshop and focus group interviews with 12 university students, and a follow-workshop with 6 undergraduate and graduate participants.

My research questions are:

1. How do these YouTube videos and vloggers discuss sexual consent and assault in their media? Why do YouTube vloggers choose to make media about sexual consent and assault? How might audiences respond to these texts?
2. How do young YouTube users perceive vlogging and vlogs as sexualities education tools, online and in the university classroom?
3. What were participants' perceptions of a YouTube and vlog-making consent education workshop held in a university context?

One rationale for using grounded theory is to develop theory that makes sense of people's actions and thinking within specific contexts (Charmaz, 2006). For this reason, the study aims to offer two emergent theoretical frameworks that represent my inquiry into research questions 1 and 2, and are grounded in my participants' voices and experiences.

The purpose of Framework 1 is to explore the semiotic work of YouTubers in a sample of 28 vlogs on sexual consent, and Framework 2 aims to uncover what 3 YouTubers and 18 Montreal-based university students think about vlogs and vlogging for sexual consent education in postsecondary contexts. While I recognize that these findings are representative of specific contexts and voices, it is my hope that they provide a useful departure point for future researchers pursuing similar work in these understudied areas. The overarching aim of this qualitative study is to provide much-needed multi-perspectival insight on YouTube, YouTube vlogs, and vlogging as sites and practices for learning about sexual consent, online and in the context of higher sexuality education. The research design is elaborated upon in Chapter 3.

Organization of the Dissertation

Chapter 1. This chapter offers a rationale and background of the study, and summarizes the research design and research goals.

Chapter 2. Chapter 2 consists of the literature review, where I explore the following sensitizing concepts: sexual violence and sexual consent discourses, social semiotics and youth media participation, and critical and media-based sexualities education. Specifically, I define sexual discourse, using a historical lens to situate how feminist and patriarchal discourses on sexual violence contribute to, or help dismantle the pervasiveness of rape culture in North America. I specifically explain how these sexual violence discourses emerge in online spaces like the one in this study. Contemporary sexual consent discourses and their criticisms are examined to set the stage for my inquiry. Switching

contexts, I shed light on current theory on media and meaning-making, turning to the scholarship on youth participation in the latter, online and specifically on YouTube. I focus on the scholarship intersecting YouTube, vlogging and sexual discourse to examine what is known and identify gaps. The final section offers a conceptualization of critical sexualities education that informs and empowers youth, and incorporates youth media practices. The chapter contextualizes my study and reflects gaps in scholarship.

Chapter 3. I begin by summarizing the overall research design and the epistemological frameworks that inform and guide this study (Constructivism and Pragmatism). I then review the specific methodologies adopted in this study, namely, Constructivist Grounded Theory (Charmaz, 2006, 2014), Arts-based research (Mitchell & De Lange), and Evaluation (Newby, 2014). I also explain how a variety of methods were employed, including qualitative content analysis, interview, focus groups, workshops and workshop artifacts, and field notes, to gather my data. The process of sampling and analysis are examined in the remainder of the chapter.

Chapter 4. I present and discuss the first main theoretical frameworks that emerged from this study. Framework 1 reflects the findings from my first research question, illustrating the complexity of vlogs as social semiotic spaces where YouTubers create and debate meanings of sexual consent and sexual violence. I look closely at relationships between producers' discourses, content and affective strategies they employ, and their audiences.

Chapter 5. I introduce the findings that inform Framework 2, which seeks to answer my second research question. I share youth perceptions of vlogs and vlogging as sexualities education resources, online and in the classroom, and discuss how their views of these texts and practices for education appear also entrenched in perceptions of the platform and the genre, as well as subjective feelings about media-making, being producers, and disseminating.

Chapter 6. I share the evaluation feedback for the media education-based, sexual consent workshops that served as sites for data collection in this study. These findings respond to my third research question and contribute to the development of the workshop framework offered in Appendix J.

Chapter 7. I revisit the categories and their relationships for both theoretical frameworks (described paragraph above), and I discuss their contributions to the field. Chapter 7 ends with a discussion of the larger recommendations that arose from the workshop evaluation, pertaining to participants' concerns around time, participation and choice.

Chapter 8. The concluding chapter summarizes the findings from this study and their contributions to new knowledge. I also reflect on the larger implications of these findings on the pedagogical potential and risks of YouTube vlogs, and vlogging for sexualities education.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter offers a more detailed portrait of this study's background. Since my work largely draws from Constructivist Grounded Theory (Charmaz, 2006, 2014), I avoid presenting a predetermined and firm conceptual framework for this study. Instead, Chapter 2 examines how the current scholarship approaches the sensitizing concepts that emerged from my inquiry: sexual consent and sexual violence discourses, youth media participation and social semiotics, as well as critical and media education-based sexualities education. As I discuss more extensively in my Methodology Chapter, this literature review seeks to set the stage for my research. The structure of the chapter is reflected in Figure 1.

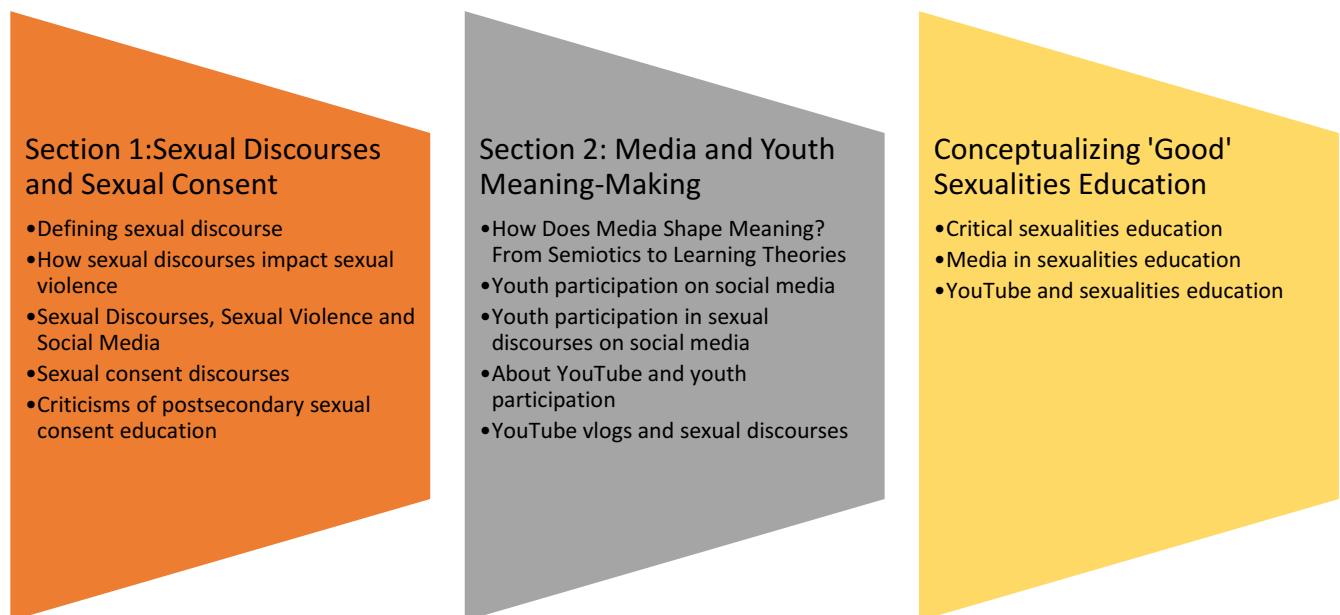


Figure 1. Map of Chapter 2

The first section of this Chapter provides a definition of sexual discourses, and from there, offers a historical overview of sexual violence discourses in North America that

illustrates how sexual discourses related to sexual violence and sexual consent are entrenched in complex political and gendered histories, and need to be critically examined. I narrow my review of the literature to sexual violence discourses online and criticisms of sexual consent discourses. The second section turns to media as a site for participation in discourses. I discuss briefly how scholars theorize about meaning-making and education online, in general and for sexualities education, before examining how youth participation in meaning-making online and on YouTube has been previously addressed in the literature. Specifically, I focus on youth contributions to contemporary sexual discourses on gendered and sexual violence, online and on YouTube specifically. The third section explores the scholarship on critical sexualities education, which calls for the exploration of sexuality topics in more critical, ethical, and empowering ways. In keeping with my study's overarching goal to develop an understanding of vlogs and vlogging practices within the broad umbrella of sexualities education (online, in the classroom), the closing section of this Chapter examines the scholarship on incorporating media and media education in sexualities education, and further highlights the gap in the literature on using YouTube in this context.

Sexual Discourses and Sexual Consent

In this section, I begin by offering a definition of sexual discourse. I provide a broad background of the patriarchal and feminist ideologies that have shaped understandings of sexual consent and sexual violence discourses in North America. The reason behind this is to illustrate the complex ways in which patriarchy and rape culture, and the institutions

within which they proliferate, contribute to harmful and problematic perceptions of women and sexual violence. I provide this background of sexual discourses to set the stage for discussion of the scholarship on contemporary sexual consent discourses.

Defining Sexual Discourse

The term ‘sexual discourse’ gained popularity through Michel Foucault’s influential work entitled *The History of Sexuality* (1990), which provides a historical account of the ways that major institutions- law, medicine, religion, politics- developed, controlled and repressed sexuality in various societal contexts. ‘Discourse’ is understood as meaning more than speech and includes the ways that institutions and groups of individuals communicate using common linguistic, symbolic, and physical patterns to express their shared beliefs of sexuality. Gee (2005a) describes “Discourse,” with a capital D, as “ways of combining and integrating language, actions, interactions, ways of thinking, believing, valuing, and using various symbols, tools, and objects to enact a particular sort of socially recognizable identity” (p.21). Discourse possesses an invisible, shifting power, one that manifests and grows based on the individuals and institutions supporting it. Discourse gains meaning when a “socially situated identity” communicates to give meaning to a “socially situated activity” (p.22). Who takes part in it and for what purpose is central to understanding the political nature of Discourse. There are ‘right’ manners of doing, acting, speaking and being, to participate in Discourse and to give it power.

Foucault's (1990) work on sexual discourse illustrates the complex and co-dependent relationships between power, knowledge, sexuality, individuals, institutions, and culture. I highlight here some key descriptive points.

Sexual discourses are motivated by power, knowledge and pleasure. The relationship between Discourse and sexuality reflects the insidious power that the former holds on the social, economic, cultural contexts in which it is located. Foucault (1990) discusses how the larger institutional structures have historically regulated sexual knowledge and pleasure, for their own benefit or what they perceived to be the common good. For example, Foucault suggests that it was in the interest of controlling demographics and ensuring the continuity of a labour force in a growing economy that spurred the legal, medical, and political arenas to maintain heteronormative values and sexual practices through law, medicine (for example, the use of hysterectomy to address hysteria) and censorship. Contemporary sexual discourses arguably continue to reflect the same impetus to control sexual ethics, behaviours, and attitudes, and sexual pleasure, as I address throughout the remainder of the section.

Sexual discourses can empower or oppress individuals, communities, and institutions. The power of sexual discourses to inform and regulate sexual attitudes and behaviours means that various populations who fall outside the stereotypical 'correct' behavior risk being sidelined, and may become vulnerable to laws that restrict their sexual rights and desires. For instance, in the 19th century, painting non-heteronormative sexual acts as taboos and demeaning the sexual behaviours of LGBTQ, women, and children,

pushed these populations' sexualities past the margins of the law and morality (Foucault, 1990). Foucault describes how the characters of “the hysterical woman”, the “masturbating child”, and the “perverse adult” (p.104-105) helped form “specific mechanisms of knowledge and power centering on sex” (p.103). And despite the great strides in advancing marginalized sexualities in the later 20th century and beginning of the 21st century, women, youth, and LGBTQ communities continue to be problematized in contemporary conservative and liberal political agendas. Nicola Gavey (2005) argues that it is the combination of power and discourse that ultimately feeds into and helps maintain a rape culture:

In the blended realm of sexual coercion and sexual violence we find a domain in which it is necessary to simultaneously take into account both disciplinary forms of power that incite consent and/or compliance as well as those forms of power that fit with a more conventional understanding that includes acts of force (or the threat of force) by one person against another. (p.91)

Insofar that discourse can yield disciplinary power in positive ways (e.g., rape laws), the latter also feeds into a system where sexual violence is facilitated by systems of power that serve to oppress and marginalize some groups.

Sexual discourses are complex, fluid, and their power is precarious. Their fluidity and dependence on power suggest that dominant discourses occupy a precarious position, subject to transformation and loss of status. Foucault (1990) refers to the “plurality of resistances” (p.96) to describe the ways that sexual discourses constantly

interact with one another, colliding, merging, altering, and taking power from each other. Kammeyer (2008) writes, “At any given historical-societal moment, one or the other of these forms of discourse is likely to have hegemony” (p.23). For instance, the 20th century saw the emergence of three feminist waves that challenged and considerably changed contemporary sexual discourses that had mostly rested on patriarchal ideologies until this point. The first wave consisting of suffragists in the early 20th century, followed by the second and third wave of feminists in the 1960s and 1990s respectively (Freedman, 2002, 2013); each were instrumental to different extents at bringing sexual violence to the forefront of public and legal discourse.

Additionally, as Gee (2005a) points out, ‘Discourses’ are positioned within the contexts of the people who use them. Sexual discourses are affected by other intersecting factors that impact individual identities such as race, social class, gender, religion, cultural beliefs, economic capital, and more. Legal and critical race scholar, Kimberle Crenshaw (1991) writes about the importance of recognizing this ‘intersectionality’ of identities in social justice discourse, drawing from her work with Black women to explain how the intersection of their gender and race shape experiences. This lens shows how their encounters with sexual violence differs from white females, because their economic and social capital, as well as history of oppression, may create barriers that the latter do not face.

Discourses are further complicated by the insidious ways that dominant discourses can capture and market others (Gill, 2007). The best example to demonstrate this discourse

hijacking is to refer to the general feminist and patriarchal sexual discourses. While at first glance, these broad discourses seem to be polar opposites, post-feminism serves as an example of a feminist ideology that sometimes seems to appropriate and validate neoliberal, often sexist, perceptions of gender (Gill, 2007). Rosalind Gill writes about the image of the powerful, independent, ‘sexy’ female whose beauty is tied to her consumer habits that emerged in 1990s popular media and marketing ads and continues today. She notes, “It represents a shift in the way that power operates: from an external, male judging gaze to a self-policing, narcissistic gaze. It can be argued that this represents a higher or deeper form of exploitation than objectification- one in which the objectifying male gaze is internalized to form a new disciplinary regime” (Gill, 2007, p. 151-152). Her argument suggests that even discourses of female empowerment can become entangled with repressive, neoliberal ideologies that seek to police and market women’s bodies.

The complexity and power of sexual discourses give cause for concern, particularly because of their roles in perpetuating rape culture. In the upcoming section, I briefly and generally explore how some prominent ideologies – patriarchal and feminist- drive sexual discourses and have moved understandings of sexual violence and sexual consent in the 20th and 21st century.

How Sexual Discourses Impact Sexual Violence

The relationships between sexual discourses and sexual violence are complex and extensive, and it is not feasible in the context of this dissertation to do them full justice, nor to offer an ‘established’ history when there is no recognized consensus. I acknowledge that

the historical overview that follows is brief and subjective; however, I believe that it helps clarify the ways in which sexual discourses and the ideologies that sustain them impact thinking related to sexual violence, survivors, and perpetrators.

Patriarchy and sexual discourses. Feminist activists and scholars have long blamed the patriarchal nature of society for the continued occurrence and implicit support of structures condoning gender inequality and sexual violence. Patriarchy, Lerner (1986) argues, is a complex concept that is often interpreted differently by feminists and non-feminists. She offers the following definition,

Patriarchy in its wider definition means the manifestation and institutionalization of male dominance over women and children in the family and the extension of male dominance over women in society in general. It implies that men hold power in all the important institutions of society and that women are deprived of access to such power. It does *not* imply that women are either totally powerless or totally deprived of rights, influence, and resources. (p.239)

In a patriarchal society, non-male bodies are objectified, and male violence becomes a means to maintain control. Power is conflated with manhood, and boys and men are taught that control, and to some extent sexual control, becomes the measure for masculinity (Jensen, 2014).

Historically, patriarchy has meant that women and girls were treated as ‘lesser’ beings. Many Western religious texts exacerbate that they are mere burdens of families, and their bodies are both rape-able and sellable (Freedman, 2002; Messina-Dysert, 2014).

Advocates of patriarchal ideologies have also couched their arguments about the superiority of males in scientific arguments (Freedman, 2002); for example, Thornhill and Palmer's (2000) controversially suggest that evolutionary biology is a factor in sexual violence. Ringrose and Renold (2012) cite Gavey's work related to blaming women for their own assault, "Drawing on an evolutionary fantasy about hard-wired male sexuality, is the idea that somehow an electromagnetic, biological (or affective) force will stir up crazed, uncontrollable hormonal sexual desire when in the company of women" (p.334). This historical perception of men with a biological imperative for violence and for power has positioned women as the 'gatekeepers' of their sexuality. In turn, this framing of women has fostered victim-blaming attitudes that has led to rape myths around women 'asking for it' when wearing certain types of clothing or behaving like 'sluts' (Hackman, Pember, Wilkershon, Burton, & Usdan, 2017; Ringrose & Renold, 2012). The positioning of women in a patriarchal society ultimately affects the ways we acknowledge and seek to prevent sexual violence, insofar as discourses and actions continue to concentrate on the victimhood of women (Pease, 2014).

It is not difficult to see how patriarchal perspectives of gender and sexuality portends to a culture that supports and condones sexual violence against women. The realities in historical and contemporary societies illustrate the extent to which bodies and sexualities have been discriminated against, oppressed, mutilated, and shamed across religious, political, social, cultural, technological, and geographical contexts. Rape culture, defined in Chapter 1, is both a manifestation and tool of the patriarchy.

One of the indications of a rape culture is evidence of institutional oppression of women and girls. For example, several feminist and legal scholars have identified ways that patriarchal ideals have underlain and supported problematic, sexist laws related to women's rights and rape (Anderson, 2016; Freedman, 2013; Larcombe, 2014; Legrand, 1977). Up until the late 20th century, American rape laws stipulated sexual violence included vaginal penetration, a male perpetrator, an attack, and the women's non-consent (Anderson, 2016). Women often had to show evidence of resistance for their case to be taken seriously, but in many cases, their complaints did not reach the courts because of the victim's behaviour during the incident and when dealing with police, or due to their lack of visible injuries (Legrand, 1977). Davidson (2016) notes, "A woman's evidence of rape was considered so inherently unreliable and untrustworthy that the Crown had to offer independent, supporting confirmation in some form before a man could be found guilty of this offence" (p. 1). Beliefs about the prevalence of false allegations by women who are vengeful or regretful, women's secret enjoyment of forcible sex, and men's biological imperative to rape presented barriers to rape cases making it to the courts (Legrand, 1977). Virtue, chastity, and seduction prominently feature in historical discourse around sexual violence, with women's sexual histories and their previous consent to other sexual relationships questioned in the courts (Freedman, 2013). These perceptions of women have birthed common myths around sexual violence that continue to impact perceptions of sexual violence incidents and that perpetuate disbelief of survivors; these myths suggest that women lie about their rape, or some women over others are likely to be raped (Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1994).

The patriarchy's objectification and control over non-male bodies (including female and gender non-conforming) is often exacerbated by other factors, such as race, colonialism, and war. Several scholars recognize that the plight of black men and women in a rape culture is perceived and dealt with differently than their White counterparts (Crenshaw, 1991; Freedman, 2013; hooks, 1994). Historically, Black men were disproportionately accused of rape and assault, for reasons such as subverting the Civil Rights Movement, reinforcing White power and maintaining the 'savage' representation of Blackness to continue to excuse harm against the communities (Davis, 1978; Freedman, 2013). In the same vein, war and colonialism are deeply entrenched in sexual violence discourses. Janet Halley (2008) writes of sexual violence as a tool of war, wherein rape provides motive (e.g., protecting women) or is weaponized (e.g., raping women).

Women's bodies have always provided a landscape on which men have waged their battles, even after they were won. The insidious presence of colonialism in North America means that Indigenous women continue to experience disproportionate amounts of sexual violence. Andrea Smith (2005) argues that "because Indian bodies are "dirty", they are considered violable and "rapeable", and the rape of bodies that are considered inherently impure or dirty simply does not count" (p.11). Smith further notes that in 60% of cases of violence against Indigenous women in North America, perpetrators are White. In Canada, Indigenous women's experience of institutional and sexual violence have been largely ignored, in spite of calls for government action (National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, 2018). Notably, the large number of unaddressed and unsolved cases involving missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls in Canada

reflects the violent colonialist background of the country and the prejudice Indigenous women experience. In 2016, a national inquiry was created to investigate the violence against women and girls and to advocate for accountability.

Feminism and sexual discourses. While patriarchy, racism and colonialism, amongst other oppressive, systemic structures, continue to prevail, the rise of feminist movements in the 20th century significantly changed the ways that sexual and gendered violence has been acknowledged, understood and addressed.

The early suffrage movement in the 19th and early 20th centuries earns credit for their work in raising awareness about the ways that women's bodies were objectified, treated inferiorly and violated in American society (Freedman, 2013). However, this movement mostly advocated for the rights of white women: the suffrage movement was deeply racialized, echoing the large discourse around violence and 'savage' Black men, and excluding women of color. The suffragist movement made considerable advances in getting sexual and gendered violence against women acknowledged, and in the 1960s, sexual assault and rape featured prominently in the agenda of second wave feminists.

The second wave was largely white, although it was inspired by the Civil Rights movement at the time (Freedman, 2002). The demands and work of diverse feminist, black, and indigenous scholars and activists diverged in many respects from their cis-, hetero-, and white counterparts. Referring to the popularity of the concept of sisterhood at the time, Freedman (2002) notes how "many women of color felt excluded from a theory that elevated gender at the expense of race or class identity" (p.89). Radical feminism grew at

the time, with women arguing “the personal is political”, and “rejecting the ideological division of public and private spheres that dismissed women’s claims of injustice as merely personal” (p.87). Prominent feminists such as Catharine MacKinnon and Susan Brownmiller (1975) steered the discourse towards the ways that patriarchy and culture condoned sexual violence. The feminist movement at the time gained political traction and called for better laws supporting victims of sexual violence, and a more complex definition of rape. Understandings of rape were evolving beyond the myth that rape occurs only with strangers, as sociologists, researchers, and feminists underscored the prevalence of marital and acquaintance rape (Gavey, 2005). The legal definitions of rape and assault expanded to become more inclusive and to recognize the different ways victims could be coerced or otherwise forced into sex.

Discourses around sexual violence shifted in the third wave, with women steering away from the previous radical perceptions of sex as rape made popular by feminists like Catharine MacKinnon, and shifting towards a more nuanced understanding of discursive power as described in Foucault’s work (Powell, 2010). The third wave continued to bring attention to rape and sexual assault, and unprecedented consent laws and policies emerged. For example, as I elaborate on next, the notion of ‘communicative consent’, made popular by feminist legal philosopher Lois Pineau, veered understandings of consent away from a model framed around a victim’s resistance (saying no, fighting back), to one where all partners are responsible for communicating with each other to ensure they are having a mutually beneficial sexual encounter (Powell, 2010). With the third wave came different forms of feminist participation. Girls and young women increasingly partook in visible

subcultures such as Riot Grrrl, and adopted their own styles of resistance through zines, websites, and music (Harris, 2008). Access to technology and online platforms provided young feminists with significantly more accessible and visible platforms than their historical counterparts. Some scholars even suggest the 21st century brought on a ‘fourth wave’ of feminism, one that is heavily influenced by third wave politics but facilitated by digital tools and spaces (Munro, 2013).

Recent feminism as deployed by young people has been criticized. Powell (2010) describes the current postfeminist era as “our living in a time in which feminism has outlived its purpose: that it has already been successful in ending gender inequality” (p.76). Today, many girls and young women distance themselves from being categorized as ‘feminists’. Rosalind Gill’s (2007) work demonstrates the prevalence of this postfeminism by bringing attention to the ways that media culture commensurate the beauty and beautification of female bodies and their sexualities, with empowerment. Postfeminism collapses the idea of ‘girl power’ with individualism and consumerism. Gill writes, “What is striking is the degree of fit between the autonomous postfeminist subject and the psychological subject demanded by neoliberalism. At the heart of both is the notion of the ‘choice biography’ and the contemporary injunction to render one’s life knowable and meaningful through a narrative of free choice and autonomy, however constrained one actually might be.” (p. 154) From this perspective, women and girls’ feelings of autonomy and empowerment is framed to meet the demands of neoliberalism; as Harris (2004) points out, the ‘can-do’ girl is one who is individualistic and fits within the 21st century consumer lifestyle. Despite these criticisms, contemporary, young digital feminists (female or other)

are making an impact through their online media production, as exemplified in the discussion of YouTubers in Chapter 1 and in the next sections.

Sexual Discourses, Sexual Violence, and Social Media

The problematic, hegemonic views of gender, sexuality, and sexual violence, and discourses of resistance discussed in the previous section are mirrored in digital spaces. Many feminist scholars theorize that the internet and social media perpetuate rape culture and enable sexual violence (Banet-Weiser, 2018; Powell & Henry, 2017; Keller, Mendes, & Ringrose, 2018; Sills et al., 2016; Stubbs-Richardson, Rader, & Cosby, 2018; Zaleski, Gundersen, Baes, Estupinian, & Vergara, 2016). Like the wider media, digital platforms can disseminate, often surreptitiously, the patriarchal discourses that circulate in political, social, educational, and legal spaces. Sills et al. (2016) theorize that some online platforms are a ‘matrix of sexism’, meaning “an environment in which sexism, misogyny, and elements of rape culture merge as a normalized backdrop to everyday life” (p.6). Young women encounter misogyny in digital platforms, similarly to other forms of media. The accessibility of platforms spaces offer opportunities to spread harmful representations of women and survivors; for instance, scholars have found that victim-blaming attitudes prevail in networking sites like Facebook and Twitter (Stubbs-Richardson et al., 2018; Zaleski et al., 2016). Banet-Weiser (2018) argues that popular misogyny operates similarly to popular feminism, in so far as individuals use online platforms to respond to feminists, to advertising sexual violence practices (like the Steubenville case), to objectifying female celebrities, to promote men’s rights activism (the type that hates women), and more. Henry

and Powell's work (2016; Powell & Henry, 2017) further contend that social media facilitates various digital forms of sexual violence, such as sexual harassment online. The Steubenville case, which involved two young men sharing media depicting their rape of a girl at a party, is frequently cited by scholars as evidence of the destructive way that technology and the internet can be deployed for sexual violence (e.g. Phillips, 2017; Rentschler, 2014; Stubbs-Richardson et al., 2018).

As Banet-Weiser (2018) eloquently notes, "The relationship between popular feminism and popular misogyny is deeply entwined: popular feminism and popular misogyny battle it out on the contemporary cultural landscape, living side by side as warring, constantly moving contexts in an economy of visibility" (p.2). While recognizing that social media can facilitate sexual violence and perpetuate rape culture, several scholars also explore how young digital feminists (female or other) use platforms to advocate for cultural change, particularly in the context of sexual violence (Banet-Weiser, 2018; Rentschler, 2014; Sills et al., 2016). I return to young digital feminists' practices in the section on social media. The next section continues exploring sexual discourses, focusing on how North American scholars, politicians and the justice system have approached sexual consent.

Sexual Consent Discourses

The following section offers an overview and criticism of the dominant section consent discourses in North America during the last three decades, specifically 'no means no' and the more recent 'yes means yes'. These frameworks have dominated consent

campaigns in universities, as well helped inform policy and law (e.g. affirmative consent laws) (Gilbert, 2018).

A popular slogan prior to the 1990s, ‘no means no’ places an emphasis on individuals’ rights to say no (Muehlenhard, Humphreys, Jozkowski, & Peterson, 2016; Harris, 2018). The discourse has been critiqued for its emphasis on danger, which may render invisible female agency and empowerment (Harris, 2018). Moreover, while it posits that women are autonomous sexual agents, this consent discourse sustains a narrative of female gatekeeping, wherein women are responsible for defending their bodies (Gilbert, 2018). ‘No means no’ may also further reinforce the necessity of a ‘no’ to indicate refusal, although some scholars reinforce that non-verbal cues can also effectively communicate the message (Muehlenhard et al., 2016), and note that in some cases, refusal may not feel possible (in coercive scenarios or in an incapacitated state, for example).

From the 1990s, the ‘yes means yes’ slogan, also referred to as affirmative consent, gained traction across North America. University policies and law began to frame sexual consent as a willing, enthusiastic, and continuous agreement to engage in sexual activity. The controversial Antioch Policy that came into effect in the early 1990s was amongst the first to require that students seek out and receive affirmative consent, which garnered some support as well as criticism (Humphreys & Herold, 2003). Today, the Canadian Criminal Code s. 273.1 reflects the language of this discourse, stating that consent requires a ‘voluntary agreement’ to sexual activity (verbal, non-verbal), and individuals can change their minds at any point (Women’s Legal Education and Action Fund, n. d.).

With this lens emerges a framing of sexual activity as a positive experience between partners that requires them to seek out each other's consent in their pursuit of desire (Friedman & Valenti, 2008; Harris, 2018). This consent process aligns with growing discourse around empowered communication; Harris (2018) argues that "in concert with sex-positive feminists, 'yes' interrupts the shame that surrounds a person who knows what she wants" (p.4). Lois Pineau further argues, "if the point of sex is mutual enjoyment, then both partners have an obligation to find out how to make sex enjoyable for their partner- and that this requires active communication" (as cited in Powell, 2010, p. 89). This communicative model requires that consent be actively given, rather than assumed by the absence of a no or other forms of resistance. Powell (2010) notes, "it makes it clear that there is a responsibility for all partners in a sexual encounter to take steps to ascertain that consent is freely given" (p.91). Thus, within a communicative model of consent, a person who is incapacitated by drugs or alcohol, or under duress, cannot agree to sexual consent. As the series of works and narratives in Friedman and Valenti's (2008) popular anthology suggest, affirmative consent is about pleasure, performance, and body autonomy. Today, several US and Canadian universities offer educational workshops and campaigns that reinforce consent is 'sexy', in addition to being necessary (Hovick & Silver, 2019).⁷ Other popular, contemporary terms used to describe affirmative consent include "freely given, reversible, informed, enthusiastic, [and] specific" (Planned Parenthood, 2019).

⁷ While I am unable to provide an exhaustive list, some examples include: Brandon University (<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/consent-is-sexy-brandon-university-students-learn-about-consent-culture-this-week-1.3439219>); Carleton University (<https://carleton.ca/cudontknow/2014/consent-is-sexy/>); Trent Arthur (<http://www.trentarthur.ca/students-respond-to-tcsas-consent-is-sexy-campaign/>).

The ‘yes means yes’/enthusiastic consent discourse has garnered some criticism for conflating ‘consensual sex’ with ‘good sex’, whereas consensual sex can be ‘bad’ sex- a yes does not guarantee a good experience. A less pleasurable consensual experience may foster a feeling of failure in a political climate that emphasizes good sex as enthusiastic and communicative, and where sexual consent and sexual pleasure are concepts entrenched in feminist discourses of empowerment (Traister, 2015). Cara Kulwicki (2008) writes that while desire and communication should be standard parts of sex, “pleasure itself cannot be considered a benchmark for consent” (p.310)

Harris (2008) notes that the emphases on “no means no” and “yes means yes” offer a needed focus on the lack of ambiguity of these terms- a no is a refusal to go further, while a yes invites sexual activity. However, sexual consent is more complex than that; as noted in the previous discussion on sexual discourses in North American contexts reflect how sexual violence exists within a larger context where patriarchy, racism, colonialism, and other systems of oppression, collide.

Criticisms of Postsecondary Sexual Consent Education

Canadian universities rely on both public and private funding and therefore must maintain healthy reputations (Quinlan, 2017). Therefore, the recent outcry against the climate that they foster, as noted in Chapter 1, and their responses to sexual violence has rightfully spurred policy-making, the creation of task forces, and the development or honing of education initiatives to respond to mitigate campus and institutional forms of sexual violence. Yet, their efforts are criticized. Some scholars (Gersen & Suk, 2016;

Halley, 2016) question the extent to which universities should partake in monitoring the sex lives of students. Moreover, many postsecondary universities use popular slogans around enthusiastic sex and ‘yes means yes’, which prompts the criticisms explored in the previous section, as well as new ones relating to the effectiveness and reach of these programs in college and university contexts (Jozkowski, Peterson, Sanders, Dennis, & Reece, 2014; Jozkowski, 2015; Koss, Gidycz, & Wisniewski, 1987; Muehlenhard, Humphreys, Jozkowski, & Peterson, 2016; Shaw, 2016; Talbot, Neill, & Rankin, 2010).

Responsibility. This involvement of higher education institutions in the sexual lives and education of their students is not new; Appleton and Stiritz (2016) point out that universities offered marriage courses as early as the 1920s, and in the 1970s, scholars such as Alfred Kinsey offered sex positive sexual health interventions. While the AIDS crisis in the 1980s led to a more conservative turn, the 1990s saw resurgence of sex positive attitudes due to the insurgence of affirmative consent policies and education (Appleton & Stiritz, 2016; Powell, 2010). Today, universities are increasingly being made accountable for sexuality education to help reduce sexual violence. Since 2013, the United States has mandated universities to offer sexual consent interventions to ensure the safety of students, under the Violence Against Women Act (Gersen and Suk, 2016). In Canada, no such umbrella policy exists. However several provinces (Ontario, British Columbia and Quebec) are creating legislation that would mandate sexual violence prevention and response measures in universities, which include educational initiatives (CBC News, 2017; Ward, 2017).

Contemporary rape culture debates have stirred up arguments around the university's and to some extent the government's involvement in the sexuality education of their students (Gersen and Suk, 2016; Halley, 2016; Rubinfeld, 2014). Gersen and Suk (2016) suggest that universities should not 'bureaucratize' sexuality. They critique the ways that affirmative consent policies and education 'train' young people by providing criteria for enthusiastic sex. Halley (2016) expresses concern about recent universities' move towards affirmative consent policies, suggesting that the current framing of consent is becoming repressive rather than liberatory. She writes,

affirmative consent requirements—in part because of their origin in a carceral project that is overcommitted to social control through punishment in a way that seems to me to be social-conservative, not emancipatory—will do a lot more than distribute bargaining power to women operating in contexts of male domination and male privilege. They will foster a new, randomly applied moral order that will often be intensely repressive and sex-negative. (p.259)

However, as I explained in Chapter 1, problematic school-based sexualities education in Canadian and American schools as well as the current climate suggests that consent education in postsecondary education is necessary. Students either get little or no sexualities education, and the programs they get, even when comprehensive, might not sufficiently tackle the complexities of consent, sexual violence, gender, power and such that I have illustrated in previous sections. Appleton and Stiritz (2016) support the importance of university involvement in the North American context, arguing "Higher sex education [...] holds promise as a corrective to the dismal sex education most students

receive before they arrive on campus” (p. 60). Consequently, while on the one hand universities’ involvement in consent education perpetuates a paternalistic, institutional role in youth sexual lives, on the other, it may be necessary to address gaps in students’ elementary and high school-based sexualities education in these contexts.

Messaging about consent. Entrenched within these debates around the roles of postsecondary institutions in informing youth sexual practices are criticisms of the current sexual consent discourses circulating on campuses and within policies. Several universities across the United States and Canada respond to sexual violence on campus through educational programs and awareness-raising campaigns, as it is either mandated by Title IX (for the US) or expected as a form of prevention measure (Sheehy & Gilbert, 2017). Problematically, they have been critiqued for their reliance on simplistic definitions of consent. Many scholars suggest a deeper, more explicit and gendered exploration of consent communication (Jozkowski, Peterson, Sanders, Dennis, & Reece, 2014; Muehlenhard, Humphreys, Jozkowski, & Peterson, 2016; Shafer, Ortiz, Thomson, & Huemmer, 2018). This is particularly important because universities’ descriptions of consent can conflict with college and university students’ understandings, and may not represent their realities (Jozkowski, Peterson, Sanders, Dennis, & Reece, 2014; Jozkowski, 2015; Koss, Gidycz, & Wisniewski, 1987; Shaw, 2016; Talbot, Neill, & Rankin, 2010).

Muehlenhard and her colleagues’ (2016) share three popular interpretations of consent. They suggest that the term can imply the willingness of the individual to engage in a sexual activity, an explicit agreement, and the gestures or cues that someone may infer to

indicate consent. Individuals may want or be willing to have sex, but they must explicitly agree to have engage in sexual activity. Observers may interpret consent cues; however this can be problematic when understandings of consent diverge. For example, Jozkowski, Peterson, Sanders, Dennis, and Reece (2014)'s study of college students' shows that while youth use verbal cues to communicate and interpret consent, they also rely on nonverbal cues. Problematically, different genders perceive these cues differently. Jozkowski et al. (2014) report that "men were more likely than women to rely on nonverbal cues to communicate and interpret consent and nonconsent, and women were more likely than men to rely on verbal cues to communicate and interpret consent" (p.913). The complexity of consent as expressed by these scholars reaffirms that approaching the matter through slogans might not provide a comprehensive and critical understanding of the practice.

Moreover, prevalent, traditional attitudes related to sex and gender suggest that consent education needs to also deconstruct harmful sexual scripts and gender stereotypes, like 'token resistance', that influence communication (Jozkowski & Peterson, 2013; Shafer, Ortiz, Thomson, & Huemmer, 2018). Token resistance, i.e., the "heteronormative belief that women typically say "no" to sex with a man when they really mean 'yes'," (Shafer, Ortiz, Thomson, & Huemmer, 2018, p.545) remains a prevalent sexist belief about women that plays an important role in perpetuating victim-blaming. While token resistance problematizes the 'no', patriarchal notions of sex and gender also render it difficult for women to say yes. Jozkowski (2015) observes, "When women say yes to sex "too much" or desire "too much" sex, they may be labelled "sluts" or "whores"" (p.21). Shame is thus case on women who act 'enthusiastic' agents in their sexual relationships. Gender

stereotypes also affect men; Jozkowski and Peterson (2013) found that in their study of heterosexual relationships, men were regarded as the initiators and therefore responsible for obtaining consent, and men were perceived as ‘always interested’.

Finally, a culturally diverse North American society brings together students carrying different viewpoints and experiences related to consent, sexuality, and gender roles informed by their cultures and religions. Someone’s background, upbringing, and community can influence their perceptions of sexual violence and of their own rights to consent. Muehlenhard and her colleagues (2016) argue that for some people, “norms and expectations can be so strong that no other options seem possible” (p.466). Students carrying various cultural understandings of sexual consent and sexual violence may benefit from more comprehensive exploration of these topics.

Reach. A second popular criticism of postsecondary consent education relates to universities and colleges’ capacity to reach the students who need it. In my experience teaching sexuality consent and other related topics at the university and through my research with the IMPACTS team, I heard several related complaints about consent education interventions. Students expressed that workshops and similar short, non-mandatory educational or prevention-oriented programs rarely reached the people who needed intervention (mostly identified as being men). Their complaints reflect findings from Rich, Utley, Janke and Moldoveanu’s (2010) study, which suggest that male university students did not see the relevance of these programs in their lives, nor did they perceive their own role in perpetuating or committing violence against women.

Moreover, consent education, when it is offered, often happens during Frosh week (Buss, Majury, Moore, Rigakos & Singh, 2016). This is problematic in situations where this is the only education young people receive outside awareness campaigns. In their study, Buss and her colleagues (2016) found that, “Upper year and graduate students appear to have received little to no education about consent or sexual assault prevention beyond what they may have been exposed to in their first year” (p.46). While short, sporadic workshops or programs are a positive step, they are still not ideal. As outlined by the White House Task Force to Protect Students from Sexual Assault (2017), comprehensive anti-sexual violence education should continue throughout students’ postsecondary schooling: “ongoing prevention, education, and training programs for students – from freshman orientation through graduate school – are critical for imparting skills to students and sending a strong message about campus values” (p.8). The report warns, “Brief, one-time interventions, especially when focused only on raising awareness about sexual misconduct, are not usually effective for creating lasting behavior change” (p.9). This echoes similar arguments for effective, comprehensive sexuality education programming in the literature on school-based sexuality education for younger people (Kirby, 2007; Public Health Agency of Canada, 2008).

Awareness and prevention campaigns, in many respects, address accessibility concerns in postsecondary settings. Several universities and student organizations are combining social media, poster campaigns, campus events, and more, to draw the attention of large amounts of students. For example, over 50 college and universities in Quebec are involved in the ‘Sans Oui, C’est Non’ campaign (Sans oui, c’est non!, 2019), an initiative

developed by students, administrators, and government bodies to raise awareness about sexual violence, teach bystander intervention skills, and offer resources. Alberta promotes the “#IBelieveYou” campaign, which uses public service announcements and Twitter to ask Alberta citizens, in universities and outside communities, to support sexual violence survivors (Association of Alberta Sexual Assault Services, n.d.). Prevention campaigns and programs such as “Bringing in the Bystander” (Banyard, Moynihan, and Plante, 2007) and “Green Dot Etcetera” (created in 2006) are also noted to effectively empower and mobilize stakeholders to intervene in situations where sexual violence is witnessed (Lalonde, 2017, p. 267).

While they hold great potential, as stated beforehand, the extent to which campaigns can educate about the complexity of sexual consent may be limited. In their extensive review of social policy and awareness campaigns, Carmody and Carrington (2000) wrote, “Preventing sexual violence through short-term election driven social policy solutions whether it is through law reform, public awareness campaigns or two-hour workshops can hardly be expected to produce the desired results” (p.355). The complex relationships between gender, sexuality, relationships and sexual violence, interwoven with patriarchal ideologies as well as the ‘-isms’ (cissexism, racism, classism, etc), suggests there needs to be a cultural shift for change to happen, and this requires more extensive, nuanced and critical forms of sexual consent education.

Media and Youth Meaning-Making

The following section moves away from postsecondary institutions, towards the online context. Unsurprisingly, considering the current climate of sexual violence and criticisms of sexualities education programming at all school level, many youths seek information about sexuality through informal resources, notably traditional (movies, films, magazines) and online (websites, social media) media (Johnston, 2016; Manduley et al., 2018). These platforms also serve as tools for self-expression, advocacy, and activism related to effecting social change in relation to improving knowledge about sexuality and gender issues, protesting injustice, and calling out rape culture (Johnston, 2016; Powell, 2015; Rentschler, 2014; Salter, 2013; Sills et al., 2016). In this section, I locate digital platforms- YouTube in particular- within the larger scholarship around media as forms of public pedagogy and platforms for activism and advocacy (with a focus on anti-sexual violence and consent education work).

How Does Media Shape Meaning? From Semiotics to Learning Theories

The literature reviewed in this section explores current theory on the relationships between media texts, producers, and consumers, before focusing on scholarship related to public pedagogy and sexualities education.

A popular framework to understand meaning-making through media is Multimodal Social Semiotics. Kress (2011) defines the latter as follows,

Multimodal social semiotics has two aspects. Multimodality focuses on the material means for representation, the resources for making texts; that is, on modes. Social

semiotics provides a theoretical frame for a focus on all aspects of meaning-making: on the agents who make signs as texts; on the processes of meaning-making and on the theoretical entities that are involved in this- sign, texts, genre, discourse, interest, as examples. (p.208)

Semiotics refers to “the general study of meaning-making (semiosis), including not just meanings we make with language, but meanings we make with every sort of object, event or action in so far as it is endowed with a significance, a symbolic value, in our community” (Lemke, 1995, p.9) Social semiotics, on the other hand, serve to Lemke “as a reminder that all meanings are made within communities and that the analysis of meaning should not be separated from the social, historical, cultural and political dimensions of these communities” (p.9) Meaning is conveyed through semiotic resources, originally conceptualized in Halliday’s seminal work in 1978, and described by Van Leeuwen (2005) as the ‘signs’ with which we communicate (actions, artefacts, technologies, etc.). These signs, or semiotic resources, become ‘semiotic formations’, meaning that they develop identifiable forms of symbolism that are inherently affected by the socio-historical context in which they are utilized (Lemke, 1995). Social semiotics recognizes that

Signs are made- not used- by a sign-maker who brings meaning into an apt conjunction with a form, a selection/choice shaped by the sign-makers interest. In the process of representation sign-makers remake concepts and knowledge in a constant new shaping of the cultural resources for dealing with the social world. (p.62)

According to Kress and Van Leeuwen (2001), texts reflect the agency of the producer, and the transformative effects of production. They write, “in fact, we see semiotic action as real action, as work. Work transforms that which is worked on. Action changes both the actor and the environment in which and with which she or he acts.” (p.36) All forms of meaning-making in media seek to produce some form of change, although the extent to which this is possible is invariably affected by the beliefs, values and contexts of the audiences (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2001; Kress, 2010).

Multimodality, on the other hand, accounts for the ways that different modes of communication, including and outside of language, perform a semiotic role (Kress, 2010). In their seminal work, Kress and Van Leeuwen’s (2001) point to the ways that communication is evolving, and they stress that the ways we analyze different media need to move past narrow understandings of ‘modes’ (e.g. visual, audio, written) and the functions they perform. They propose that, “we move towards a view of multimodality in which common semiotic principles operate in and across different modes” (p. 2). With new media, where one producer might be in charge of editing a whole piece and use different modes to convey meaning, Kress and Van Leeuwen suggest that “we might have, not only a unified and unifying technology, but also a unified and unifying semiotics” (p.2). In a nutshell, they suggest a more holistic analysis of media, one that accounts that meaning-making can traverse modes as intended by a producer. They refer to the 4 non-hierarchical domains of meaning-making practice as “strata” (p.4). They can be summarized as, (1) Discourse: the knowledge conveyed; (2) Design: how the knowledge is expressed; (3) Production: to the strategies and materials used to express knowledge, and (4) Distribution:

a deeper level of production to facilitate preservation and distribution (p.4-7). Both producers and consumers of texts need to acquire the knowledge of semiotic formations to be able to effectively draw meaning from these domains.

Kress (2010) contends that Multimodal Social Semiotics “may bring real benefits in understanding apt forms of communication through better understandings of design” (p.16). He suggests that communication involves the combination of rhetoric, design, and production. The producer as ‘rhetor’ makes informed decisions about their message,

The rhetor as maker of a message now makes an assessment of all aspects of the communicational situation; of her or his interest; of the characteristics of the audiences; the semiotic requirements of the issue at stake and the resources available for making an apt representation; together with establishing the best means for its dissemination. (p.26)

The rhetor builds and makes decisions regarding the design of the text to ensure that the latter meets their needs. While the rhetor takes charge of communicating a message, the designer works on the representation of the message in a text. Social semiotics, or the process of producing and communicating, “happens both in making of messages and in their ‘remaking’ in a participant’s engagement with and transformation of a message” (Kress, 2010, p.27). Kress (2010) identifies the process of production as a relationship between content, ideas, and affects.

While learning relates to meaning-making, Multimodal Social Semiotics does not necessarily account for producers’ learning in the process of design and communication

(Kress, 2010). Theories of meaning-making and learning, while nascent from different disciplines (semiosis and education), are connected. Kress argues, “Meaning is the stuff of semiotics, hence semiotics is inevitably and centrally implicated in any theory of learning” (p.178) Learning occurs when producers use signs to make meaning that are then consumed by audiences. Nevertheless, the framework itself only asks the reader/analyst to interpret the text and thus they can only presume the learning that might or might not have taken place.

Quite a few learning theories exist around traditional media (television, radio and magazines) that shape how we think about the relationships between media and audiences. Bandura’s social cognitive theory, priming theory, and Gerbner, Gross, Morgan and Signorelli’s cultivation theory remain the three most cited media learning models (Ward, 2003). Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, and Signorielli (1982) generated the *cultivation perspective*, which implies that audiences all receive the same messages through a media text, but individuals are affected differently based on how much media they watch. It is one of the most popular media effect theories in the last decades, along with Bandura’s *social learning* theory. Bandura (1977) posits that we learn from observation; therefore, individuals’ attitudes and behaviors are influenced by what they see and hear on television. Building on this, the *social cognitive* theory also acknowledges the dynamics between media and individuals as a two-way street in which factors such as environment, behavior and personal experiences play a role in how they learn through media (Kirsh, 2010).

Giroux (2000) has also spoken to the impactful ways cultural artifacts such as media can influence our understandings of sexuality, race, and gender, through his work on public

pedagogy. A complex concept undertaken by multiple fields and within different contexts, I understand public pedagogy to mean “learning and education happening outside of formal schooling systems” (Sandlin, Schultz, & Burdick, 2010, p.2). Public pedagogy online can both reproduce hegemonic discourse and lead to the production of counter-narratives.

Public pedagogy has typically been framed in the same ways as education in schools and in the workplace, with individuals consuming messages they are being taught (Reid, 2010). However, in today’s digital world, our understandings of the relationships between meaning-making, media, and audiences are complicated by the complexity of new technologies. Through new media— websites, mobile phones, and social network sites— and platforms such as instant messaging, chat systems, blogs and vlogs, different opportunities to react to and create media texts prompt audiences to become producers as well as consumers. Technological progress has shifted audience involvement with media from a relatively one-sided relationship with a television screen or print paper, to dynamic, complex webs of interaction and learning. Its prevalence and popularity mean that one cannot assume that pedagogies today (classroom or public) are divorced from social media:

Traditional educational spaces from classrooms and campuses to scholarly publications and institutional partnerships are invested with social media. Public and private spaces from sidewalks to bedrooms are likewise interpenetrated by social media. Traditional sites of public pedagogy such as mass media are also intertwined with social media where users participate in new ways with their favorite media properties. (Reid, 2010, p.198)

Reid (2010) observes that public pedagogy can emerge in social media practices, though how it manifests varies across platforms, producers and audiences. Engagement in social media production on YouTube, for example, offers its own kind of public pedagogy (Kellner & Kim, 2010).

Therefore, in addition to entertainment media playing an important, albeit sometimes controversial, role in the sexuality education of young people (Bragg, 2006; Kammeyer, 2008; McKee, 2012), digital platforms also offer important opportunities for consumers' sexual socialization and education (Brown and Bobkowski, 2011), through voluntary and involuntary exposure to sexually explicit and non-explicit materials. The internet appeal to consumers seeking out information about sexuality for various reasons, including "presumed safety, perceived anonymity, transcendence from adult control, 24-7 availability, and the ability to communicate with peers" (Brown, Keller, & Stern, 2009, p.14). Moreover, Fine's (1988) discourse of desire, which she found lacking in American schools a couple of decades ago, flourishes in erotic and non-erotic internet sites. In his review of literature on sexual resources used by youth, McKee (2012) suggests "across all sources of information, the basic rule was that formal sources of information were used for biological information, while informal sources provided erotic and relationship information" (p.501). Youth therefore have access to material that may create contention if brought up in a classroom, but that can nevertheless help them better understand their sexual identities and desires. For example, youth in Bragg's (2006) study argued that media addressed topics like sexual techniques and LGBTQ sexualities that were not part of the

school curriculum and felt too embarrassing to ask about, illustrating the potential of digital media to address gaps in sexualities education.

Recognizing how digital platforms are accessible and popular platforms to reach audiences of all ages, numerous organizations, researchers, educators, and universities are using these spaces to communicate information about sexualities education. Institutionally-produced sexuality education websites and social media have been found to yield positive results. Two decades ago, Barak and Fisher (2001) proposed to use a combination of the internet and the Information-Motivation-Behavioral model, calling the web “a revolutionary sex education tool” (p.329). The website created for their project, sexualityandu.ca, provided a theoretically-based, education resource for audiences worldwide (Barak and Fisher, 2003). This initiative, as well as the Facebook pilot project “Just/Us” (Bull, Levine, Black, Schmiede & Santelli, 2012), embraced the knowledge that youth will turn to websites as resources. These studies found that online, institutionally-produced programs had positive repercussions on the sexual attitudes and behaviours of participants. Scholars are also looking into the possibilities of offering school-based sexuality education through information and communication technologies. Chong, Gonzalez-Navarro, Karlan, and Valdivia (2013) evaluated an online sexuality education program offered in Columbian schools that yielded positive effects on sexual knowledge and some impact on safe sexual practices.

In the current move to teach about sexual consent and sexual violence, the internet and social media are becoming popular platforms employed by postsecondary institutions and organizations to publicize slogans and provide information about sexual violence and

consent. For example, both McGill University and Concordia University offer YouTube videos designed to teach students about anti-sexual violence topics such as bystander intervention and consent (Concordia University, 2016; Voco Studios, 2017). The popular Quebec-wide initiative “Sans Oui, C’est Non” (2019), created by faculty, staff and student associations across Quebec colleges and universities to raise awareness about sexual consent, invites people to follow their campaign on Instagram, Twitter and Snapchat.

Outside of institutionalized websites, social media also offers popular spaces and communities for sexualities education. In the next section, I move away from institution-led media for sexualities education, towards youth-led social media.

Youth Participation on Social Media

I begin by exploring how scholars understand youth participation on social media in general, before turning to sexuality-specific media. I focus specifically on participatory cultures, because the way that this concept has been taken up in the scholarship effectively sheds light on current discourses around young people’s use of online platforms for peer education and civic engagement.

In his early work on youth and fandom in the early 1990s, Henry Jenkins coined the term ‘participatory culture’ to describe the ways that youth banded with their peers with common interests and expressed their fandom by remixing popular culture texts (Jenkins, Ito, and boyd, 2016). In Jenkins’ recent work with other scholars (Jenkins, Clinton, Purushotma, Robison, & Weigel, 2009), the following definition is offered:

A participatory culture is a culture with relatively low barriers to artistic expression and civic engagement, strong support for creating and sharing one's creations, and some type of informal mentorship whereby what is known by the most experienced is passed along to novices. A participatory culture is also one in which members believe their contributions matter, and feel some degree of social connection with one another (and at least they care what other people think about what they have created. (p.4)

Participatory cultures can take different shapes. New technologies simply provide new sites within which participatory cultures can operate and exacerbate their reach. Jenkins et al. (2009) identify four forms of participatory cultures: 1) "affiliations," or one's membership to digital communities (e.g. Facebook); 2) "expressions," or the production of different forms of media (e.g. videos, zines); 3) "collaborative problem solving;" and 4) "circulations," which involves the act of "shaping the flow of media" (p.9). Shafer (2011) uses a more specific framework to categorize participatory cultures and their labor. He both widens and bounds the definition of participatory cultures based on three often interconnected types of producer labor in which they engage, including the remixing of media content, the archiving of material online, and finally, the construction of new media. YouTube, Shafer argues, provides opportunities for participatory cultures to engage in all three forms of labor.

Jenkins et al. (2009) work suggests that young people join participatory cultures wherein they share goals and motivations with other members. To some extent this is

supported in the work by Ito and her colleagues (2010), where they propose that youth partake in online participatory cultures primarily for two reasons. One motive is friendship, and young people's desire to connect with peer networks outside physical locations like schools. The second motive is based on interest-driven participation wherein individuals join communities based on their hobbies and interests. Shafer (2011) suggests that Jenkins' body of work rests on the premises of 'explicit participation' (p.44), wherein young people consciously join their communities.

Online participatory cultures constitute important sites of teaching and learning, where members can interact with each other and share their knowledge (Jenkins, Ito, and boyd, 2016; Jocson, 2018). Online participatory cultures join media consumers and producers together in similar endeavours, however the extent of their participation and their impact can vary. Jenkins et al. (2009) note about participation, "Not every member must contribute, but all must believe they are free to contribute and that what they contribute will be appropriately valued" (p.6). Less experienced members can learn from their peers with more expertise. They compare participatory cultures to Gee's notion of "affinity spaces," which encourage informal learning by bringing diverse participants together, allow varying levels of participation, offer peer-based teaching, and foster feelings of expertise amongst participants (as cited in Jenkins et al., 2009, p. 10) Thus, participatory cultures as affinity spaces catalyze informal learning. Jenkins and his colleagues (2009) theorize that engagement in participatory cultures provide important discursive, leadership, and technological skills.

Some scholarship suggests that participatory cultures both foster and represent forms of youth civic engagement as they raise awareness about topics and engage in advocacy work through their online work (Jenkins et al., 2009; Kahne & Bowyer, 2018). While the meaning of civic engagement varies across the literature, I refer to it here to mean the ways in which young people advocate for change in their communities (Adler & Goggin, 2005). Civic engagement can both encompass formal political participation (e.g., membership to a political party) or informal participation, such as one might find on social media. Cohen and Kahne (2012), and later Jenkins (2012), refer to this relationship between young people, digital media, and civic engagement as ‘participatory politics.’

Cohen and Kahne (2012) define participatory politics as “interactive, peer-based acts through which individuals and groups seek to exert both voice and influence on issues of public concerns” (vi). Participatory politics are central to youth activism and play a critical role in social justice movements that seek to change campus culture (Earl, Maher, and Elliot, 2017). Jenkins, Ito and boyd (2016) propose that participatory cultures are neither necessarily political or resistant communities; however, their existence does allow for these discourses to thrive outside normative spaces. Through this form of civic engagement, youth can engage independently in political discourse outside the immediate social spheres (family, schools, friends), and provide independent and creative platforms of expression. Cohen and Kahne (2012) suggest media platforms offer youth the opportunity to engage in political discourse, communicate with politicians, and act as agents of change by spreading awareness about a cause. Technology, digital platforms and networking further enhances the usual reach of youth as they communicate and engage with political

discourse, offering cracks in the system through which youth voice and perspectives can be expressed and heard. Ito suggests that,

All young people have agency and voice, but not everyone has the opportunity to connect this agency and voice to a broader public stage and to sites of power. This is where I think participatory and network culture has the potential to address some of this inequity. (Jenkins, Ito, and boyd, 2016, p.24)

Harris (2008) writes, “Youth subcultures or lifestyles today are the product of an ongoing process of a negotiation between consumer culture and youth creativity” (p.4). She notes that in many ways, youth are still excluded from the institutional locales of political discourse, thereby leading them to construct their own spaces within which they can discuss and respond to the issues that affect them. With the effects of globalization and the marketing of youth voice by mass media and consumer culture, voices of resistance do not have many outlets outside the very same neoliberal system that gives rise to many of the issues that affect young people. Participatory politics therefore offer a ground-up means for youth to become involved in politics, explore their creativity and share their opinions outside institutionally governed platforms.

However, since its conception, the utopic framing of youth civic engagement online has been questioned and studied, within the concept of youth participatory cultures and in general. Shafer (2011) writes, “Constant problem with the discourse about Web 2.0 and participatory culture is the ultimately rather myopic idea that participation by many users somehow equals democracy” (p.45). He critiques the over-optimist discourse around

technology-enabled social change through participatory cultures, drawing attention back to the ways in which corporations and the marketplace continue to dominate, manipulate and profit from the labors of young producers. This reminds of the ways that corporations capitalized on the Riot Grrrl movement, co-opting and marketing their work. In the 1980s and 1990s, this movement protested the patronizing ways girlhood was defined and treated (Harris, 2004). The movement was later appropriated and marketed to a generation of 1990s youth by celebrities like Spice Girls and Britney Spears. The discourse of empowerment, Harris (2004) argues, was repackaged into “a discourse of choice and focus on the self” (p.17).

Moreover, some scholars remind of the ‘dangerous’ discourses in online sites. For example, in their study of youth civic engagement online, Middaugh, Bowyer and Kahne (2017) argue that the better capacity of a site to engender political engagement, the higher the risk for debate and conflict. Ito et al. (2010) also found that youth involved in participatory cultures driven by interest rather than friendship were most likely to run into conflict. Moreover, the dangers of online participation are also exacerbated by gender (Henry & Powell, 2016). These manifestations of violence and conflict point to a gap in people’s media and digital literacies. Jenkins et al. (2009) propose that to improve young people’s participation online, they need to possess ‘new media literacy,’ which includes skills that extend beyond traditional concept of media literacies, to include social skills that would enable them to effectively and respectfully interact and participate in larger communities.

While members may share platforms and thus seemingly have access to similar opportunities, boyd warns that this is not always the case, as these sites reflect the same types of inequalities as one might find offline (Jenkins, Ito, and boyd, 2016). Neither technology, nor participatory cultures are necessarily ‘democratizing’. Moreover, as Jenkins and his colleagues make known, a participation gap exists, wherein some individuals do not have access to the tools and skills they need to effectively participate online.

Youth Participation in Sexual Discourses on Social Media

Moving from the concept of participatory cultures, I examine more closely the feminist theories on youth participation, women and girls’ particularly, in social media spaces.

Attwood et al. (2015) contend that in general, social media offer opportunities for everyday youth to teach each other about sexuality topics. Their study on sex advice channels, which use entertainment as tools to convey information about sex, progresses from traditional media like television programming to online spaces, where young people can now not only learn about sex, but talk about it too. Attwood et al. (2015) argue that,

Blogs and tumblrs give young people the opportunity to create or curate their own educational spaces around sex and relationships, describing personal experiences, creating and sharing memes featuring sexual and/or sex educational content, or building activism on sexuality and genders. (p.532)

Studies on girlhood show the internet offers especially valuable spaces for girls to explore and convey their feelings (Bell, 2007; Stern, 2002). In Harris's (2005) work, she claims that women perceive blogs, or web logs, as relatively safe spaces to express themselves and communicate with one another in online communities where they are free from repressive commercial, male-centric discourses. Wood (2008) identifies these spaces as potential communities where women can learn and take control over what is said about their sexualities by vocalizing pleasure through alternative, new vocabularies and recounting their narratives. Muise's (2011) thematic analysis of women's sex blogs exemplifies how female bloggers break free from heteronormative constructions of sexuality in spaces where they write freely about 'embodied desire', 'sexual control' over their partners, and casual sex. Blogs are one example of a space where women offer others' opportunities to learn, adopt, promote alternative sexual discourses, and develop an understanding of their sexualities.

Several scholars have examined how young people, women and girls in particular, participate in social media spaces to educate and learn about, as well as advocate for social change on matters related to sexual violence (Rentschler, 2014; Keller, Mendes, & Ringrose, 2018; Salter, 2013; Sills et al., 2016). These scholars broadly maintain that women and girls use complex networks and counterpublics to engage in activism and to share their stories. Similar to the larger theories on participation, there is no consensus of what this participation looks like or what it is trying to do. Mendes, Ringrose, and Keller (2019) reflect that, "Digital platforms and tools are often used in unexpected, and "slippery" ways, which are hard to predict, and which change over time" (p. 178).

Rentschler's (2014) calls attention to the ways that feminists practice 'responsibility', i.e., "the capacity to collectively respond to sexual violence and its cultures of racial, gendered and sexuality harassment" (p. 68). While her work focuses on the power of testimonials and networks to bring attention to the various ways rape culture manifests and to those who should be held accountable, it also reflects the power of networks to define and inform others about rape culture. Sills et al. (2016)'s study further denotes that many young women and girls form feminist networks, or 'counterpublics', where members of these networks of resistance teach one another, often in humorous ways, and offer each other support. In their extensive study of online spaces, Mendes, Ringrose, and Keller (2019) found that this online activism helped survivors' healing process, as well as contributed to their own education about feminism. They also reported, in their study of Twitter, that young feminist activists were also keen on educating others, which reinforces their argument that online spaces and the discourses within them offer forms of "digital public pedagogy" (p. 108).

Survivors of sexual violence who mobilize on social media, Salter (2013) argues, are also using online platforms to "generate new and more authoritative enunciative positions for themselves and to find a more sympathetic audience for their claims" (p. 237). However, while noting the supportive aspect of media participation, Salter (2013) also observes in his case studies that women may also be deploying media to acquire justice in more formal spheres. This is exemplified in the #MeToo movement, where survivors' testimonials and accusations not only brought sexual violence and sexual consent

discourses to the forefront of public debate, but also led to the exposure of perpetrators like Harvey Weinstein (Banet-Weiser, 2018).

Feminist scholarship thus recognizes the use of current online spaces as opportunities for networked learning, support, and justice. At the same time, feminist scholars note their engagement can put young people at risk. This is especially true for women. As mentioned in the last section, technology and the Internet are potential platforms and tools for rape culture. One of the many forms in which this emerges is through ‘technology-facilitated sexual violence,’ (Henry & Powell, 2016) wherein individuals use technological platforms and devices to sexually harass, abuse, stalk, intimidate, or bully others. This violence is gendered, they argue, as women face unique forms of online threats through sexual harassment, threats, and “sexualized ‘trolling’” (p. 11). These scholars refer to Mantilla’s (2015) work, which uses the term “gendertrolling” to describe situations where “women are ‘typically called “cunts,” “sluts,” “whores,” and the like; their appearance is insulted by calling them “ugly,” “fat,” and much worse; and graphic pornographic depictions are frequently made of images of the targeted woman” (as cited in Powell & Henry, 2017, p.168). One notable example is the case of Laci Green, a popular young sex educator on YouTube who has experienced large amounts of trolling, cyberbullying, and harassment in the last decade or so, with her aggressor(s) going as far as sharing her address online (Johnston, 2016). While it is important to note that this danger exists, Lange (2014) also advises not to immediately make assumptions that girls are impacted, and their practice affected, by comments. She argues that “many who are familiar

with YouTube's contentious participatory practices understand that they include "hater" commentary that should not be taken too seriously" (p.84).

About YouTube and Youth Participation

The literature I address above speaks more generally of youth participation online and addresses how this participation can be used for general and feminist education and civic engagement. However, this study focuses on the YouTube platform which, as I address in the Introduction Chapter, is an important space where YouTubers are talking about sexual consent and sexual violence. In this section, I focus on what the literature currently says about YouTube and youth participation.

YouTube for learning and civic engagement. In spite of, and to an extent because of its economic and market-oriented algorithms, YouTube is a popular platform for adolescents and young adults' self-expression and education. The plethora of communities and videos focused around educational videos (instruction videos, tutorials, and formal education), vlogs, and game-based videos make this a popular site for learning. Kellner and Kim (2010) argue that YouTube videos, even without intended educational purposes, are sites of public pedagogy. The dialogical nature of the platform prompts various forms of learning: "dialogues and discussion among UTers are vivid moments of learning by doing, learning as process, and learning as communication within the public sphere of Internet media" (Kellner & Kim, 2010, p.13).

Young people on YouTube create their content with purpose and creativity, to convey information and call for social change (Caron, 2017; Raby, Caron, Th  wissen-Leblanc, Priolella, & Mitchell, 2018). Their choices of content and the manner in which they produce reflects that they are “strategic, agentic choice makers” (Raby et al., 2018, p.502). Some scholars argue that the formation of networks on YouTube contribute to the sharing of knowledge and in addition, offer the opportunity to build communities of advocacy related to particular interests (Burgess & Green, 2009; Caron, 2017; Lange, 2014; Raby, Caron, Th  wissen-Leblanc, Priolella, & Mitchell, 2018). Lange (2014) calls ‘reticulated civic engagement’, “the combination of knowledge, actions, media sharing, and participation that draws people into or creates a new social network of people who share particular values” (p.121). While scholars continue to examine YouTube spaces for learning and civic engagement, questions have been raised about the nature of youth participation in the site.

Youth participation on YouTube. There have been some debates regarding whether YouTubers form participatory cultures. Some scholars qualify YouTube as a site of where some participatory cultures can take shape (Burgess and Green, 2009; Lange, 2014; Jenkins, Ito & Boyd, 2016; Waldron, 2013). While the platform is not a participatory culture on its own (Jenkins, Ito, & Boyd), it provides a space where encounters occur. Waldron (2013) writes, “YouTube videos often act as catalysts for discussion on site forums, chat rooms and email, thus forming a partial but significant foundation for online participatory culture” (p.259). Thus, YouTube media may prompt some participatory cultures by bringing together media producers and consumers.

However, participatory cultures involve community members coming together to achieve common interests, which some scholars argue that that cannot take place in market-driven spaces like social media. Massanari (2015) maintains that in an era where participatory cultures often intertwine with the market economy, it is difficult to imagine whether we are truly ever even talking about participatory cultures, because of the commercial aspect of their work.

Moreover, it cannot be assumed that because YouTubers engage with similar topics, they form a community. In her study of vloggers tackling bullying through their videos, Caron's (2017) findings do not point to the type of community that Jenkins and his colleagues describe, where members of a participatory culture work together. She suggests instead that her YouTubers participate in 'semiotic social space' (Gee, 2005b). Caron explains (2017),

As opposed to the concept of virtual community, a semiotic social space does not suggest shared identity components, may those be imposed or chosen by participants. The semiotic social space rather draws our attention toward meanings, as produced and exchanged among participants sharing a common vocabulary, as well as common references, social values, interests, or concerns in a given social/cultural context—a discursive community. (p.656)

This networked relationship is also recognized in Molyneaux et al. (2008) study, where she suggests that making and responding to vlogs prompts discourse in a larger

social network. They suggest this may lead to communities being formed, however they do not suggest that these consist of participatory cultures.

The plethora of videos, vloggers, styles, and types of content render it difficult to tell whether or which YouTubers are part of participatory cultures, counterpublics, social semiotics spaces, or other forms of networks. This question of participation arose in my study of YouTube vlogs and vloggers, as I navigated and studied the sample in my study. And as the next section reveals, youth participation in sexual consent-related YouTube media is a particularly understudied area of scholarship.

YouTube Vlogs and Sexual Discourses

What is vlogging? There are genres and sub-genres of YouTube videos and vlogs that suggest some degree of membership in the YouTube community; for example, there are several YouTubers who specialize in makeup tutorials. Ito refers to “the ways in which people engage with media also track along certain styles and conventions” as ‘genres of participation’ (Jenkins, Ito, and boyd, 2016, p.60). Vlogging is one type of YouTube genre of participation.

Although the parameters of the vlog definitions shift in the literature and amongst vloggers, some general conventions are followed, such as the producer usually looking at the still camera, and sharing their opinions, interests, or stories (Christian, 2009). Vlogs are generally considered to be ‘authentic’ videos; while editing to some extent is accepted, some vloggers perceive that as a marketing ploy (Burgess & Green, 2009; Christian, 2009). Caron (2017) describes vlogs as,

A distinctive feature of vlogs is that their creators, called vloggers, appear physically in their media text and express themselves verbally. Usually recorded at home, with a laptop or desktop webcam, vlogs are generally short in length (between two and five-minutes long). (p.650)

According to Frobenius (2011), vlogs can include various amounts of editing, and generally, they “instantiate non-scripted, non-institutionalized monologue situations, as opposed to fairly conventionalized situations such as lectures, news reports, radio broadcast talk, sermons, etc” (p.815). In conjunction with YouTube’s motto ‘Broadcast yourself’, vlogs invites their producers to express their views and narratives in an authentic manner with their audiences (Burgess & Green, 2009). Video bloggers, or vlogs, are responding to other YouTube content, inviting dialogue, answering to their audiences and in some cases, addressing their ‘haters’.

YouTube and sexual discourse. The research on YouTubers reveals different types and levels of participation in sexual discourses.

Pertaining to gender and sexual identity. Scholars have focused their research on youth negotiations with and constructions of their gendered and sexual identities through YouTube media (Banet-Weiser, 2011, 2014; Christian, 2010; Potts, 2015; Raun, 2012; Saul, 2010). The literature emphasizes that the process of building, negotiating, and showcasing identities can serve an educational function. For example, in her study of YouTube video game players, Potts (2015) found that they engaged in and promoted queer discourse, thus potentially leading to more accepting attitudes amongst their fans. Christian

(2010) suggests that YouTubers' performances of camp "remade camp for a postqueer, new media world" (p. 370). Raun (2012) writes, "the vlog becomes an important tool, alongside other technologies of the self, in constructing, performing and expressing trans identity" (p.166). In his study of YouTube vlogger Kevjumba's online practices, Saul (2010) notes about the heuristic aspect of adolescent YouTube texts:

The work that young people carry out can be deeply educative: It can disrupt conventional popular constructions of adolescence, it can offer young people a venue from which to critique and negotiate the social constructions made about them, and it can serve as a reminder that even if online spaces offer young people more autonomy for self-expression than in traditional spheres of mainstream media, these new popular cultural spaces bump-up against their own external controls. (p.472)

While these videos may be empowering tools of self-expression and educational within the communities in which they are located, they also perpetuate problematic discourses. Banet-Weiser (2011, 2014) recognizes that YouTube performances of identity - in her work related to girlhood- mirror representations of traditional gender and beauty marketed through popular culture. She (2014) argues that analysis of girl-produced YouTube videos, such as the 'Am I pretty or ugly?' YouTube videos, need to be "contextualized within hegemonic gender construction, including a postfeminist environment that centers on a specific concept of the notion of empowerment" (p.80). YouTube contributes to this postfeminist culture where young girls feel subjected to meet the criteria of the 'can-do-girl,' (Harris, 2004) by forging a space in which young people

willingly subject themselves to surveillance and judgement (Banet-Weiser, 2014). Rossie's (2015) study of audience feedback to these videos further problematizes the discourses circulating within these spaces, "YouTube feedback reinforces existing hegemonic discourses of gender, race and sexuality and acts as a disciplinary force to reify normative bodies and expressions of femininity" (p.239). While my study will not necessarily be focusing on identity work, this body of work does draw attention to sexual discourses online and sheds light on their relationships with postfeminist ideologies. The implications of postfeminism on girls and women, and the threads of postfeminist discourse weaving through young people's work, suggest that YouTube media- even videos that appear feminist or inclusive- need to be critically consumed by audiences.

Pertaining to sexuality topics. Some researchers have started to examine how social media sites like YouTube also offer channels through which youth can teach and learn sexuality topics (Johnston, 2017; Manduley, Mertens, & Sultana, 2018). Manduley and their colleagues (2018) recognize the popularity of the platform and its potential to share stories as particularly useful for youth learning about sexuality topics. They argue that social media can offer 'by and for' sex education, particularly in the case of marginalized communities excluded from institutional discourse who then create media to serve other individuals who identify in similar ways. Johnston (2017) focuses on YouTube celebrities whom she argues play an important in YouTube sexuality education. She describes their work with sexuality education vlogs as a mix of entertainment and education, or "sex edutainment" (p.76). Johnston highlights the importance of YouTube for informal sexuality education:

YouTube still plays a significant role in community building and engagement with sex education outside educational institutions. The loyalty and trust built into the video producer's star brand helps sustain interest in sex education beyond the classroom. Sex education on YouTube, then, can be seen not only as an extension of the programs taught in schools but also as a community that continues to inform and share insights into sexuality long after young people have passed through the classroom doors. (p.90)

The research on sexual discourses related to sexual violence is still emerging. In my quest for sexual violence and rape culture-related studies of YouTube, I was unable to find English scholarly literature that explores how young people negotiate sexual violence and sexual consent on YouTube outside my previous work with Ayesha Vemuri. We performed a thematic analysis using Buckingham's digital literacy framework (2007) to inquire about the types of discourses that circulated in 10 YouTube videos on rape culture created by young women and girls, and to reflect on the potential of these videos to stir up social change (Garcia & Vemuri, 2017). We argued that, "from the care and attention that the producers invested in their videos that they are actively and conscientiously producing media to persuade, inform, and reach out to audiences to promote transformative change" (p. 39). However, our work was limited by a small sample that included only women, which fails to reflect the realities of online networks. Moreover, we did not seek out YouTubers' experiences and opinions, as this study does. The combination of methods and voices in this study provides a more holistic lens through which I examine youth production processes and media.

Moving Forward: Conceptualizing ‘good’ Sexualities Education

This third section of my thesis sets the stage for the discussion of YouTube, vlogs and vlogging as sexualities education resources, by exploring visions of ‘good’ sexualities education by different feminist and media scholars. I also employed this literature as a guiding construct to develop the goals –learning and empowerment- and evaluation tools in my media education-based sexual consent workshops.

Several feminist critiques of sexuality education have argued for a more critical approach to sexualities education but framing what is ‘good’ sexuality education is value-laden and subjective. I primarily draw from the works of Lisa Trimble, Sharon Lamb, and Louisa Allen, but I also engage with several cultural studies and critical pedagogies scholars. While some conversations around critical sexualities education often take place in the literature on programming at elementary and high school levels, I believe that these are relevant and applicable in all contexts where sexual learning is taking place, including higher education.

Critical Sexualities Education

Trimble (2009) writes that a “critical, cultural sexualities education seeks to analyze and respond to the messages we are bombarded with about what it means to be sexual, whose body is desirable, who deserves pleasure and who invites condemnation simply by existing” (p.52). She argues that critical sexualities education requires a transformational learning that speaks to Lange’s (2004, as cited in Trimble, 2009) perception of

transformation, which is described as moving beyond affecting ways of thinking to impacting ways of being.

Critical sexualities education invites adult educators to consider how affect and experience intersect with sexual learning, and it promotes the recognition of youth and adults' experiences in the ways that they teach. Trimble (2009) writes, "Transferring our thinking about sexualities education as a techno-rational space into naming it as a political space means that we can also seriously consider the role emotions play in learning and resisting learning about sexualities" (p.56). This may involve leaving spaces for emotions to emerge and call upon educators to recognize how manifestations of emotions may provide indications on the ways that young people 'encounter' sexuality topics.

Trimble (2009) further argues that critical sexualities education is about promoting engagement with all forms of sexualities topics, even those that are more contentious and stigmatized, despite the recent 'culture wars' that prompt educators to avoid difficult topics that may shock others and to teach superficially. Without a critical approach to sexualities education, and with an approach to sexuality that is clinical, oversimplified and disembodied, those engaging in sexual learning will fail to make connections with their own complex sexualities and sexual lives. Such an approach invites individuals to "boldly welcome the opportunity to wade through ambiguity and unknowing together" (p.61). It advocates for steering away from privileging hetero-, cis-, White normativity, towards developing a more complex and empathetic understanding of sexualities and encouraging young people to unearth and explore their own sexual knowing.

Trimble (2009) also iterates the connection between critical sexualities education and sexual citizenship. She argues, “Positioning sexualities as citizenship frames our intimate lives in political and epistemological contexts, and dissipates the illusion that sex, pleasure and desire can be negotiated mostly within the private domain.” (p.58) Teaching sexual citizenships involves the acknowledgement of the ways that politics and rights are tied in with sexual identities, gender, and practices.

Lamb (2010) suggests that moving beyond comprehensive and liberal programming requires a stronger focus on sexual ethics and care (for self and others), which may be achievable in programs that adopt a feminist lens to think about issues with stereotypes, privileging of masculinity, and the oppression of girls and women. This echoes the work of Fine (1988), whose earlier work called attention to the ways in which American sex education programs have problematic positioned girls and women as passive gatekeepers, victims, and burdens to the community in sexual discourse. Focusing on ethics and care, Lamb (2010) argues, may offer a pathway towards citizenship education. She writes that young people must know their rights and those of others, and importantly, exercise care for themselves and others. They must also understand how rights are exercised and breached, as gendered, sexual, racialized, dis/abled, citizens.

Allen (2005, 2011) posits that feminist poststructuralist lens in sexualities education offers a useful tool for feminist to inquire into the relationships between young people and sexual discourse. Feminist/poststructuralist researchers have played an important role in deconstructing and shining light on the relationships between knowledge, power and institutions (St-Pierre & Pillow, 2003) Both poststructuralists and feminist poststructuralists

deduce that the sexual discourses pervading schools, media and other contexts can empower and weaken individuals (Allen, 2005; Fine, 1988; Fine & McClelland, 2006; Foucault, 1990; Jones, 2011). Feminist poststructuralists seek to “[show] that discourses are not closed systems and that shifts in historical thought and material conditions are possible” (p.4). Such scholars value critical engagement with discourse to understand the patriarchal and heterosexist ways in which society portrays women, their bodies and their sexual desires (Weedon, 1987). Poststructural feminist educators critique the nature of knowledge, recognizing the possibilities of multiple truths and opening the door for the critical analysis of the self and of feminism in general (Gavey, 1989). Feminist poststructuralism is largely concerned with language and the way it shapes structures of hierarchy present in our society (Gavey, 1989; St. Pierre, 2000). It also recognizes the need to raise awareness of inequality and call for social change (Gavey, 1989).

Allen (2005) argues that poststructuralism frames sexuality as ‘discursively constructed’ and as a lived experience, meaning that individuals are agents in their sexual lives, but they are still subjected to the social practices and values in their context. This framing of sexuality education thus positions learning, on the Internet or in the classroom, within the complex relationships between sexual discourse and lived experience in which young people must negotiate meaning. It recognizes that while sexuality education offers a site of possibility, it also means that programming inherently positions young people as ‘sexual subjects’ (Allen, 2011)

Resonant with critical sexualities education, is also the relationships between critical pedagogy and sexuality education. Freire's seminal work *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (2005) shaped some the pillars of critical pedagogy, including consciousness-raising, problem-posing and building the democratic classroom. Amongst other things, critical pedagogy asks educators to promote critical thinking and engage students in reflection about power and discourse in their everyday lives. Critical pedagogy might inspire young people to express themselves in a democratic classroom and be able to relate to the curriculum (Giroux, 2006). Tisdell (2008) in her work in higher education, makes important connections between popular culture, critical media literacy, and the potential for transformative learning. She found that "It is generally not entertainment media themselves, but the engagement and discussion of social issues highlighted in movies and television shows, which have the power to raise consciousness leading to transformative learning" (p.64). She expresses that higher education may be an opportune moment to have critical, emotional, and affective deconstruction and dialogue about media "to engage in a critical pedagogy of transformative learning" (p.64) Moreover, from a more practical perspective, using videos as a teaching device can help educators anchor their points in examples, offer texts to critique, stimulate youth brains, link learning to 'reality', demonstrate various ways of thinking, and appeal to younger audiences by eliciting emotions (Berk, 2009).

In summary, the scholars discussed here seem to identify critical forms of sexuality education as programs that teach youth sexual skills and knowledge, inspire critical thinking regarding the intersections of sexuality, power, history, cultural context, and citizenships, and provide young people with the empowerment and agency to act in favor of

a better world. As I began to address, some arguments can be made about the use of media education, and the development of critical media literacy skills that hone youth skills pertaining to the deconstruction and production of texts, to achieve critical sexualities education.

Media in Sexualities Education

The use of media for teaching sexualities education is not new; in fact, some of the earlier methods of teaching sexual health involved showing videos to youth. Sex hygiene films were common in the early 20th century, prompted by concerns over sexually transmitted infections and morality (Schaefer, 1999). However, in recent years, some sexualities education programs have been to encourage the development of critical media literacy skills as part of sexualities education (explored below). Critical media literacy, according to Kellner and Share (2005), means “cultivating skills in analyzing media codes and conventions, abilities to criticize stereotypes, dominant values, and ideologies, and competencies to interpret the multiple meanings and messages generated by media texts” (p.372). Critical media literacy, in the digital age, may also involve the ‘new media literacy’ skills described earlier, which refer to the social skills to effectively engage in the larger online community (Jenkins et al., 2009). Rheingold (2008) suggests that teaching participatory media literacy “is an active response to the as-yet-unsettled battles over political and economic power in the emerging mediasphere, and to the possibility that today's young people could have a say in shaping part of the world they will live in-or might be locked out of that possibility” (p.100). Youth need the skills to produce and

consumer democratically and responsibly in participatory media sites. He argues elsewhere that a participatory form of media education where educators teach young people how to use the Internet as a space to express themselves, inform others and engage in activism, can lead to positive forms of citizenship (Rheingold, 2008b).

At the intersection of cultural studies, critical pedagogy, and sexuality education, empowering young people with the critical media literacy skills to aptly deconstruct and create media texts is necessary and relevant in a time where entertainment media and social media spaces continuously engage with sexual topics and offer a plethora of sexual and gender representations (Giroux, 2006; Neustifter, Blumer, O'Reilly, & Ramirez, 2015). They are particularly necessary in today's rape culture where representations of sexual violence are problematized by and often exacerbated within media spaces, but also, where media spaces offer young people opportunities to respond and protest representations of sexuality, gender, and sexual violence. The potential of teaching sexualities education through media education has been recognized in some programs such as Media Relate (Bragg, 2006; Grahame et al., 2005) and Take It Seriously: Abstinence and the Media (Pinkleton et al., 2008). Their evaluations suggest that a critical media literacy approach can effectively equip young people with the critical thinking skills to learn from and produce sexual discourses in general and via media. While I only provide these examples, it is important to note that many comprehensive sexualities education curricula will encourage educators to address and question media representations to some extent.

The evaluation of media literacy-based sexuality programs suggest youth enjoy learning about sexuality through media (Bragg, 2006; Grahame et al., 2005; Pinkleton et al. 2008). Videos on social media can interest young people, and even prompt them to share messages on their platforms (McKee, Albury, Burgess, Light, Osman, & Walsh, 2018). Media education-based sexuality education can also provide opportunities to be critical of and respond to representations of sexuality in their lives. The importance of providing young people with the skills and space to speak about issues that concern them is evident in a number of participatory projects worldwide involving media production to call attention sexual violence (for a series of examples, see Mitchell and Moletsane, 2018). Media-making offers the potential to empower young people with knowledge as well as skills using artistic and technology platforms for self-expression and to reach wider audiences.

YouTube in Sexualities Education

There are various types of media that can be critiqued and created in a sexualities education program; however, for the purpose of this study, I focus on the literature that explores using YouTube in sexualities education. A few researchers have advocated for the use of YouTube in critical pedagogy (Kellner & Kim, 2010), and in sexualities and health education (Akagi, 2008; Manduley et al., 2018; Prybutok, 2013). Kellner and Kim (2010) suggest that “new media like YouTube (UT), combined with a transformative critical pedagogy, can help realize the Internet’s potential for democratization and transformative pedagogy” (p.6). The inclusion of social media in sexualities education, Manduley et al.

(2018) also argue, allows for the exploration of marginalized voices and experiences that otherwise might not make the curriculum.

Moreover, Manduley and their colleagues (2018) write about the potential of using social media and vlog-making, as a means to engage young people:

The ability to use and communicate effectively on social media is often undervalued. Sex educators and activists can improve their work by looking at ways that classroom learning can invite young people to write blogs, make vlogs, or engage on social media to share their personal stories around sexuality, race, and gender. Capitalizing on the collaborative nature of social media through its inclusion in classroom projects, community initiatives, and even research can further foster skill sharing and intra- and cross-cultural exchange. (p.163)

Akagi (2008) also found that YouTube videos were useful and engaging in college-level health education, though educators need to be mindful of the types of videos (humorous, graphic) that are used because they may be offensive.

YouTube videos also help deliver content knowledge. Akagi (2008) suggests that effectively using videos in a formal environment involves “using video delivery to educate” and “engaging students in cognitively processing the video’s message” (p. 60). In her work with college students, Prybutok (2013) also found that watching YouTube videos to help with STD prevention was helpful in developing her participants’ knowledge. Students were presented with two types of YouTube videos, entertaining or professional; they preferred the latter. Her work suggests that YouTube can also lead to behavior change.

Beyond the use of YouTube media as texts, McKee et al.'s (2018) study shows how young men found these useful learning resources, and the prospect of sharing the videos excited participants. The scholars note their youth participants claimed they might share sexualities education videos within their networks, and also discuss how their control of what they spread and how they engage with the content online might cause sexualities educators to feel a loss of control pertaining to the dissemination of material for entertainment vs educational purposes.

More generally, there is a significant amount of work that has advocated for the use of YouTube in the classroom, particularly in higher education (Jones & Cuthrell, 2011; Hung, 2011; Sherer & Shea, 2011). Jones and Cuthrell (2011) argue that YouTube is useful across classrooms, from elementary to university, because of its potential to attract interest and to effectively support the instruction of a subject. While Hung (2011) used YouTube vlogs in a ESL context, students participating in their study reported that vlogs helped their learning, although they did encounter technical difficulties and some participants reported feeling shy using vlogs in a 'public online environment'. Sherer and Shea (2011) further argue that YouTube's accessibility and the wide range of content can offer students and teachers opportunities to build dialogue and engage the classroom. However, scholars have not yet examined, to the best of my knowledge, how older youth (e.g. postsecondary) might feel about the use of YouTube videos and vlogs for sexualities education, even though many young people are using these platforms to talk about sexuality and gender topics (see previous sections).

This conceptualization of sexualities education grounded in the literature by prominent sexualities, education, and cultural studies scholars, reinforces how cultural artifacts and practices like YouTube vlogs and vlogging can contribute to more critical forms of sexualities education (combined with other practices). The principles elaborated upon in this section – of empowerment to effect change, of critical sexual learning- formed the pillars of the workshop context in which this study took place. They emerged in the previous sections as well, where youth participation is discussed in the context of awareness-raising and civic engagement. These principles also informed the evaluation of the workshop, and the broader reflection on vlogs and vlogging as forms of sexualities education.

Summary of the Chapter

The literature review in this chapter offered an overview of sexual violence and sexual consent discourses in North America. The scholarship pointed to issues in consent education, mainly around the lack of depth within current postsecondary consent education and the difficult access to students who may need it. I explored theories and studies multimodality and social semiotics, public pedagogy and learning, to frame how the scholarship addresses meaning-making on and through these spaces. This chapter also engaged with the scholarship on youth participation in digital spaces and on YouTube. I pointed to a gap in research on the ways that young YouTubers use the platform and their vlogs to talk about consent and sexual violence, which is important to understand considering the popularity of these resources and the context explored in the first section.

The first research question guiding my study becomes important to address, “How do these YouTube videos and vloggers discuss sexual consent and assault in their media? Why do YouTube vloggers choose to make media about sexual consent and assault? How might audiences respond to these texts?”

Moreover, I came back to the issues with consent education when reviewing scholars’ calls for better sexualities education as a whole, which further reinforces the need to improve consent education and offers strategies for improvement. This includes adopting a critical pedagogy and critical media literacy-approach that accounts for the larger discourses and media artifacts in youth lives, as well as recognizes and empowers youth abilities to take action through their participation. The section also pointed to the need to develop a better understanding of YouTube in the context of sexualities education, given that scholars in different fields advocate for the inclusion of media, social media, and YouTube in education. The third section of the literature review demonstrates the importance of asking, “How do young YouTube users perceive vlogging and vlogs as sexualities education tools, online and in the university classroom?” and “What were participants’ perceptions of a YouTube and vlog-making, consent education workshop held in a university context?”

In the next section, I elaborate on the research design that guided my inquiry.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Chapter 3 details the processes and methodologies that informed this study. I begin with an overview of my research design. The remainder of the chapter details the methodologies, data sources (participants and videos), methods, sampling, and analysis.

Research Design

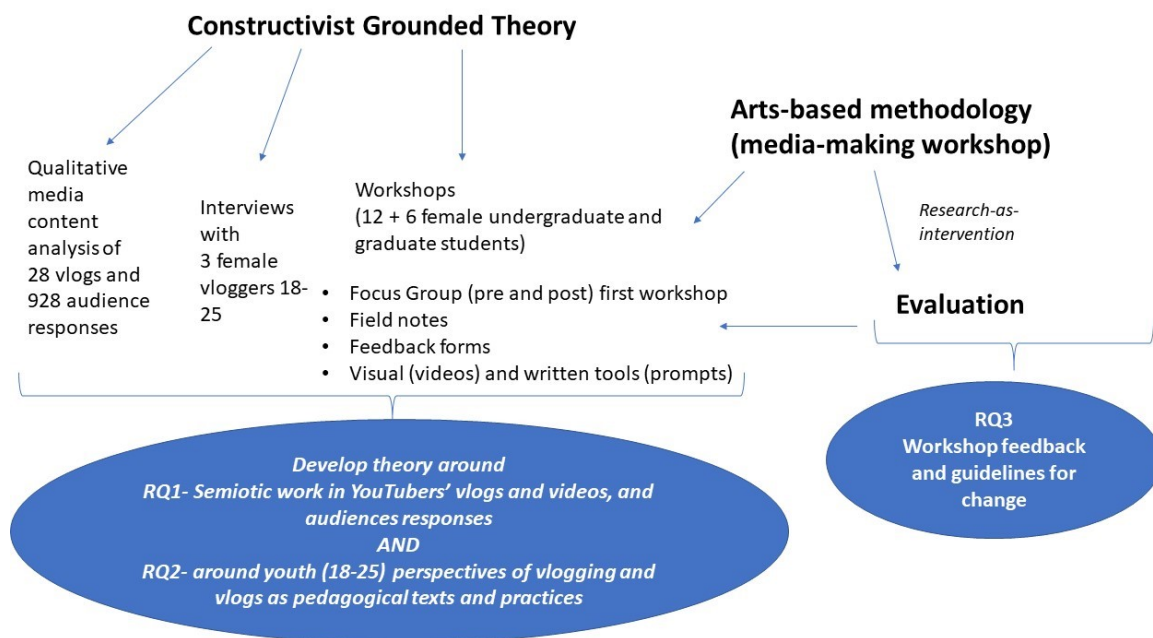


Figure 2. Map of research design

My research design is summarized in Figure 2. As I explain in Chapter 1, this qualitative study investigates the semiotic work in youth vlogs spaces and examines youth perceptions of vlogs and vlog-making as pedagogical tools. The research design is primarily informed by Constructivist Grounded Theory, arts-based methods, and evaluations tools.

RQ1. How do these YouTube videos and vloggers discuss sexual consent and assault in their media? Why do YouTube vloggers choose to make media about sexual consent and assault? How might audiences respond to these texts?

For the first subset of research questions (RQ1), I investigate the semiotic work of YouTube vloggers' media on sexual consent and sexual violence. Using a sample of 28 vlogs, I study how young vloggers, who appear to be older teenagers and young adults, represent sexual consent and sexual violence in their media. I examine their potential motivations for this work, to get a sense of the ways these texts may contribute to larger sexual discourses online. In the study of their vlog pages, I also analyze 928 audience comments and replies mined from 20 vlogs in my sample, to uncover potential audience responses to these vlogs. I use a combination of Constructivist Grounded Theory methods and a qualitative, multimodal content analysis loosely guided by the dimensions in Kress' model of Multimodal Social Semiotics to answer these questions (RQ1).

RQ2. How do young YouTube users feel about vlogging and vlogs as sexualities education tools, online and in the university classroom?

To respond to this research question (RQ2), I gathered youth perspectives from YouTubers and participants in a university workshop context. I first conducted three interviews with vloggers between the ages of 18 and 25, and to reach theoretical saturation during this phase, organized two sets of workshops with university students. Inspired by the literature on arts-based methodologies (Mitchel and De Lange, 2011) and previous practice, I organized the first three-part, pilot consent education and YouTube media-making workshop in March 2017, and one single session workshop in October 2018. This methodological approach allowed me and my participants to collaboratively explore how

YouTube vlogs and media-making contribute to knowledge about sexual consent and social change. The design of this consent education workshop was also informed by my previous workshops, literature on sexuality and media education (see chapter 2), and my initial findings at the time. The data was gathered using a combination of methods: focus group discussions (pre and post-workshop), workshop transcripts, written and visual artifacts, written evaluation tools (developed to answer RQ3), and field notes.

RQ3. What were participants' perceptions of a YouTube and vlog-making, consent education workshop held in a university context?

The last subset of research questions (RQ3) relate to the evaluation part of the study. Inspired by the concept of 'research as intervention' (D'Amico, Denov, Khan, Linds, & Akesson, 2016; MacEntee, 2015), I primarily rely on an evaluation design to conduct an exploratory inquiry into the effectiveness and relevance of my media-making interventions as workshops at a Montreal University. The methods used to answer the previous research question asked for participants' feedback on the workshop in addition to their general perceptions of vlogging and vlog for online and classroom-based sexuality education. The findings for RQ3 therefore inform RQ2, and contributed to the redesign of the workshop (available in Appendix J).

Epistemological Frameworks

Two epistemological frameworks undergird the research: Constructivism and Pragmatism. Informed by the philosophical assumption that reality is a construct, a constructivist approach to research calls for an inquiry into participants' unique

perspectives and realities (Mertens, 2015). It is therefore congruent with the Constructivist Grounded Theory approach (Charmaz, 2006, 2014), which requires the researcher to remain as objective as possible and true to the data that emerges. Researchers embarked in a study with a constructivist lens must be careful to root their findings in the experiences of their participants and acknowledge the bias and values that they bring to their study (Mertens, 2015). A constructivist paradigm strives to comprehend the complexity of phenomena as they are understood and lived by the actors involved within a specific context. Constructivism thus prioritizes participants' voices and does not make grand assumptions that their experiences reflect the realities of others. Throughout my analysis and writing process, I strove to remain faithful to the texts I analyzed and to the participants' experiences and voices. This was significantly facilitated by the use of Constructivist Grounded Theory procedures.

I adopt a pragmatic lens as well. It offers an “action-oriented approach” to improve the educational system by targeting specific problems, and offering solutions grounded in the experiences and feedback of those affected (Lodico, Spaulding, & Voegtle, 2006, p. 11). Mertens (2015) writes, “in pragmatists' eyes, the lines of action are methods of research that are seen to be most appropriate for studying the phenomenon at hand” (p.36). This pragmatic lens influenced my decision to refer to my workshop as ‘research-as-intervention’. Evaluating and reflecting about the context in which my participants operated offered me an opportunity to rework the framework for potential use by future researchers and educators and offer guidelines for practice.

I believe that researchers must remain flexible in their philosophical orientations and research design to address their research questions, which explains why my work is situated within two philosophical orientations that are not necessarily congruent. Denzin and Lincoln (2008) as well as Kincheloe's (2005) theory of 'bricolage' offers a rationale for a more comprehensive research design. Bricolage invites researchers to become 'bricoleurs' or 'quilt makers' by choosing an eclectic mix of methodologies that will best address their research questions (Denzin and Lincoln, 2008). Denzin and Lincoln note that, "This process creates and brings psychological and emotional unity- a pattern- to an interpretive inquiry," (p.7) which may not be possible with the traditional application of a singular methodology. The researcher-as-bricoleur brings depth and complexity to a study when seeking ways to piece together methodological frameworks to acquire rich data through the active construction of research methods (Kincheloe, 2005). This approach is also useful when navigating online spaces, as it allows for the research to take the necessary steps to meet their needs in a complex and dynamic environment (Gerber, Adams, Curwood, & Magnifico, 2017).

Methodologies

Constructivist Grounded Theory

What is Grounded Theory? Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss developed Grounded Theory in the 1960s, while they conducted research with dying patients (Charmaz, 2014). Their seminal work "The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research" (2017, originally published in 1967) articulates methodological

procedures that culminate in the discovery of theory. Their purpose, Charmaz (2014) expresses, was “to move qualitative inquiry beyond descriptive studies into the realm of explanatory theoretical frameworks, thereby providing abstract, conceptual understandings of the studied phenomena” (p.8). Grounded Theory addresses some of the criticisms of qualitative inquiry by adding rigor to the process of data collection and analysis (Newby, 2015). Since the original conception of Grounded Theory, there have been several versions of the methodology, including Strauss and Corbin’s modified framework (1990) and Constructivist Grounded Theory (Charmaz, 2006, 2014).

Constructivist Grounded Theory (CGT) follows the basic tenets of Grounded Theory, calling for “the inductive, comparative, emergent, and open-ended approach of Glaser and Strauss’ (1967) original statement” (Charmaz, 2014, p.13). However, it adds flexibility to a methodology previously critiqued for its rigidity and positivist tendencies, and for its focus on researchers’ objectivities. Constructivist Grounded Theory adheres to the idea that reality is constructed, and posits that “we must take the researcher’s position, privileges, perspective, and interactions into account as an inherent part of the research reality” (p.13). Such a perspective forces the researcher to think deeply about the impact of their background, values, and choices in their application of Grounded Theory methods during the research process and analysis.

The following represents Charmaz’s (2010, as cited in Charmaz, 2014, p.15) nine criteria for a Constructivist Grounded Theory study (condensed to 6 points). Each point includes an explanation of my approach:

1. Simultaneous data collection and analysis: In brief, to answer my first research question pertaining to the discourses and production strategies in sexual consent vlogs and videos, I gathered, processed, and analyzed my videos between October 2016 and September 2018, while conducting a pre-and post-workshop focus group, facilitating workshops, and conducting interviews. This process of simultaneous analysis and data collection informed my search for more videos, helping identify gaps in my understanding which I was then able to answer through additional research.

This process was also helpful during the workshops phase (described in full in the Arts-based Research section). The initial workshop informing this study, held in March 2017, was divided in three sessions so that I may adapt my instruments and questions based on preliminary analyses of feedback forms and field notes. The October 2018 workshop complemented my inquiry.

2. Analyzing actions/processes vs isolated themes: I found Constructivist Grounded Theory to also be a particularly suitable for a study looking at how youth participate in sexual discourses through their YouTube vlogs on consent, why vloggers produce their media, and what meaning-making might occur when making and watching vlogs. Grounded Theory methodologies ideally suit studies that focus on researching action and process (Charmaz, 2014), and are useful for online research (Gerber et al., 2017). Glaser (1978, as cited in Charmaz, 2014, p.34) once stated that the Grounded theorist must first ask, “What’s happening here?” This question remained in my mind throughout the process of analysis as I grappled with the data. In the section called Analysis, I detail the

actions I took while coding the data during and after my data collection. As demonstrated in my two theoretical diagrams detailed extensively in Chapters 4 and 5, I carefully studied the relationships between categories, as well as the content within them.

3. A comparative process: Charmaz (2014) notes that in Grounded Theory, the researcher must continually seek to make comparisons between data and between sources as they build their categories and theoretical relationships. My attention to the comparative process is evident through my analytical process detailed in the Analysis section. I continually travelled within and across data sources during the process of coding the videos and interviews, as well as the focus group and workshop data. My use of different methods to reach different voices across various contexts is represented in my visual timeline (Figure 3).

4. Basing category development on data vs preconceived ideas, and through systematic analysis: Charmaz (2006, 2014), as well as most Grounded Theorists, highlight the need for researchers to build their theory based on what the data is telling them, rather than overly relying on or comparing to other theories. I appreciate how Grounded Theory requires that theoretical models be faithful to those or that which is studied. This is challenging to do when investigating online media texts, as researchers are the research tools, and they rely on their own interpretations to draw conclusions (Gerber et al., 2017). Therefore, during the process of collecting and analyzing data, I conscientiously distanced myself from the literature, and my personal experiences and bias, while not completely discarding my views.

During my research journey, I did make use of ‘sensitizing concepts’, which Charmaz (2014) frames as “points of departure for developing, rather than limiting, our ideas” (p.31). These concepts helped shape my initial research proposal, my research questions and my design. Throughout all the phases, I remained careful to avoid forcing these preconceived notions or concepts onto the data and into frameworks of thinking. These sensitizing concepts were included in the initial literature review that was developed to some extent before and during the process of data collection and analysis.

I conducted an initial literature review because of the expectations of academia (e.g. research proposals, candidacy papers). Some Grounded Theorists, such as Glaser and Strauss (2017), believe that to ensure that a theory is grounded in data alone, researchers should delay writing this portion of the study. Others such as Dey (2007) and Charmaz (2006, 2014) recognize the difficulty, and arguably the unlikelihood, of building theory from scratch. Dey (2007) argues that researchers need to keep an open mind, and be aware and critical of their preconceptions, ensuring that those they bring to the research report are well-supported by their data. He recognizes the benefits of acknowledging and understanding the roots of the sensitizing concepts brought to a study. I take Dey’s (2007) and Charmaz’s (2006, 2014) position that the role of a literature review in Constructivist Grounded Theory is to set the stage for the research. The literature explored in Chapter 2 represents some of the points of departure that guided my work, but also my ‘points of arrival’, meaning that I tailored my literature review post-analysis.

5. Theoretical sampling: Charmaz (2014) writes, “When engaging in theoretical sampling, the researcher seeks people, events, or information to illuminate and define the properties, boundaries, and relevance of this category or set of categories” (p.345). I address theoretical sampling further in this Chapter. I highlight the efforts to seek out different YouTube vlogs tackling sexual consent and sexual violence, produced by a variety of youth. I also discuss my attempt to attract diverse participants in my university workshop; however, a limitation of this study was my inability to attract male participants at that stage, despite my efforts.

6. Focus on theory construction, with attention to variation, and faithfulness to categories. Charmaz (2006) emphasizes that CGT researchers should aspire towards theory development, rather than simple, isolated descriptions of themes. Throughout my coding process, detailed in the Analysis section, I kept my eye on recurring ideas as well as the variation cases, to seek out a better understanding of youth processes (RQ1) and of their feelings and thoughts (RQ2). In addition to helping with theoretical sampling, this process of seeking data saturation, recording variation, and moving between categories was instrumental to shaping my theoretical frameworks.

Constructivist Grounded Theory and methods. I used different tools (e.g., multimodal, qualitative content analyses; interviews; focus groups) and drew from other methodologies (arts-based workshops and tools, evaluation tools) during my study. I elaborate upon these methods in sections on Data Collection Methods, Sampling, and Analysis:

Table 1. Methods and methodologies to answer research questions 1 and 2.

RQ1. How do these YouTube videos and vloggers discuss sexual consent and assault in their media? Why do YouTube vloggers choose to make media about sexual consent and assault? How might audiences respond to these texts?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Multimodal/Qualitative content analysis of 28 YouTubers vlogs and videos</i> • <i>Qualitative content analysis of 928 audience responses in 20 of the vlogs and videos</i> • <i>Semi-structured Interviews with three YouTubers</i>
RQ2. How do young YouTube users feel about vlogging and vlogs as sexualities education tools, online and in the university classroom?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Semi-structured interviews with three YouTubers</i> • <i>Data collected from participants in two consent and media-making workshops (March 2017, October 2018)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Pre- and post- March workshop focus groups (transcripts analyzed)</i> ○ <i>Workshop transcripts (observation notes)</i> ○ <i>Participant reflections (written)</i> ○ <i>Evaluation feedback (see Evaluation section)</i> ○ <i>Field notes</i>

Rationale for using Constructivist Grounded Theory. The current context of sexual violence and sexuality education, combined with the scarcity of literature exploring the YouTube vlogs and vlogging about sexual consent and sexual violence by youth and young adults as well as the noted complexity of youth participation online, indicated a need for new theory related to YouTubers semiotic practices in sexual consent vlogs, and perspectives of this work for sexualities education. Grounded Theory methods and processes provide a set of useful guidelines for theoretical development.

Moreover, I chose CGT as my main methodology because of its flexibility, and its less positivist approach to data analysis (as opposed to Glaser and Strauss's approach, for

example). I needed a methodology that would allow me to thread between two spaces (the classroom, YouTube) to study YouTube vlogs and videos in great depth, and in addition, gather people's perceptions of these videos. One of the main benefits of Grounded Theory is that despite its steps and rules, it offers a certain amount of breathing room for the researcher to adjust the design to meet the needs of their research (Charmaz, 2006). In addition to its flexibility, I also selected CGT because the methodology calls for a researcher to weave between data collection and analysis. I found it beneficial that Grounded Theory asks researchers to engage in the process of data collection and analysis simultaneously throughout the study (Corbin & Strauss, 2015).

Moreover, the scholarship reflects that Constructivist Grounded Theory can be useful to study media texts in online spaces. Gerber et al. (2017) argue that while interviews and observation remain the primary choice of data collection for grounded theorists, researchers studying online media platforms and texts may find this approach useful. They refer to studies by Gooden and Winefield (2007) and Dodge et al. (2008) to explain how Grounded Theory prompts inquiry into a versatility of data sources and offers an advantageous analytical framework to better understand the meaning of technology in people's lives and learning (as cited in Gerber et al., 2017). YouTube researchers have also used Grounded Theory, complemented with content analysis, to systematically study texts and processes online (Caron, 2017; Church, 2010). Caron (2017) applied a systematic Grounded Theory approach to select her YouTube videos and perform an ongoing analysis, which led to the development of an understanding of youth civic engagement on YouTube. Like Caron, Church (2010) incorporated Grounded Theory with Content Analysis to

develop a structure of categories upon which he could ground his analysis. The coding process offered the researcher opportunities to systematically identify key themes and rhetorical strategies in YouTube texts, as well as comment feeds. In a similar vein, Al-Rawi's (2015) found that Grounded Theory processes of coding- open, axial, and selective- provided depth to his analysis of audience comments in YouTube reaction videos. These studies were relevant sources of inspiration as I designed my study.

Arts-based Research

While collecting data on youth perspectives of vlogs and vlogging (RQ2), I encountered a barrier: none of my online potential participants were responding to my emails. This raised the question; how else could I elicit perspectives of YouTube media and media making? How else could I find YouTubers vlogging about consent? Since I was offering sexualities education workshops in the university community at the time, I therefore turned to university-attending youth to gain more perspective. I borrowed from arts-based research practices, particularly related to media-making, and critical sexualities education theory to develop a workshop that would engage participants in learning about consent with the help of YouTube media and vlog making, and empower them with the skills to develop their own media on sexual consent.

The consent education workshops were designed and implemented between March 2017 (with 12 participants) and October 2018 (with 6 participants). The first three-part workshop was held in March 2017 and for research purposes only, and I facilitated the second workshop as part of a larger event. Both workshops served to gather additional

perspectives about vlogging from new participants pertaining to the research questions that I began to explore in my media analysis and interviews.

What is arts-based research? Finley (2011) describes the powerful potential of arts-based inquiry, suggesting that,

Connectivity among the forces of political resistance, pedagogy, and interpretive performance, and arts-based methodological approaches crystallizes a way of understanding that is at once aesthetic and conducive to interpreting social structures and inspiring transformational action. (p.444)

Arts-based methods, Finley (2011) notes, offer opportunities to elicit and engage with participants' emotions and experiences by working with participants to create artistic performances, poetry, media, or other forms of art. Such a methodology can (and arguably should) also be educational, empowering, and emancipatory. Employing an arts-based approach seemed appropriate in the context of sexual violence work, where methodologies related to dance, poetry, media-making, and photovoice are often used (Garcia, Carter, Nyariro, Ezcurra, Beavis, & Mitchell, in press). The work I did with my colleagues examines how art can contribute to survivors' healing processes and foster empathy and understanding within communities. Visual art, theatre and performance, as well as other modes of artistic representation, can also help educate others. We also refer the several artists, scholars, and feminist communities who have used art for activism and advocacy.

Incorporating arts-based research approaches. I applied arts-based research guidelines three ways: (1) to develop the design of workshops as sites of research and

education for social change, (2) to inform my relationship with participants, and (3) to justify the importance of evaluating the workshop.

Developing the workshop design. There are a wide-range of visual methods that fall under the umbrella of arts-based research, including photovoice, participatory video and ‘cellphilms’, and digital story-telling (Mitchell, De Lange & Moletsane, 2017). With easy access to mobile technologies, participants in the research process can easily collect data by making media like movies and photographs. I broadly drew from literature on participatory video and cellphilming as visual methodologies (MacEntee, Burkholder, & Schwab-Cartas, 2016; Mitchell & De Lange, 2011) to inform my workshop design.

Notably, Mitchell and DeLange’s (2011) seminal work on a community-based participatory video project proposes these steps: 1) video making, which involves identifying issues and storyboarding, training with technology, and shooting the film, 2) initial screening and discussion of their videos, 3) the compilation of the videos by the researchers, and 4) a second screening of the re-edited video, and 5) screenings of the community. With my research questions and time limitations in mind, I decided to focus on the first two steps, video-making and an initial screening and discussion of videos. I followed these steps to guide the media-making process: “Brainstorm, storyboard, film, (edit and upload), audiencing and dialogue, [and] archiving and action.” (Burkholder & MacEntee, n.d.)

The workshop framework encourages the exploration of sexual consent and consent culture with participants through media watching and making, specifically using YouTube

vlogs and vlog-making as tools to raise awareness about consent and advocate for change. The workshop design, elaborately detailed in Appendix H, was developed based on my past sexualities education workshops, as well as from contemporary literature on critical forms of sexual consent and media education addressed in the last chapter, to build the content that focuses on developing knowledge and skills related to consent, critical media literacy, and empowerment to effect social change. Some considerations came from the interviews with vloggers; they shared their diverse processes to creating videos, which in turn informed my instructions for creating a vlog. I was further inspired by my analysis of videos at that point in time to address key themes with participants, notably around definitions of sexual consent and assault. Finally, my initial design was also shown to two members of the Office for Sexual Violence Response, Support and Education, who collaborated on the final version before the March workshop.

The workshop focuses on teaching knowledge about sexual consent, honing critical media literacy skills, and fostering empowerment. Participants examined YouTube videos about consent, discussed the impact of these videos as well as YouTube, created their own media for the platform, and talked about their videos and vlogs that we exhibited in the workshop. I registered their feedback about the workshop through evaluation tools, and, we further discussed our videos, workshop and the process of watching and making videos in the focus groups, as well as within our workshop discussions. To have them reflect individually on their media-making process, participants were also asked to complete small written reflection pieces after the two first workshops and a small plan for their videos.

Relationships with participants. Drawing from arts-based methodologies seemed appropriate with CGT because of the emphasis on participants' voices. Participatory arts-based research can disrupt policies and education by bringing participants' voices at the forefront of the research and together, advocating for change (Mitchell, De Lange, & Moletsane, 2017). Mitchell and her colleagues note that arts-based (visual methods specifically) methodologies are:

[...] effective in engaging community participants, and especially in altering some of the typical power dynamics related to the researcher/researchers, and [in] ensuring spaces for marginalized populations to both speak about and then speak back through interactive workshops sessions to social condition. (p.3)

Both cellphilming and participatory video are visual methodologies that focus on drawing out and fleshing out participants' perspectives of a phenomenon, and their own interpretation of the media they create. MacEntee et al. (2016) point to the benefits of empowering participants through media making, "cellphilming is a means through which researchers might act as allies and in support of creative production by community members that speak to their own ways of knowing" (p.8). When engaging in participatory research with visual methodologies, the researcher should involve the participants to involve themselves in the process of formulating research questions, producing and analyzing data, and possibly, sharing the research findings with wider audiences (Mitchell et al., 2017).

Framed as an emergent design, I used the staggered approach to workshop delivery to ensure that participants could provide ongoing feedback on their learning and topics of interest, so the initial design shifted throughout the three sessions. I consistently sought out and prioritized participants' feedback about the workshop. Moreover, participants were sent the final workshop design before I offered the second version of the workshop in October 2018. Therefore, I perceive my study as research with participatory sensitivities, rather than fully participatory, in recognition of the additional steps I could have taken to involve my participants.

Evaluation

Rationale for evaluation. As I developed workshop that aimed to both inform participants as well as gather data, I recognized that I was putting into place 'research-as-intervention'. "Research-as intervention" emerges in projects using participatory visual methodologies, insofar as the use of arts-based methods such as photovoice, digital storytelling, or cellphilmimg are meant to empower youth participants (D'Amico, Denov, Khan, Linds, & Akesson, 2016; MacEntee, 2015). D'Amico and her colleagues (2016) argue that "research using the arts can facilitate change while at the same time provide evidence of such changes" (p.530). While this approach strives to effect positive change in the lives of the participants during the research process, realities do not always meet expectations. When MacEntee (2015) reflected upon in her research, she found the larger context and working technologies can pose challenges in the process. Consequently, I recognized that beyond gathering data through workshops, I wanted to better understand

what went well and less well during the intervention. Situating workshops as interventions therefore prompted the question, “Will they work?” To address this pragmatic question, I referred to work on evaluation research to conduct an exploratory study of participants’ feelings about the workshop.

Incorporating evaluation in the study. An evaluation methodology calls for inquiry into the effectiveness of a small or large-scale program (Newby, 2014; Patton, 2015). The potential of evaluation to measure the values and need of a program makes this methodology attractive to policy-makers, program managers, and curriculum-developers (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007). While I was initially concerned about their preferred use for larger programs, some scholars argue that evaluation methodology can be successfully adapted to smaller scale studies led by individual researchers for scholarly or personal interests (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007; Newby, 2014). I adapted methodological guidelines for program evaluation set by Newby (2014) to suit the smaller scale and objectives of a workshop framework. I opted for qualitative methods, inspired by Patton’s (2015) description of the possibilities that they offer: “qualitative methods are often used in evaluations because they tell the *program’s story* by capturing and communicating the *participants’ stories*” (p.18).

The same methods to gather participants’ perceptions of vlogs and vlogging in general were used to collect specific information about the workshop they were attending and answer RQ3:

- Evaluation methods specific to the workshop content and approach included (See section on workshop artifacts and Appendix I):
 - *Feedback forms related to the content and approach of each section, and one post workshop 5-6 months later(March 2017)*
 - *Two reflections (one about vlog, one about workshop) (March 2017)*
 - *Observation notes (media and media-making activity sheets) (March 2017)*
 - *Feedback form related to the whole workshop (October 2018)*

I referred to Newby (2014) to shape the questions in my feedback forms and reflections. When using evaluation methodologies in any study, he suggests that researchers make three major decision related to the following: goals, focus, and types (p.57).

Goals. Newby (2014) recognizes four main goals for evaluation that can be studied separately or mixed: “to understand what is happening, [...] to ensure compliance, [...] to improve organisational management and practice, [...] for policy formulation and shaping” (p. 57-58). In this study, I am primarily focused on the “understand” goal to explore participants’ perspectives of what happened. Such a goal prompts the researcher to ask questions such as “*Why did things turn out differently from what we expected? [...] Why does this system actually work?*” (Newby, 2014, p.57) I therefore decided to follow Newby’s suggested practice and created the following sub-questions that guided my inquiry:

- A. **Outcome:** Did the workshop improve participants’ understandings of consent and consent culture? **Process:** In what ways? Where did the workshop fail to meet expectations?
- B. **Outcomes:** Did the workshop inspire and empower participants to raise awareness and promote change through online participation, or in other unexpected ways? **Process** In what ways? Where did the workshop fail to meet expectations?

- C. Across questions 1 and 2, in what ways did participants feel the workshop could be improved?

Focus. The stated questions are also tied to what Newby's (2014) describes as another characteristic of an evaluation study that a researcher must choose: its focus. He suggests that researchers can concentrate on drawing data pertaining to objectives (i.e., relevance of program), processes (efficiency), outcomes (effectiveness), and/or sustainability (capacity to continue as it is) (p. 59). Evaluating the process means questioning whether the approach and content have value in the given context, and are efficiently producing the desired results. Studying outcomes, on the other hands, requires information about whether the workshop met the objectives it set out to accomplish. In my study, the focus of questions across methods prompted participants to share whether the process of analyzing and producing media led to the accomplishment of the workshop objectives. Further, I used my field notes and observation notes to add depth and examples where needed.

Type of assessment. Finally, Newby (2014) describes the evaluation methodology must establish the type of evaluation. A researcher choosing the types of assessment -formative and summative- must establish the time that they choose to evaluate the program and the degree to which they are doing so. Summative evaluation occurs at the end of a program, whereas formative evaluation transpires throughout.

My workshop draws on both methods. From a formative evaluation standpoint, my feedback sheets, analysis of the pre-focus group workshop, and field notes contributed to improving the March workshop as we did the three sessions. I also conducted a summative

assessment by investigating “if whatever was supposed to happen actually did happen” (p.59) through the reflections and follow-up focus group.

Constructivism and Evaluation. The constructivist assumptions that underlie this dissertation reinforce that truths are subjective and affected by context. The evaluation of a program or workshop in this case, brought forth within a constructivist methodological approach, calls for the researcher to bring together multiple perspectives to share a ‘constructed reality’ of a specific event (Guba & Lincoln, 1989; Stufflebeam & Coryn, 2014). The researcher remains faithful to the input of stakeholders, engaging in richer descriptions of what happened, and be honest about the limitations of what can and cannot be said about the program (Stufflebeam & Coryn, 2014). The constructivist evaluator further “employs a relativistic perspective to obtain and analyze findings, stressing locality and specificity over generalizability” (p.200). This perspective informed my mindset as I sought to unravel the unique experiences and feedback my participants shared with me, which I share in Chapters 5 and 6.

Positionality

Constructivist Grounded Theory recognizes the presence and thinking of the researcher in the creation of their study and analysis of their data (Charmaz, 2006). While they are recognized as a contributor to the developed theory, they are asked to position their preconceived ideas and bias outside the analysis, to ground their work in participants’ voices. As noted elsewhere, I made efforts to distance myself from my analysis, e.g. by keeping away from the literature when needed. However, with my study positioned within

the gendered politics and discourses of sexualities education, sexual violence and online youth practices, I do bring a feminist lens to this work.

Feminist research and Grounded Theory are no strangers to each other, with several feminist scholars using the methodology in their work (Olesen, 2007) Yet, as Olesen (2007) notes, scholars within each paradigm might adopt different takes regarding reflexivity (and its place in the study), positivism, and research ethics. She proposes that for the alignment of feminist research and Grounded Theory to happen, particularly in studies about complex gendered issues like this one, the larger social context in which both researchers and participants and the roles of both in creation of the data should be recognized. As such, reflexivity can be an important tool during a researcher's inquiry and analysis. It is for this reason that I took reflexive notes throughout the process.

A second position taken in this study was that of "observer-as-participant", which "enables the researcher to participate in the group activities as desired, yet the main role of the researcher in this stance is to collect data, and the group being studied is aware of the researcher's observation activities" (Kawulich, 2005, p.9). As facilitator, I was only marginally immersed in the observed activities, however I did play a substantive role in leading them. While uncommon in evaluation studies for the facilitator to evaluate (Newby, 2014), this is usually because organizations or corporate institutions seeking funding and policy change may insist on a traditional scientifically-oriented methodological approach that requires external examiners without bias. This position of observer-as-participant exacerbated the need for frequent exercises in reflexivity about the impact of my presence,

my facilitation, and my workshop approach on participants. This was an important process to evaluate and improve the ways in which I, as researcher and facilitator, interacted with my participants.

Data Collection Methods

I acquired ethics approval from the REB office at McGill University in October 2016, although in the following two years, I would require some amendments to accommodate the shifting design of my study. Figure 3 features an approximate summary of the data collection process that followed the ethics approval.



Figure 3. Research timeline

I discuss the methods in this study below, further detailing the procedures taken and relating their use with the three methodologies informing this research.

Qualitative Content Analysis

One of the most prominent method and analytical tool in this study is the multimodal, qualitative media content analysis of 28 vlogs and 928 comments (mined from 20 of the vlogs) to answer my first research question.

Rationale for multimodal qualitative content analysis. A qualitative content analysis consists of “a searching-out of underlying themes in the materials being analyzed” (Bryman, 2004, p.392). Bryman writes that the process is usually implicit, and the themes are explained through the quotations derived from the media texts that are analyzed. My rationale for this approach was as follows. First, qualitative media analysis is an effective tool to analyze user-generated content (Altheide & Schneider, 2013). While a quantitative approach to media analysis is popular in Internet studies (Altheide & Schneider, 2013), particularly with the plethora of analytical tools and platforms available to media scholars, a qualitative analysis seemed better suited for online media to capture the depths of media messages and to describe the types of media strategies in vlogs. Moreover, the use of qualitative media content analysis may serve to help understand the three pillars that undergird this research, “culture, social discourse, and social change” (Altheide & Schneider, 2013, p.5), which are at the center of the scholarship on sexual violence and online participation.

Second, qualitative content analysis was also necessary to help with multimodal coding (which I detail in the Analysis section). Altheide and Schneider (2013) argue that this form of analysis is useful for the study of different types of internet spaces and media, from text messages and links, to weblogs and videos. They propose to either collect social media texts in one shot or over time- I chose the latter as it was necessary to study videos across a couple of years to effectively engage in theoretical sampling. Units of analysis (what one counts) can vary; for example, in their study of Vancouver riots, Altheide and Schneider (2013) explain how they used words (e.g. crime) and discourse to study

Facebook posts. Qualitative content analysis involves the use of some preconceived categories, which in this study were loosely informed by the research questions. However, as constructivist Grounded Theory calls for the data to speak for itself, the categories and subcategories shifted during the analysis.

Some researchers navigating the online spaces of youth have turned to qualitative media content analysis as a method, such as Stern (2002) and Caron (2017). Suzannah Stern (2002) studied girls' webpages, analyzing the content and stylistic features of their sites, and using a cross comparison method to better understand how they expressed themselves through these spaces. Furthermore, as discussed earlier, Caron's (2017) study of 55 youth vlogs about bullying involves a qualitative content analysis of these media texts to better understand youth civic engagement as it emerges within these spaces. She successfully uses this analytical process combined with Grounded Theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967), and informed by a Multimodal Social Semiotics approach (Kress, 2010). Caron (2017) remarks that her methodology was useful for systematically reviewing, selecting, and analyzing vlogs, and for pinpointing as well as studying the units of analysis that would inform her study.

Multimodal Social Semiotics framework. As discussed in Chapter 2, media texts and online spaces can be characterized as social semiotics resources and spaces. While conducting this research, I eventually adopted Kress's (2010) Multimodal Social Semiotics framework as a tool to scaffold my qualitative content analysis of the vlogs. Kress (2010) notes that this framework prompts the meaning-maker to investigate questions such as,

‘Whose interest and agency is at work here in the making of meaning?’ ‘What meaning is being made here?’ and ‘How is meaning being made?’ (p.57). With vloggers positioned as motivated media-makers, this broad framework offered a loose structure through which I could investigate their process of meaning-making and how it aligns with their interests and agency (p.59) The Multimodal Social Semiotics framework “theorizes meaning from three perspectives” (p.61) - semiosis, multimodality, and that of the *specific mode*, which requires the researcher to consider the use of modes within the contexts of their use (e.g., the study of intonation in speech vs music). When studying media, researchers must account for all the signs used by producers to contribute to meaning-making, e.g. textual, verbal, audio, visual, and studies their relationships to each other (Kress, 2010, p.59).

Kress’s model, described in greater depth in the literature review, is based on 3 dimensions of meaning-making, driven by the agency of the producer: content, ideas and affect. Caron (2017) effectively summarizes their meaning within this framework as referring to “to the materiality of the media text (form and textuality), to its ideational dimension (concepts, representations, and discourses), as well as to its affective dimension (expressivity and emotiveness)” (p.657). The categories and modes that emerged in my analysis and are reported in my findings are summarized here:

- Ideational/discursive: how vloggers defined and represented consent and sexual violence, as well as how they couched these concepts within larger contexts and discourses, for specific audiences.
- Affective: the expressed emotions and emotive productive strategies communicated and used in the videos.

- Content: the explicit and interpreted purposes of the media texts.

Challenges. A qualitative content analysis offers some challenges. Notably, the intentionality behind the content and production strategies that media-makers draw upon cannot be assumed; however, Stern (2002) provides an argument that echoes my thinking, pointing to “the ability of artifacts to speak about the people who produced them” (p. 269). Therefore, by drawing upon signs, modes of communications, and Discourse, a researcher has enough tools to produce an informed interpretation of the materials. Scholars must remain cognizant of the ways in which their access to documents (for example, some vlogs appear earlier than others on YouTube) influence the findings of a study as well. This was a challenge met by Caron and her team, which they describe how YouTube’s search functions and video disappearances affected their study (Caron, Raby, Mitchell, Théwissen-Leblanc, & Prioletta, 2016). I also encountered these barriers. It was particularly difficult when some vloggers in my study removed their vlogs during the end stages of my data collection and analysis.

The qualitative content analysis combined with Constructivist Grounded Theory is more elaborated detailed in the ‘Analysis’ section below. In that section, I also detail how it was applied in the comments section.

Interviews

Rationale. Interviews are popular tools for grounded theorists (Charmaz, 2014) and in qualitative research (Punch, 2009). Interviews offer opportunities for rich and meaningful discussions with participants. While analyzing my first set of YouTube videos,

the interviews that I conducted with three vloggers effectively helped me capture the voices of YouTube ‘producers’ (Bruns, 2008). My initial coding of vlogs and previous experience with YouTube informed the types of interview questions that would allow me to gain deeper perspectives of vlogging, particularly around matters of agency, as it was difficult to tell what intrinsic or personal factors motivated vloggers to produce and share their media. This is standard in Grounded Theory, as theoretical saturation is obtained through the ongoing analysis and reformulation of inquiry (Charmaz, 2006, 2014). The interviews were therefore effective tools for theory development. Participants’ responses helped address RQ1 by adding to my interpretation of the vlogging process, and they also contributed to answering RQ2 by sharing their perceptions of the potential impacts of their vlogs (and of other vlogs) and vlogging.

Conducting the interviews. I carried out 3 semi-structured interviews with 3 vloggers that lasted between 45 minutes and one hour. The interviews took place between December and early February. The interviews occurred on Skype, and were audio-recorded via my Iphone. I had some technical difficulties with two of my participants, with a weak Skype connection either jumbling my voice or preventing me from using video, which in turn distracted us for a few minutes. However, once we started, the interviews went smoothly.

My interviews were semi-structured, because this approach typically allows for more natural conversations to occur (Bryman, Bell, & Teevan, 2012). I used an interview guide (see Appendix L) with standard questions that directed the conversation. Patton

(2015) writes that interview guides “[make] sure that the interviewer/evaluator has carefully decided how best to use the limited time available in an interview situation” (p.439). I remained flexible with my questions; while I always returned to the interview guide, sub-questions were added based on the directions of the conversation with the vloggers. Feminist research advocates for a more egalitarian relationship between participants during interviews. Such an approach mandates the interviewee to be conscious, particularly when interviewees are women, of their experiences. I made efforts, at the beginning and throughout, as well as in follow-up emails, to establish a positive rapport with my participants, which Punch (2009) also confirms is important when organizing and conducting an interview.

Focus Groups and Workshop Transcripts

Rationale. While interviews and observation are the most common tools in Grounded Theory studies, Corbin and Strauss (2015) assert that, “Just about any type of written, observed, or recorded material can be used” (p.7) to effectively lead an inquiry. As explained in the section on arts-based research, I had difficulty gathering participants online to discuss YouTube and vlogging, and further, I was also interested in gathering different perspectives on the phenomenon I was studying. In Grounded Theory, theoretical sampling is a necessary step to address gaps in a study (Charmaz, 2006). This may involve seeking new participants or working in new settings, both of which I felt were needed in this study. Therefore, I created workshops and used arts-based visual methodology to elicit participants’ perspectives on vlogs and vlogging (RQ2). In this section, I do not repeat the

aspects of arts-based visual methodology that I included in the workshop design (which are in the Arts-based research section). I tackle instead the more pragmatic details about designing and leading focus groups and workshops.

Kitzinger (1995) highlight the benefits of focus groups, stating “The idea behind the focus group method is that group processes can help people to explore and clarify their views in ways that would be less easily accessible in a one to one interview” (p.299).

Kitzinger also writes of the usefulness of focus groups regarding discussions around taboo topics,

Group work can actively facilitate the discussion of taboo topics because the less inhibited members of the group break the ice for shyer participants. Participants can also provide mutual support in expressing feelings that are common to their group but which they consider to deviate from mainstream culture (or the assumed culture of the researcher). This is particularly important when researching stigmatised or taboo experiences (for example, bereavement or sexual violence). (p.300)

Finally, Kitzinger (1995) also notes that focus group discussions can elicit more critical feedback than other methods. Focus groups may yield additional benefits; for example, their dialogic nature encourages a deeper exploration of one’s views, and the group setting gives access to different forms of communication and interaction that may inform their study (e.g., jokes and arguing). Bryman (2004) further stresses that in some situations, focus groups may also naturally push to the forefront of discussion the issues that are more significant to participants. Moreover, as opposed to interviews where the

researcher may not want to or think of challenging the interviewee, focus groups provide a setting for participants to argue with each other and therefore may provide better insight into participants' true feelings. Punch (2009) describes focus groups as “inexpensive, data-rich, flexible, stimulating, recall-aiding, cumulative and elaborative” (p.147).

Conducting the Focus Groups. My initial workshop in March 2017 (Appendix H) was divided in three sessions, and it was preceded and followed by a focus group discussion to set the scene for the research and to elicit perspectives of vlogs and vlogging, online and as tools in higher education workshops (Appendix I). The focus groups and workshops were video- and audio-recorded. I used both tools, because researchers sometimes find it difficult to discern who is saying what when relying on one mode only (Creswell, 2008). While a second workshop took place in October 2018 (Appendix J) and informed the evaluation of the workshop framework, there was no focus group discussion, and I relied on field notes and feedback forms for data.

To elaborate, my focus group for the March 2017 workshop began with the completion of consent and demographic data forms, and with a “Get to Know You” segment, where participants shared their motives to participate in the workshop and their own histories of sexualities education. My focus group included 12 participants, and at the time, it was clear that several participants knew each other, either because they were friends who had decided to participate together, or they were in the same faculty. Therefore, while the ‘Get to Know You’ segment was designed to increase comfort amongst participants, I also saw it as an opportunity to create bridges between peer groups.

This ‘Get to Know You’ segment was an important period, because as noted by Creswell (2008), focus groups will be more useful and effective when participants get along. Moreover, when dealing with sexualities topics, participants may be influenced by their peers to answer in certain ways. For example, in Louisa Allen’s (2005) study of 17 to 19-year-old youth, she noticed the performance of her participants’ sexual selves: “Through their talk about sexuality young people engaged in the management of their own sexual identities fashioning these through what they revealed and concealed about their sexual selves” (p. 86). This can be further accentuated when people in a group are friends.

After the ‘Get to Know You’ segment, we discussed the format of the workshop (they had a copy of its structure). I used this as an opportunity to acquire feedback, although there was little at this time. The focus group eased into a workshop in the first meeting, and the reverse happened at the end of the third meeting. While the two focus groups flanked the workshops, there were several moments in between where discussions around YouTube media, videos and video-making emerged, and provided meaningful opportunities for gathering perspectives about their interactions with technology. The distinctions between these moments and those within the focus groups were their focus- the sessions aimed to achieve the objectives of the workshop, while the focus groups were guided by the research questions.

Moderating the Focus Groups and Workshops. Newby’s (2014) observation about focus groups remained as the back of my mind during the focus groups, workshops, and the analysis; he argued that the researchers could “‘capitalize on [the] good will”

(p.372) of participants, who would be eager to assist and please the researcher. This good will benefits the researcher; when a question or activity is not well-formulated, participants will seek to provide the ‘right’ answers that the researcher is looking for. However, this also fueled concerns that participants would not be honest if they had concerns.

I turned to research on participatory approaches to research to create and manage the focus group and workshop setting. Bergold and Thomas (2012) state that in participatory research, it is important to provide a space where “participants are given the opportunity to enter into conversation with each other in a safe setting and to deal with aspects of the project” (p. 209). Consequently, I positioned the focus group discussions and workshop activities as ‘their’ space in which I would not talk talking at them but learn with them. I also frequently reminded the focus group participants of their position as ‘co-researchers’ and the potentially useful implications of their input. I explained that as co-researchers, their voices would be prioritized in my study and the evaluation of the workshop, and their input may potentially lead to an improved framework for teaching consent in higher education. I hoped that reminding them of the larger implications of this research would help mitigate the influence of my presence.

Moderating conversations presented some challenges. The flexible structure of focus groups can open doors to new perspectives and discussions (Newby, 2014). However, as Creswell (2008) observes, focus group facilitators may find it difficult to control focus group discussion. While I wanted to keep discussion open and in the control of participants, I also felt constrained by time, by my research questions and by my desire to see different

people speak. One limitation I encountered was that not all participants communicated equally. This is a common issue with focus groups (Newby, 2014). Some were quieter than others. To provide these participants with alternative spaces, I offered opportunities to speak back through written work, in their videos, and in a follow-up email.

Transcripts. Data from focus groups most often involve transcripts (Punch, 2013). I transcribed these fully after they took place. I did the same with the three sessions of the March 2017 workshop. I watched and listened to the recordings several times to effectively capture participants' words and actions, including expressed agreement or discontent through grunts, laughter, clapping, and 'mmhmm's. For the workshop transcripts, I also took down several observation notes. These require the researcher to establish their focus of observation and rationalize their choice, which may be decided based on the sample and the research questions (Punch, 2009). In my case, I was particularly drawn to moments in the workshop that involved the use of media, particularly YouTube media. The workshop and focus group transcripts contributed to both the analysis of youth perspectives (RQ2) and the workshop evaluation (RQ3).

Workshop Artifacts

Activities sheets and media. As part of the media-making component of the workshop, participants were asked to share their video preparation thoughts using an activity sheet (See Appendix I) and submit their vlogs/videos to the researcher. I also provided writing prompts specifically designed to get them to think about their videos and their roles in effecting change.

Reflection is a crucial part of participatory research (Bergold and Thomas, 2007), and I wanted to provide participants with a space to think about and share their vlog and creative process. As stated by Plack, Driscoll, Blissett, McKenna & Plack (2005), “reflection gives meaning to experience; it turns experience into practice, [and] links past and present experiences,” (p.200) and the process of writing generally opens the windows to this reflective process. While I initially hoped to capture their process of creating vlogs through the prompts and by asking them to register the process, this did not happen. I only had 6 participants complete the prompts for the first and second reflection and fewer participants provided details about their vlogging process. By the end of the March workshop, 11 out of 12 participants submitted vlogs and videos; in the October workshop, the group submitted one. It was not in the scope of this study to do an in-depth analysis of the vlogs and videos, as my interests rested in their perceptions of the process of watching and making them. However, observation notes provided some insight that informed this study; notably, I learnt my participants preferred alternative media genres than vlogs. Their videos, and their shared reflections about the production process, thus contributed to their arguments about vlogs vlogging.

Feedback/reflection forms. For the March 2017 workshop, paper feedback forms were handed out after each session (see Appendix I). The workshop forms included Likert scales to rate the workshops’ effectiveness; I asked participants to rate the workshop based on established objectives and outcomes. Three open-ended questions asked participants what was helpful/new to them, what could have been done differently, and what they wanted to learn more about. These were purposefully kept open-ended and broad, to

minimize my impact on their answers. Due to the generic nature of the questions and my previous use of this type of feedback forms in past workshops, a pilot of the feedback forms was not conducted.

At the end of the third and final session of the March workshop, participants were given open-ended questions to guide their reflections and feedback about the workshop. The end-of-workshop reflection included slightly more complex questions centered around their perceptions of the workshop's outcomes on their knowledge of consent, knowledge and skills related to media production and sharing, and agency. They were explained to participants, and I was available to assist my participants if they were unclear. Participants received a follow up feedback form 5-6 months later by email, prompting them to reflect again about the workshop and its possible effects on their knowledge and agency.

For the follow-up email and the October 2018 workshop feedback form, I adjusted the questions slightly based on the ongoing analysis of my data (Appendix E). Participants in the October 2018 vlogging workshop were sent a short, online feedback/reflection form via Survey Monkey the day after it took place, and it asked for feedback about the workshop as well as prompted their thinking about larger questions related to vlogging. Since this workshop was not divided in three sessions nor set up as a focus group, participants were sent only one smaller, online questionnaire designed to gather further feedback on the workshop and on the questions from phase 1. This was the only data collection tool for this workshop, outside my field notes.

While questionnaires can be impersonal (Nisbett & Entwistle, 1970), they are economical in time, which was necessary considering the short periods between the March sessions. Nisbett and Entwistle (1970) also note that questionnaires can also be limiting when engaging with complex questions, however in the context of this study, they offer a pragmatic method to acquire feedback. Feedback forms were transcribed and coded after each session, and along with my field notes, contributed to adjustments in the workshop and to the focus group questions. This ongoing transcription and analysis between sessions added a participatory element to the evaluation and re-design of my workshop, as I was able to incorporate most feedback from participants in following sessions.

Field Notes and Memos

I engaged in field notes throughout the process of my research study. I employed field notes to record my thinking, my personal biases and preconceptions as I navigated the YouTube and workshop contexts. This was particularly important in the context of evaluating the workshops and when considering the tensions that may arise in research-as-intervention (MacEntee, 2015). Recognizing the bias that I brought as observer-as-participant, and the power imbalance of the researcher, these reflexive notes served as a tool to reflect on my treatment of participants, clearly establish my positionality, untangle my thoughts, and to the best of my ability, allow me to report evaluation findings while remaining faithful to the truths expressed by my participants. My field notes provided me with a confidential space where I reflected on the development and implementation of the workshops. Field notes were particularly useful for the October workshop; with the limited

data collection tools available, writing what happened and what was said was crucial to capturing participants' voices and feedback.

In my practice of Grounded Theory, the collection of field notes should not be confused with theoretical memo writing, a process designed to “catch your thoughts, capture the comparisons and connections you make, and crystallize questions and directions for you to pursue” (Charmaz, 2006, p.162). I provide details on this in my analysis section, as they are essential analytical tools that drive theoretical development.

Sampling

Effectively gathering multiple perspectives to inform my study required a search for participants across two sites: online and at a university. Charmaz (2014) argues that Grounded Theory methods can and often should be adjusted and refined to the needs of your research. This is an essential part of the process of theoretical sampling. I engaged in theoretical sampling throughout the process of seeking out new videos, new participants, and audience comments during data collection, to build my frameworks related to vlogs and vlogging. Charmaz (2006) advises that CGT researchers should pursue theoretical sampling until they feel that their conceptualization of the theory is complete. This pursuit of saturation may be limited by the findings from your sample, with theories developed with a small sample size. Moreover, saturation may occur earlier if a researcher does not generalize their claims or if they make unreasonable claims. I conducted my study until I reached saturation, however I acknowledge in my final chapter that the study could be expanded in new directions by future researchers.

Selecting YouTube Videos and Vlogs

In November 2016, I began the search for vlogs by exploring YouTube as a whole, familiarizing myself with the platform and the videos on sexual consent and assault. Over 2,000,000 sexual consent videos appeared when ‘sexual consent’ was typed in the search bar; only a small percentage less showed up when I looked for ‘sexual assault’ videos. I added the search term ‘vlog’ in both cases, which severely reduced the number of items. There were still thousands of videos related to these topics, created by young people, organizations, schools, teachers, lawyers and police, etc. The wide variety of videos online made the initial search difficult to narrow. I decided to rely on YouTube’s automatically generated playlists. Two lists seemed relevant, one named “Consent and Sexual Assault” and the other entitled “Popular videos- Consent”, both of which had “Consent” listed at their topic. According to YouTube, “The Topic channels are generated when an auto-generated channel is created when we identify a topic to have a significant presence on the site.” The Popular videos- Consent playlist contained over 200 videos, and almost 9000 views by January 2018. While there were numerous youth-produced videos, about 11 could be described as youth-produced vlogs on sexual consent and assault. The Popular Videos- Consent and Sexual Assault playlist contained 149 videos, with far less views (145 in Feb 2017). There were 17 vlogs in this playlist. Unfortunately, this playlist has since disappeared from YouTube.

I selected videos from these lists by referring to my criteria of inclusion, and then engaged in ongoing coding and analysis until May 2018. During this process, I watched and re-watched my selection of videos as well as others on YouTube, removing those that

did not meet my criteria for inclusion. It is difficult to track the exact number of videos I watched, as I sometimes kept YouTube going on a loop. Nevertheless, I estimate reviewing over 200 potential contenders for the study throughout the year and a half I searched YouTube for media texts. The process of theoretical sampling prompted me to seek out vlogs and videos produced by youth from diverse ethnic backgrounds, of different genders and sexual orientations, and with different ideological standpoints.

From the start, I found scholarly descriptions of vlogs and vlogging (see Chapter 2) did not entirely coalesce with some of the videos that my vloggers were producing. First, while many vloggers still choose to speak, or rant, in front of their computer camera, it is apparent that several of them use editing software to cut clips, add visual effects, include music and media, and enhance lighting effects. Some vloggers shot their videos with others, and in certain cases, their content appears scripted (e.g., when singing or reciting poetry). Some vloggers choose to sing, act, or recite poetry, rather than simply speak to the camera. Thus, while the features of vlogs cited by scholars like Frobenius (2011) and Caron (2017) offer a classic definition of the genre, it may be useful to broaden conceptualization of the vlog genre to better reflect what youth vloggers are currently doing.

By May 2018, when I finalized my video analysis, my sample consisted of 28 youth-produced vlogs (Appendix B). As far as I can tell, most of the sample are in North America and the UK, however I distinguish this solely based on participants' profiles, their content, and accents. In any case, their origin was not a criterion.

Videos in my sample had to meet the following criteria for inclusion:

- 1) English vlogs produced by youth and young adults (under 30). This required some searching, and in some cases where information was not available, I took a guess of their age based on their other videos, their context, and mannerisms;
- 2) The producer must be a vlogger who created and shared more than three vlogs;
- 3) Vlogs with a focus on sexual consent and/or sexual assault.

I excluded videos made by adults for commercial or legal purposes, awareness-raising videos created by organizations or schools, videos shorter than one minute (these resembled public service announcements), videos about other types of consent (example, informed consent), TedTalks, and animated videos.

I later turned to the comments' feeds of my sample of 28 videos. As reflected in Appendix B, some have few comments, while others host thousands in their feed. I downloaded the comments using a software entitled "YouTube comment scraper". Upon scanning the comments across videos, I selected the latest 75 (or the maximum number of) comments and replies per video from the selection downloaded on June 17, 2018.

Gerber et al. (2017) explain that "current online spaces often become networked field sites in qualitative research studies- complex mixtures of social networking, archived contributions, and topic focused content" (p.115). This makes the process of studying online texts a contentious process, with researchers facing minefields in terms of ethics and sampling. I found that the phase 1 sampling process proved itself challenging. As expressed by other researchers (Caron, 2017; Caron et al., 2016) and as encountered in my previous work (Garcia and Vemuri, 2017), YouTube videos are added and removed daily, and some voices are prioritized over others. This was particularly problematic when some videos in

my sample were removed from YouTube during my analysis stages; at this point, I had to keep the removed videos as the categories were threaded within my analysis. When I realized that two out of three of my interviewees had taken down their videos, I contacted them immediately to find out if anything had happened and if they were still interested in being part of this study. They both confirmed their participation, stating that the removal happened because they had either made a mistake transferring the videos to another channel, or they had decided to update the video.

Selecting Vloggers

In addition to my search for more videos, I also looked for interview participants. I reached out to over 40 young people on YouTube who, 1) had produced more than 3 vlogs or had a channel, 2) published a video on sexual consent and/or assault that was not required as part of their employment or coursework, 3) were youth who appeared to be in their late teens, or their twenties at the time they posted the video. I referred to their profile and their video's description to determine the number of videos they had produced and the purpose of the vlog. Determining their age proved to be a difficult task. While I had approval from ethics to contact vloggers as young as 14, the context of my research pushed me to aim for a population that would be in their later teens or early 20s. I searched their YouTube and other social media profiles for information and watched videos for hints of their context (e.g., when they spoke of their life on campus). To request interviews, I used the 'about' section in YouTubers' profiles to find contact information such as an email or a 'Google +' account. When these were not available, I would use the 'Send Message'

option. Approximately 40 YouTubers were contacted between November 2016 and February 2017, and only 4 replied. Three vloggers between 18-25 - Harriet from the UK, Leia from Canada, and Jenna from the USA (pseudonyms) - agreed to Skype interviews, which took place in December, January and February, respectively.

The participants were sent the consent form (Appendix F) before our Skype meetings, and this was briefly discussed before beginning the interviews. Participants were reminded that they were free to leave the interview at any time. A compensation fee of \$50 was sent to participants following the interview. Vloggers were contacted later in the study when I shared the analysis with them.

Workshop and Focus Group Participants

The primary criteria for selecting workshop and focus groups participants were their age, student status, and their availability to participate in the three workshops. Ideally, I hoped to get a diverse sample, with participants from diverse ethnic backgrounds and of different gender. In February 2017, I recruited my first workshop participants through posters in various buildings on the McGill campus, advertisement through the university online marketplace, and physical recruitment in Education and Communication Studies classes. Over 35 students responded. I sent an excel sheet with different options for availabilities to 23 students. After recruiting for two weeks, I isolated the 15 participants who were available on the same three dates (13 women and 2 males). I attempted to choose the option that had the most males to capture a richer sample, however there were limited applicants. Three participants, including the two males, did not show up at the first

workshop; however, the 12 female students (10 undergraduates, 2 graduates) who remained stayed for all three session. Focus group/workshop participants were given a consent form (Appendix D) and demographic questionnaire at the beginning of the study, to help me get a better sense of their background. At the end of the three workshops, participants were compensated \$100 for their participation, with an opportunity to win an additional \$100 in a draw.

The October 2018 workshop was part of a larger event at McGill University called “Consent Week”. The workshop was advertised through various institutional webpages and social media. Six female participants attended, including two graduate students and four undergraduate students. One of these undergraduate students was a participant in the previous workshop; she had begun volunteering at her university and wanted to try the workshop again. These participants signed a consent form when they completed the online reflection questionnaire (Appendix E).

Analysis

The theoretical frameworks. One of the main reasons I selected Constructivist Grounded Theory as methodological framework was the combination of flexibility and rigor involved in the collection of data and data analysis (Charmaz, 2006, 2014). I describe here my analytical process as I developed theory in response to my first two research questions.

My analysis of vlogs was ongoing, as I watched over a hundred vlogs to select my sample, eventually reaching theoretical saturation with 28 vlogs and videos. At the beginning of my study, I proceeded with watching, selecting and performing an initial coding of vlogs to data to investigate the themes of the videos, the approaches to communicating these themes, and the purpose of the media texts. Throughout the process of coding, I adopted Glaser's approach of using "line-by-line coding, the initial Grounded Theory coding with gerunds, [as] a heuristic device to bring the researcher into the data, interact with them, and study each fragment of them" (as cited in Charmaz, 2014, p.121). The process of initial coding remained inductive in the sense that the codes I gathered consistently changed as I coded across media texts. I used a 'constant comparison' approach, referring to and adapting previous codes as I engaged with new data.

I created an excel sheet that originally included a descriptive segment, key messages, and observations about the vloggers. As my analysis of vlogs progressed, this excel sheet grew to include categories such as, description of the vlogger, context (title, name, length of vlog, year, views/likes/dislikes and comments, description under vlog), themes/messages that emerge from the vlog (main themes associated with corresponding vlog messages, audiences identified, vlogs/videos/resources/vloggers mentioned), and vloggers' strategies (use of media, personal expression). The multimodal nature of these texts required me to use short qualitative descriptors to describe visual and audio modes in the videos, included music, written text, facial expressions, intonation, gestures, lighting, setting, and images. While my categories and subsequent theoretical framework were informed by the coding process, I also referred to Kress' (2010) Multimodal Social

Semiotics framework to move my thinking forward; however, I was careful not to guide my analysis to fit within its parameters.

I conducted an initial coding of the interviews separately from the ongoing vlogs analysis. The process of constant comparison was significant at this stage. Upon conducting the initial coding of my interviews, I returned to the codes and categories developed in my vlogs' analyses. The vloggers' voices and experiences shared in the interviews provided me with more nuanced and complex insight into semiotic work, which in turn helped the development of the first framework. They were particularly useful in capturing a deeper picture of the incentives that guide vloggers to use YouTube. The process of focused coding drove me to seek out relationships from the initial codes and refine categories. I was able to determine when to seek out new vlogs, what to ask in other stages of data collection and where to seek out additional information. I went back and forth with focused coding and initial coding more than once. Charmaz (2014) writes, "we think of focused coding as following initial coding. But moving to focused coding is not entirely a linear process," (p.141) with some findings drawing the researcher back to previous codes that had been taken less into account. When doing focused coding, I often returned to certain video segments to seek out additional details.

The process of coding the audience comments also combined qualitative content analysis and Grounded Theory processes, without the additional need for a sensitizing framework. The ongoing analysis of the comments across 20 vlogs resulted in theoretical saturation at 928 comments and replies. Upon doing an initial and focused coding to

understand audiences' responses and interactions between themselves and with the vloggers online, I connected the emerging findings with the RQ1 framework at the time.

I began to develop the second theoretical framework with the initial and focused coding of the interviews, where I found some emergent ideas around youth perspectives of YouTube and vlogs for sexualities education. While the interviews were analyzed in the earlier stages of my research, I also found myself returning to this data with fresh eyes and new lenses after my continued analysis of vlogs and the focus groups.

Engaging with the data from the workshop was more complex. My coding process began with an open, line-by-line coding of the focus group transcripts and post-workshop reflection questions related to general perceptions of YouTube and vlogs which was oriented (as well as informing) the already developed categories and emerging theory around vlogging that came out of the interviews. I then turned to the other materials pertaining to the evaluation of the workshop to gather more insight. The reflection pieces and workshop feedback forms reflected participants' feelings and were useful on both pragmatic as well as theoretical levels.

When I engaged in focused coding, I also referred to the workshop videos and transcripts, seeking out specific moments in the workshop where they exemplified the feelings they shared in the focus groups or other artifacts. At this point, I also investigated participants' thoughts about vlogs and vlogging shared or demonstrated in their videos and video-making activity sheets, and my own field notes. In these situations, I coded by

incident (Charmaz, 2006), since the nature of some of the methods I used (observation notes, videos) would not make it possible, nor useful, to do line-by-line coding.

Throughout the process of initial and focused coding, I engaged in frequent memo-writing. I wrote my memos in the excel document I used to code data, as well as individual memos in Word documents and on my mobile phone, and in comment boxes on my dissertation drafts. Charmaz (2006) suggests that a research should “focus on certain actions, experiences, events, or issues, not on individuals per se, to understand how, when, and why your theoretical categories vary” (p109). I regularly wrote memos during my analysis, seeking out and identifying moments of variation, which at times led to further theoretical sampling and theoretical development. Charmaz (2006) states that “Theoretical integration begins with focused coding and proceeds through all your subsequent analytic steps” (p.46). Memos were integral to shaping emergent theory, or alternatively, seeking new sources of information.

As reflected in my description of the coding process, I also continuously engaged with constant comparison, an essential step in Grounded Theory that adds rigor to the analysis by identifying (in) consistencies, for theoretical sampling and to verify preconceptions (Charmaz, 2006). I believe that this is reflected in my overview of my analytical steps.

Evaluation of workshop. To analyze the workshop, I created an evaluation report on an excel sheet that included all the participants’ work, reflections, and feedback (see Appendix I). I used this report to isolate common themes pertaining to participants’ perspectives of the effectiveness of the workshop, aspects of the workshop that

contributed/hindered the objectives being met, and recommendations. I then added insight from the workshops (drawn from field notes and observation notes regarding specific incidents, and media artifacts). I also referred to the focus groups transcripts for details that may inform the evaluation. Finally, I referred to the visual artifacts that my participants created to gather insight on what their products revealed about their learning and encounters with vlogging.

Meeting the Requirements of Good Quality Research

Lodico, Spaulding and Voegtler (2006) summarize the 4 basic standards for good quality research: “credibility, dependability, transferability, and promoting action and collaboration” (p. 273-276). I explain here how I met these requirements.

Credibility. Lodico et al. (2006) describe credibility as ensuring that “participants’ perceptions of the setting or events match up the with the researchers’ portrayal of them in the research report” (p.273). While there are a few measures for credibility, the primary tools I used to ensure the latter consisted of the researcher’s meaningful participation and the use of multiple methods. While I was not in the field for long, I established positive relationships with my interviewees and workshop participants. I also corresponded with my interviewees a couple of times by email before and after the interview. With my focus group/workshop participants, I created space for us to get to know each other. I also maintained a relationship with some participants after the study. I had fewer opportunities to create a rapport with my October workshop participants, but I did have the opportunity to follow up with two participants by email. Second, I use numerous sources of data, from

YouTube and from the workshops, to ensure I captured a multitude of voices, and addressed cases involving conflicting findings. To ensure I accurately portrayed interviewees and workshop/focus group participant, I sent both sets of participants the dissertation chapters that reported and discussed findings. Moreover, workshop/focus group participants were also sent the revised workshop framework for feedback before I held the second workshop.

Dependability. Dependability of a qualitative research project relies on the researchers' transparency and detailed recording of the methodology that informed the study (Lodico et al., 2006). This dissertation offers a comprehensive review of my methods and analysis.

Transferability. Due to the constructivist and qualitative nature of this study, I do not make generalizable claims. As I have noted elsewhere in this dissertation, the theory that emerges from this research was shaped by a specific context and sample, therefore I recognize that my findings are not universal. However, Dey's (1999) discussion of the use of 'encased studies' (p.228) – where the researcher aims to understand a phenomenon rather than generalize specific findings – resonates with me. He argues that while smaller (or encased) studies may not be generalizable, they are still relevant in that understanding a small part of a wider problem or area of research. Grounded Theory researchers can therefore focus on the part of a 'puzzle', so long as they choose a relevant piece and address their work within the larger literature; this dissertation both offers a rationale for this work and for my selection of participants and contexts, and later engages with the literature.

Should scholars be interested in reproducing this work, I remain transparent about my participants' profiles and the study's contexts in this chapter (through links to Appendices) and in the next three (through rich description), so that they can assess transferability.

Promoting action and collaboration. Lodico et al (2006) note that some qualitative researchers may seek to effect change through the research they conduct. In this respect, I sought to empower my participants by helping to develop their knowledge, skills, and agency related to consent, media production, and effecting social change. I share their perceptions of the study on their lives in this report. Moreover, this dissertation offers the exploratory evaluation study of a consent education, media-making workshop that I later encourage others to adapt to their context and evaluate in greater depth.

Structure of the Presentation of Findings

The study's findings are presented across three chapters (4, 5, 6); each represent a phase and research question in this study.

Table 2. Structure of the presentation of findings

Part 1: Chapter 4	In Chapter 4 , I present findings from my analysis of vloggers' media, audience comments, and interviews that answer my first set of research questions (RQ 1): <i>How do these YouTube videos and vloggers discuss sexual consent and assault in their media? Why do YouTube vloggers choose to make media about sexual consent and assault? How might audiences respond to these texts?</i> I offer a visual representation of my emergent theory on the semiotic work studied within my samples, which also guides how I present my findings.
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Part 2: Chapter 5	Chapter 5 offers a response to my second research question, <i>How do young YouTube users perceive vlogging and vlogs as sexualities education tools, online and in the university classroom?</i> I present a second diagram to reflect participants' perspectives in this study of YouTube, vlogs and vlogging as teaching and learning tools.
Part 3: Chapter 6	Chapter 6 offers an evaluation of the consent and media-making workshop that served as a data collection in this study. I share the feedback I received on the workshop framework. I address the sub questions related to perceptions of outcomes and processes related to the workshop, captured under this larger question, "What were participants' perceptions of a YouTube and vlog-making, consent education workshop held in a university context?"

Summary of the Chapter

Building the intricate methodological design of this qualitative study was a challenging process. However, using a combination of Constructivist Grounded theory, an arts-based approach, and evaluation methods effectively allowed me to gain multi-perspectival insight on the phenomenon of vlogging. I explore the frameworks and evaluation feedback that emerged from this study in the next three chapters.

Chapter 4: Presentation of Findings Part 1

Chapter 4 explores the findings related to my first research question. I begin with an overview of Framework 1, before exploring the context and different categories that emerged from my study of the semiotic work of the YouTubers in this study.

Sexual Consent and Sexual Assault Vlogs: The Semiotic Work of YouTubers

The following emerging theory about the sexual consent and sexual violence-related semiotic work of young people on YouTube was loosely guided by Kress' model Multimodal Social Semiotics, but ultimately grounded in the data obtained from the qualitative content analysis of my sample of vlogs and comments.

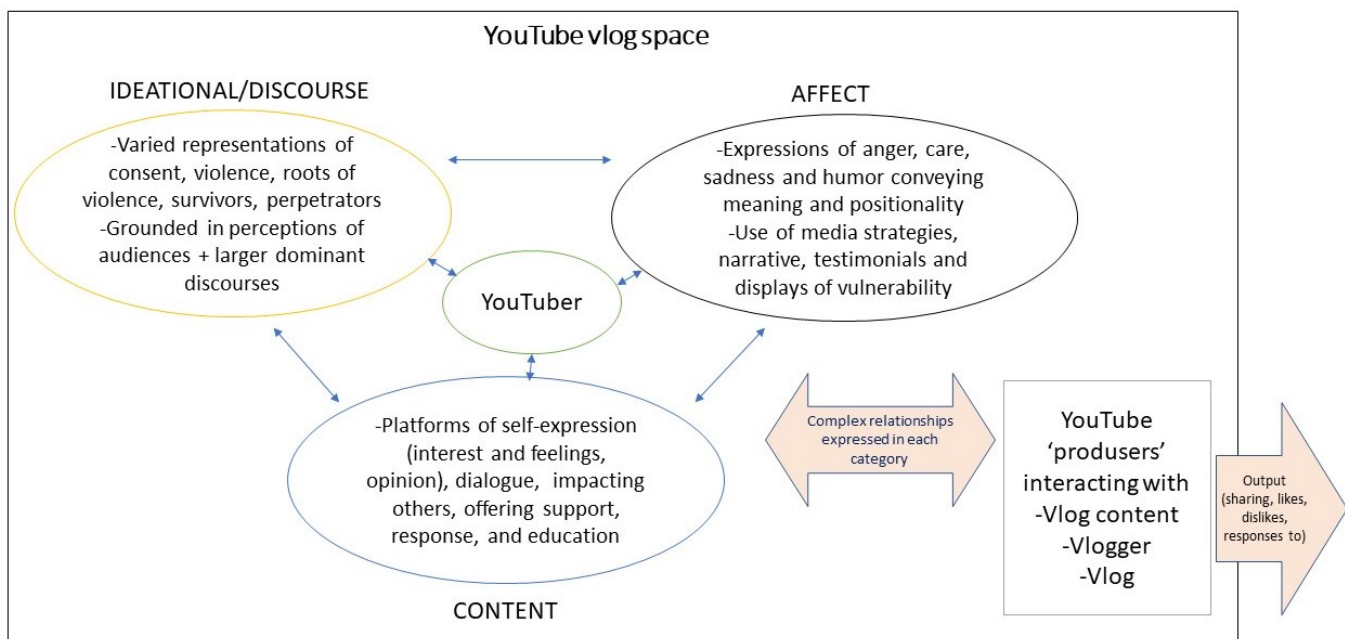


Figure 4. Sexual consent and assault vlogs: The semiotic work of young YouTubers

To summarize, Framework 1 suggests that young sexual consent vloggers in my sample and their audiences create complex discursive spaces for engaging with topics of sexual violence and consent, that reflect, resist, elaborate upon and to an extent personalize popular consent discourses. Vloggers' participation in consent discourses through their vlogs is seemingly influenced by their perceptions of their audiences. Figure 4 offers a visual representation of the model.

My analysis reflects the key themes and discourses that came across the vlogs, to capture the areas of interest around this topic. Youth selected a large variety of talking points in their vlogs, however the essence of their discourse pertains to defining sexual consent and sexual assault behaviors, describing perpetrators and victims (in general and by situating their audiences as either), and identifying issues with sexual violence within a larger context (cultural, political). The discursive content and media approaches also imply that YouTubers view their audiences as both agents of change, as well as potentially harmful individuals. The approach, themes and recommendations appear to be guided by the four perceived audience members (not mutually exclusive): the survivor, the initiator, the perpetrator, and the person giving consent. Through the use various media and rhetorical strategies, vlog makers potentially situate their audience members as learners and as other youth.

In the study of affective dimensions of vlogs, I found that vloggers exhibit a range of emotions, expressed through narratives and expressed vulnerabilities and self-awareness, in displays of care, through manifestations of anger, sadness and other emotions in tone and

facial expressions, and with the use of humor as rhetorical devices. These media texts reflect the complex emotions and subjectivities that emerge from sexual violence discourse, and that reflect vloggers' use of affect to convey meaning in ways that attract, persuade, invite empathy, show support, call for change, and support audiences. The affective dimension of vlogging further positions some vloggers at the center of their discourse, with many using their own stories and experiences to raise awareness about issues and persuade others.

Finally, findings reflect that vloggers intentionally create media to reach out to and impact audiences. Some of the reasons these vlogs were created – perceived or expressed-include: sharing personal thoughts and feelings, expressing opinions, promoting dialogue, impacting behavior, offering support, responding to prompts, and educating and raising awareness. With their calls for action, well as expressions of desire to raise awareness and influence behaviors, vloggers in my study position themselves and others as agents of change.

Since vlogs feature within an interactive platform (YouTube) where audience comments are visible to YouTubers watching the videos, their participation and responses are addressed in a 4th broad category, *Audiences*.

Context of the Framework

The theoretical framework I propose is principally grounded in my analysis of the 28 vlogs and videos on sexual consent and sexual violence produced by YouTubers that I

introduced in Table 3, although partially informed by interviewees as well (for expanded table, see Appendix B). Their contexts are elaborated upon to better situate the study.

Table 3. Vloggers and vlogs in this study, with brief descriptions

#	Vlogger(s)	Video Title and Link (when available)	Views	Description Summary
1	LifeOfAGay/Alex Naquin	Sexual Assault & Consent (2017)	779	This vlogger speaks to the camera, including only minor editing in his vlog (music). He addresses the topic of sexual assault, focusing his talk on pornography. He also advocates for saying no.
2	Blair	Let's Talk: Consent (2016) (Recently changed to Consent & Coercion)	97	Opera Hippy edited her vlog to include sounds and a colored screen. Seated on her couch, this vlogger focuses her discussion on sexual violence in the media and sexual assault.
3	Shades of Mindfall	Defining Consent and Sexual Assault (2015)	57	The background of a dimly bedroom looms behind this vlogger, who uses little editing outside the addition of music. She discloses an incidence of sexual violence and proceeds to untangle sexual assault and sexual consent.
4	MarissakWood	Rape, Consent, ETC ... (2016)	64	This vlogger used no editing in her vlog and focused her discussion on a recent incident related to sexual violence that involved allegations against a famous YouTuber. She addressed sexual consent, and critiqued responses to the incident, the victim, and the perpetrator.
5	Venaloid	Mutually Drunk Sex (2015)	8140	This vlogger uses minor editing, and some graphics, to talk about sexual consent and drinking. He expresses concerns over double standards related to men and perpetration of sexual violence and reacts to media that promotes double-standards.
6	Meghan Hughes	LET'S TALK ABOUT CONSENT BIG SIS ADVICE MEGHAN HUGHES (2016)	76633	Meghan talks about consent in her video and expresses support towards survivors. Her video includes an emotional testimonial. She also critiques political and university climates. Her vlog uses a thumbnail at the beginning, on-screen wording, and music to communicate to her viewers
7	shoeonhead	consent (2015)	723278	Shoeonhead's video is a vlog; however she also invites a 'guest' with whom she performs short, comedic skits to make her point, and uses various imagery, voiceovers, and some music. This vlogger talks about sexual consent and affirmative consent laws. Her vlog offers some

				critique of the way sexual consent and sexual violence is framed in North American society.
8	Dion Yorkie	Consent! (2015)	9965	This vlogger performs slam poetry that addresses rape myths and stereotypes, as well as consent. Their vlog has been edited to include pop up messaging, music and flashing colors.
9	How to Adult	Sexual Consent 101 (ft. Hannah Witton) (2015)	29322	This popular vlogger is a guest on this channel, however the background reflects a usual space from which she vlogged at the time. Against a faded background of fairy lights, Hannah talks about sexual consent. Her video has some minor editing, including a thumbnail and scene splicing.
10	Just between us	What is consent? (2015)	248626	This pair of vloggers operate a channel together, with a talk-show style setting for their vlog. They use some scene splicing, and a thumbnail at the beginning. Their talk consists of a humorous discussion of sexual consent.
11	Allie Tricaso	Consent// Song (2016)	7253	This vlogger plays the guitar and sings about sexual consent and sexual assault in her vlog. Some other minor editing includes writing on screen.
12	new green shoe	Consent is key (2015)	1607	New green shoe discussed victim-blaming, sexual consent, and rape culture in his vlog. He used minor editing techniques, such as splicing, changing screen colors, including writing on the screen and using a thumbnail.
13	Blake Steven	Consent (2015)	20929	Speaking to the camera with a white kitchen and entrance in the background, Blake speaks about a recent event related to sexual violence allegations against a YouTuber. He critiques responses to the incident, the victim, and the perpetrator. His vlog also discusses sexual consent. He uses some splicing as well.
14	Rantswers	Bearing asks about consent (2015)	1249	This vlogger addressed sexual consent in the context of intoxication. He spoke about the double-standard against men regarding perpetration of sexual violence in cases where both parties are drinking. He also strongly reacted to media that promotes double-standards. This vlogger incorporated music, other media and an introductory thumbnail.
15	Geony Rucker	Drunk consent? (2015)	275	Geony's vlog addressed sexual assault, sexual consent, and drinking. Her vlog was not edited.
16	Jack and Dean	Consent (2014)	1398209	Jack and Dean are two popular vloggers who created this music video to talk about sexual consent and bystander intervention. While this video is not a standard vlog, I included it in this sample because it is the product of vloggers and was recommended by participants.
17	Andrew Quo	Why Consent Doesn't Matter (2014)	112919	This vlogger addresses a recent case of sexual violence involving a YouTuber. He explores the concept of sexual

				assault and also critiques the perpetrator. The vlog includes some graphics and music as well.
18	Jenna	Jenna's vlog (2017)	N/A	Jenna's vlog addresses various rape myths. She uses some splicing and writing on the screen.
19	Harriet	Harriet's vlog (2016)	N/A	Harriet's vlog featured her reaction to a film about sexual violence. She also discussed victim-blaming and the university climate. No editing was used.
20	Leia	Leia's vlog (2015)	N/A	Leia described sexual consent and sexual assault, focusing on the treatment of the latter in society. Her editing strategies included some splicing and music.
21	Gaby Dunn	A SEXY GUIDE TO SEXUAL CONSENT FT. ASH HARDELL (2017)	39252	This vlogger and her friend are the same duo as 'Just Between Us', but this video was featured on a different channel. They discuss consent and bodily autonomy. Their vlog includes some minor editing, with words appearing on the screen.
22	Marina Estrella	Let's Talk About Consent #chatwithmarina (2017)	247	Talking to the camera against a white background, and clad in black and white herself, Marina discusses sexual consent and sexual assault. She uses some splicing and words on her screen.
23	Shaynainshambles	Climax of Consent 5 Secrets to Safe Sex (2018)	76	Shayna's vlog was about safe sex, which she then related to sexual consent. Her vlog included some minor editing, and words appearing on the screen.
24	Lauren Hogan	Lets talk about consent (2018)	256	With fairy lights lighting up her background, this vlogger engages in discussion about sexual consent and communication. She uses some editing techniques, including splicing, a faded background, and media images.
25	Abby Williamson	Let's talk about consent (2016)	841	Sipping her drink in her bedroom, Abby talks about rape culture, sexual consent, sexual assault, and notably, Donald Trump. Her production strategies include splicing and music.
26	Grapefruit_spoon	Pillow Talk ep. 01 Consent (2017)	63	Seated on her red couch, this vlogger explores topics such as sexualities education, sexual consent and communication. She relied on minor editing techniques such as adding wording to the screen and incorporating music.
27	Cassie Rattray	Sex & Consent (2018)	357	Cassie's vlog explores sexual consent. She uses some splicing.
28	Laci Green	Wanna have sex consent 101 (2014)	3085914	Laci Green's video includes a varied mix of techniques-including music, splicing, background color changes, writing on screen. She discusses sexual consent and sexual assault.

The popularity and style of the YouTubers that I examined varies. Their popularity can be determined by a wide range of factors. When accessing a YouTuber's channel or

video, it is possible to see the number of subscribers to a channel, which in turn may mean their videos are visible. In addition to noting the views that a video attracts, audiences' feedback is sometimes reflected through the thumbs up and down buttons directly under their video, and within the comments' feeds. YouTube channels and videos also inform other YouTubers about each other through the 'about' section, and by referring to other platforms. Their style became more apparent when surfing their channels, where their other media and descriptions shed light on the type of vlogs and/or videos they like to produce. A deeper investigation into these sites revealed the YouTubers in my sample came from diverse backgrounds and have different goals (see Appendix B for details).

There were a few vloggers in my sample like Hannah Witton, Laci Green, and members of the Just Between Us duo Gaby Dunn and Ash Hardell, who are popular names in YouTube sexualities education. Other popular vloggers in my sample, like Alex Naquin, Jack and Dean, and Shoeonhead, address gender topics but do not specifically aim to provide information about sexuality in most of their videos. One vlogger is well known in the beauty and makeup industry, Meghan Hughes, whose video on sexual consent stood out from her other vlogs. Several participants have well-attended channels, but a significantly lesser number of subscriptions than the celebrity YouTubers, while others' vlogs reached fewer than 100 views. However, although the popularity of the videos can be determined by the tools that YouTube provides to measure the reception of vlogs and vloggers, it would not be possible to measure the reach of a video or a vlogger by those tools alone. Several YouTubers in my sample, for example, promote their work on alternative web or social media platforms, such as Instagram and Twitter accounts.

The relationships between vloggers, and vloggers and audiences, is sometimes apparent. For example, YouTube's algorithms create thematic playlists that gather similar videos and play them sequentially or at random. Moreover, YouTubers in my sample occasionally refer to each other's videos. For example, Venaloid, Hannah Witton, new green shoe, Harriet, Marina Estrella, and Cassie Rattray respond to, reference, or recommend other vloggers' videos. In vlogs by Shades of Mindfall, Blake Steven and Andrew Quo, the media-makers even call out the sexual misconduct of other YouTubers. And in my review of vloggers comments, other YouTubers were mentioned in six comment feeds, and in two cases, the vlogger and their audience members even exchanged subscriptions. However, due to the limited sample of comments I examined, and my study of the public spaces on YouTube alone, it is difficult to tell for certain the extent to which YouTubers are engaging with each other's work.

Within this sample of vlogs I found my three interview participants. Harriet, Leia and Jenna, are vloggers between the ages of 18 and 25 (at the time of the interview) from three different geographical locations (UK, Canada, and USA, respectively). While these three female participants were selected for their vlogging practices, the interviews revealed that they engage with the latter in various ways.

Harriet. Harriet reported that her activist roots emerged in high school, but she primarily learnt about feminist and consent through social media. Her vlog was inspired by another vlogger's discussion of the movie *The Hunting Ground*. While she perceives herself as an activist, she finds her reach via YouTube is limited. She vlogs about what she

is passionate about and hopes to reach people who may not be knowledgeable about topics. Her process to vlogging was simple, involving doing little preparation beforehand to make it look more authentic and less intense.

Leia. Leia learnt about consent through more personal experiences, in her own relationships and through her involvement at the university she attends. Her vlogging habits are informed by the context in which she works. She identifies as a feminist and as an influential person, strongminded and vocal. Her vlogging process informed her knowledge of consent and developed her communication skills. She vlogged about consent because of her desire to influence people and to reach people who might not have the same resources she has. While she did not engage in full preparation for the vlog in this study, she did say that she attempted to use a more serious approach and did make minor scene cuts.

Jenna. Jenna learnt about consent and feminism through various sources, including her family, her own research, her program, and notably, her involvement at her university. Her vlog is closely tied to her work background which involves anti-sexual violence prevention on her campus. The latter inspired her to share what she learnt. In our interview, she identified issues around terms like feminist and activist, but she highlighted that she enjoys educating. Her vlogging equipped her with a deeper knowledge of sexual consent and honed her communication skills. She vlogged about consent and sexual violence primarily because of her university context; she has used her videos since to educate people online and in classes. Her process of vlogging was more extensive than Leia and Harriet,

involving extensive research and some scripting to ensure she provided accurate information.

Their interview responses reflected their differing experiences with the vlogging process, but similar rationale for participating and perspectives of the practice. Their input spans across both theoretical frameworks.

The Different Social Semiotics Dimensions

The Ideational/discourse Dimension

The analysis reveals that vloggers in my sample represent sexual consent and sexual violence in both similar and different ways (*Framing of Consent and Assault*). It is also apparent that their media move past definitions to related topics (*Framing sexual violence, Framing the Perpetrators, Framing the Victims*). Their approach to discourse appears informed by perceptions of their audiences (*Producing for their audiences, Vloggers teaching Youth, Feeling concerned about the audiences*). Table 4 summarizes the categories and subcategories that fall under the umbrella of this dimension.

Table 4. Ideational categories

Framing of consent and assault.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Legal definition of consent.</i> • <i>Affirmative consent discourse.</i> • <i>Legal discourse and enthusiastic consent.</i> • <i>Policy and affirmative consent.</i> • <i>'No means no'.</i> • <i>Bodily autonomy and saying no.</i> • <i>Legal discourse and 'no means no'.</i> • <i>Coercion.</i> • <i>Danger.</i>
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Framing sexual violence.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Rape culture.</i> • <i>Rape myths.</i> • <i>Contexts.</i> • <i>Women..</i> • <i>Climate.</i> • <i>Lack of sexuality education.</i>
Framing the perpetrators.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Talking to perpetrators.</i> • <i>Motivation to perpetrate.</i>
Framing the victims.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Addressing victim-blaming.</i> • <i>Male victims of rape.</i>
Producing for their audiences.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Supporting survivors.</i> • <i>Encouraging persons giving consent.</i> • <i>Warning initiators.</i> • <i>Calling out perpetrators.</i>
Vloggers teaching youth.	
Feeling concerned about the audiences.	

Framing of consent and assault. Vloggers in my sample frequently describe sexual consent and sexual assault. When speaking of sexual consent, vloggers mostly offer broad definitions of consent, using positive language and intonation to describe the acts of giving and receiving consent, and body autonomy.

Legal definition of consent. The legal aspects of sexual consent emerge in the discourse. That consent is mandatory is explicitly discussed in some vlogs (Table 5).

Table 5. Vloggers talking about consent as mandatory

Hannah Witton	<i>Consent is a voluntary, enthusiastic yes. Unassumed. MANDATORY.</i>
Blake Steven	<i>Consent is crucial. Consent isn't optional. It's a necessary thing.</i>
Jenna	<i>Remember consent is mandatory. An affirmative and ongoing consent is what's mandatory.</i>

Gaby and Ash	<i>Gaby: You know what I hate? Those things that are like, 'Consent is sexy'.</i> <i>Ash: Yea!</i> <i>Gaby: I hate that.</i> <i>Ash: Because it is not sexy it just is..</i> <i>Gaby: it is mandatory!</i>
Laci Green	<i>but consent isn't just hot it's also mandatory. Sexual contact without consent is assault or rape.</i>

Several vlogs further address that consent is an ongoing process of agreement that can be revoked (4, 9, 21, 22, 23, 24, 26, 28). For instance, Gaby and Ash (21) emphasize this when they note that “consent can be revoked at any time, no matter what’s going on”. Marina Estrella (22) reinforces that consent is ongoing to her viewers when she says, “the cool thing about giving consent is that you can change your mind at any time”.

New green shoe, Blake Steven, Jenna and Cassie Rattray emphasize the importance of checking in and communicating during sexual activity. New green shoe recognizes that the ease with which one can communicate depending on the relationships, arguing that it may be easier with a long-term partner than a one-night stand, but he asserts that it is nonetheless important to ask questions and read body language. Cassie Rattray also warns audiences that checking in is needed as a yes in the past “doesn’t necessarily mean they always want sex and they always mean yes”. One cannot assume consent, because of the type of relationship, as Lauren Hogan brings up, or the person’s choices of clothing (discussed in Gaby Dunn’s vlog).

Affirmative consent discourse. Several vloggers address in some ways consent as affirmative and enthusiastic agreement and willingness to engage in sexual activity (see

Table 6). Affirmative consent is usually expressed with expressions such as ‘yes means yes’ or calls for an ‘enthusiastic yes’.

Table 6. Vloggers addressing affirmative and enthusiastic consent

MarissaKWood	<i>consent is when two people are very enthusiastic about having sex with each other and say yes</i>
Meghan Hughes	<i>it's basically two people saying yeah I'm down to do that, yeah I'm down to do that on both sides</i>
Hannah Witton	<i>consent is a voluntary enthusiastic yes</i>
Blake Steven	<i>yes means yes. I don't know it seems pretty simple to me the thing is getting a yes from someone you really like if maybe one of the best things in the world</i>
Geony Rucker	<i>consent is your free willing desire to partake in that activity</i>
Jenna	<i>whoever is initiating sex has the responsibility to ask for and receive a verbal and enthusiastic yes before advancing in any sexual contact</i>
Gaby Dunn and Ash	<i>giving an enthusiastic yes to the activity at hand</i>
Marina Estrella	<i>I know what I am saying seems clear cut, like of course no means no and of course yes means yes</i>
Shaynainshambles	<i>consent is key yes means yes</i>
Lauren Hogan	<i>consent is enthusiasm, so you should only be engaging in sex if you really really really really really want to do it.</i>
Abby Williamson	<i>the basic definition of consent is as follows: permission for something to happen or agreement to do something. It's as simple as that.</i>
Grapefruit_spoon	<i>definition of consent is an agreement for something you allow to happen [...] if your friend says yes then you can go hug them and it makes them feel genuinely comforted so yeah consent can apply to those kinds of minuscule interactions</i>
Cassie Rattray	<i>The official definition for consent is permission for something to happen or an agreement to do something</i>
Laci Green	<i>Notice how consent, is a clear yes, it's enthusiastic. I WANT IT! It's out loud and there's no doubt in your mind</i>

Many of these vloggers elaborate on consent definitions by showing examples of agreement and contexts. Vloggers like Hannah Witton, Gaby Dunn and Ash, and Lauren

Hogan describe what consent looks like, explaining that a yes can be expressed verbally and non-verbally. Some vlogs 3, 6, 12 20, 23, 24, and 28 provide examples and scenarios to exemplify asking for and giving consent. For instance, Laci Green (28) uses media techniques like a reddish or greenish screen colors, and a visible X or checkmark to demonstrate what a yes and no can look like (Figure 5).



Figure 5. Laci Green’s examples of consent and non-consent

Shades of Mindfall, Gaby Dunn and Ash, Marina Estrella, Shaynainshambles, and Lauren Hogan argue that giving consent to one activity is not a blanket agreement to other forms of sexual activity. Gaby and Ash exemplify this when they provide the following example, “I do not like when you kiss my neck- duly noted- however I am okay with you paddling my butt”. Some vloggers also elaborate on the spectrum of contexts where consent needs to take place as well, from friendships to dating to one-night stands (vlogs 10, 12, 21, 22, 26). For example, Grapefruit_spoon talks about consent in the context of daily interactions while also relating it to sexual interactions,

Consent can apply to those kinds of minuscule interactions [with] people who you're not intimate with in a sexual pattern [...] the more you're able to practice consent within your friend group within like larger relevance of intimacy, you can then be sure you know how to practice it when you're being very intimate with someone.

Legal discourse and enthusiastic consent. The intersections of legal and enthusiastic consent discourses are apparent in some cases. Gaby and Ash address the mandatory aspect of consent in contrast with the popular slogan “consent is sexy” (addressed positively in vlogs 9, 10, 19, and 28), saying that “hate those things that are like consent is sexy yeah I hate that because it's not sexy, it is just mandatory”. Hannah Witton affirms,

And for the people who still think it ruins the moment or is unsexy to ask for consent you can't argue with the amazingness and the sexiness of being a hundred percent sure and without a doubt that your partner is into it. One it's the right thing to do, and two you won't be worried about miss reading any signals. You can just relax.

New green shoe, Lauren Hogan and Cassie Rattray also refer to complaints that asking for a yes is a mood killer, with all three stressing that prison and rape are worse. Several vloggers choose to paint a positive picture of asking for consent in sexual relationships, describing the act as feeling good for all parties involved (Blake Steven, Gaby and Ash), making sex more fun (Cassie Rattray), and essential to fostering safety and

comfort during sexual relations and in relationships overall (Meghan Hughes, new green shoe, Marina Estrella, Laci Green).

Policy and affirmative consent. In a few cases, vloggers discuss policy; mainly, Venaloid and shoeonhead share their negative perceptions of affirmative consent laws. The former suggests that they are ridiculous, while the latter argues the policies overregulate sexual relations and cultivate fear around rape.

‘No means no’. The discourse of ‘no means no’, which straddles the discursive dimensions of consent promotion and assault prevention, emerges in several vlogs (Table 7).

Table 7. Vloggers addressing ‘no means no’.

Blair	<i>No it means no and if they say no and push you away, it means no. Kiss you a few times and then push you away and say no, it means no.</i>
MarissakWood	<i>If someone says no that means no. No means no means no means no.</i>
Meghan Hughes	<i>No means no always, it will always mean no okay. It doesn't mean maybe, it doesn't mean maybe if she's drunk enough, she'll say yes, it just means no.</i>
Just Between Us	<i>It shouldn't have some sort of hip phrase, oh well, no means no.</i>
new green shoe	<i>There's a rule a whole lot of people follow, which is no means no, which is a solid wall. It makes sense, but I don't like it because it's too easy to manipulate.</i>
Blake Steven	<i>Here the basic rule's no means no. Fairly simple. It's so obvious, no means no.</i>
Harriet	<i>If you are watching this video, note that no always means no.</i>
Marina Estrella	<i>No I'm tired right now, means no. A drunk or a high yes is a no. I don't really feel like it today, means no. I don't want to, means no. Can you please stop, means no. Hmm I don't know, means no. Um, means no. Maybe means no. Silence means no.</i>

New green shoe is particularly engaged with the idea of no means no, instructing audiences to stop. This vlogger critiques the rule ‘no means no’, suggesting that it makes it easier to manipulate understandings of consent, “very often most people will be like oh well, they didn't say no, so no means no, so they said yes”. ‘No means no’ is problematized then by this vlogger for being taken too literally. Vlogs by new green shoe, Marina Estrella, and Shaynainshambles, as well as by Hannah Witton and Laci Green, offer examples of refusals. Shaynainshambles also explains why people might not say no, such as guilt, discomfort, and not knowing how to say it.

Bodily autonomy and saying no. When talking to survivors about the importance of saying no, some vloggers invoke the concept of bodily autonomy. Gaby Dunn and Ash, and Grapefruit_spoon, highlight its importance. Gaby and Ash provide several examples of bodily autonomy through humorous role-playing, and Grapefruit_spoon refers to body autonomy when they say “because you ask them to stop they need to stop because it's your body”. Meghan Hughes also emphasizes the right to say no “because it is your body”.

Legal discourse and ‘no means no’. The law comes out in a few cases, with discussions of what no means, incapacitation, coercion and policy. For example, Shades of Mindfall, Allie Tricaso, Blake Steven, Lauren Hogan and Cassie Rattray stress that silence, or the absence of a no, does not equal consent. This is strongly asserted in vlog 3, where Shades of Mindfall says, “if somebody doesn't say yes it's not a yes; if somebody says no that's not a yes; if somebody is silent that's not a yes”. Geony Rucker and Laci Green describe the circumstances in which one cannot consent (and rape occurs), while Shades of Mindfall

recognizes that definitions vary by US state. Instances where consent is not possible is addressed by a few vloggers; for example, vlogs 9, 15, 22, 25, and 28 note that underage people cannot consent.

Several media producers refer to consent not being possible when persons are incapacitated (Table 8).

Table 8. Vloggers addressing incapacitation.

Shades of Mindfall	[...] you know substances that could hinder judgment of whoever it is that's being asked that question [...]
MarissakWood	Now when drinking gets involved, if you want to have sex with someone you just have to make sure that they know what they're doing. If they're Incoherent, if they are stumbling, if they're kind of confused, they're slurring their words, I wouldn't do it. Don't do it.
Hannah Witton	[...] if they are blackout drunk or high [...]
Allie Tricaso	Because they're drunk or asleep, it doesn't mean anything. So leave them alone, don't touch one single bone. Don't be disgusting.
new green shoe	Communication is absolutely vital, and that basically just disappears when alcohol is involved, and people are intoxicated, so usually it's just safer not to do it when they're drunk or if you're a drunk or if you're both drunk
Blake Steven	When someone's inebriated, drunk, on drugs, that isn't consent.
Geony Rucker	When you're drunk hmm is that consent? We're going to talk about it; there are a couple different reasons that consent cannot be given.
Jenna	Alcohol makes people unable to consent and abusers that use alcohol as a way to get their victim know that.
Gaby Dunn/Ash	I can't even believe I have to say this, but inebriated or unconscious people cannot consent to sex in relationship is not the same thing as consent.
Marina Estrella	This also includes situations in which somebody is intoxicated or under the influence, do they have the capacity to consent?
Shaynainshambles	If you are drinking enough to drown your common sense your sense of boundaries and your libido in booze, you are not fit.
Lauren Hogan	Consent cannot be given if a person is intoxicated, if they're asleep, or if they're under any kind of influence that can't let them make a clear decision

Cassie Rattray	If someone is intoxicated to the point where they cannot make their own decisions or they're not in the right mind [...]
Laci Green	Sometimes people get drunk, you may have learned this about the world. When it comes to sex a little bit of alcohol isn't a big deal, but if they're too drunk to drive they're too drunk to give consent period.

Drunk sex is also the focus of three vlogs by Venaloid, Rantswers, and Geony Rucker. While the latter addresses the general conditions that prevent someone from giving consent including intoxication, Venaloid and Rantswers argue that there is a double-standard perpetuated by activists, college administrators, and feminists, of portraying men as perpetrators and women as victims when both are drunk. Rantswers argues,

I have to ask you a question: who raped who? Did he automatically rape her because vagina, or are they both equally intoxicated and both under the law incapable of making that decision for themselves? Obviously the second, it has to be the second because if it's the first, that's sexist to just arrest the guy when we have no idea what took place in that bed.

They also both make the case that consensual sex is possible when two people are drinking.

Coercion. Coercion is also discussed in vlogs 13, 15, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25 and 28, in situations where threats, pressure, fear or distress are employed as tools to obtain a yes. Gaby and Ash (21) and Laci Green (28) also elaborate upon how coercion may be applied in relationships.

Lauren Hogan and Laci Green tackle power imbalance. The former affirms that while power can be sexy, it also enables manipulation; the latter lists the types of persons that can potentially use their power to influence others,

Teachers, and doctors, therapists, coaches, priest, caregivers, famous actors, maybe even famous YouTubers with their fan, and any party that depends on the other when they trust them, rely on them, when they idolize them, it severely impairs their ability to consent

Danger. In portraying sexual assault, a discourse of danger and prevention emerges. For example, several vloggers describe boundaries being crossed. To vloggers Alex Naquin, Meghan Hughes, and Marina Estrella, the “no” sets a line that upon crossing, becomes assault, though as Alex Naquin explains, the act of refusal does not in and of itself prevent rape in all cases. The disrespect of a refusal to engage in sexual encounters warrants accountability on the part of the perpetrator (Alex Naquin). New green shoe also asserts that ignorance of consent does not excuse rape.

In some discussions of assault, vloggers appear to call out perpetrators. For example, Blair calls out how people - in the case of this video, men- react to a no by giving people guilt trips. Cassie Rattray also focuses on the perpetrator, teaching about the personal and legal implications of committing assault. She emphasizes the pleasure of sex and a willing sexual partner, “like I know personally that if I'm having sex or someone that I know who doesn't want to have sex with me that surely cannot be fauna and I surely don't

want to be involved in that”. Laci Green also addresses the perpetrator and consequences, “you can be expelled or you can go to jail”.

Framing sexual violence. Some vloggers went beyond definitions of consent and violence by identifying problematic roots of sexual violence that underlie rape culture, although this term was not often used.

Rape culture. In their videos, several young vloggers identify a spectrum of factors that contribute to perpetuating sexual violence, such as jokes, clothing, locker room, porn, lack of sex education, misogyny, universities, beliefs about women, and Trump. Notably, language and discourse are identified as issues. For example, Jenna argues for, “removing language that insults or degrades women trivializing sexual assault with a rape jokes or sexual assault jokes fun”. Both Jenna and Harriet note that jokes diminish the gravity of rape. Meghan Hughes and Abby Williamson point to locker room talk and Donald Trump as examples for the normalization of sexual violence. They express strong reactions to the support that Trump receives, and in the case of Abby’s vlog, the way women have internalized misogyny to the point of voting for him. Grapefruit_spoon interprets language as an issue in relationships, wherein slang such as “Netflix and chill” or “hooking up” can be interpreted differently by parties and lead to misunderstandings of expectations.

Rape myths. Blair, Dion Yorkie, Leia, Harriet, Jenna, and Shades of Mindfall address rape myths around clothing, some of them debunking the idea that women ask for it by wearing certain items or flirting. Entitlement is addressed in vlogs 1 and 6. Alex Naquin (1) states that it is entitlement that drives people to treat women the way they see in

pornography, paired with a lack of sexuality education that would prepare them to accept refusals. Meghan Hughes (6) takes Trump as an example of someone who feels entitled to women's bodies.

Contexts. Meghan Hughes and Harriet, as well as some others, identify contexts of sexual violence that extend to become supporting factors. Their specific vlogs speak of universities, and both refer to *The Hunting Ground*, a movie about rape culture on postsecondary campuses, as resource for information. New green shoe debunks the myth that rape occurs in dark alleys, pointing to the known fact that most victims know their rapists.

Women. The objectification of women is addressed in vlogs 2 and 12, with Blair (2) speaking to the “archaic belief” that women are objects. She also discusses the ways that perception of boys and men condone sexual violence, with “boys will be boys” views of boyhood excusing rape and suggesting second chances. Blair further argues that “animalistic impulses” are not restricted to men; women feel and control impulses as well, yet theirs are not used as excuses for sexual violence. New green shoe (12) also points to education programs continuously focusing on teaching women self-defense.

Climate. Some vloggers engaged with discourse about sexual consent emerging in today's North American climate. Shoeonhead particularly focuses her video on how society currently frames sexual consent, arguing that the climate promotes fear mongering and discriminates against men. Several vloggers argue that consent is a ‘hot button’ issue, with

vlogs by Rantswers and Shoeonhead reinforcing that the discourse around this topic is damaging to men.

Lack of sexuality education. Critiques of the lack of sexuality education emerge in some videos. While one vlogger (Allie Tricaso) recalls receiving sexuality education in school, another (Grapefruit_spoon) critique the lack of programming in schools as gateways for mistakes and unsafe choices. Laci Green notes, “that situation where most teenagers can't even describe what consent is... we do have the power to change as individuals and by spreading this information to other people we can create something called consent culture”. Grapefruit_spoon points to adults’ fears of providing sexuality education to kids and their embarrassment as a barrier to sexualities education

Framing the perpetrators. In their videos, several vloggers describe perpetrators. The awareness that their audiences might be perpetrators impacted some of the messages as well, as I explore later.

Talking to perpetrators. Most videos in my sample framed men as perpetrators of sexual violence, with only a few- such as Blair, Dion Yorkie, and Blake Steven- explicitly recognizing that women can also commit acts of sexual violence. Three vloggers – Venaloid, shoeonhead, and Rantswers – address the double standard of rapists too, with Venaloid and Rantswers focusing on drunk sex, arguing that men are unfairly accused of sexual assault, and shoeonhead addressing the focus on men throughout her video in general. Vlogs by Meghan Hughes, Blake Steven, Jenna and Shaynainshambles also remind that perpetrators can be friends and acquaintances.

Motivation to perpetrate. Some vloggers explore perpetrators' motivations. When addressing the audience as perpetrator, Blair says, "don't blame your animalistic tendencies," referring to a common belief that men who rape cannot control their urges. Blake Steven, Andrew Quo, and Jenna addressed how rapists are influenced by power and control, with Andrew Quo making the comparison of people who do things like assault are comparable to Hitler and Genghis Khan. Alex Naquin and Andrew Quo also speak of entitlement, while new green shoe and Blake Steven critique the world and their audiences defense of rapists.

Framing the victims. Discussions about victims featured prominently across videos. Most vloggers in my sample express care and support towards victims, with some also sharing their own experiences of sexual violence.

Addressing victim-blaming. Discussion about victims is sometimes intersected with other issues related to sexual violence, such as reporting and victim-blaming. For example, Shades of Mindfall, MarissakWood, and Meghan Hughes discuss how difficult it is to disclose and report sexual violence because people might not believe you or they will partake in victim-blaming. Leia, MarissakWood, and Jenna especially grapple with the reasons that victims are held responsible for their sexual assault, whether it is because they stayed in a relationship or due to rape myths. Dion Yorkie (8) also delves into victim-blaming, addressing in a hypothetical scenario reaction to a girl's looks and dress. Harriet also brings up clothes as she provides examples of the ways people hold survivors responsible for sexual violence, related to their dress and their behaviors (tease, going out).

Jenna exemplifies this: “no I mean did you see what she was wearing? Oh my gosh; he was drinking; she has a short skirt she was totally asking for it; he was being such a tease and he totally wanted her”. Victim-blaming, Jenna states, protects the perpetrator, and makes victims doubt their roles in their own assault, or make victims look like liars.

Meghan Hughes’ own poignant story touches on how many women even doubt their own assault, explaining that it was the process of disclosing what happened that helped her realize she was a victim. Blair, Meghan Hughes, and Jenna further speak to how victims might doubt their assault. Jenna confronts the perception of women as “untrustworthy manipulative lying human being[s]”, and how this “subconscious bias” affects the treatment of women who report.

On the other hand, Rantswers, shoeonhead, and Venaloid problematize victims, speaking of false accusations and warning of the possibilities that women will lie. These vlogs also disparage feminism and rape law. Vlogs 5 and 14 find the framing of women as victims/male as rapists problematic and emergent from feminism, suggesting that the victimization of women frames women as passive and removes their agency.

Male victims of rape. A few vloggers – Dion Yorkie, new green shoe, Rantswers, Jenna and Leia- mention male victims of rape. Rantswers’ case vlog pairs the argument that males can be victims to with the argument that both parties can “claim rape” when neither remembers. Rantswers thus frames rape as a matter of who accuses who first of rape, rather than an experience with a victim and perpetrator.

Producing for their audiences. The interviews with vloggers reflected that they have a keen sense of their audiences when selecting their content and approach. Through her media text, Leia hoped to teach people who may not be in school or have training, recognizing the privilege of her own sexualities education. Jenna also aimed to teach people who had not had training, and as well, individuals who may not have had experiences with sexual violence and members of the university community. Jenna was a special case; as part of her role at the university, she used her video as a teaching tool in the classroom, thus she saw its impact offline. Harriet recognized her audience was limited, but still hoped to reach at least one person. She identified her perceived audience as people who may have experienced more subtle forms of sexual violence, and people who were not knowledgeable. All three interviewees were inspired by university contexts and addressed them in their videos.

These vloggers' experiences suggest that vloggers may be positioning their audiences as learners. One instance in the interview with Leia further reflected this, as she recounted an example where the audience reacted negatively to a 'falsehood' in her vlog and she subsequently removed the text from YouTube. The university setting was discussed in the three interviews, with all vloggers expressing concerns about the context and students' knowledge of consent. Whereas Harriet expressed concern over her future experiences, Leia and Jenna saw their roles at their university, the education they received within that context, and their university's role in teaching about consent as inspiration to teach.

Outside speaking of sexual consent and sexual violence in general or in personal terms (e.g. sharing their own experiences or opinions), several vloggers in my sample also speak directly to the audience with supportive messages, encouragement, warnings, or to call them out, which shifts their approach (supportive, encouraging, empathetic, angry) and content. Notably, I found that parts of, or whole videos seemed directed towards survivors and perpetrators, as well as the parties asking for consent (referred to as the initiator(s) in the next section) and the persons giving consent. This suggests that other vloggers may also be considering their audiences as ‘learners’ and framing their representations of consent, violence, survivors, perpetrators, and other aspects of sexual violence according to whom may be consuming their media. They also paid attention to the ways they represented this information, using reference tools to offer better definitions, examples, media references, humor, etc. These strategies hint that their perceived audiences may be youth as well.

I first explore some of the indications that vloggers are addressing specific populations -survivors, initiators, persons giving consent and perpetrators, learners and youth- before discussing how some of the vloggers seem to express wariness about their audiences in general.

Supporting survivors. Some of the content and approaches taken in vloggers’ videos indicate that they are speaking to survivors of sexual violence. For example, some vlogs start with trigger warnings (6, 12, 20, 24, 27). Within their media, vloggers will extend supportive messaging to survivors as well. They demonstrate care through affectionate and personal messaging; in vlogs by Meghan Hughes and Laci Green, for

instance, they say ‘I love you’ with caring emphases in their voices. Moreover, vloggers will express hope that survivors take care of themselves (Jenna) and facilitate the process through the provision of resources within their videos and in the description boxes (shoe head, Blake Steven, Lauren Hogan). While most vloggers offer resources to support survivors, one vlogger, shoeonhead, provides a link to men falsely accused of sexual violence. Some vloggers go so far as to offer themselves as resources for support (MarissakWood, Venaloid, shoeonhead, Lauren Hogan).

With one vlogger sharing her experiences seeking support with her friends, and many others emphasizing the importance of seeking care as well as the availability of resources, vloggers also normalize the process of getting help. For example, Lauren Hogan reassures, “never be afraid to look for help if you need it because all of us did at some point or another”. Meghan Hughes offers a similar comment:

I really just wanted to talk about this to say that you're not alone, and there's so many thousands of girls out there who are in the exact same position as you. And when I think back to like when it actually happened, I just think of what I would have given to have somebody just hold me and be like it's okay, I know what you're going through.

Finally, demonstrations of care for survivors resonate in calls for them to keep safe.

The support for survivors extends to vloggers beckoning their audiences to support survivors of sexual violence when they receive disclosures (Jenna), or by intervening (Dion Yorkie, Jenna). Jenna explains how audiences can support persons disclosing incidents,

advising them to let the survivor take control of the situation, and warning that survivors can react differently to their experiences. They also advise self-care to persons receiving disclosures, as these can cause emotional distress to recipients as well. Jenna also speaks of bystander intervention, suggesting that audiences react when witness potentially dangerous situations for another person. Here too, the vlogger practices care by emphasizing the importance of their safety when intervening.

Encouraging persons giving consent. As demonstrated beforehand, vloggers offer different advice on how to give and receive consent. They also emphasize the importance of communicating their feelings with their partner (s). I explore their requests for audiences to speak out during sexual activity as a form of call for action in the Content section, elaborating upon the ways that vloggers push persons giving, refusing, or withdrawing consent to express themselves.

Allie Tricaso, Marina Estrella, Lauren Hogan, and Cassie Rattray recognize the potential vulnerability that may affect someone's capacity or willingness to give consent, providing reassurance to the audiences that it is ok, and important, to say no. Lauren Hogan urges her audiences to practice body autonomy by begging them to take care (via the repetition of pleases): "please please please know that your body is yours and don't ever push yourself into doing something that you don't want to do". Marina Estrella takes a more aggressive approach to enforce the importance of not succumbing to pressure or acting when uncomfortable, "tell them no, tell them that you don't like it, tell them to fuck off if they can't respect you". The emphasis on safety is expressed in videos 1, 6, 7, 22, 23, 26 27,

with some producers (Meghan Hughes, Shaynainshambles) warning audiences to avoid being in a situation where consent would not be possible (“be aware of your surroundings be aware of your drinks”- Meghan Hughes), to checking in with themselves to make sure they are willing, comfortable ,and in the emotional space to have sex or participate in all types of sexual activity (“be aware of your physical and emotional state, be aware of the physical and psychological risks involved in your play”- Shaynainshambles).

In most cases, when giving consent has been addressed, the implications are gendered, with vloggers assuming this population to be female. A couple of videos did specify that their content was not geared to discriminate based on sex, and in one case, where Shaynainshambles advises persons giving consent, she explicitly states, “I am concerned for any assortment of genders who are engaging in any assortment of sexual intercourse”.

Warning initiators. The content focused on receiving consent, and listening to partners indicate that many vloggers in my sample are targeting initiators of sexual activity. Some videos speak more generally to ‘initiators’ with generic messages about healthy relationships; for instance, Shaynainshambles and Cassie Rattray emphasize the importance of treating partners with equality and respect, while Shades of Mindfall uses a humorous colloquial term to encouraging responsibility, “need to exercise that noggin”.

Vloggers also provide more specific guidelines on consensual behavior for the initiators of sexual activity. Some advice is given based on legal repercussions, e.g. advising to check age (Geony Rucker) and the other person’s level of intoxication (new

green shoe, Geony Rucker), while others offer examples of what not to do and when not to continue before or during sexual activity (2, 3, 8 9, 10, 11, 12, 1, 17 18, 19, 22, 24, 28). These examples range from, asking for consent at all times and checking in by examining body language, to respecting boundaries and adopting the appropriate reaction to refusal or hesitancy (listening to the partner(s), reassuring them, stopping the activity). Recommended coping skills if they hear a no include accepting rejection (Just Between Us and Jenna) and walking away (new green shoe).

Awareness of these audiences appears to impact how these messages are communicated. In certain instances, these guidelines are laced with incentives for motivation, sympathy, and calls for empathy. For example, new green shoe suggests that the initiator would be happier knowing their partner would feel better if they were not assaulted when intoxicated, and that jail would be avoided. Shaynainshambles makes similar connections to the wellbeing of the partner, arguing that the audience member should behave responsibly with partners who are putting their trust in them. Vlogger 2 advises self-control and calls for audiences' sympathy by explaining the perspective of the victim:

No it means no and if they say no and push you away it means no; kiss you and a few times and then push you away and say no it means no; and if you pursue beyond that moment you are an asshole, because you are negating the fact that she is an intelligent cognitive person, that she's a being who can make decisions in this world. How do I stop myself I just can't control it what! Yes you can, you can do so.

She did you the courtesy of saying something out loud and saying no, I don't want to, [...] so you could do her the courtesy of like listening to what she said

New green shoe attempts to persuade viewers by relating to initiators of sexual activity, “I know it sucks. why do you have to do it because we're humans and we have morals.” He advises perpetrators or initiators to make sure that they obtain consent the right away, without pressure or manipulation, and to reassure partners when they hear a no. Cassie Rattray also attempts to gather the sympathy of audience members, explaining how fear of humiliation can silence a partner, and thus encouraging to ask for consent.

While vloggers in my sample approached these types of advice with humor at times, in other instances, the vloggers appear angry and threatening. The duo Just Between Us, for instance, explain to initiators how to hear a no, and warns lightheartedly, “if they are running away from you, that’s a sign”. New green shoe urges, “now just because you ask the question does not give you a stamp, Polar Express Golden ticket, woohoo! [they whoop]”. The same vlogger fakes leaving a room if they hear a clear yes, as if they were interrupting. In the sections that appear to target potential perpetrators, however, the tone shifts considerably. Marina Estrella speaks to how people in general can’t understand the basics of consent and swears, expressing anger. Harriet’s advice offers a hint of warning:

If you are watching this video, note that no always means no, if you are with a girl, at a party, a bit tipsy and drunk and she’s interested, do not do anything. Drunk people can’t make good decisions. Also if you are in a situation with somebody that

are uncomfortable, don't pressure them. Everybody is different and you are an asshole if you force someone to do something they don't want to do.

As the example demonstrates, the advice for initiators borders on a warning, and the use of the word "asshole" denotes contempt towards those audiences that do not adopt respect these behavioral guidelines.

Finally, vloggers used sympathy and understanding to approach their audiences' potential recalcitrant position on consent. Grapefruit_spoon expresses understanding that consent can be 'annoying' to some people:

If you're someone who's not used to this type of thing you may very well think wow this is so annoying right now I have to ask all my friends I can hug them if I can touch them that's really annoying yes I know this might require a bit of a learning curve it might take some time

New green shoe acknowledges that men might feel sensitive around female concerns over safety around men and being accused of being a rapist, before suggesting that they have the power to make others' feel safe and emphasizing the importance of communication. He shares,

so it might be annoying but guys we've got to go beyond the expectation of what you would normally do in the street. We need to do our very best to make sure that everybody around us does not feel threatened by us which is a really upsetting thing to say and some people might even think, well that's stupid because I'm not gonna rape anybody, and no you're right you're not going to rape anybody, hopefully, but

the person walking towards you doesn't know that so you need to do your best to communicate to them

Calling out perpetrators. I addressed in the previous section how vloggers direct their messages at initiators of sexual activity, and their change of tone when warning them. In certain videos, notably vlogs 2, 3, 6, 12, 13, and 20 appear to speak directly to perpetrators, as the ‘you’ in these cases either address known perpetrators as well as perpetrators in general. Shades of Mindfall (3), Meghan Hughes (6), and Blake Steven (13) speak to known perpetrators, with Meghan directing her discourse to the person that assaulted them and Blake expressing frustration about a fellow YouTuber who behaved inappropriately with girlfriend in a leaked video. Shades of Mindfall speaks of a student who touched them saying, “told the kid that I was sitting with I'm like I'm not your girl so don't touch me unless somebody says that they're okay with you touching them you don't”.

Blair, Shades of Mindfall, new green shoe, and Leia address rapists’ excuses for committing acts of sexual violence. Blair says: “if you don't know [...] forcing your way, is I mean which is [...] really commonly acknowledged as rape, so if you're doing that, you're absolutely a rapist”. New green shoe sarcastically addresses a similar excuse, “if you're in a situation and you have to ask yourself, I wonder what if I'm about to do counts as rape or not, then yeah it probably does and you definitely shouldn't do it”. Shades of Mindfall critiques excuses, stating “she didn't say no, he didn't say no, if that's not wrong to you, then you need to check yourself”. Finally, Leia warns her audience that if they think people deserve rape, they should reconsider.

Vloggers teaching youth. Earlier, I address how the interviewees positioned their audiences as learners, and their targeted viewers when making their vlogs were other youth. Many of the themes I just explored refer to their contexts (e.g. university) and cultures (e.g., drinking and partying). Moreover, the strategies that other vloggers in my sample employ reinforce the assumption vloggers are reaching out to other young people. They use a variety of rhetorical devices, media strategies, and resources (e.g., statistics, organizations' resources, and legal and dictionary definitions) to appeal to their peers and to support their representations of sexual consent and sexual violence.

Some producers (e.g., Shoeonhead, new green shoe, Shades of Mindfall, Rantswers) were especially prolific in their use of rhetorical devices including metaphors, comparisons, and analogies to approach topics of sexual violence; in some cases, these strategies demonstrate the absurdity of certain ideas, and in others, they exemplify what is consent and assault. While I approach production tools within the context of ideational component of semiotic work, these tools are also relevant to the following section on affect, insofar as these are means of production in emotional content-oriented work, and within the dimension of content, with the positioning of audiences as learners, agents of change, and consumers.

Vloggers use comparisons as instruments to support their arguments and enhance their explanations with visual imagery and scenarios. Shoeonhead, for example, shares the M&Ms analogy from a famous Tumblr post (where 10% in a bowl are poisoned therefore it is risky to eat any) to explain fear mongering. Further, she compares university-based,

male-targeted sexual consent classes to antitheft classes for persons of color, and to classes on “how not to drown babies” for women, implying that targeted anti-rape interventions are problematic. New green shoe shows the absurdity of reactions of sexual violence by offering a scenario where he is shot and blamed for it (in a similar way that people who are raped experience blame). He argues that we would not ask a shooting victim why they were not wearing a bullet proof vest or carrying weapons. Shades of Mindfall also demonstrates the absurdity of victim-blaming by comparing sexual assault to being shot, explaining that if one were to ask whether you wanted to be shot, and you were silent, it would not mean yes. Rantswers, on the other hand, relies on several analogies to demonstrate arguments. For example, suggesting that sexual activity is like driving, they say that the driver cannot get out of a ticket by saying they are too drunk to consent, as they still got into the car.

Vloggers draw from contemporary popular culture references that youth may be familiar with, such as musicians’ quotes, YouTube vlogs and videos, and movie scenes for inspiration, motivation, and information. For example, *The Hunting Ground* movie is mentioned extensively in Meghan Hughes and Harriet’s vlogs. Meghan talks about the way the movie informed her thinking and prompted feelings of anger:

It's called the Hunting Ground, and it literally just informed me on all of these things that I had no idea had happened. And it made me feel a lot less alone but it also made me feel really really angry, because when the aspect of rape is brought into a college campus [...]

Sources for definitions, when stated, include Google, universities, the dictionary, and well-known YouTube videos (particularly “Consent as Tea”). Shades of Mindfall explains their conscious choice to provide Northwestern University’s definition of assault, based on the prestige of the institution. When providing lists of sources and support resources, vloggers typically pointed to links and phone numbers in their comment boxes (13, 19, 24, 27, 7, 22, 4). The use of resources within their texts suggested some preparation to ‘teach’ their audiences. In recounting their production processes, for example, all my interviewees reported taking some notes pertaining to definitions, and facts about sexual violence. Leia drew from what she learnt at school and sought out a dictionary definition when she made her vlog, although she does not usually conduct research when vlogging. She organized herself when producing this video due to the seriousness of the topic and her goal to teach young people. Harriet wrote some notes while watching *The Hunting Ground*, and later researched the facts to ensure they were correct. Otherwise, she describes her process as turning on the camera and talking, with no other prep or editing. Jenna researched her material and took 2-3 days to familiarize herself with the material.

Feeling concerned about the audiences. Some videos within my sample suggest that vloggers are also sometimes wary of their audiences, discussing them in their media. Blake Steven, the one who responded to the YouTuber’s Carter Reynold’s scandal, critiques audiences’ reactions to the vloggers’ actions. He argues that people willing to show support for perpetrators of sexual misconduct because of their popularity are wrong. Blake also acknowledges how this is common on YouTube. MarissakWood, whose video is no longer available online, focuses on rape culture and on fans reactions when they hear

that celebrities are accused of sexual violence. Like Blake Steven and Andrew Quo, this vlogger is referring to audiences when citing people, and critiquing how audiences will protect the accusers before the survivors. MarissakWood further points out how the comments section impact due process:

I'm seeing in the comment sections or on Tumblr or people who are saying that this person is innocent until proven guilty, which is very true, but the thing is you cannot automatically discredit a person who's come forward talking about abuse.

Meghan Hughes foreshadows that audience members might partake in victim-blaming and make comments about her testimonial,

I know that there will be people out there watching this who are like oh well what were you wearing were you drunk because that's a real thing that people ask victims when they speak up about sexual assault or rape or any of these things and to answer that question not only was I 100% sober but I was also wearing a fucking sweatshirt so yeah sexual assault and rape happen all too often.

The Affective Dimension

The emotional dimensions of their work resonate in the past section, however I focus here more specifically on affective strategies that stood out during the analysis, including tone of voice and facial expressions, lighting, narratives and testimonials, self-expression through art, as well as displays of self-awareness and vulnerability.

Use of tone of voice and facial expressions. I address in the Ideational and in the Content dimensions how vloggers, as meaning-makers, use a variety of strategies to frame

the discourses in the videos in humorous or persuasive ways. The expression of emotions in the videos appear to perform similar roles, with care and outrage emerging as the primary emotions one captures from these videos.

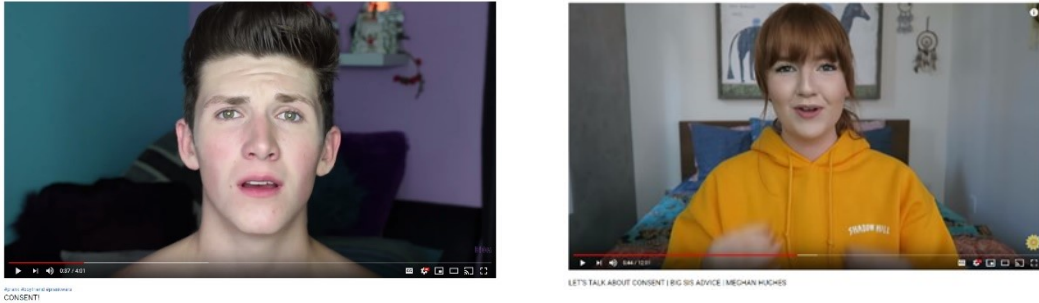


Figure 6. Dion Yorkie emotionally performs a spoken word piece; Meghan Hughes shares her emotional experience.

When I previously identified how some vloggers speak to survivors, I noted that they adopted caring tones. I perceived this when vloggers' voices become softer and warmer while speaking about or to survivors. Generally, the caring tone is accompanied by concerned or sad facial expressions (Figure 6). For example, Meghan Hughes breaks into tears as she advises her audiences to reach out for support. Care and concern were exhibited in most videos. In other instances, vloggers turn to anger and frustration (Shades of Mindfall, Blake Steven). I found that when this happens, as may be predicted, vloggers are addressing initiators of sexual activity and perpetrators, or are speaking about larger societal issues and discourse that they find frustrating.

Use of art for self-expression. Art as a form of self-expression- music, poetry and theater- emerges in some vlogs. Four vloggers (Allie Tricaso, Gaby and Ash, Jack and Dean, Dion Yorkie) especially focus on music and spoken word to communicate content

through emotion and poetry. Allie Tricaso plays guitar and sings a cheery song about consent, while Gaby and Ash use music as a humorous reminder of what is consent. Jack and Dean offer a more elaborate production, with the vloggers singing and acting in a video clip set at a club, where one of the singers is attempting to flirt with a girl and his friend is intervening. Dion Yorkie offers a heartfelt and passionate spoken word poem which tells the stories of assault in different circumstances. The songs and spoken work range from happy to sad, sending messages about sexual consent as well as sexual assault.

Use of lighting and colors to convey mood. There is a brighter, positive approach to these topics that emerged in some videos, characterized by bright, salient colors and lighting.



Figure 7. Laci Green's living is an example of a bright backdrop

For example, Laci Green's background features a colorful living room (Figure 7). Her voice is high pitched and cheery, and she often interjects sounds and giggles to reinforce her points in a humorous and light-hearted manner. This vlogger clearly uses color to set the scene, with her screen veering to greyscale when she demonstrates examples of what is and is not consent (see figure 5). However, while several vloggers' videos feature light play, this is not always indicative of the content, but of the vlogger. For

example, vloggers such as Alexa Naquin and Lauren Hogan appear to use this set-up for other videos unrelated to sexual violence or consent.

Use of narratives and testimonials. Some producers share personal narratives and testimonials about their experiences with sexual violence, which then serve as points of reference in their video. Specifically, new green shoe, Rantswers, Jenna, Leia and Harriet draw from offline experiences and occupations to make their arguments. Not all stories refer to experiences of sexual violence; for example, Leia mentions her psychology class as a reference when discussing victim blaming, Jenna speaks about a presentation at her school, and new green shoe recounts how a friend had questions about drunk sex.

Four vloggers shared testimonials about experiences with sexual consent and sexual violence (Blair, Shades of Mindfall, Meghan Hughes, Leia). Meghan Hughes, as well as Shades of Mindfall, share emotional stories of their assault, which turn into a discussion about getting support and self-awareness. In one occasion, Meghan Hughes breaks down on screen, expressing the difficulty of talking about this; she shares that while she does not want her video to focus on her story, she feels the latter would impress on her audience her own state of denial about her assault. Shades of Mindfall asks if her body invites unwanted sexual attention based on personal experience. Blair refers to her past feelings of guilt when she was coerced into sexual activity, and Leia shares a story about her boyfriend's treatment of her, when at times she felt forced to hug him.

Displays of self-awareness and vulnerability. Vloggers also display self-awareness and vulnerability in their media by commenting on their production skills and experience with the topic they are discussing. Cassie Rattray, MarissakWood, Hanna

Witton, the duo in both *Just Between Us* and Gaby's vlog, Lauren Hogan, and Abby Williamson make fun of themselves in humorous and often endearing ways as they introduce their videos, or struggle with their production skills and emotions (Grapefruit_spoon). These moments of vulnerability often lighten the tone of their vlogs. In these moments, some vloggers appear aware of their audiences' potential reactions. For example, when Cassie Rattray addresses her drinking on camera, she clarifies her age and the timing of the filming and asks for "no hate comments". Gaby and Ash acknowledge their behavior in a past show (a kiss without asking) to shed light on consent and to reassure audiences that they did not commit sexual assault. Some moments of vulnerability come across as self-deprecating, for example when Cassie Rattray admits that she is not an expert on sexual consent. Allie Tricaso, Harriet, and Grapefruit_spoon self-reflect on their performance and choice of video. For example, Allie Tricaso expresses insecurity at her performance, "honest I didn't really like the way I performed that, but my cat made that so amazing! He just hugged me and I could not have that not be the one that I use but I had squeaky cords and my voice was flat". Grapefruit_spoon also observes, "I hope this video was okay and helpful, I am really not used to talking about this sort of stuff out loud on camera and not very well-versed in it so I try my best".

The Content Dimension

Caron (2017) writes "the dimension of content refers to the idea that a media text is a non-randomly selected assemblage of signs, which implies that content and form are both structured by the goals, interests, and incentives of the media creator" (p. 660). In isolating

the themes, I came across the stated purposes of the vloggers, which I discuss below.

However, I also interpreted purpose based on the content and format of their videos.

Vloggers' agency is expressed in both the identified purposes of the vlogs, and the non-identified, but interpreted, purposes. I distinguish these as I address the incentives for producing and sharing these videos in the next section: sharing personal thoughts and feelings, expressing opinions, promoting dialogue, impacting behavior, offering support, responding to prompts, and educating and raising awareness. I also address the commercial aspects of their vlog production in general. Parts of this section echoes the previous discussion about audiences in the content section, as I reiterate the important advice that vloggers give to specific audience members regarding behaviors and attitudes related to sexual violence.

Personal interest and feelings. Some vloggers express that the purpose of their videos is to share their personal feelings about sexual consent and sexual violence. Several of the participants in my sample felt this topic was important (6, 9, 10, 19, 22, 24, 26, 27). For instance, Lauren Hogan states, "I want to be talking about a subject that means so so so much to me and it's so crucial, it's so important". Grapefruit_spoon feels the topic is important and as a child, she wished she had had an adult to talk to when growing up, so she decided to be a role model. Harriet feels strongly about the topic, which prompted her to use her platform to share her ideas. Shades of Mindfall expresses disappointment about feeling she had to make a video about consent and assault. To some extent, participants

who shared their own stories may have been at least partially motivated by their own experiences, as their testimonials formed important parts of their narrative.

Personal interests in effecting change and educating was a theme that arose in all three interviews, where Leia, Jenna, and Harriet reported some form of activist involvement and leadership roles offline. In describing themselves as vloggers they used terms like influential, strongminded, vocal (Leia) and someone who enjoys educating (Jenna). While Harriet said she hoped to effect change, she did acknowledge that her lack of popularity online might limit the extent of the difference she could make.

Expressing opinion. Venaloid, Meghan Hughes, shoeonhead, and Harriet specifically state that their video is a channel through which they can express their opinion. For example, Shoeonhead frames her video as opinion-based, and calls upon her audiences to share theirs, “so what are your opinions of this whole consent thing do you think it's gonna help in the long run do you think it's a little unnecessary?” Upon explaining how he will address the topic, and the structure of the video, Venaloid also invites the audiences to follow him as he makes his arguments, and to form their own opinions in certain parts.

Promoting dialogue. Several vlogs (6, 12,14, 19, 20, and 27) explicitly express the intent to promote dialogue, in general or in the comments feed. Vloggers either prompt conversations about issues related to sexual violence in general or related to their video specifically. For instance, new green shoe invites more general discussion about sexual in their comments feed, “feel free to discuss the more important topic of rape culture in our society”. On the other hand, Rantswers asks the audience to engage directly with the

content and arguments in the video, by prompting them to respond to a video the vlogger discusses, and to express whether they saw the same thing or feel the same way, “but I think they're worth a public discussion so if you've got something to add, I'd love to hear it”. Meghan Hughes emphasizes as well that dialogue is the reason she created her video, to “open discussion in the comments about consent”.

Impacting behaviors. I illustrated how the vloggers designed the content and specifically the encouragement of certain behaviors and attitudes, warnings, and calls for action according to perceived audiences in the Ideational section. Only a few vloggers explicitly state their hope that their videos will lead to change. Meghan Hughes, for example, wishes her videos lead to action. New green shoe thinks that videos will help reconsider rape and he expresses hope that his video helps people. He states, “I like making these types of videos because I feel like it helps people”. Shades of Mindfall anticipates her video will lead to people being more attentive to their actions.

While vloggers do not necessarily explicitly state their intent to effect social change, their discourse reflects a desire (in most cases) to promote healthy sexual behavior. As I addressed earlier, most vloggers invite specific audiences, particularly those they identify as survivors and initiators of sexual activity, to adopt specific behaviors and attitudes during sexual relationships, and with survivors and perpetrators. I also found that in general, some videos included recommendations for behavior applicable to general audiences. For example, two vlogs by Jack and Dean, and Jenna, tackle bystander intervention. The former indirectly addresses the topic, as the video features two characters

at a club, with one telling the other to treat women like humans. Thus, the character is displaying bystander intervention, but the topic is not directly defined nor stated as the motive for the video. Jenna's vlog provides specific guidelines and examples such as asking (if it's a female) for a tampon or speaking with the perpetrator. She speaks to the audience and brings up the importance of not assuming behavior is acceptable because no one else is reacting. Some vloggers call for action from a political standpoint; for example, Meghan Hughes promotes voting to prevent Donald Trump from coming into office in the US.

Offering support to others. Few vloggers explicitly express that the purpose of their videos is to support survivors or show care for their audiences in general, except for new green shoe. However, throughout most of the video samples, the vloggers use their platform to speak to survivors (see previous sections). Across the descriptions in the videos, many of these vloggers also take the opportunity to leave resources for audiences. These steps indicate that some of these videos are at least partially intended to offer support.

Videos as response. Vloggers sometimes broach the topic of sexual violence and consent by first mentioning meaningful incidents or media that affects them or prompts their interest in the topic. While these prompts are not always necessarily cited as the reasons these videos were produced, vloggers' engagement with the incidents and media indicate the important role they played in directing the chosen media content.

To media. Shaynainshambles explains in her video that consent education is necessary considering the rage around BDSM, spurred by the Fifty Shades of Grey videos, and as well, the press' problematic response- "about not being able to talk to a girl anymore

without being labelled a sexual predator”- to feminist calls for accountability. Geony Rucker, similarly, addresses the media hype around drinking and consent. Venaloid and Rantswers also react to a university’s promotional material about sexual consent and sexual assault. As previously mentioned, *The Hunting Ground* serves as a prompt for two vloggers, Meghan Hughes and Harriet, with the former inspiring the latter to watch and respond to the video. Moreover, the video “Consent as Tea” is mentioned in vlogs byShoeonhead, new green shoe, Jenna, and Cassie Rattray. Finally, Blair relates an assault scene in movie to her and many other women’s experiences, using this as a prompt to begin their video.

To current events. MarissakWood states her desire to educate about rape and rape culture in response to a current event (referring to an unnamed YouTuber called out for sexual assault) and to the fans’ responses that she witnessed. The interviewed vloggers identified offline and online events as ‘prompts’ for activism and feminism; whereas Harriet was inspired by her exposure to the song “Blurred Lines” and social media, Leia and Jenna were motivated by their context, the university. Both Leia and Harriet mentioned personal experience: Leia shared her relationship with her bf in high school prompted her to learn further about consent, whereas Harriet admitted she had not had a negative experience herself but felt compelled to talk about the topic anyways.

To others. Blake Steven and Andrew Quo state their videos are reactions to YouTubers’ mediatized sexual misconduct. Blake Steven addresses the Carter Reynold’s scandal (a leaked video depicted sexual misconduct) and dissects the problematic apology

letter disseminated by the latter. Andrew Quo speaks of another vlogger doing pranks by grabbing people's buttocks.

Venaloid and Rantswers both respond to YouTube videos that cover consent during drunken encounters, the former calling out Laci Green and the latter responding to a video on the Bearing channel called "feminism for bros" (no longer available). Each use these videos to frame their arguments about double-standards. As stated beforehand, Harriet's inspiration came from *The Hunting Ground* film, however it was Meghan Hughes's vlog that motivated her to watch the film.

Alex Naquin and Lauren Hogan refer to YouTube videos more generally as inspiration for their videos. Alex Naquin less specifically states they created their video to address the hype on YouTube regarding consent and rape, "there's been a lot of videos of sexual assault and things of that nature coming to light and people are making a deservedly big deal about it on media and social video". Finally, while not stated as expressed intent to create the video, Lauren Hogan refers to wanting to talk about consent, and then refers to testimonial videos on YouTube: "I saw so many response videos where people talked about their stories and their experiences with non-consensual sex a lot of them talked about how they didn't even know about consent properly and they were young and had they known some of the things [...] maybe it wouldn't have happened".

People who inspired videos outside of YouTube include a volunteer who attended the vlogger's school and an audience member. Allie Tricaso states that her video is an extension of their work with a community organization, who sent a member to educate

students at her school and inspired her to teach others about consent. Just Between Us's vlog addresses an audience member's question about consent.

To the climate. While not necessarily stated, certain vloggers appear to respond to well-known events and current ideologies. For example, Abby Williamson sets the tone for her video by discussing Brock Turner and how society still has issues understanding consent. Jenna structures her videos on rape myths that permeate society's thinking. Venaloid, on the other hand, clearly vocalizes his frustration with feminism, and directs his videos to feminists, but also to respond to double standards that emerge within feminist discourse.

To educate and raise awareness. Many vloggers in my sample stress the importance of knowing what consent and sexual violence is, although not all videos clearly state that their video was created for educational purposes.

All three interviewees expressed a desire to educate others about different aspects of consent. Leia shared she saw it more as influencing than teaching and cited her privilege in receiving education about consent as a motivational factor. She stated her goal "to communicate and influence thinking". Jenna recognized a need to clarify the definition of consent in her university community, and hoped to start a conversation via her vlog, in particularly related to specific related topics that are not often discussed. Harriet hoped to reassure audiences who felt self-blame and to educate audiences who were not knowledgeable on the subject.

Amongst those vloggers who clarify their intent to educate, common reasons include rape prevention (12), to increase knowledge about aspects of consent and rape (1, 3, 6, 7 9, 11, 12, 15, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 26, 27), and to debunk myths (3, 19). Vloggers Shades of Mindfall (3) and new green shoe (12) express concern about people's current knowledge of consent. Some producers like Hannah Witton, Lauren Hogan, and Grapefruit_spoon acknowledge issues with their own lack of sexuality education.

I can only speak for myself and when I was growing up, but I won't get into anything personal. I definitely didn't know about consent growing up. I definitely had completely wrong ideas of what sexual consent was [...] so I just really wanted to make this video and just shed some light on what consent is. (Lauren Hogan)

In school the most I ever got taught about consent was no means no and don't do it until you're ready but that's not enough when it comes to understanding consent.

First of all here are some other things that you might hear. (Hannah Witton)

Grapefruit_spoon explains being inspired to create her video based on her own lack of sexuality education growing up, and also cites other barriers to sexuality education (parents' cultural contexts) as motivation to create this video.

Shades of Mindfall and Jenna specifically state their intent to educate about and debunk myths. Shades of Mindfall wants the audience to know if “there is a thesis statement for this video”, it is related to victim-blaming for clothes. Jenna goes into depth about several myths, notably around perpetrators, victim-blaming, and around gender.

Some vloggers also acknowledge the power of the medium to educate. Shades of Mindfall says, “the reason I'm making this video is to teach you or teach someone you're going to show this video exactly what consent is and exactly what sexual assault is”.

Performance and production for commercial purposes. While no act is apolitical, and it can be argued that the choices made throughout these videos reflect potential commercial intent, certain production strategies and performances suggest attempts to gain and keep followers. As mentioned before, vloggers frequently try to communicate with their audiences, inviting dialogue and questions. They prompt their audiences to share whether they liked the video in comments, and prompt them to like, share, and subscribe videos (e.g., 1, 8, 17, 21, 23, 27), and to provide ideas for other videos (22, 23, 27). Dion Yorkie intersects the commercial nature of the platform and attracting viewers to awareness-raising and rape prevention: “please like and share; you may save someone out there”. Alex Naquin and new green shoe also acknowledge the taste of their audiences, by asking for advice on video production strategies and style.

Audiences

Building from the idea that their content is intentional semiotic work purposefully created to share meaning and affect audience, this study also briefly examines the intertextuality between texts by analyzing some of the vlogs’ audience responses. The previous section points to the ways that several of these vloggers engage with audiences, with other vloggers, and with other media, which suggests a positioning of the video within a network of larger texts and vloggers. In nearly all videos, vloggers attempt to create

relationships with their audiences by inviting them to share their opinions and stories, or seek comfort; they also express support, invite dialogue, or promote their channels. This raised the question, “How do audiences respond?”

Across the 20 vlogs that I examined, audience members engage to varying degrees with the content in the vlog (on their own or with other audience members), the vlog production, and the vlogger. From this sample, ten vloggers respond to audience members’ comments and questions- Allie Tricaso, Blake Stevens, new green shoe, Dion Yorkie, Lauren Hogan, Cassie Rattray, Shaynainshambles, Jenna, Venaloid, and Abby Williamson. Most of these vloggers were my less popular YouTubers.

Expressing love for the video, song or vlogger, is a popular form of response, with nearly 150 instances identified. There are also other, different levels of engagement with the content of the vlogs. The more common types of response include simply agreeing with the vlog content about sexual consent and assault, and within a smaller number of contexts (i.e., 12 videos), going beyond expressing approval to positively engage with the topic. Extensive dialogue rarely occurs in my sample, with the notable exception of Venaloid’s vlog. There are 7 incidents of dialogue, with the vlogger himself avidly involved in arguments about topics such as feminism and patriarchy. Venaloid continues his arguments against feminism in this space and shared more resources for his audience. In relation to the content, there were also at least 43 cases in 13 videos where audiences expressed that they related to the material.

Trolling. There are fewer instances (8 vlogs) where the audiences critique vlog content, with female vloggers especially becoming particular targets of criticism and trolling as well (Hanna Witton, Just Between Us, and Laci Green). These vloggers also happen to be celebrity vloggers, with two of them specializing in sexualities education. Trolling is rare across my sample of audience responses, except within these three vlogs. The ‘troll’ comments I found address the content of the vlog as well as the vlogger. For example, in Laci Green’s, some audience members’ responses are: "3 GENDERS 4 GENDERS EVEN 5!!!!"; "Darling, no one in their right mind would ever insert themselves into you"; "like 50% of women fantasize about being raped. How tragic it would be if my sex fantasies came true. I want 2 women to force oral sex on me, that would be sexual assault right? Something doesn't add up here". There is a strong anti-feminist rhetoric amongst critiques of vlog content, the female vloggers who were trolled, and within the comments of the videos that critiqued consent discourses (Shoeonhead, Venaloid, and Rantswers).

Vloggers and their design are also targeted by audiences. Outside expressing love for them, audiences also frequently thank the vloggers for the videos and their work (59). In approximately 50 instances, audiences comment on the vlogger’s performance or appearance, but this is usually in positive ways. 40 audience members ask the vlogger questions, and in many instances, receive replies. Moreover, audiences express some trust in the vloggers and their audiences. There were 24 disclosures of sexual violence, most occurring with the space created by the vlogger who herself disclosed an experience (Meghan Hughes). In this case, audiences respond with sympathy towards survivors as

well. Finally, there are several instances where audience members comment about, or critique vlog production. This is notable in Alex Naquin's vlog space, which is unsurprising since it is at the behest of the vlogger.

Summary of the Chapter

Framework 1 addresses the complex discourses and participation in young YouTubers' vlogs about sexual consent. It offers nuanced understanding of young media-makers, the spaces they create, and their audiences contributions' to meaning-making through subjective approaches to sexual consent and sexual violence, narratives, testimonials, arguments, support, response, care, love, and more. Chapter 5 investigates how youth feel about these texts/spaces as possible educational resources online and in the classroom.

Chapter 5: Presentation of Findings Part 2

Chapter 5 explores the findings related to my second research questions, “How do young YouTube users perceive vlogging and vlogs as sexualities education tools, online and in the university classroom?” I developed an emerging theory of this study’s participants’ perceptions of vlogs and vlogging as resources and channels to build knowledge around sexual consent and sexual violence and promote agency. This Chapter explores the categories that shape the framework – perceptions of YouTube, of vlogs, of media-making, and of self, media-making and disseminating- and the relationships between them (Figure 8).

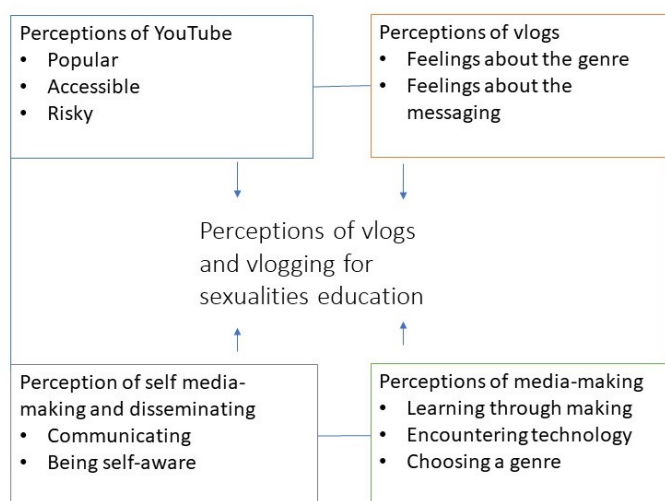


Figure 8. Youth perceptions of vlogs and vlogging for sexualities education

Figure 8 offers a visual representation dissecting participants’ perception of YouTube, vlogs, and vlogging as resources and activities to teach and learn about sexual consent, divided in 4 categories. In summary, participants mostly agreed that YouTube is a popular and accessible platform for learning and communicating about sexual consent that

can reach diverse audiences, including those who may be less receptive to traditional forms of sexualities education. However, the commercial and performative aspects of vlogging on the platform, and the perception of risk due to trolling (particularly for women), means that they might also be contentious learning terrains.

Moreover, while there was some enthusiasm for making and watching media, participants shared mixed feelings about the vlog genre and messages within the vlogs. When asked about the potential of using YouTube vlogs and vlogging practices as teaching tools in educational settings, participants expressed positive feelings around the use of YouTube vlogs and participant-produced videos as conversation openers and as means to address missed curriculum content in university workshops. Conversely, some participants noted that watching vlogs could distract from conversations around consent. They also warned that vlogs should be carefully chosen for appropriate content and approach.

While the interviewees and workshop participants found vlog-making an effective means to increase learning, some of them drew upon their experiences to advise that this approach can also distract from learning in university contexts due to technological difficulties. Moreover, the prospect of disseminating vlogs can make some people uncomfortable, due to concerns with being judged and trolled. This was a recurrent theme of discussion, with female participants frequently citing their worries about communicating with others, especially men, about sexual violence.

Context of the Framework

In addition to the three interviewees – Jenna, Harriet, and Leia- I grounded my findings in the voices and experiences of University students across two workshops.

March context. My second set of participants includes university students between the ages of 19 and 25 with varying levels of experience with the platform, who gathered to the consent and media-making workshop to develop their knowledge of consent. My participants were familiar with YouTube, but only 4 reported previously posting a video on the platform. As I shared in the Appendix C, participants came from different university programs. All 12 student in my March workshop were students at universities in Montreal, and their shared experiences in this context echoed through their discussions of sexual violence, the ways it manifests, and how to beat it, unifying this sample in a bond other than their attendance of the workshop. The university context specifically often threaded through our conversations in the workshops and focus groups, with some participants like Katie referring to her postsecondary consent education at her residence, or like Juliette, imagining how a media-making could affect change on the McGill campus. They reported varying levels and sources of sexualities education and media education before arriving to the workshop. Most participants did not report receiving school-based consent education before university, although all participants reported learning about it through various other channels.

I expected varying exposures to sexual consent education and YouTube, so the workshop was designed to provide them with a baseline knowledge of sexual consent and

sexual violence, and to initiate them to sexual consent vlogs and vlogging so that they could provide an informed opinion about vlogs and vlogging as sexualities education tools.

The first day, after the introductions and initial focus group questions, I began the workshop by exploring the definitions of consent, consent culture, and rape culture that would inform our discussions. I prompted participants to think about and share their personal understandings of sexual consent, in three groups of 4. These smaller conversations varied across tables, moving between how they defined consent, to sharing personal stories or examples, to discussing the larger issues around consent, such as healthy relationships and communication barriers (for women particularly). I then drew from feminist literature and my previous workshops to develop the definitions and orient the conversation. We watched one vlog by popular YouTuber Laci Green from my sample, entitled “Wanna have sex? Consent 101”. Following the showing, we had a conversation on consent culture and barriers to consent culture.

The second session started with talks about social change and how to challenge the previously discussed barriers to consent culture. We examined the different ways that consent was promoted and discussed across various media. Participants received an overview of vlogging and YouTube as a platform for advocacy as well as a site of dangerous rhetoric, using Laci Green and Shoeonhead’s vlogs as examples of the types of discourse and responses to vlogs one might encounter. As part of the workshop, participants watched several different videos to learn about consent, to get a sense of ways that producers use videos for education and advocacy, and to hone their critical media

literacy skills. The selection of materials I broached included vlogger Laci Green's "Wanna Have sex: Consent 101", vlogger Shoeonhead's "consent", Concordia University's "Get Consent. Ask. Listen. Respect" and the #Ibelieveyou Campaign video (no longer available online). While the two last reflect university and organization approaches to sexual consent, the first two vlogs were selected to encourage participants to be critical of media messages, and to reflect on how their own video strategies and content could be interpreted online. I also knew from my analysis that while both popular vloggers use similar media approaches, they also offer a different viewpoint about what consent means, about victims, and perpetrators. Moreover, both receive different reception in the comments feed, with Laci's comprehensive and sex-positive video on consent attracting negative criticisms and trolling, and Shoeonhead's more sarcastic-driven text critiquing consent and consent culture receiving support. Participants critiqued these YouTube vlogs during the workshop; however, the discussion steered more towards the vloggers' styles and their audiences, then the content itself. This was an unforeseen setback in our conversations around consent, noted by myself in my field notes and by one participant, though it contributed to a conversation on the use of media as tools for social change.

Before beginning the process of developing their vlogs, we examined the components of critical media literacy and media production. I did not have to go into detail about how to film a vlog, since we had discussed the definition of vlog in our earlier focus group. I briefly suggested mobile applications for participants who wished to edit their videos.

Participants gathered to discuss ideas for their vlogs in groups and begin conceptualizing their video and production strategies using a form I gave them (see Appendix I). The three sets of participants discussed a range of ideas for their content and they justified their choices with their peers. There was a certain amount of shared opinions and personal narratives around consent and violence that took place. In the end, while we were supposed to draw a storyboard, participants opted to stick to the form alone to plan their video. Participants were encouraged to take notes on their vlogging process when filming the vlog after that session.

Finally, during the third session, we re-assembled to discuss our vlogging process and reflect on how it went. We did not watch all 11 videos produced by participants, only those made by Amalie, Pudding, Maria, Mathilda, and Juliette. We discussed Megan's video, and while she was willing to share her work, technical glitches with the computer prevented us from viewing it. During the screening, participants expressed interest in each other's' video, but conversation was limited at this point. During the focus group, we shared our views of YouTube and finished with discussions about the research.

October context. The October workshop was scheduled within a time frame of three consecutive hours, during a larger event surrounding consent culture held at a Montreal university. Significant changes to the presentation included a collapsed PowerPoint with the information from the previous iteration (See Appendices J for new workshop design and L for PPT), which was sent to all previous participants for approval before the workshop was held.

During this workshop, we skipped the brainstorm to define sexual consent, because most participants expressed that they were well versed on the topic. We reviewed the principles of verbal consent after we went over definitions of sexual violence. To explore consent and videos as forms of advocacy and activism more deeply, we looked at three YouTube videos and vlogs: “What is Consent?” by Just Between Us, “Wanna Have Sex? Consent 101” by Laci Green, and “Consent as Tea” by Blue Seat Studios. I diversified the selection based on the previous participants’ interests in the ‘Consent as Tea’ video, and feedback on the Shoonhead video. We then discussed the challenges to consent culture and went over some of the ways that consent culture can be challenged. Because we had practiced our critical media literacy skills beforehand, we went straight to making a video.

Participants decided that they did not want to make vlogs; instead, they opted to do participatory video. We brainstormed topics, which ranged from being able to say no, and how barriers often prevent girls from voicing their concern and resisting sexual assault. These barriers are related to social status and politeness. Stories were shared about their own or friends’ feelings about it. We decided then on a video that shows to people texting about meeting up, with one of the persons then texting their sister to tell them that they had felt uncomfortable about the person’s behavior and had ended up hooking up because they did not want to make the situation weird. Participants expressed that this was a common situation. Rather than use a party scenario, which one participant mentioned had been critiqued at another workshop for being too stereotypical and not the only place where this takes place, they chose a study scenario. During the process of storyboarding, we wrote out the sentences and decided who would hold the phone, type, and edits. We filmed the video,

during which we discussed the importance of communicating our message, referring to all genders as potential survivors of sexual violence, and using language that students would relate with.

Youth perceptions of vlogs and vlogging for sexualities education

Perceptions of the YouTube: Popular, Accessible and Risky

The categories that continued to emerge across participants when discussing YouTube were the platform's popularity and accessibility, which were recognized as reasons why it is a useful sexualities education resource.

The three vloggers cited YouTube's popularity and accessibility to explain the educational opportunities of the YouTube platform, online and in the classroom. Leia pointed out that one can search for anything they want to see, and Harriet noted that she knew several girls who obtained sex education via YouTube. Jenna brought up the potential of sharing YouTube vlogs so people who cannot otherwise access consent education can learn:

I do a of talks about [consent] on campus, but a lot of people are using social media so much, so it's like, oh well, if people aren't coming to my talks they are going to see it in my Facebook, they're going to see it in my Twitter.

Participants stated that they were familiar with the platform to varying degrees. Yet, when discussing the possibilities of teaching and learning via YouTube, its popularity was

frequently cited. One participant from the October workshop contrasted the popularity of YouTube with other media,

I think it's amazing as YouTube is the new platform that everyone is using. People don't watch TV as much anymore and YouTube has replaced this. For younger people, YouTube is extremely relevant and more videos on consent need to exist.

The creativity of the platform was noted as well. Jenna expressed that YouTube offers an original way to learn about different topics, which contributes to its accessibility and to its potential to effect change:

I've vlogged since junior year of high school, I've been like the little social activist, that's what everyone calls me at home, everyone calls me here, and I felt like YouTube, since it's growing into something more, and people are [...] watching these videos and using social media as I mentioned, is a great platform to use just because you can meet so many different creators and it's a creative way of getting people to learn about different things, so well I feel like using YouTube as a platform, it really spreads awareness a lot. I don't want to say a lot, [...] but it does, because you can post on various different social media websites.

Juliette also agreed that a bridge between the popularity of the vlogs and videos and their ability to reach audiences with messages about consent may be in part due to their imaginative formatting. She noted,

Yea, it is just a way to get it out there and in creative way because not everyone is just going to want to sit and listen to a lecture, how about we make it creative? Like,

put some music in there, make it your own, make it your own thing, so like, I feel that is definitely why I use YouTube as a way to, a platform for this.

In terms of accessibility, the use of YouTube and videos in general were deemed useful by participants to help reach specific audiences, such as people with ADHD and males. Pudding expressed, to which other participants agreed, that the platform and genre of YouTube videos and vlogs could appeal to men and boys, who were often positioned in the workshops as the audience they hoped to impact:

Because you think if they had something, if they were those guys that just stare at their computers all day, watching YouTube videos all day, like if they had something more stimulating like, visually stimulating, [their attention] would have lasted longer.

She also asserted the accessibility component, drawing attention to the usefulness of communication with videos to people with ADHD,

I liked watching the videos and learning from that because I have ADHD, my attention span is like nonexistent, So having multiple senses stimulated at the same time is gonna just like keep me, keep my focus longer. So, because there is sound, and because there is a visual, I am more likely to sit for a longer period of time, and actually be listening. So, I think that multiple forms of stimulation, that helps.

The ability to upload videos from YouTube to other social media was noted by Leia as well. However, one limitation to accessibility, workshop participants Maria and Katie observed, pertains to the limited potential of affecting change when your network is

smaller, or when the people you are trying to reach are not seeking out informative videos on consent. Maria shared her thoughts about the limits of social networks,

And often the circle around you is people that gravitate towards the same topics, the same ideas. It's the same concept as sharing on Facebook, you only share to people that are in your friend group. And only the people who have the same view as you see the video, so to get people that you know, outside of your circle, is what we actually need to do.

The accessibility of vlogs also rests on the popularity of a vlogger. In Pace's workshop video, she discusses popular YouTubers and their potential to teach and effect change (in quotation marks, wording was enhanced on the screen):

Some YouTubers use this as a means to "enhance the common good". I think that they can help "spread awareness" "motivate + teach + create" social change. If they "model" how to openly discuss their thoughts, "openly communicate", about the importance of transparency, "about consent", it does not even necessarily need to be sexual, then we can start reaching people outside of the choir "instead of preaching to the choir.

Pace also addressed in the workshop that people who are resistant to consent education may not want to access these videos:

I find Laci Green, like she speaks to us because we agree with her, but others will be so resistant to change, they'll be like no, I don't want to hear any of it!

Participants often addressed the vlogging genre, therefore this category is readdressed in the next section.

A dangerous space. The interviewed vloggers expressed little concern for trolling when producing media online. While they were aware that other vloggers encountered trolls, they themselves did not report being targeted. On the other hand, workshop participants were worried about audiences' reactions to YouTube videos. Fears of being attacked online was a significant barrier to producing media, as I report later. Their concerns, shared in the classroom as we talked about YouTube and making videos and again re-emerging in feedback forms, reflected an overall perception of YouTube as a potentially dangerous site to navigate. These are two comments that effectively represent some of the thoughts that were shared around YouTube.

I do hang out with a lot of guys and they definitely find humor in trolling a lot of those comments. I don't know if I can think about a specific comment, but I do know there is an industry, not an industry, but there is like YouTubers, and then there is people who are set out to troll those YouTubers (MJ)

The comments threads I noticed in resistance to change about discussion of consent was that there was a misunderstanding about the need for change because the reason for change is not clear, or they focused on an aspect or scenario in which consent may not have suited their personal sexual preference, not even consent, but something else, more about their sexual preference. I believe that they stuck with a

piece of information presented in the video, focused on an aspect and not the general message, and failed to understand and soak up the huge message, or the general message, that Laci Green was trying to explain. Laci also mentioned, you know what I find? She actually said, “you know what is so deliciously hot to me?”, meaning it is her opinion in that specific circumstance. For individuals who are stuck on this, I recommend checking out the “Consent explained by a pornstar” video and checking out the legal definition of rape and consent. (Pace’s video)

YouTube as a dangerous space reemerges in the discussions of perceptions of media-making, as participants worried about making and disseminating vlogs.

Perceptions of YouTube vlogs: Genre and Messaging

The three interviewees felt positively about the power of vlogs and vloggers to educate and raise awareness about consent amongst online consumers. All three vloggers explained their own experience watching and making YouTube vlogs as contributing factors to their engagement with the platform and with learning about consent. For example, Harriet shared that a lot of her consent education came from other vloggers, like Hannah Witton and Jack and Dean. Watching other vloggers’ content further inspired Harriet to vlog about consent: “Yeah, [Meghan Hughes] did a video about the documentary *The Hunting Ground*. And so that made me want to watch it. And then this made me want to make a video about it”. All three interviewees envisioned that their texts and the messages within them might affect change in the community, even if only a few people saw their videos.

Workshops participants, on the other hand, had divided feelings. In their reflections and in the focus group, participants expressed enthusiasm about the usefulness of YouTube videos and vlogs as online resources to learn about consent, and most participants agreed about the potential of some vlogs to prompt cultural change. However, there were also criticisms around the genre and messaging. Regarding the genre, it is worthy to note that the most appreciated YouTube video discussed in both workshops was not a vlog, but an institutionally produced animated video called “Consent as Tea”. Some of the noted benefits and criticisms of vlogs as resources are shared below.

In general, there was appreciation about the approach to consent in some YouTube vlogs. One participant noted, vlogs allow for cross-culture education, as vloggers may share perspectives from different areas of the world. Participants also discussed how the format and genre may appeal to youth and other YouTube consumers. In terms of approach, some participants noted that the appeal for youth is the element of peer-based learning. Vlogs, according to Leia, offer a way for younger friends to remember her message in the future, and allow other youth audiences to learn from a peer.

When watching the vlogger Laci Green, workshop participants generally expressed their appreciation for the genre and her style. While a couple of participants in the October workshop reported some discomfort around the cheery approach to sexual violence in her vlog and another I showed at the time, March workshop participants felt her production strategies and communication style would resonate across ages.

Maria: Laci Green is a good like a good (gestures flash) to start a discussion, I think starting the discussion is the most important thing you want to get out of these kind of workshops with people that have never discussed it

Pudding: I think it was very upbeat, I think she makes it very, not scary...She wasn't too, she is not very like, lecture-y in her style, and I think changing the visuals to keep someone interested is like, a really, really good idea because if you don't have something to look at it's hard, often, to keep hearing it.

Chloe: Ok that's good, so you like the production. Yes?

Maria: I think it's accessible, the word choice, the pace... I feel like a 14-year-old, a 12 year-old, could understand this video as much as you know, university level...

It's not academic.

However, there were some criticisms of the use of vlogs in a learning context. Pace stated,

I agree with you (points to Maria) but at the same time if we want to stop preaching to the choir, I find Laci Green, like she speaks to us because we agree with her but others will be so resistant to change, they'll be like no, I don't want to hear any of it!

The need to be critical came up when watching and discussing some vlogs, with participants recognizing that problematic messages about consent and sexual violence could be couched in humor and performance. When we deconstructed the media produced by Shoeonhead, we explored the content and approach she used. Some participants expressed

discomfort at hearing her viewpoints, and that audiences would be receptive to her videos (she is amongst the most popular videos in my sample):

Juliette: It made me feel very uncomfortable. I even got giggly because I couldn't believe this girl is actually saying these things. I didn't find it... first of all, during the whole skit, I felt like I forgot what it was about? It was just so humorous. I didn't... They were trying to be funny but for me it wasn't... That's just my opinion.

Chloe: So perhaps somewhere ... it's about how the message was communicated through humor, and maybe that distracted you.

Juliette: Ya, but it also turned me off. What they are talking about I think was consent. I still don't see how she would, she made it a joke.

Chloe: Ya she basically disagrees with the enthusiastic yes. The yes is yes policy in California and New York. It's the idea that consent is enthusiastic, and she is trying to make fun of that. [...]

Charlotte: I feel like at first when I was watching the video, I thought it was gonna be like, ahh we are making fun, but wait, we are gonna actually get to the informative part, because it is true that a lot of times when people think of consent and they have all these ideas and like, "oh my god, it's so complicated and why, I don't understand it." So in that sense I can understand why it would draw in audiences, like to watch the comedic version of what they are thinking in their heads? But exaggerated? But then if she would have actually done it in an informative way, then you just input the Laci Green video into that, ok. But just the

whole fact that she like mocks it and doesn't say anything intelligent about it after, that was kind of disappointing

The conversation steered towards the type of information she provided, and her performativity to attract viewers as a paid vlogger. Accountability within vlogs also emerged as a concern:

Artemisia: Yea I found her video especially insidious because especially compared to Laci's video, they look a lot more amateurish. Right, like the production, the setting, her bio, "just my opinion!" versus Laci's references and all those things, sources and stuff, because in that way she can kind of have it both ways, right? She can disseminate her ideology to a vast audience yet say "oh no! I am just a girl making videos in my house trying to be funny!" and kind of disavow any criticisms of her. Which is what a lot of comedians actually do. And yea I find her distasteful.

Pudding: She is also denying her responsibility in that way. So any time you put yourself out there in a way that other people are going to view, you do hold some social responsibility. Some people hold more than others. In her case, she is getting a ton of views from a ton of different people, so there is social responsibility that comes with that. And exactly what you describe, the way she is playing this out, she is trying to deny her social responsibility.

Participants recognized that her message and performance might be tied to the consumerism of the platform, the latter perceived as a barrier to consent education.

Charlotte argued that vlogger purposefully using entertainment factors and popular conceptions of sexual consent to attract viewers:

I feel like if she is getting paid too, I am going to talk about a debated topic, because that's what people are going to be googling and I am going to do it in the most entertaining, in the sense of the images move quickly and all that, kind of way to get the most views possible, because if you agree with her you are going to watch the video, and if you disagree with her you are going to be like, omg look at this person.
(Charlotte)

Participants who attended the October workshop expressed similar feelings, noting that the performativity of vloggers distract from the messaging about sexual consent. They critiqued how the persons are too humorous and giggly. In the case of a situation where there was a joke made about one of the vloggers being a stalker, one participant felt that they make light of a situation that could be scary to others. Laci Green was better received, because while she is humorous, she adopts a more professional attitude and appropriate language.

There was also the issue of simplistic messaging that Maria raised during her media-making brainstorming talk at her table. She argued,

I feel like everyone, all these videos hammer this idea that... And I love it, I love listening to them, and I think they are great and they are important, all these videos have a very simplistic view of like actual interaction, like going back to being in a relationship or being drunk, you can't always

Participants across workshops noted the importance of critical media literacy skills to untangle the messages in these videos and navigate YouTube in general.

Perceptions of media as ‘Text’: YouTube and Vlogs in Higher Education

The 3 vloggers’ perceptions of vlogs in general echoed each other when asked about the potential of vlogs for sexualities education in postsecondary institutions. They expressed enthusiasm about vlogs in a higher education environment to encourage young people to learn about consent and promote social change by disseminating their own videos. Interviewee Harriet felt teaching through vlogging would be a powerful tool to educate. Using YouTube as a platform would help student engagement, as they might recognize videos they like, and most YouTube videos are interesting. Jenna also stated that vlogs allow for sex education online as well as in the classroom. She described her own experience where using her vlog was well received at the university. Leia saw the opportunity to introduce different perspectives, stating: “So not only would it teach different perspectives, but I guess because of all those perspectives coming in, people can actually take a lot of views into consideration, and then really formulate what they think about consent, and other topics as well”. While vloggers, who were familiar with YouTube and held personal connections to the platform based on their own practices, felt positively about the potential of vlogs, workshop participants held different opinions based on their comfort with, and perception of, the YouTube platform and vlogs.

With workshop participants, the previously discussed assets of vlog, such as their creativity and some of their engaging and transformative content, as well as their barriers,

including the occasionally problematic content and media strategies, resonated in their arguments about the potential of these media texts as pedagogical resources in a classroom or workshop.

In general, watching videos and vlogs inspired enthusiasm about the potential of YouTube vlogs as classroom resources, based on their ability to generate dialogue. One participant reflected, “In fact to see how people discuss consent in various circles, cohorts and social contexts can inform a very interesting and productive discussion -so I really think that the way you did it - showing three different vlogs is a very good activity”. Several workshop participants addressed that YouTube vlogs could offer important prompts for discussion.

However, numerous barriers were also identified to their use in a classroom, including the danger of the platform, and the practicality of videos in conveying messages about consent (in terms of choosing appropriate texts, promoting dialogue). Charlotte shared her concern over how the commercialization of YouTube videos may impede with learning,

I think that the videos themselves can be very good to learn, like any educational videos can be very stimulating, they can really engage students, but sometimes YouTube itself, you can't really filter the platform; sometimes the ads show up, and you're like maybe I don't want to show students this particular ad [...] an ad that has nothing to do, and sometimes they have these suggested videos, because you can't...

Some participants wondered at the practicality of including videos in the classroom. Here, the conversation steered towards high school, with some of the participants sharing that facilitators and teachers would need to be careful not to pick videos that have inappropriate language, jokes or comments, and that are the perfect length, which might make the process difficult (Juliette and Maria). Juliette noted, “I think that the videos are a good way of teaching, for students to learn from, not just students but everyone, but as a teacher, I know for the projects that I have done, I have had to watch 17 videos to pick one that I thought was suitable for students [...] So they’re out there but you really have to work hard to find them”. This comment generated nods and murmurs of agreement from the group.

When asked about the university context, Maria remarked that facilitators still need to make sure videos are appropriate. And referring to vlogs sharing more radical perceptions of consent, participants discussed the choice of videos that would be featured in a university workshop. They were aware that I had selected two styles of vlogs with different lenses, to be able to critique them. Two participants agreed that an educator could show videos with diverging viewpoints:

Pudding: As long as there is a purpose to it, you know, like a purpose to showing it... It’s ok to be like, I am using this to be an example of what we don’t want to do or what’s inappropriate or something like that, then it’s ok to show things as long as there is a purpose. Like I wouldn’t have just shown that video if there was no reason for it. If there wasn’t something we were taking away from that example.

Maria: I think it's healthy to show criticism. We like, as we have mentioned before, I think it's just like a, it's a good thing to see other people's opinions because we are in a dialogue, we don't have the truth right, we don't like you know, just talking to people, seeing other people disagree and why they disagree, what are your arguments for disagreeing, ok where, which point do we agree with, where... I don't know talking because we are all human beings.

However, Artemisia hesitated, arguing that such videos might not be conducive to learning because of their resemblance to trolling material, recommending instead that workshops should instead give space to other critical voices on campus:

Artemisia; Yes, I think we spoke a lot about trying to bring people outside the bubble into our bubble, but we should also try to expand our own bubble? And I think if we had more time in this workshop, it would be really informative to engage with thoughtful critiques of campus consent culture. Like not Shoeonhead! Like feminist writers, who do have critiques of how consent activism is on college campuses. I think that even if we don't agree with them, it's by confronting our opposition that we can often clarify what our thoughts are?

Another issue pertaining to practicality revolved around the conversation that these videos generated. It was noted in the evaluation section, within my field notes and by one participant in her feedback (Artemisia), that discussing the popular vlogs distracted from conversations around consent, as participants were more focused talking about the vloggers' approaches, rather than untangling their own understandings. Yet, while this may

have been the case in class, some participants shared that the vlogs offered conversation pieces outside the workshop (Pudding, Maria).

Despite our limited discussion after showing our videos, several participants expressed the benefit of watching and discussing consent through their own and their peers' videos to widen discussions about consent. This was also evident in the evaluation of the workshop as well as the conversations around the videos. Amalie expressed, "I liked how we expanded the discourse we had had so far on consent- through the videos which I found very informative targeting very different audiences/issues in general".

Perceptions of Media-Making: Learning Through Making, Encountering Technology and Choosing a Genre

When discussing media-making, three coding categories emerged: 'learning through making', 'encountering technology' and 'choosing a genre'.

Learning through making. The process of making and watching their own videos and vlogs was generally appreciated as informative and interesting by workshop participants, with some factors such as technology encounters and concerns around dissemination on YouTube (discussed shortly) reported as barriers to their learning and to the effectiveness of this approach in higher sexualities education. In sharing these findings, I speak alternatively of YouTube vlogs and videos, because as I note later, there were clear preferences in media-making.

In the context of the workshop, participants reported the vlog and video-making process could be useful in sexualities education, and in some cases, increased their learning

about the topic of consent and their overall communication and media literacy skills. This became visible in the evaluation (see Chapter 6). For example, Pace reported that,

I found this part of doing your own video for YouTube, you learn a lot about yourself, you learn about your interest in your idea, and you actually learn a lot of stuff outside of this class. Like personally, I learnt so much about consent and things that I would never think of googling. So I think it's important to be individuals within a community, and we share, and work together and form a group video.

Juliette explained that the process of making the videos was enjoyable because she developed communication skills to be able to talk about consent with others:

The actual playing my thoughts and my learning from the workshop into words, expressing it... I really enjoyed that part because it also helped me think about what did I learn, what did I take away from here, what would I teach my students or my own children, or even family or friends that you know, during a conversation about consent because a lot of people don't know about it! So I took a lot away from it.

The benefits of making media to learn about consent echoed the feedback from the vloggers. The interviewees reported that the process of vlogging about consent helped increase their passion for and knowledge about consent, as well as their communication skills. Harriet expressed feeling more passionately about a topic the more she vlogs. Jenna said that her perception of consent evolved as she researched the topic and chose what to discuss. Moreover, she described the process as helping her develop communication skills-

as she needed to edit. She also felt her work makes her more creative. Jenna had an overall enthusiastic position on vlogging throughout our talk. She felt that while making vlogs in a classroom setting might be a challenging assignment, it would be creative and fun, inspire students to do their research, and would enrich a class environment. Leia stated her work has led her to be more careful about communicating consent, even with friends. She also expressed that her vlogging about a topic reinforced her beliefs. In sum, the vloggers echoed the positive feedback of workshop participants in terms of developing their knowledge of sexual consent and communication skills.

Encountering technology. Encounters with technology may impact the outcomes of vlogging for participants. Vloggers and workshop participants' feelings about media-making were often intertwined with individual practice.

Findings revealed that not all media-makers employ or enjoy the same processes of media-making. My interviewees, for example, reported different amounts of effort and preparation for vlogging. Based on their feedback, the workshop had two sets of preparation- storyboarding and outlining- that were optional (for those who preferred the improvisation). The process of storyboarding was not successful (no one did it), while 9 participants completed their vlog outline. When I asked if they did not enjoy the planning process involved with storyboarding, participants said little. Pudding did comment, "I am just not a planner, I know my friends like to, you know, before you write an essay". On the other hand, one participant, Pace, did extensive planning.

Workshop participants reported mostly positive experiences making their videos and vlogs, although half of participants (6) encountered barriers with technology and production. Pace reported difficulty finding an editing application for her android phone that would allow voice over, while Margaret had difficulties with her camera. Their encounters with technology also intersected with feelings of vulnerability, a topic I explore in the next section. While she opted to shoot a video instead of a vlog, Pudding struggled with feelings of self-consciousness during the filming process. She observed that,

I think it was the opposite problem for me, I am more comfortable with other people listening to my recorded voice, than having to listen to my own voice. Like I would have been more comfortable just being this is my video, I am going to leave the room [...] So what I did I typed up my script first, thinking it's going to help me stay on track as I do the vlogging, and then I actually tried it, and it was completely different from what I had on the script, and I was like wow, I am so nervous that what I am trying to say doesn't make any sense! What I was doing, I took, I recorded one take of the audio, and I placed that as my base, and then I filmed and I put like pictures, videos, but open source, like if I wanted to post it its ok. I had to look at the rules. And that really, really helped, and I realize that wow, I am really self-conscious of my voice, my face, but not necessarily what other people have to say, I feel like when I listen to myself, I always think, "I should say this, I shouldn't say this..." I go crazy on the spot..."

On a positive note, her encounters with technology led her to discover her comfort zones and genre preferences. On the other hand, however, Pudding realized that she was not comfortable with listening to herself.

Choosing a genre. My observation notes about the 11 participant videos in the March workshop indicate to some extent participants' feelings around vlog-making:

- Music clip with people holding signs (Maria)
- Media and slide mash-up with voice over (Pace)
- Art Slide show with voice over (Artemisia, Charlotte)
- Vlog (Juliette, Katie, MJ, Megan)
- Metaphor slide show (Pudding)
- Role-play with objects, masked faces (Mathilda, Amalie) (Figure 9)



Figure 9. Mathilda uses tennis balls to exemplify consent for kids (left); Amalie role-plays with the bottom half of hers and another person's face (right)

As it can be observed, participants chose a variety of media genres other than vlogs in the workshops, which indicated that in spite of often positive conversations around vlogs as a sexualities education resources, vlog-making may be a different story. Similar to *Encounters with Technology*, this category reflects subjective feelings around vlogging

based on the producers' preferences; their varied perceptions of genre suggest that making vlogs may not appeal to all learners.

While interviewed YouTubers reported feelings of empowerment when vlogging, most participants in both workshops felt uncomfortable with the task of filming themselves (Pudding's comments in the *Encountering Technology* echo this). As demonstrated in the evaluation, no participants reported wanting to vlog, or having vlogged, after the workshop. One participant in the October workshop explained, "Only vloggers are going to vlog," speaking to the idea that the practice may only appeal to a certain population.

Juliette and Katie expressed specifically why they chose to create a vlog, despite the consensus that it made people vulnerable. Juliette explained she appreciated the personal aspect of it,

I just want to add a little something... I think the face to face thing, something that really made me want to do it, is that people really relate when they see another face. If I was hiding, like let's say, maybe not this specific video of what I said in this video, but people relate more to people's faces. They feel like ok, there is someone else out there, who has experienced the same things as me, and there's a face to it. So I think it's more relatable, and it starts a conversation, and that's how instead of hiding, I, a lot of people might feel like they're hiding, or there ashamed, or you know, this is the way to empower people. That's what I was trying to portray. Maybe it was my insecurity, but it would help someone else

Juliette also saw an opportunity for vlogging as means to encourage testimonials, which she argues is an effective way of learning. She also admitted that it was difficult for her to get personal, and she recognized the vulnerability of the vlogger. She stated,

I think we learn from each other's experiences. We have to be more open about what we go through, to help other people realize you're not the only one going through it. You are not the only one experiencing this. But that takes a lot of vulnerability. And this workshop was short. I didn't get to know each of you personally. If we would have built more of a trust, and it was a longer workshop, I think a good idea would be either for journal writing, or sharing through video, something at a more intimate level.

On the other hand, Katie expressed that she did a vlog because she personally found it an engaging type of media. She argued, "I did, well you saw it for a second, it's like a video of me talking, but I wanted to do that for at least a bit because I just thought that's what people usually do on YouTube and it's engaging" To Katie, vlogs are appealing because of the personal aspect, "Vlogs! It's as if you are having a conversation with them."

Other participants (Megan, Maria, Katie) also hoped to include other voices in their video. Maria also felt that a vlog would not bring the perspectives she wanted to hear to the screen, which is why she chose an alternative format for her video:

Yea I purposefully didn't put my face on this video. One because I just didn't want to just look at me talking and two, because I wanted to get the voices of men in conversation, because we are just all women, and we always talk between women, but it's not like we don't talk about it with men, and I just wanted to seek guys'

opinions, and what kind of words they would come up with, and they chose really good ones.

The genre also did not suit those participants who wanted to use a different communication strategy. Pudding added she also had an idea of using a multiple-choice question as a metaphor, and she wanted to feature that in a way that a vlog would not allow her to do.

In both contexts, participants suggested more participatory process to video-making for this type of workshop. Several participants expressed interest in a community-based media-making project, as opposed to vlogs, “to come together and construct” (Pudding), or an assemblage of vlogs. In addition, they recommended that university students’ vlogs and videos fall under a larger institutional umbrella (e.g., a university YouTube channel). Producing under the McGill name, for example, would “show authority” (Artemisia). However, they also recognized that this approach may limit participants to an institutional message and be harder to organize.

Since many students do not have time to attend workshops, they also recommended a video-making challenge where participants could produce consent videos on their own and submit. One participant noted,

If you could have a workshop, like this was, I know the purpose of our videos was pretty broad, because we got to choose a purpose, but if we made a workshop for informative videos on consent and each person chooses an aspect of consent to

focus their video on, and then you could do it that way and that could be used for...for what Pudding said.”

The experiences, feedback and views of participants suggest that while media-making was an effective means through which they could learn about consent, other genres of video and video-making practices may be more appealing to young people.

Perceptions of Media-Making and Disseminating: The Self as Producer

Concerns with communication and self-awareness. The overarching findings, which resonated from participant’s feedback as well as from the outcome of the workshop, suggest that while making a vlog (or video) helped some participants develop their knowledge about consent, making a YouTube ‘vlog’ versus a video can be daunting. While participants recognized that YouTube and vlogs can be useful sexualities education resources, they also did not feel comfortable disseminating their own sexualities vlogs/videos on YouTube.

Communicating. One aspect that intimidated workshop participants was talking about sexual consent issues with others, whether online or in person. While the interviewees did not express concerns communicating about consent, this was often brought up during the workshop. Talking about consent could annoy people, as Pace suggested, or make them feel defensive, or like the topic does not relate to them (Artemisia). Jenny shared that in her case, speaking about social justice issues like this have caused her to get shut down by others in the past. Moreover, Katie argued, there was also the emotional labour. Katie’s experience with her video production, where guys didn’t take her seriously,

was frustrating to her. She originally had planned to create a video that included her peers, but she reported a negative experience during the production process that echoes the feelings around mis/communication that arose in the workshops:

So I made them come together and try to talk to them about it, and I ended up being so frustrated with them because I just felt that they weren't taking it seriously? And they just didn't care, and I ended up cancelling the entire video and making another. So yea that's why I filmed the video.

It led her to discuss this experience in her video, where she shared some of the barriers to communicating about topics like consent that include minimizing sexual violence or protesting consent education.

Being self-aware. Concerns around dissemination related to worries about the production quality, concerns about audiences, or concerns about their knowledge and positionality about consent; therefore, vulnerability was not only a key barrier in media-making, but sharing as well. Here, their overall perceptions of YouTube as a potentially contentious platform and their relationships with technology emerged. I share below some of their illuminating statements on the matter:

- **Producing media:**

Participants expressed discomfort being media producers, because of their perceived lack of skills, their awkwardness, and their feelings towards online dissemination:

- Unfortunately, I would not post my vlog online because I am not proud of it. I could have done way better if I had a better camera and if I were allowed to interview people. (Megan)
- Not this vlog as I think it is a bit rambling and I am kind of awkward on camera. If I had the chance/motivated myself to produce a video I knew I was publishing online, I would identify a more clear message and maybe script it more because I think it is a very important topic to get right and I would want to really feel like I did it justice. I might also try and make the final product more polished in terms of editing because other videos like Laci Green are more engaging than other low resolution/monotone/just voiceover style videos. (Sarah)
- More generally, I have an aversion to brandishing my life/opinions online even though I am aware that social media is an effective means of activism. (Artemisia)

- **Protecting the self:**

These statements reflect some of the concerns that arose in the workshop around dissemination of vlogs, with some participants concerned about a potential backlash:

- No, I would be too afraid of negative comments or feedback (Charlotte)
- Only if I could post it anonymously because I wouldn't want to deal with the aftermath of it. (Pudding)

Some participants struggled with the idea of performing for and being judged by an audience. Vlog-makers Juliette and Margaret, for instance, shared their insecurities pertaining to their looks and their accent (respectively). Here, Juliette's fear of being judged online emerges:

I don't like people saying bad things about me! Not that anyone does. But some people, it doesn't get to them or they, they are strong enough to not care. I do, soooo... I had to work myself up to do it, but I knew that it was just Chloe watching it and you guys, so so that made me feel more comfortable, like I said if it had been on YouTube it would have been a whole other thing. Like the hate that YouTubers get, that's like... I don't know how they put up with it

- **Knowing the topic:**

Some participants stated that they felt they needed more knowledge before being able to disseminate media that advocated for sexual consent. These comments represent some of their feelings expressed:

- No, I think there are voices out there who can represent and advocate for these issues much better than me. (Artemisia)
- I feel like I would like a more educated and researched statement eventually so perhaps not yet. BUT to make a compilation of all videos we have could create something worth uploading (bits and pieces). (MJ)

Sharing their videos offline and using a different video genre were more popular option for dissemination, because they would feel less vulnerable. However, as March participants stated, they were willing to show videos they made if they collaborated on one, and if they could show it offline on campuses. Only Juliette stated she might show her vlog offline:

I agree with the offline aspect of showing the video. At different conferences, if I would be doing conferences, or giving the right to people who do conferences to use the video, and to have a collection of different videos like that, so you can show different points, on the topics of consent. Like when we saw the Laci Green, when we saw her, I like seeing other people talking about something, so like offline would be cool when you could control who it is and you see them in real life, as opposed to online where the whole world can see it, say whatever they want and you deal with the confrontation afterwards.

There was also the notion that in addition to producing a collaborative piece of work, one participant made a suggestion that generated nods in agreement.

I think there is a lot of pressure that it's just you and your name. And rather if it would be something like a group project or like you know [x university] did a video, so then you are not, it's not you. It's not on you to have the burden of criticism. (Maria)

Therefore, videos that were institutionally-led and collaboratively created were almost unanimously perceived as a better option for media-making and dissemination to help address youth's vulnerability (by all workshop participants, in March and October).

Summary of the Chapter

The findings shared in this chapter provide insight on my participants' perceptions of vlogs and vlogging for sexual consent education, online and in higher education contexts. Framework 2 reflects how young people in the context of this study have diverse and personal feelings about vlogs and vlog-making, guided by their perceptions of, and taste for YouTube and the genre more generally, as well as by their experiences, preferences and perceptions of self. It also underscores how feelings of vulnerability thread across categories and influence participants' perceptions of these texts and practices as educational resources. These findings are discussed in greater depth in Chapter 7. The next chapter delves into the evaluation of the two workshops that served as sites for data collection in this study.

Chapter 6: Presentation of Findings Part 3

Chapter 6 offers the more concrete summary of feedback of students' experiences with the workshops held in March 2017 and October 2018, and the reported impact on their sexual learning and agency to effect change, both of which were goals of the workshop. I seek to answer, 'What were participants' perceptions of a YouTube and vlog-making consent education workshop held in a university context?' While the evaluation tools contribute to the findings in Chapter 5 as well, this chapter is designed to report findings on their perceptions of the specific workshop itself, which I used to adjust the final framework in Appendix J.

The Workshop Evaluation

March workshop. To summarize, participants reported enjoying and learning from the workshop, and reported some advocacy and activism, although none used YouTube or other online platforms as tools.

Table 9. Evaluation of the March Workshop sessions.

Objectives	Participants circled the degree to which they agreed or disagreed with the statement...	Agreement/Disagreement
Session 1 of 3 (day 1) Participants will develop their knowledge of consent and consent culture (session 1)	Today's workshop reached its stated objectives: "Participants will develop their understandings about: -Sexual consent (from personal to legal perspectives) -Barriers to a culture of consent"	March workshop: 5 agreed 6 strongly agreed
Session 2 of 3 (day 2) Participants will build their media	"Participants will build skills and motivation by: -Learning how media and digital literacy can help foster a culture of consent	March workshop: 1 neutral 5 agreed

literacy skills by learning about, and practicing vlog-making	-Learning how to develop a video for YouTube using storyboarding and media literacy skills”	6 strongly agreed.
Session 3 (day 3)	Today’s workshop reached its stated objectives: “Participants will reflect on their learning by discussing: -Their experiences using media as ways to inform and learn about consent.”	12 strongly agree

On Improving Participants’ Understandings of Sexual Consent

Participants reported increased learning about sexual consent throughout the workshop in the final two reflections. Aspects of the workshop that they felt were helpful included the collaborative atmosphere and the videos. Amalie shared, “What helped my learning was the sharing of personal knowledge and experience from the others”. The videos and extended discussion helped expand the conversation as well. Several participants reported how much they enjoyed this aspect. To share an example, Amalie shares her perception of her experience with the workshop:

This workshop was my second encounter with "consent education"- the one being the Rez Projects which we briefly talked about. I can definitely say that this workshop project has been far more enriching and interesting- both in terms of the info shared and the individual initiatives we were asked to make (making the video, researching about the topic). I feel I have a better understanding of the concept today and have been pushed to go beyond my initial thinking of "consent is self-evident for anyone with common sense".

Moreover, one participant noted the importance of the workshop in reminding her of the importance of consent. Katie wrote,

The workshop had a lot of information on the complexities of consent, all of which was valuable, however I also think the workshop as a whole was valuable in that the existence of a project focusing exclusively on consent reaffirmed its importance to me and validated my thoughts and experiences in a way that I rarely encounter in my everyday life.

However, as it can be noted in their recommendations for topics (Appendix K), it was extremely difficult to address all the areas of interest in such a limited time. Participants were aware of the time limitations, and as noted in Chapter 5, some took it upon themselves to address the gaps through their media (especially Artemisia and Pace). Moreover, with the staggered feedback as an evaluation tool, I was able to address some of the topics that participants asked about in later sessions. However, by the end of the workshop, there were still some gaps in learning that participants identified, notably around consent in diverse contexts, the political implications of consent, and effective communications strategies. The latter was by far the most popular and consistent request, with the topic of how to effect change in possibly resistant communities being a question that arose throughout the sessions. More time, as one participant noted, would have helped:

Yes, group discussion (especially with this group of very respectful and thoughtful folks) was informative. It is always interesting to see other perspectives. In future,

more time to more deeply examine nuanced, intersectional aspects of consent would be beneficial but we didn't have the time.

The issue of perspective came out throughout the workshop, with participants aware of the limitations of their sample or expressing the desire to hear from others (other cultures, other viewpoints). Participants enjoyed how their videos opened the conversation to new perspectives, topics and visions of change.

I think this was the favorite part of the 3 workshops. I really enjoyed watching the other videos and the extended discussion. (Artemisia)

I like how we expanded the discourse we had so far on consent through the videos which I found very informative targeting very different audiences/issues in general. (Amalie)

While there was appreciation for new perspectives, one participant reported still feeling uneasy about sharing different viewpoints:

I enjoy hearing different perspectives I love being devil's advocate but somewhat did not want to share alternative ideas as I worried to possibly offend my classmates. (Pace)

Moreover, several participants noted that they would have liked to hear even more perspectives, shared by myself, from others in our group, or people outside our group. MJ questioned whether a different sample would have shifted the atmosphere.

It has definitely developed I don't know if it's ideal that we had a sample problem but personally it helped me to hear do many reasonable yet interesting opinions. In the future maybe the group could be more diverse so we could gain even more insight. (MJ)

On Inspiring and Empowering Participants to Raise Awareness and Promote Change through Online Participation

10 participants reported a change in their media literacy skills, with one participant reporting that her field of study had already equipped her with this knowledge and another stating that she did not use social media. Notably, they shared that they would be more likely to pay attention to and be critical of YouTube comments and videos about sexual consent, and media in general. For example, Amalie shared, “Yes, to a certain extent I've learned to be more critical about consent media. I used to think I didn't have anything to learn from that- but that perspective has been challenged”. Megan wrote about her abilities to now be more critical, “Yes, I will watch/read media with a more critical thinking because now I know so many things and I'm able to say if this info is biased or not.”

Participants further discussed how the workshop steered their thinking about media production. Pudding offered, “Yes, I would be more courageous in what I communicate when producing a video”. MJ also noted, “There's so much content that digital//media literacy really is an issue. I feel like it was very important for me to understand contrasts like shoe on head and Laci Green. If I produce media myself I would definitely be cautious of making it informed but entertaining.”

All workshop participants reported that feeling they had been provided with the tools and motivations to promote consent culture. While the media-making was addressed by some participants as a useful method to raise awareness, several participants reported learning communication skills through our general discussions. One participant noted they acquired new resources to engage in these conversations, while another simply appreciated the space to talk. Where one participant felt frustrated that some topics were not addressed, the media-making process helped address the gaps: “It was a great introduction. Somewhat frustrating because I had a lot of questions that were not addressed in the workshop, but I was more or less able to look into, research, on my own”.

8 participants reported a change of perspective of YouTube and media, specifically related to the platform as a resource to learn about consent, with 4 others explaining that they were already familiar with the uses of the platform. Two found the exposures to YouTube and vlogs were new. One noted new information about YouTube production. Several participants expressed they now had a better sense of how YouTube realized could potentially be informative resources, and the importance of critical media literacy.

Not really, I had already watched Laci Green and people like her trying to inspire social change. Maybe in future I will think more about vlogs and videos that are not meant to be for social change but may have some implicit message or opinion.(Katie)

All reported that they would not participate in vlogging during the workshops, though some participants in the March workshops noted that if they had the opportunity to rework their videos, they might.

The process of production also allowed participants to envision change, and the specific contexts and audiences where it would happen. Megan and Pace, for instance, saw their media-making as an opportunity to help teachers address consent, and speak to teenagers. Others focused on what they wanted to show, with Maria focused on bringing in voices from members of her community, and Pudding aiming to addressing gaps in consent education. Finally, they also looked at what they could achieve; Juliette pointed to fostering empowerment as a goal, while Sarah saw an opportunity to respond to people who don't care about consent.

Impact five and six months later. Participants were contacted within 5 to 6 months. At this point, two participants had joined sexualities education initiatives at McGill, one of her own and the other through a connection made during our workshop. 5 participants responded to the follow up email. One reported, "I was fairly well versed in issues surrounding sexual consent prior to the workshop, so although I learned some new facts and statistics and enjoyed the discussions, my general thinking and behaviour has not changed". However, she used the video-making skills she learnt with friends and family. Katie shared:

I think the workshop has had somewhat of an impact on my offline behaviour. If I had had less of an understanding of the concepts outlined in the workshop beforehand, then I feel like it would definitely have had a greater impact. I think

having such clearly defined boundaries and the positive group discussion about them in addition to hearing how they resonated with different participants and their experiences has strengthened my belief in the importance of these types of discussions. I think that it has also strengthened my commitment to asserting my beliefs and boundaries in daily interactions offline, and maybe it would translate to online behaviour if I had a more active social media presence. I have never been a confrontational person, especially online, however I think that the information and resources presented in the workshop were great at giving us the language and confidence to start conversations about consent with those around us when we left the workshop. Also, the workshop would have been interesting if we had been able to get input from even one guy, however I think the sensitive nature of the topics was handled in a thoughtful and supportive way by all the female participants in a way that it may not have been if it had not been women only. This environment actually inspired me to become involved with *[cut to keep anonymous]* because of how important I think it is to participate in changing our culture. :)

Juliette confirmed that the workshop helped her communication skills, giving her confidence to teach about consent to her boyfriend and his family, and colleagues. She reported a change in her own practice of consent:

Yes, I believe the knowledge I acquired throughout this workshop impacted the way I have thought, talked and acted since the workshop. I am more aware of situations that require consent, such as personal situations in my own relationship. I have had

the privilege of explaining what consent means to people who weren't aware, and helped closed minded people open their minds to the every growing social issue. A point that stuck with me most from the workshop is that consent isn't only about sexual actions, but also for simple actions like hugging someone. Because I am an affectionate person, I used to hug people without necessarily asking if it was ok, or if it makes the other person uncomfortable. I am now aware that some people do not appreciate or feel safe with people hugging them unexpectedly, and ask before now. Additionally, ever since the workshop, I have realized how much consent is mentioned in tv shows be it sitcoms or reality shows like the bachelor, on the radio, and on social media. I wasn't aware of this before, mostly because I wasn't sure what consent meant or what it related to before this workshop. I look forward to continuing to preach about consent to whoever will listen! “

MJ reported the workshop help her “distinguish the underlying sexism in that, rather than the religious or socio-economic difference” of catcalling when she was travelling. She also shared feeling more sensitive to differing views and has tried to become better informed.

Another participant used the vlogs as speaking tools in discussions with others. Pace informed me of the following,

I showed my friend (H) one of the vlogs about consent and showed a colleague of mine (A) the sexual consent video for children and the original version. Both of them seemed to agree with the videos. We had, on separate occasions, an open

dialogue and critique of each video and it was very therapeutic. With my first friend, it ended up in us talking about stuff that may make us uncomfortable whether they be sexual or not (not just intercourse). I also showed my boyfriend the Laci Green video. He liked it and agreed that consent is important. When I told him about Quebec schools' new sex ed curriculum- wanting to teach consent, the body parts to young children, he said that the body parts and sex ed should be taught mostly by parents and when the child is of age, not at the age of 5, 6, or 7.

Both her and Juliette saw opportunities to effect change in the future, once she would be able to teach the new sexualities education curriculum.

Recommendations for Practice

The most notable criticisms of the workshop were the sample, the length and the missing facets of consent we did not have time to explore. As displayed in the table (Appendix K) participants shared their interests in learning about several topics that we did not have time to explore. It was frequently cited as an issue, and a barrier to discussions. Moreover, the sample issue was a hot topic across workshop discussions, with the participants noting that the lack of a male presence was a common issue in these types of workshops and affected their effectiveness. Maria expressed a sentiment that was echoed with murmurs of agreement, “I was disappointed there was no guys that came to this workshop”. As Artemisia argued, to address the sample problem, mandatory workshops might be effective:

Yeah I feel like with this workshop, we kind of have a bit of a sample problem because I feel like us women who chose to be here were probably more on the converted side? There's a way that you could make these workshops mandatory? You go to the classroom themselves or to a certain community, I think that might be better.

Further, when asked whether media-making sexual consent workshops could help engender cultural changes in universities, there was some hesitation about workshops in general as those attended by the participants had trivialized consent:

Katie: I think it's debatable, but I think it's worse to do nothing. I think it's hard also because like, for example, what you (pointing to Artemisia) were saying, there is a woman, I forget her name, but she wrote an article for the McGill Daily last year, about the whole thing being like consent is sexy, and especially like McGill is like, trivializing it and making it a joke. Like people, whenever anyone is like bringing up consent and trying to have a serious conversation (inaudible), like consent is sexy, hahaha, it's like so hard.

Katie: I don't think that means we should be like ah, get rid of it.

Pudding: It doesn't sound required that way.

Therefore, while participants enjoyed the idea of media-making in sexual consent workshops, larger issues that affect consent workshops in general preoccupied them, and emerged as considerations for practice (which I explore in Chapter 7).

October workshop

The 2 participants who completed the forms answered that they ‘strongly agreed’ that the workshop reached its stated objectives relate to deepening understandings about consent and consent culture, building media literacy skills and understandings of the effect of media on sexual violence in our culture, and encouraging reflection about social change. Since I only had two participants’ views, my feedback on this workshop was limited; however, I was able to incorporate their perspectives of vlogs and vlogging in Chapter 5.

Summary of the Chapter

The evaluation feedback in this Chapter shares where the workshop was successful and less successful, and offers practical recommendations for consent education workshops grounded in participants’ perspectives. I remained transparent about feedback to help scholars and educators interested in my workshop framework (Appendix J) get a broad sense of its possibilities and gaps. In the next section, I reexamine this study’s findings and situate its contributions within the larger scholarship.

Chapter 7: Discussion of Findings

In this chapter, I first summarize the categories in my frameworks and their properties, then draw upon the larger scholarship on sexualities education, YouTube, and youth participation in media culture to discuss them. The contributions of each framework - Framework 1 (about youth meaning-making practices on YouTube) and Framework 2 (about youth perceptions of YouTube, vlogs, and vlogging for sexualities education) - are detailed. The final section revisits the evaluation of the workshop I offered in the last chapter, focusing on the three broader recommendations for practice related to sexual consent education that emerged in participants' feedback.

Sexual Consent Vlogs: The Semiotic Work of YouTubers

My first framework, Framework 1, reflects my findings pertaining to the semiotic work in my sample of sexual consent and assault vlogs. As stated in my Introduction and Methodology chapters, this study aimed to uncover youth meaning-making practices within YouTube vlogs about sexual consent and sexual violence, focusing on the ways they addressed these topics. Framework 1, which I extensively describe in Chapter 4, effectively demonstrates the complexity of YouTubers' participation in sexual discourse through the production of, and responses to vlogs. While it is grounded in a specific sample of participants (28 selected vlogs), platform (YouTube), and genre (vlog), I believe that the theoretical framework of their work and their engagement with the platform is a useful starting point to understand the complexity of the discursive spaces that young YouTubers create.

YouTube Vlogs as Discursive Spaces

One of the larger Framework 1 dimensions presented in Chapter 4 was Discourse. As I explain in the literature review, Discourse⁸ refers to more than the use of language, addressing the ways in which power, hegemony, and politics impact how individuals and institutions address sexuality and gender issues. Within this framework, I address the discursive strategies that emerged in the analysis, but the findings refer largely to the sexual Discourses found in my vlog sample.

To be brief, I found that producers in my sample explore various facets of sexual consent and sexual assault in their videos, notably drawing from larger slogans (e.g. no means no, consent as sexy), law (affirmative consent, legal definitions, policy), and Discourse of pleasure and danger. In several instances, their work reflects the larger ideological underpinnings of sexual violence and sexual consent and addresses some of the more contentious areas of debate around rape that pervade North American and university Discourse. Their use of the YouTube platform to communicate about consent potentially impacts their messages to some extent, particularly in relation to perception of audiences and the engagement of the latter.

Mirroring larger societal Discourses. My analysis uncovers some of the complex ways in which YouTubers expressing their thinking around sexual consent and sexual violence rely on, debate with, and argue against the wider Discourses on these topics. In

⁸ To avoid confusion, I capitalize Discourses in this chapter when I am referring to the more institutional ways of speaking about sexuality, vs discourse, pertaining to the language they use.

summary, findings reflect that the vlogs in my sample are complex discursive sites where heterogeneous legal/institutional, pleasure and danger, and rape culture-related Discourses sometimes intertwine.

Their positions on these concepts, for example, often mirror or refer to the representations of consent epitomized in the slogans ‘yes means yes’ and ‘no means no’ that prevail in North American universities and law (Harris, 2018). The vloggers in this study also rely on the legal language and common descriptive terms for sexual consent, e.g. ‘mandatory’, ‘enthusiastic’, ‘incapacitation’, although few elaborated on the legal aspects. Several vloggers do expand on what sexual consent looked like, while delving into another popular Discourse: pleasure (described in the category, *Framing of Consent and Assault*). In some cases, talk about the ‘enthusiastic’ yes required in affirmative consent laws and policy is followed by conversations around pleasure and the ‘sexiness’ of consent, like in Laci Green’s video. These examples of what to do (and what pleasure looks like), and what not to do, are generally accompanied with visual and auditory production strategies that convey positivity. My sections on ‘*Vloggers teaching youth*’ and ‘*Affect*’ elaborate up this; using production tools like references to popular culture items or artistic modes of expression and lighting to engage their audiences and set the tone.

Discourses agreeing with or contesting rape culture often emerge in the videos that include broader topics of sexual violence, perpetrators, and survivors (described in the sub-category *Framing Sexual Violence, Framing the Perpetrators, and Framing the Victims*). While the term rape culture is seldom mentioned, vloggers in my sample frequently call out

the problematic roots around sexual violence, and the issues around reporting sexual violence and victim-blaming. Some of my vloggers – Venaloid, Rantswers, and shoeonhead- who are critical of current understandings of consent in the law and promoted by feminists, verbalize their disagreement with what they feel to be ‘fear mongering’ and the double standard against men allegedly promoted by the latter.

Non-feminist views and misinformation. My findings point to some problematic representations of women and survivors and some misinformation. Notably, as stated previously, a couple of vlogs mirror popular debates around sexual violence targeting contentious ‘grey areas’, such as drunk sex, and myths, such as false accusations. The more controversial cases (in that they were my variants)- Venaloid, Rantswers, and shoeonhead- were distinct from the other media in my sample. These vloggers disagree with several popular conceptualizations of sexual consent and sexual violence. They tend to show more mistrust in the process of believing survivors, and question feminist and legal frameworks of consent and sexual activity, particularly when drinking is involved.

Within the more popular vlogs that positively engage with affirmative consent, their similar points about consent and drunk sex emerge in the comment feeds. Arguments against vloggers’ content and positions about these topics are either countered, or in some cases, turned into trolling against feminists in general, or the vloggers more specifically. Some of these positions against feminism and legal discourses, and feminists, reflect to some extent patriarchal views of women; for example, in vlogs 5, 7, and 14, there is a clear sense of mistrust over their accusations of sexual assault. Arguments about ‘drunk sex’ and

consent, contested in vlogs by Venaloid (5) and Rantswers (14), and problematized in the comments against Laci Green, suggest that audience members are conflating drinking, intoxication and incapacitation. Further, very few vloggers clarify geographical context when laws, which is problematic in that rape and consent laws vary per country and state (United States).

Absent Voices. This study was not designed to determine the actual audiences of the sample of vlogs, however it did offer an idea of whom the vloggers imagined they would be: youth in university contexts and learners, survivors, perpetrators, and initiating and consenting individuals (see sub-category, *Producing for the Audiences*). The relationships I point to between my three Categories – Discourse, Content, Affect- and the fourth – Audiences- suggests that this study’s group of vloggers created their content and use affective strategies to convey their messages in anticipation of certain audiences. It is therefore interesting to note that what is noticeably absent from most vlogs was a discussion of the ways that issues of consent and sexual violence impact non-White and non-heterosexual individuals. This can be attributed to my sampling methods, as I did not find many few vloggers who are visible minorities, or intersectional content about sexual violence. While some of my vloggers stated that they were gay and lesbian, there are also few mentions within theirs, or other videos, about the experience of sexual violence within the LGBTQ community.

I explore these findings in context with the literature after the next section on affect, as both should be examined in tandem with the scholarship.

Affect and Sexual Consent Discourses

Within my sample, discussions of sexual consent and sexual assault are often straddled with commentary around recent events, personal narratives, responses to media, and expressions of opinion, which are in turn sprinkled with humor, anger, care, emphasis, and sadness. In exploring the RQ1, “How do these YouTube videos and vloggers discuss sexual consent and assault in their media?”, I therefore found that affect plays a critical role in vloggers and audiences’ communication with each other.

Conveying Messages through Affect. Several vloggers make efforts in their vlogs to normalize sexual consent and make it sexier using entertainment devices, like humorous skits where pleasure and displeasure are mimicked. For example, Laci Green’s use of theatrics, facial expressions, moans and hesitation sounds (‘mmm’), reflects her intent to teach her audiences how to recognize expressions of consent to sexual activity. In some cases, some also shared emotional stories that lead to exhibits of strong feelings, like when Meghan Hughes cries recounting her experience with sexual violence. My sample includes a couple of testimonials, by Blair, Shades of Mindfall, Meghan Hughes, and Leia, which also serve as foundations for further discussion.

These displays of vulnerability – through the expression of opinions and the sharing of their stories- in many ways exemplify vloggers’ agency to create an impact in the world through the information in their media. Many vloggers also exhibit their vulnerability in their videos or through their vlog descriptions, making fun of themselves, or addressing potential issues with their audiences through a preface. The risk of encountering ‘trolls’ or

negative reactions by audiences was addressed in my interviews and sometimes referred to in vloggers' videos. While the interviewees in my study had not themselves experienced violence, they recognized that others might; and as reported, in some cases, vloggers in my sample also appreciate that their audiences may have different views about sexual violence that could cause disagreement (e.g. in vlogs 4, 13, 6) or lead to negative judgement (21, 27).

Engaging with the Scholarship

Discourses. The various representations of sexual consent in the vlogs and the occasional disagreement amongst vloggers reflect the heterogeneity of Discourses in the spaces I explored. It was apparent early in the analysis that youth participation in these vlogs diverts from the popular theories on feminist counterpublics (Sills et al., 2015) and participatory culture (Jenkins et al., 2009). I found instead that the sample of vlogs as a whole reflect what Foucault (1990) refers to as 'plurality of resistances', in so far as they do not primarily rely and share a single representation of sexual consent Discourse, but instead offer a more fluid circulation of perspectives. The fluidity of Discourses becomes more apparent as well when studying the vlogs' audiences' comments as well, where several YouTubers agree, disagree, and debate with each other (see the *Audience* category in Framework 1, Chapter 4; also addressed later in this chapter). This diversity in Discourse resonates with Gee's (2005b) conceptualization of a semiotic social space, in so far as vlog spaces offer a place for interaction and for dialogue without the need for adherence to common goals or political positions. It also reflects this idea of a battle between popular misogyny and popular feminisms taking places online that Banet-Weiser (2018) studies in

her recent work, insofar as vlogs spaces may house feminist, legal and pleasure-based Discourses around consent, but so can they invite overt or subtle forms of misogyny and harmful thinking about sexual violence and survivors driven by patriarchal ideologies.

YouTubers' adherence to the more popular framings of affirmative consent and legal Discourses was unsurprising. After all, with most of my sample in the late teens and early 20s, they are likely exposed to popular sexual consent discourses in their schools and university contexts. Their adherence to these Discourses may be reflective of the types of participation on YouTube. In Saul's (2010) work on the adolescent YouTuber Kevjumba, he remarks that, "KevJumba videos are clearly not exempt from being shaped by larger ideologies simply because they are being disseminated online and outside of the context of traditional media" (p. 464). Similarly, in my study, undergirding several vlogs' authentic appearances, youthful producers, and informal language and media strategies, are these larger, historical feminist and non-feminist ideologies guiding how these YouTubers frame survivors, perpetrators, rape culture and other aspects of sexual violence. My findings reinforce that the YouTube platform – a powerful video-sharing site with global audiences – is an important discursive site where youth may be perpetuating as well as resisting hegemonic representations of sexual violence (a good example related to how survivors are framed can be found in *Framing the Victims*).

The scope of this study prevents deconstructing where vloggers are performing or authentic about their views, or unpacking the extent to which they are motivated by commercial purposes. However, my findings hint that YouTubers' emplacement of their

semiotic work within YouTube's vlog space may be a contributing factor to their decisions to explore the broader, popular discourses around sexual consent and sexual violence, because of the audiences they are trying to reach. Ultimately, YouTube is a powerful institution (in the Foucauldian sense) that monitors, promotes, and silences its 'producers' for commercial purposes. It may be the case, as Burgess and Green (2009) argue, that the YouTubers are aware of the platform's control over the visibility of media and vloggers through algorithms and therefore might modify their discourses accordingly. This is supported by vloggers' efforts to gain their perspectives of the content and production by asking for input or prompting questions; this demonstrates awareness of the potential of the interactivity of the platform for informing their work and building relationships with their audience. Attwood, Barker, Boynton, and Hancock's (2015) offer a similar observation regarding celebrities giving sex advice who want to be taken seriously,

[They] often emphasize their place in a hierarchy of media genres, privilege talk about sex over sexual activity and highlight a form of expertise which draws on respectable views of sex and on personal experience, rather than on expertise in the sphere of sex and relationships, on critically informed understandings of sexuality, and on the available evidence. (p.532)

While there is adherence to common themes and sexual consent Discourses, and a few vloggers relied on personal experiences as resources, I also found that sometimes their practices divert from what Attwood et al. (2015) describes as the privileging of 'respectable views' over critical discussions of sex. There are instances where vloggers share riskier

expressions of opinion, rejected popular rape myths, and reflect a subjective, yet critical, interaction with sexual consent and sexual violence discourses. This is particularly evident across vlogs that tackle themes in the category, *Framing Sexual Violence*. Some vloggers deconstruct the larger rape myths that affect communication about consent, like token resistance (Jozkowski & Peterson, 2013; Shafer, Ortiz, Thomson, & Huemmer, 2018), or explore the more complex relationships between patriarchy and sexual violence that explain some of the current resistance to consent laws and rape culture. Therefore, while this study reinforces that vlogging practices reflect larger legal and cultural Discourses around consent, I further argue that they are also peppered with subjective and critical engagement with the matter that demonstrate vloggers' abilities and intent to negotiate meaning with and for their audiences.

Vloggers also move past legal slogans, definitions, and terminologies in some notable ways, giving the impression that they want to connect sexual consent to the realities of their audiences and reflecting their attempts to untangle the phenomenon of sexual violence. Expanding on what sexual consent looks like through examples and art-based tools demonstrates that some youth vloggers are making a conscious effort to move past simplified representations of consent, and to participate in the 'discourse of pleasure' (Fine, 1988) by framing individuals as active partakers in sexual activity. While not unexpected, the implications of this finding suggests that the some YouTube vlogs maybe be addressing sexual consent in deeper and more relatable ways than more formal sexual consent programming (Jozkowski, Peterson, Sanders, Dennis, & Reece, 2014; Jozkowski, 2015; Koss, Gidycz, & Wisniewski, 1987; Shaw, 2016; Talbot, Neill, & Rankin, 2010).

Attwood, Barker, Boynton, and Hancock (2015) also remind that these vloggers' stakes in their reputations and in attracting audiences may steer content towards normative discourses rather than push producers to steer towards more challenging narratives surrounding race and sexual orientation. I noticed similar trends in my last study on vlogs about rape culture, where Ayesha Vemuri and I (2017) discerned an absence of intersectionality within sexual discourses in our samples. Here again, conversations did not address sexual violence as it affects non-white persons, and rarely touched upon queer experiences, despite the historical violence against women/persons of color, Indigenous women, and LGBTQ communities in North America. When Raby et al. (2018) noted an absence of Black and Indigenous vloggers in their vlog sample, they theorized it might be because of their methodology, or due to the higher risk of participation for people of color. Within the scope of my work, I was not able to determine why vloggers omitted these experiences from their videos, or why I could not find more non-White vloggers. However, to a certain extent this observation of the absence of intersectionality in online YouTube media corroborates the argument of media scholars like Jenkins, Ito, and boyd's (2016), that technology and online cultures are not necessarily democratizing spaces for all who participate.

Affect. My study adds to the scholarship on the use of affective strategies in the YouTube context by concentrating on sexual consent and sexual violence-related vlogs. I found that the YouTubers in my sample, male and female⁹, use affective work to inspire

⁹ I recognize the assumption of gender here- there is a possibility that one or more vloggers in my sample identify as non-binary, or agender.

and persuade audiences to adopt sexual consent practices, to support survivors, and to promote change through alternate means (e.g., voting). Several vloggers communicate with anger, care, and humor, to drive home their messages about sexual consent, suggesting that vloggers perceive affect as tools for awareness raising and persuasion in similar ways as other youth using other social networks (Rentschler, 2014; Sills et al., 2015).

The use of affect to attract audiences has repercussions on the popularity of the vlogs, and to a larger extent, of the sexual Discourses that YouTubers are perpetuating or resisting. Using the concept of ‘social media ecology’, which is drawn upon Van Dijck’s (2013) understanding of ‘platformed sociality’ (as cited in McKee, et al., 2018, p. 4577), McKee and his colleagues argue that media content is only as popular the people that distribute it, and some characteristics of media can prompt audiences to share the material more than others. Their study indicates that youth would repost sexualities education material online if it were entertaining or humorous. In this study, the use of humor is a constant across most vlogs, suggesting that the YouTubers in my sample may also be aware of its power to attract audiences. Because of vlogs’ location within YouTube and the inherent consumerism guiding many YouTubers to produce media, the use of affective strategies like humor as a semiotic resource may not be ‘authentic’, but rather a conscious performance; however, this would be difficult to interpret and as noted earlier, not within the scope of this study to decide.

In my sample, vloggers’ emotional approaches to consent stirred reactions from audiences, whether it was Meghan Hughes’s testimonial or Allie Tricaso’s self-deprecating

observations about her performance, both of which spurred an outpour of support from their audiences in the comments' feeds. These personal and affective approaches to sexual consent resonate with the related literature exploring the intersections of affect, multimodal social semiotics and media (Kress, 2010). In her study of girls and women testimonials, Rentschler (2014) argues that young women and girls sharing their narratives may prompt consumers of these stories to 'react' upon their witnessing of the effects of sexual violence. She argues that both use of testimonials and humor are tools within "social media responses to rape culture [that] are deployed via networks that are both affective and technological" (p.69). Raby et al. (2018) also found similar strategies- around the aesthetic of their work, their tone, etc. - in agentic manners, which resonates with Kress's work around social semiotics and the role of the producer as designer of content.

Why Vlog?

The category entitled '*Content*' addressed vloggers' incentives to create and disseminate their vlogs. As I describe in that section of Chapter 4, vloggers in my sample appear to have several motives for making and posting their work on YouTube, including 'sharing personal thoughts and feelings, expressing opinions, promoting dialogue, impacting behavior, offering support, responding to prompts, and educating and raising awareness.' These incentives are not mutually exclusive, and I recognize that the vloggers in my sample may have had other motives to create their vlogs. Underlying these motives, I also acknowledge that the commercial nature of the YouTube and vlog space may have had an influence in interactions with audiences and messaging. Unfortunately, my limited access to interviews meant that I had little opportunity to gain vloggers' perspectives of the

reasons they vlog. Since these categories identified relied on my interpretation, I was careful to rely on stated, or at the least evident, intent expressed in words or through their approach.

Seeking to effect change. Framework 1 reflects that in many cases, the vlogs appear oriented to ‘you’ (as vloggers expressed), which I took to mean their perceived audiences. Their messages imply that the ‘you’ they are speaking to may be survivors, initiators of sexual activity, people giving consent, or perpetrators (see Chapter 4, *Producing for their Audiences*). Many vloggers in my sample, as demonstrated in my presentation of findings, seek to effect some change in the lives of their audiences or in broader society by promoting dialogue, attempting to impact behavior, offering messages of support, and most of all, raising awareness and educating others about sexual violence. My findings indicate that youth call for nuanced types of change, for example, they tell their audiences to challenge risky behavior and to vote against known perpetrators. Some vloggers appear to ‘breach’ their regular vlogging habits to address sexual violence and consent, which suggests a conscious effort on the part of the digital youth in my sample to actively participate in sexual discourses, and in many cases, to try to effect change through their influence and other networks.

The interviews and several vlogs clearly reflect a desire to provide others with information that they might need and not have access to. Leia, Jenna and Harriet, for instance, stated that this desire arose from their contexts and personal experiences;

similarly, in other vlogs, YouTubers share that they want to teach about consent as part of their overall work in sexualities education (e.g. Laci Green).

Vlogging as response and resistance. Certain YouTubers also respond to various media (other YouTubers, movies) and events, referring to these as prompts to build their arguments. By using their vlogs to support findings in the movie *The Hunting Ground* or to further discuss the *Consent as Tea* video, or to unpack other YouTubers' scandals, vloggers position themselves as agentic meaning-makers in sexual discourse that extends from the topic of consent to the wider, more complex understandings of sexual violence, power, and culture. Donald Trump also emerges in some rhetoric around misogyny and the importance of voting. This sub category is an interesting facet of vloggers' approach to rape culture Discourse; it offers an example of the way that YouTubers position themselves as agentic meaning-makers by making clear references to people and events that in their mind, supported or countered their expressed beliefs about sexual violence and sexual consent.

Vlogs as sites of personal expression. In the same vein, most vlogs in my sample also appear inspired by subjective experience and feelings. This is evident with some vloggers sharing personal stories related to sexual violence and sexuality education, and others recounting their feelings towards the importance of sexual consent. As discussed in the last section on *Affect*, I found that vloggers' expression of opinion and vulnerability in this sample also demonstrate their willingness to share intimate feelings and stories to open discourse. The risk behind such personal exposure is especially evident in Meghan Hughes' vlog, where the testimonial of the vlogger becomes the context for her argument against

sexual violence and for consent and support for survivors, insofar as she also demonstrates awareness of the possibility that her audiences may partake in victim-blaming.

Engaging with the Scholarship

These findings resonate with the larger scholarship on youth participation in online spaces for civic engagement (Caron, 2017; Cohen & Kahne, 2012; Jenkins et al., 2009). Previous research on YouTube and sexuality-related media has argued that YouTube videos and vlogs reflect some aspects of civic engagement as youth use their platform in ways that shift larger cultural constructions of youth, youth identities, and sexuality (Christian, 2010; Lange, 2014; Saul, 2010). This research provides further insight into the ways young people purposefully engage with sexuality through their YouTube vlogs, shape their Discourses and their affective strategies to inform others (as discussed earlier, often with specific audiences in mind), and in most cases, seek to effect change through awareness-raising and education, self-expression, response, and promoting action.

My findings reflect the ways that many vloggers- expert and amateur- use rhetorical devices, media, theater, and narratives as strategies to provoke feeling, entertain, and educate, and to advocate for a consent culture. This is not surprising; creating media is not a neutral endeavor and generally aims to create some kind of impact (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2001). My research reflects the findings from Johnston's (2017) work, which supports the conceptualizations of vlogs as a form 'sex edutainment', where sexual learning occurs in entertaining fashion; however, this study contributes to her argument by not only

examining celebrity vloggers, but the participation of less popular YouTubers in this type of semiotic work.

Moreover, outside my previous work with Ayesha Vemuri (2018), there is very little research that investigates how youth and young adults use YouTube for activism and activism to promote change related to sexual violence prevention and responses. Scholars have more generally pointed to the potential of YouTube, and young people's usage of YouTube spaces, to share views as well as advocate for and learn about social issues they care for (Lange, 2014). Therefore, the findings on the sexual discourses and the call for changes that emerge in this framework allow for better grasp of this platform's use as an advocacy and activism tool. At the same time, it confirms the findings around youth participation in online spaces for activism and education that other scholars have found in different spaces (Mendes, Ringrose, & Keller, 2019; Rentschler, 2014). Notably, my sample of vloggers, female and male¹⁰, appear to take on a degree of 'response-ability' (Rentschler, 2014), in their efforts to call out sexual violence. In one instance, Rentschler describes a young woman's affective work in her YouTube video to strategically mobilize their audiences; likewise, this sample reflects that young people make active and personal choices to set the stage for their discourse.

Vloggers' use of vlogs as 'response' was foreseeable. This study supports the arguments that YouTubers use vlogs as response tools, made by other researchers who have established that social media is often used by producers as a platform to respond to the

¹⁰ Assumed genders

world around them (Rentschler; 2014; Caron, 2017; Raby et al., 2018). This deployment of YouTube media to talk back further supports the positioning of vlogs as Social Semiotics spaces. As Kress (2010) writes, the design and communication of media are about producing and reproducing messages and meaning. Vlog producers are partaking in this process both by exhibiting that they consume other media material and prompting audiences to consume and respond to theirs. This is particularly apparent with the quantity of calls for dialogue in my analysis, and with the ways that some vloggers challenge or respond to each other.

In expressing their opinions and sharing personal stories, I believe that vlogs in my sample engage to some level in identity work related to their positionality around sexual violence. This echoes the findings in feminist scholarship around women and girls specifically. As I describe more extensively in Chapter 2, numerous scholars (Harris, 2005; Muise, 2011; Powell, 2015; Rentschler, 2014; Salter, 2013; Sills, Pickens, Beach, Jones, Calder Dawe, Benton-Greig, & Gavey, 2016; Wood, 2008) recognize the work of women and girls in creating and curating online spaces and communities for self-expression. While this study includes vlogs by at least two genders, the work of the female vloggers resonates with this scholarship, as I found they exhibited similar agency in shaping others' views through stories and through their own definitions of consent and sexual violence.

My analysis uncovers that vloggers display courage as well, since many speak out about sexual violence despite recognizing that their audiences may respond negatively. Lange (2007) contends that vloggers often place themselves in vulnerable positions. She

states, “Many video bloggers argue that it is precisely by putting these intimate moments on the Internet for all to see that a space is created to expose and discuss difficult issues and thereby achieve greater understanding of oneself and others” (para. 1). While the vloggers in my sample seemingly put themselves at risk with their expressions of vulnerability and their stories, and even by virtue of their gender, it is also this affective work and personal approach to content delivery that contribute to the appreciation of vlogs as sexualities education tools (Johnston, 2017).

In many ways then, sexual consent vlogs may offer consumers a space for entertainment, learning, support, and dialogue, and insight into ways that one can embrace and promote sexual consent and consent culture; however, as I discuss next, comment feeds are also mined with harmful responses that may impact audiences reaching out to these forms of media.

Audience Engagement with Vlogs

Meaning-making, from a social semiotics perspective, occurs when prompts are created and responded to (Kress, 2010). On YouTube, audiences and producers demonstrate the qualities of ‘produsage’ (Bruns, 2008). While not all YouTube consumers are necessarily producers, those who make and respond to videos are engaging with and evaluating each other’s content, stratifying the videos through their likes and dislikes, responding to each other, and building discourse through audience comments and response videos. Framework 1 emphasizes the significance of the YouTubers’ relationships with each other and with their content. The importance of audiences, which became prominent

during my analysis and discussions with participants, prompted the emphasis of this category in my framework on the semiotic work of vlogs. It should be noted how audiences shape YouTube Discourses, by offering support and creating conflict, and through their extensive or limited engagement.

Support and conflict. First, it is apparent, as illustrated earlier, that the imagined audiences' needs influence the representations of sexual consent and assault in YouTube vlogs. The responses (see *Audiences* category in Chapter 4) illustrates that in general, content was well received by the consuming YouTubers. Most comment feeds reflect positive feedback on the video content, the production, and the vlogger. However, at the same time, two vlogs by Hannah Witton and Laci Green feature significantly more criticism and trolling. My findings thus reinforce that YouTube vlogs spaces, even sex positive ones, are potential sites of violence and harm for those who navigate within those spaces as participants or witnesses. Even without being the targeted producer, the gendered nature of aggressive comments, the undisguised contempt for feminism, and disagreements on the definitions of consent contribute to a problematic atmosphere within the space.

Laci Green specifically experiences some brutal pushback in her comment feeds, which was somewhat expected due to her history of public backlash (Johnston, 2016). Their encounters with violent and sexist remarks, as female YouTubers vlogging about sexuality, reaffirm that women and girls' participation on YouTube (and social media) are at particular risk of technology-facilitated sexual violence (Henry & Powell, 2016)

Technology-facilitated sexual violence and the matrix of sexism are two reasons, amongst others, that the internet is a dangerous space, particularly for women (Henry and Powell, 2016; Sills et al., 2016). Sexual consent and sexual violence are historically contentious topics that continue to be at the center of debate between feminists and non-feminists, and as Banet-Weiser (2018) points out, there is a misogynist trend that targets feminists. Johnston (2016) argues that their popularity online can put popular female social media influencers at risk,

Viewing a YouTube producer as an authority figure can sometimes lead to hero worship, but in other instances, it can also dehumanize the person and make them susceptible to online harassment. (p. 85)

Therefore, while most vlogs in my sample framed consent and sexual violence within legal, critical and feminist understandings of sexual violence, some of the vloggers experienced visible backlash in the comment feeds because of their gender or their affinity to feminist ideologies.

Limited Engagement. Second, while YouTubers refer to the comments feed as space for self-expression, it is not always apparent whether they expect to foster a dialogue. A close reading of audience responses suggest that most people offered short, close-ended statements on the vlog content, production and vlogger, with only some responses yielding more complex exploration of the topics and questions about consent with the vlogger or other audience members. Therefore, while many scholars hail the potential of social media and YouTube for their ability to facilitate discourses and dialogue through the interactive

spaces they offer (Burgess & Green, 2009; Kellner & Kim, 2010), this was not necessarily the case in the vlogs spaces I explored. The specific responses I studied expressed love for videos and vlogs, and often stated their agreement with the content (beyond clicking the like button), but rarely were there more complex explorations of the topic, with a few exceptions.

Several vloggers in my sample asked audiences for their thoughts about the content, their approach or the design, and although only a limited number participated in my sample of responses from comments feed. The little engagement between vloggers and audiences reminds of Johnston's (2016) observations about producers purposefully asking audiences for advice and for their opinions to establish relationships and forge their networks. Johnston (2016) argues that for vloggers, "maintaining follower loyalty and satisfaction, then, begins to take the shape of a business" (p.88). In some ways then, these relationships mirror the economic practices of the marketplace, where the consumer and producer negotiate what they want and what they will make. This reaffirms the political and powerful omnipresence of the YouTube Corporation in the background of these vlogs, which Burgess and Green (2009) and other YouTube scholars draw attention to. For celebrity YouTubers like shoeonhead, Hannah Witton, Jack and Dean, Just between us (also Gaby and Ash), and Laci Green, who have agents and careers intersecting with their vlogging practices, engaging with audiences comes with financial benefits. However, in my study, it was the less popular vloggers who responded in the comment feeds, perhaps reflecting a desire to grow their fan base.

Framework 1: From Vlog ‘Texts’ and ‘Communities’, to ‘Vlog Spaces’ for Sexualities Education

To summarize, Framework 1 responds to my inquiry about youth semiotic work and participation online by revealing the following: Vloggers in my sample offer complex, heterogeneous, and often affective ‘sex edutainment’ ‘spaces’ for sexualities education that in most cases, seek to effect some form of impact on personal to societal levels.

While I will not reiterate the theorization around their semiotic work, I will speak to the broader insight that Framework 1 provides in regard to my vloggers’ participation in the sexual consent vlogs on YouTube. I believe that these YouTubers and their audiences’ participation in this space should not be characterized as a participatory culture, or under a uniform conceptualization of participation, based on my sample’s diversity of Discourses, and the varied engagement and support from audiences. Several vlogs did indeed reflect contributions to learning and forms of civic engagement, which may arise in some participatory cultures (Jenkins et al., 2009; Kahne & Boyer, 2018); and to an extent, it can be argued that vloggers’ decisions across the sample to engage in sexual consent discourse reflects a common, ‘interest driven’ act which Ito et al. (2010) and Jenkins et al. (2009) argue may motivate youth participation in participatory cultures. However, a closer reading of the vlogs reflects a vast number of Discourses and different intents expressed by YouTubers (producers and audiences) suggesting that while the space brings them together to engage in discussions around sexual consent issues, the commonalities end there.

This research more closely aligns with and supports Caron's (2017) framing of vlogs as 'semiotic social spaces' - my analysis also revealed that while youth are 'chained' together by language, interests and values, their participation looks different. Some are sex educators; others are not. Their goals vary, as I explore in the Content section of Chapter 3. These factors alone steer me away from one of the 'points of departure' with which I began my study, where sexual consent vloggers form participatory cultures. This does not mean that YouTube spaces as a whole do not produce the latter, as some scholars have upheld (Jenkins, Ito & Boyd, 2016; Waldron, 2013). I would argue that some vloggers in my sample belong in participatory cultures, if their participation was framed within the groups in which they situate themselves, like a community of beauty vloggers or the comedy networks, rather than based on their vlogs. For many vloggers, addressing topics of consent fell outside their habits, suggesting that vloggers consciously 'breached' their participatory cultures to speak out about sexual violence and consent.

Perceptions of YouTube Sexual Consent Vlogs as Sexualities Education Resources

In addition to providing feedback on an approach, the use of Grounded Theory as a methodology urged me to move beyond describing perceptions of vlogs and vlogging as sexualities education tools, to developing a critical understanding of youth thinking. Through my interviews, my evaluation tools, workshop and focus groups, as well as field notes, I developed a visual framework representing participants' perceptions of YouTube and vlogging to teach and learn about sexual consent.

In brief, I found that participants' perceptions of vlogs and vlogging for sexualities education were mixed and complex. Framework 2 shows that feelings around YouTube, vlogs, technology, and vulnerability resonated in the workshop, affecting how participants engaged with the activities and the media (notably by the many participants' refusal to create vlogs). As reported in Chapter 5, participants shared mixed feelings about YouTube and vlogs in general; while potential for the platform and media for sexualities education was cited for popularity and accessibility (1), there were also concerns around the messaging and genre (2). These views ultimately influenced the mixed reception of these vlogs and videos as sexualities education tools, particularly in the classroom. The idea of making and disseminating videos as a production activity in sexualities education also prompted various feelings arising from (3) experiences with technology, learning through making, and genre preferences, and (4) feelings of vulnerability as a communicator and producer of sexual consent messaging and media. These four categories, and the relationships between them, are elaborated upon below.

Perceptions of the YouTube: Popular, Accessible and Risky

The popularity of the platform and its accessibility was cited as a positive factor. The vloggers in my study as well as workshop participants recognized that the availability of the technology could benefit sexuality-related learning in the classroom and online, with some citing their own or others' experiences as evidence.

When discussing accessibility, the creative style of YouTube also came up, suggesting that participants in this study viewed the content of the platform as having

potential to reach young people because of the videos and vlogs' often original, peer-based approaches. Males were frequently cited as the audiences that workshop participants wanted to reach with their videos and with consent education in general; YouTube and its media content were positively perceived as tools to attract their attention. However, there was also recognition that not all videos are watched by the people who need to see them, and even when shared, they may only extend to individuals within the same network, which echoed one of the larger issues with consent workshops pertaining to 'preaching to the choir'.

Youth in my study also expressed some concern over the YouTube platform. As stated earlier, the interviewees recognized the potential for trolls online, but had not experienced it themselves; yet several participants in the workshop expressed wariness about accessing YouTube texts in the classroom (see next section, *Messaging*, as well) and disseminating online. Therefore, while popular and accessible as a potential platform for sexualities education, youth in my study also perceived risk.

Scholarship. Many participants believed the popularity of YouTube and its accessibility contributed to the pros of the platform for sexualities education. This was expected, as there has been a consensus for decades that websites and social media are attractive sources of sexualities education for these reasons (Brown & Bobkowski, 2011; Brown, Keller, & Stern, 2009; McKee et al., 2018). The popularity of YouTube amongst youth and young adults is also cited in the literature (Burgess and Green, 2009; McKee et al., 2018), and many scholars and media outlets have recognized young people's use of YouTube as a platform for sexualities education (Hautea, 2017; Johnston, 2017; Leeming,

2015; McKee et al., 2018; Powell, 2017). Based on the numbers of views in many videos I examined, the popularity of videos on consent and sexual assault confirm that these are well-enjoyed, or at least well-watched.

However, findings in this framework contribute a more nuanced youth perspective of the platform for sexualities education. Participants expressed mixed feelings about the potential of YouTube for teaching about sexual consent-related topics and for effecting cultural change related to sexual violence. The aspect of risk (explored further) and difficulties accessing target audiences were worth noting in this study. The latter resonates particularly with McKee et al.'s (2018) argument about the social media content's dependence on networks; his study reflects that if media does not appeal to youth audiences, it is not shared. This study adds to this perception of networks and popularity of media content, suggesting that even if it is shared within networks, they may be limited in scope because of their homogeneity.

Perceptions of YouTube Vlogs: Mixed Views about Genre and Messaging

To summarize the findings reported in this category, some participants appreciated that the media format of vlogs might encourage audiences to learn about consent. Most participants further agreed that YouTube vlogs are creative tools for classroom-based learning that can enhance discussions on consent. The peer-based teaching aspect of some vlogs were also noted benefits. For instance, one vlogger found this to be a useful tool in her university setting and with her friends, while another participant also addressed how the vlogger themselves could model a form of citizenship for their peers, in terms of opening dialogue around sexual violence and promoting change.

However, even amongst celebratory perspectives of vlogs as tools in my sample, the messages caused some doubt and concern about the potential of these media texts for sexual learning. First, while ‘Consent as Tea’ (in institutionally produced animated video on YouTube) generated positive feedback from both sets of workshop participants, the celebrity vloggers in my sample received some criticism for their performativity, the potential commercial influence on their videos, and the platform in general. This suggests that youth (and in my sample, female youth) recognize the underlying power and marketing of YouTube dynamics and how producers of media content may be adhering to popular discourses for ‘likes’, which I discussed in Framework 1.

These overall feelings around vlogs translated to reception of the vlogs as media texts to use in the classroom. The vlogging genre produced some mixed feelings, making some participants feel that some vloggers may approach sexual consent in inappropriate ways. There were varying opinions about their potential reach in the classroom. Content in vlogs such as Laci Green’s can inspire a discussion, but also distract the classroom, with students focusing on the media genre and approach rather than the message. There were also concerns about the appropriateness of the YouTube site, and the difficulty of finding the ‘right’ videos. I encountered this difficulty in the selection of the texts within the workshops I offered, with some students reporting their dislike of the videos in the evaluation forms, and others advocating for a selection of divergent viewpoints.

Scholarship. Participants’ appreciation for YouTube vlogs and videos to learn about sexual consent echoed the findings of the media scholars who posit that using media and social media can be more engaging and relevant approaches to talk about health topics

(Bragg, 2006; McKee et al., 2018; Tisdell, 2008). However, where Bragg (2006) reported that media was an effective distancing device to engage in discussion around sexuality topics, some participants in this study found that it had the effect of drawing their attention away from the topic of consent.

Moreover, the comments around the benefits of young people teaching their peers also resonate with other scholars' arguments about the benefits of peer education online, in sexualities education and in general (Attwood et al., 2015; Gee, 2005b; Jenkins et al., 2009). Yet at the same time, youth in my study questioned the difficulty of choosing YouTube vlogs to explore with students in actual classrooms. This finding might have arisen because several of my participants were students in the Faculty of Education, being trained as teachers. Other YouTube scholars have also determined the importance of being careful with video choice (Akagi, 2008; Prybutok, 2013). I could not find studies that examined perspectives of showing YouTube videos about sexualities topics in the classroom, therefore this work may provide new insight into the selection and inclusion of YouTube content in the context of sexualities education.

Perceptions of Media-Making: Learning Through Making, Encountering Technology and Choosing a Genre

Framework 2 reflects participants' perceptions of media-making as being grounded in their subjective experiences and preferences. While the vloggers offered a more experience perspective in this domain, many of my participants based their opinions on the workshop. For this reason, in this category, I drew extensively from their evaluation feedback to support their perceptions. The overarching finding in this category is that

vlogging was not well-liked by participants, but media-making for sexualities education as a whole is an effective learning tool.

The educational potential of media-making was noted. The vloggers were especially enthusiastic about the ways in which they developed knowledge and passion through the process of creating and disseminating their videos. Workshop participants reported learning, not only about sexual consent, but about communication skills and YouTube. At the same time, this study was not able to capture a full picture from participants about the perceptions of vlog-making as a pedagogical practice, considering several participants chose not to make one, and most participants strayed from media production instructions I gave to engage in their own process. As I saw with interviewees as well, perceptions of vlog-making as a sexualities education practice would also be difficult to study because even amongst vloggers, media-making practices vary.

Participants were hesitant about making vlogs. I found that their learning experiences were sometimes colored by their encounters with technology, which caused some frustration and feelings of vulnerability. Moreover, using vlog-making as a prompt in the classroom led to mixed reactions in the workshops. Only 4 out of 12 participants chose to do a standard vlog, with others preferring slide shows, role-play with/without objects, and a music montage of signs held by people. Several other genres were chosen, for reasons that included discomfort filming themselves, wanting to include alternative voices, and preferring other communication strategies. While those who did choose a vlog reported enjoying the more personable aspects of the traditional vlog genre, participant preferred other forms of media. This sentiment towards vlogs may have been a reason that the March

workshop participants did not vlogs about consent after the workshop either. In both the March and October workshop, participants expressed desire to take a participatory approach to media-making.

Scholarship. Despite the vlog genre's reported popularity amongst young people, participants in my workshops reflect that the creating vlogs may not appeal to all. I return to Literat et al. (2018)'s warning that a critical lens is needed to understand participation; my findings concur with their arguments about the degrees of participation that are affected by factors such as aims, actors, intensities and consent (cited in their study). This study reflects that young people asked to make and/or disseminate vlogs or videos may feel uncomfortable with the task.

I found that the study's methodology was not enough to conclude whether the activity of vlog making effectively reflected the transformative, critical pedagogy that Tisdell (2008) and Kellner and Kim (2010) describe when working with media. However, several participants reported that the process of producing and watching vlogs helped develop their communication skills around consent, which aligns with Manduley et al.'s (2018) argument for media-making in sexualities education as well.

Barriers to learning that were identified in this study related to watching and making media in sexual consent education, related to preferences around technology, mirrored some of the findings in Hung's work (2011), where students created vlogs to learn ESL. He reported as well that participants experienced issue with technology, and exhibited shyness using vlogs as media; these findings that my study and Hung's are unsurprising, as faulty or

misused technology in the classroom is widely known as a potential barrier to teaching and learning.

Perceptions of Media-Making and Disseminating: The Self as Producer

Finally, concerns around communication and their production abilities came up in this study. In many ways, their perception of self as communicator and producer impacted their feelings about making and disseminating consent vlogs via YouTube, and vice versa. Their perceptions, generally, was that creating and sharing sexual consent vlogs online were risky activities; they preferred a participatory approach and alternative genres. Media-making in general, however, was perceived as an effective way of learning on one's own and developing communication and media skills.

Participants shared some experiences communicating about consent in their everyday lives, where their advocacy was not well received by others. This was best represented in Katie's story, which gathered empathy from her peers. Her production story yielded frustration as she was not able to 'reach' her audiences, and she shared these feelings of anger in our workshop and in her video. These experiences with mis/communication were for some participants linked to feelings of self-awareness producing and disseminating vlogs. This is particularly evident in the subcategory '*Producing Media*', where I share participants' feelings about being self-conscious or disliking producing and disseminating media. The notion of '*Protecting the self*' also reflects how participants viewed their dissemination of media online as a risky endeavor, as expressed in the broad category '*Perceptions of YouTube*'. Concerns around negative comments, around their opinions as well as their looks, affected their willingness to publish

online. Finally, for some participants, the idea that they might not be the best qualified to advocate for these issues were also barriers. The vulnerability of making and disseminating media about consent on YouTube could be circumvented, as participants enthusiastically suggested, through participatory work under an institutional umbrella.

Scholarship. It is this category, and its relationships with the others, that I regard as the most interesting contribution of this framework. While I will not reiterate discussions of sexual violence online that I have discussed elsewhere in this chapter and extensively covered in Chapter 2, I would like to additionally highlight here the importance of taking into consideration perceptions of self and risk when considering YouTube, vlogs, and vlog-making as resources and activities in sexualities education. At the nascence of the study, one point of departure that guided my early work was conceptualizing youth as agentic media-makers online (a perception shaped by the work of media scholars like Henry Jenkins), and my exposure to the work of women and girls-led activism (e.g. Rentschler, 2014; Sills et al., 2016) accentuated my belief that young people would enthusiastically partake in media-making to effect social change. Moreover, the scholarship on critical sexualities education points to the process of meaning and encouraging civic engagement as forms of critical pedagogy (Jones, 2011; Trimble, 2009). Yet, this study's findings reflect that youth reported discomfort with the process of media dissemination online, even when they expressed the desire to engage in advocacy and activism for social change. At the root of perceptions of vlogs and vlogging for sexualities education was risk; many of the young women in this study recognized these spaces as dangerous, which resonates with the

experiences of other women and girls' experiences participating in other social media spaces (Keller, Mendes, & Ringrose, 2018; Sills et al., 2016).

Framework 2: Youth Perceptions of Vlogs and Vlogging: Looking at Risk

Framework 2 offers a theory of youth views on vlogs and vlogging grounded in the voices of YouTubers and workshop participants. To summarize, it describes the divided feelings influenced by intersecting factors such as the perceptions of the platform, the vlog gender, the self, individual experiences, and genre preference. While they report that YouTube vlogs and media-making are interesting to watch and make, have the potential to reach others, contribute to learning about sexual consent, and enhance communication skills, the findings show that perceptions of risk and vulnerability thread across the categories in Framework 2. This study does not indicate to what extent these perceptions impacted each category or the evaluation, however Framework 2 reflects their worries about risk, related to the messages of sexual consent that come from YouTube and YouTubers, issues with vlogging, and their own vulnerability creating and possibly disseminating vlogs.

In terms of the content, the findings in Framework 2 contribute to the work on media education-based sexualities education programs by investigating views on the use of online platforms, particularly YouTube. Several scholars support the intersection of media and sexualities education (Bragg, 2006; Pinkleton et al., 2008; Neustifter et al., 2015). There is a significant body of research looking into the use of YouTube in classrooms to teach various topics to younger and adult learners (Jones & Cuthrell, 2011; Hung, 2011;

Sherer & Shea, 2011), in some cases within the health context (Akagi, 2008; Manduley et al., 2018). However, the research on using YouTube within the context of formal sexualities education is generally lacking; this may be because, as Attwood et al. (2018) point out, there is a prevalent trend to perceive media as ‘bad’ sexualities education. This study responds to this gap in the literature by offering young people’s perspectives of this platform and the media to teach about sexual consent in higher education. While limited to my sample, I believe that it can potentially help orient future studies on the use of social media in university based-sexualities education.

Scholars agree that the use of video-making to engage young people in thinking about sexuality and gender issues and empowering them with the skills to speak out about them is also significant, with programs like Media Relate, Youth Talk Back and TISSAM (Bragg, 2006; Grahame et al., 2005; Pinkleton et al. 2008) building on this idea, and numerous arts-based methodologies scholars (Garcia et al., in press; Mitchell et al., 2017) using this approach in their transformative work. However, school-based programs like those just mentioned, where young people’s views about media education-based approaches are gathered, are based in elementary and schools. Framework 2 offers unique insight into older youth’, e.g. individuals in their late teen and early adult years, perspectives of media education-based sexualities education.

The perceptions of risk veining the framework further speaks to overall arguments for the intersection of media education, sexuality-related texts, and the development of youth skills to engage with others online in ethics ways. The framework shows the

insidious ways in which fears of trolling and other negative encounters in social media can impede in learning and using social media for positive change. In this way, the framework supports Jenkins et al.'s (2009) argument for teaching youth new media literacy skills so that they may participate in online sexual discourses in less harmful ways.

Importantly, my findings that use of media texts and production in the context of consent education should be approached carefully, as macro factors (perceptions of the platform and genre) and micro factors (e.g. experiences with technology and feelings of vulnerability) can have a significant impact on young people's engagement with and feelings about watching and making sexual consent vlogs. It is not new for sexualities educators to take into consideration the vulnerability of participants; the potential for workshops to 'trigger' trauma has spurred a movement around creating safe spaces and triggering warning in university classrooms and workshops. Moreover, it is common to hear concerns around media's negative impact on consumers (Omori et al., 2011; Peter and Valkenburg, 2011) and especially on women and girls. Nevertheless, this study indicates that considerations of risk and youth safety may be particularly important at the intersection of media education and consent education in higher education, in addition to reflecting the importance of checking on young people's sense of vulnerability when media-making.

Evaluation of the Workshop

The results for the March and October workshop evaluations are detailed in Chapter 6. Evidently, their feelings about the workshop were felt in their larger expressions of the view of YouTube and vlogging for higher education consent workshops discussed in

Chapter 5. However, Chapter 6 reports how they perceived the workshop itself. These findings specifically contributed to the remodel of the workshop and the PowerPoint (Appendix J and M), which were also sent to participants for their perusal and feedback.

Participants' feedback revealed a general enthusiasm about the workshop. They felt that the approach taken effectively impacted understandings of consent and consent culture, and developed communication and media literacy skills. Moreover, a few participants felt motivated to promote consent and consent culture in their community or at work, although they did not employ online channels.

Nevertheless, the evaluation unveiled certain barriers preventing the type of critical sexualities education that Trimble (2009) calls for, where students deeply, critically, and emotionally engage in learning through dialogue and the exploration of the multiple facets of sexuality, including the political and the ethical elements. We did indeed untangle ideological discourses around sexual violence as we moved forward in the sessions, but time restricted their participation and dialogue, as well as limited the choices of topics we were able to address. Certain participants honed their communication skills and experienced more confidence communicating about sexual consent; this was apparent in their feedback 5-6 months later, where a few of the women reported feeling better equipped to tackle the topic and educate others.

The evaluation findings also yielded barriers to learning that came up in these workshops, but that were perceived by participants as broader hurdles facing university contexts. I share these below, as I view these as valuable contributions to the scholarship the limitations of consent education workshops in higher education.

Considerations for Practice: Time

Workshop participants were critical of the lack of time to discuss and deconstruct sexual consent. The workshop was built with the idea of engaging young people in deconstructing their own and media's sexual representations, as Trimble (2009) calls for; however, while we did have the opportunity to do so, there was little space to unpack our learning and explore different paths together. This was anticipated, as my years of practice giving sex education workshops and presentations hinted that this may still be a problem. As the facilitator, I struggled to incorporate suggested topics (see Appendix K) and give time to plan, watch, and discuss our work. While brainstorming about their videos in groups and watching them afterwards afforded some space to explore more varied facets of consent that peaked their interest or resonated with their lived experiences, the workshop feedback and my observations as facilitator echo the concerns I hear from many facilitators in the field: there needs to be more space afforded to talk and learn about sexuality.

The lack of time in workshops is a relevant consideration for practice due to the importance of postsecondary institutions' roles in addressing the issues related to conservative or absent programming in elementary and high school-based sexualities education in North America (Appleton and Stiritz, 2016). As the White House Task Force to Protect Students from Sexual Assault (2017) warns, for consent education to be effective, brief interventions can hardly be expected to create lasting change. And in contexts like universities where change needs to occur to address the culture of sexual

violence (Jozkowski, 2015; O’Sullivan, 1993; Shaw, 2016; Sweeney, 2014), sexual consent education needs time and space to effectively reach students.

Considerations for Practice: Choice

Several scholars critique the ways that universities teach about consent, which I explore in depth in Chapter 2. To some, universities offer restrictive framings of sexuality (e.g. Gersen and Suk, 2016; Halley, 2016); to others, messaging about consent needs to go deeper (Jozkowski, Peterson, Sanders, Dennis, & Reece, 2014; Muehlenhard, Humphreys, Jozkowski, & Peterson, 2016; Shafer, Ortiz, Thomson, & Huemmer, 2018). And as Trimble (2009), sexualities education should deeply engage and prompt students to ‘wade together’ in their learning. However, it is evident that without time, it is difficult to provide a space for choice, exploration and dialogue.

While I attempted to include a wide range of topics, and encouraged participants to approach sexual consent in their own ways through their videos, there was still missing elements that the students wanted to learn about. I tried to follow the parameters of critical pedagogy and critical sexualities education (Trimble, 2009), using media making offered opportunities to draw upon lived experiences and to deeply, critically, and affectively relate with the material. Yet, the list of topics in the feedback forms (see Appendix K) identifies areas of interest that I was not able to cover or did not elaborate upon enough. Participants’ feedback of the workshop suggests that despite efforts to address multiple facets of consent, there were still gaps in learning.

Considerations for Practice: Participation

The final criticism that emerged in the workshops, which I have heard repeatedly throughout my own practice as a sexualities educator, and is reflected in Rich et al.'s (2010) work, was the problematic lack of male presence in consent workshops. As is the case with many voluntary workshops, it is often difficult to bring this population to the table. While this study was not designed to offer specific recommendations to increase male participation (or all genders in general), there was a belief that videos could potentially address issues of access to student populations. Yet, while a goal of this media-making workshop was to be able to foster media-making and dissemination to be able to reach people outside its boundaries, concerns around this practice suggest that this may not always occur in media education-based consent education programming. When brainstorming about alternative ways they could 'reach' the people they felt needed consent education, participants suggested that the media-making workshops offer screenings on campus instead. Moreover, should videos be published online, participants were more receptive of the videos that would bear the institutional name, to protect them from backlash.

Summary of the Chapter

This chapter demonstrated how the categories and relationships in my theoretical frameworks confirm or add to the larger scholarship on sexual discourses, youth participation online, sexualities education, and social change. In brief, the findings from the categories in Framework 1 add to our understandings of YouTubers' semiotic work in the

context of sexual consent and sexual violence discourse. Framework 2 reveals that different, somewhat intersecting factors impacted how participants in my study envisioned YouTube vlogs and vlogging as sexualities education resources and activities. This chapter also includes the three larger criticisms that came out of the workshop evaluation; while they were informative in the context of this work, I also express how they relate to larger criticisms around consent education. The next chapter revisits the dissertation's contributions to the field and shares the practical and research implications of this study with readers.

Chapter 8: Conclusion

As part of this study, I designed a theoretical framework (Framework 1) that explains how my sample of YouTubers, their vlogs, and their audiences contribute to complex discursive spaces tackling sexual consent and sexual violence. I also developed a second framework (Framework 2) representing youth perceptions of the ways that YouTube vlogs and vlog-making can contribute or hinder sexualities education, grounded in the voices of YouTubers and university students participating in this research. Finally, I discussed the outcomes of the workshop that served as a research context and a media education-based sexual consent education intervention in this study.

The dissertation was divided in 8 chapters:

- Chapter 1 told the story of how this research came about; in that part of the dissertation, I shared the inspiration for the study (heavily grounded in the content) and presented the research design and questions guiding my work. I also offered an overview of the structure of this paper.
- Chapter 2 examined the intersecting concepts that constitute the background of this work. I reviewed the scholarship on sexual discourses, especially sexual violence and sexual consent discourses, to better situate the messages I found in YouTube vlogs. I also explored the literature on contemporary sexual consent discourses and current criticisms of related educational initiative in postsecondary contexts, which also set the stage for my discussion about the sexual consent discourses in my vlogs. An overview of the scholarship exploring the impact of media on consumers, particularly in the context of sexualities education, and of youth participation on social media and in

online sexual discourses, followed. Specifically, I reviewed the literature that posits social media platforms offer spaces for learning and political participation, through dialogue, advocacy, and activism. This section focused on YouTube, which is an increasingly popular tool for sexual learning. I identified gaps in scholarship on the ways that vlogs spaces, their producers and their consumers contribute to sexual discourses through their online participation and meaning-making. I ended this chapter by sharing how some feminist and critical pedagogy scholars conceptualize more critical and transformative sexualities education. Within this section, I posited that there should be further examination of the potential of YouTube vlogs and vlogging to offer this type of sexualities education.

- Chapter 3 highlighted the methodologies, methods and analysis process employed in this study, specifically Constructivist Grounded Theory as well as Arts-based and Evaluation Methodologies. The Chapter delivers an in-depth and transparent review of my study's data collection tools and strategies, as well as my sampling methods and analytical processes.
- Chapter 4 presents my findings for RQ1: *How do these YouTube videos and vloggers discuss sexual consent and assault in their media? Why do YouTube vloggers choose to make media about sexual consent and assault? How might audiences respond to these texts?* I briefly reiterate how Framework 1 answers these questions, and reflection on my findings' contributions to the field and implications for practice and research in this Chapter.

- Chapter 5 shares the findings related to RQ 2: *How do young YouTube users perceive vlogging and vlogs as sexualities education tools, online and in the university classroom?* Framework 2 is revisited in this Chapter as well, as I underscore what I found, the unique value of these findings, and their implications.
- Chapter 6 introduced the evaluation of a workshop I delivered as part of my data collection process. I answered RQ 3: *What were participants' perceptions of a YouTube and vlog-making consent education workshop held in a university context?*
- Chapter 7 intersected this study's findings with the theory and concepts in Chapter 2 and highlighted the ways in which my findings support or contribute to existing research.

Contributions to the Field

As I explain in Chapter 3, while the smaller sample in this study prevents me from generalizing my findings, I agree with Dey (1999) that smaller studies offer useful insight on a 'part of a puzzle' (limited by context and sample) that can help understand its whole (the wider phenomenon). Chapter 7 extensively details the ways that my findings contribute to the larger puzzle that is YouTube, social media, and sexualities education, and advance our knowledge in these fields. I briefly reiterate here my study's contributions to the field to underscore the unique value of this work.

Framework 1

Addressing gap in scholarship on YouTubers vlogging about sexual consent.

This dissertation began with a review of contexts – online, in sexualities education and in higher education – that prompted this study of YouTubers’ use of vlogs spaces to communicate about sexual consent. Youth sexual discourses and related media-making practices on YouTube remain understudied (Garcia & Vemuri, 2017; Johnston, 2016), in spite of their popularity as sexualities education resources. This dissertation addresses this gap in research by delivering an emergent theory of YouTube vloggers’ meaning-making processes and sexual discourses grounded in the study of 28 vlogs.

To summarize, the categories and their properties in Framework 1 shed light on YouTubers’ participation in sexual consent related vlogs, accentuating the relationships between vloggers’ discourses (feminist and non-feminist, legal, and pleasure-related) and agency (e.g. to educate, to respond to, to express themselves), the design of their vlog (production and rhetorical strategies, use of tone and facial expressions, displays of vulnerability), and perceptions of as well as interactions with, audiences and YouTube. This framework contributes to the field of YouTube and sexualities education by offering a glimpse at the type of sexual consent education that youth might encounter in their peers’ YouTube vlogs about sexual consent. While the study relied on a small sample of vlogs, it still answers a gap in the literature on YouTubers discussing sexualities and sexual consent topics, a topic addressed by few scholars (Garcia & Vemuri, 2017; Johnston, 2017; Manduley et al., 2018). The findings in each category begin to paint a picture about sexual

consent vlogs as sexualities education resources that may be useful for future scholars and sexualities educators seeking to study or use them. I elaborate on the implications of the framework in the next section.

It also points to vlogs being potential sites of rape culture, with some vloggers and audience members deploying harmful discourses against women and survivors. In this manner, the findings support a large body of work pointing to online spaces as potential sites of rape culture (Banet-Weiser, 2018; Powell & Henry, 2017; Keller, Mendes, & Ringrose, 2018; Stubbs-Richardson, Rader, & Cosby, 2018; Sills et al., 2016; Zaleski, Gundersen, Baes, Estupinian, & Vergara, 2016).

Conceptualizing youth participation in YouTube vlogs spaces on sexual consent. One way in which this study adds to the scholarship is related to youth activism and advocacy in online spaces (Mendes, Ringrose, & Keller, 2019; Rentschler, 2014), as it provides much needed insight into YouTubers' practices raising awareness about, and advocating for personal and social change related to, sexual consent and sexual violence. Moreover, this research supports existing theory around YouTubers and their engagement in social semiotics work within a semiotic social space (Caron, 2017); however, my study is unique in that it looks at the work of specific YouTubers (my sample of vloggers who produced and disseminated sexual consent related media), their videos (about sexual consent and sexual assault), and their semiotic choices from a sexual violence lens.

Finally, more broadly, Framework 1 also contributes to debates around youth participation in online spaces by supporting the merit of conceptualizing YouTube media

and youth participation as ‘semiotic social space’ (Gee, 2005b), which I discussed in Chapter 7. This framework outlines the importance of approaching youth participation in YouTube sexual consent vlogs through this flexible lens because as demonstrated, YouTubers engaging in these discourses come from different backgrounds, use varied approaches to vlogging about sexual consent, and produce media with different intents. While confirming the usefulness of a social semiotics framework to understand youth YouTube practices online (Caron, 2017), the framework also accentuates how audiences contribute to ‘vlogs spaces’ and the sexual discourses within them. This study briefly examined their participation in this space, finding that audience comments can both support and conflict with the intended messages of vlogs. For this reason, their inclusion in the conceptualization of YouTube vlogs as social semiotics spaces for sexualities education may be important.

Framework 2

Informing a gap in literature on YouTube vlogs and vlog-making for sexualities education. Chapters 1 and 2 point into the issues affecting school-based sexualities education and postsecondary sexual consent education, which suggest a need to reimagine how sexual consent is taught. Some scholars (e.g. Lamb, 2010; Trimble, 2009) argue for a critical sexualities education that moves beyond clinical and even comprehensive approaches to teaching sexual health, towards one that invites youth critical thinking and seeks to empower them. The practice of deconstructing and making media offers such opportunities in sexualities education. However, while scholars do examine

YouTube in other classroom contexts (Akagi, 2008; Jones & Cuthrell, 2011; Hung, 2011; Manduley et al., 2018; Sherer & Shea, 2011), few have investigated the potential of watching and making YouTube videos and vlogs to teach about sexual health topics like sexual consent. This study addresses this gap in scholarship and contributes to the field of sexualities and YouTube education by offering complex picture of youth views on the benefits and challenges of working with vlogs and vlogging in sexualities education.

Framework 2 offers unique insight into youth perceptions of YouTube for sexualities education, as previous scholarship has focused on perceptions of YouTube for other topics or centered on researchers' (vs youth) theorizations of the potential of the platform. I found that different, intersecting factors impacted participants' views of YouTube vlogs and vlogging for sexualities education, including perceptions of the platform, the genre, of the self, and of media/vlog-making. The framework sheds light on the importance of considering youth perceptions of risk when watching and making vlogs, which were grounded in participants' feelings of vulnerability and concerns around communicating about sexual consent. This knowledge contributes greatly to the fields of sexualities education and art-based methodologies, where encouraging youth media-making is often framed as an empowering practice (Mahadev, 2015; Milne, Mitchell, & De Lange, 2012).

Findings from Framework 2, and my evaluation of the workshop, bring to light positive perceptions of YouTube vlogs and vlog-making for learning and for empowerment; yet, the concerns around risk in this context suggest that youth are cautious

about this approach. I recognize that Framework 2 is limited, in that it reflects the viewpoints of a small number of participants (undergraduate and graduate students in Montreal) taking a university YouTube vlog and vlogging-related sexual consent workshop, however I believe that findings within and across categories offer guiding points to practitioners interested in this approach. The emphasis on risk in this framework can also help orient researchers who are investigating particularly contentious topics (e.g. sexuality) and/or working with vulnerable populations.

Evaluation of the workshop

My third research question inquired about the media education-based sexual consent workshop specifically. Chapters 6 and 7 reflect that participants were mostly satisfied with the workshop; they reported learning about sexual consent, media-making, and YouTube, and expressed interest in making and watching vlogs and videos to investigate the topic. However, participants expressed a desire to examine and discuss the complexities of consent in ways that may exceed the time allotted in university consent workshops. And while vlogs offered a medium through which to open dialogue, it was not entirely feasible to engage in critical discussions within limited time frames. Moreover, while media-making practices are enjoyable strategies for learning about consent and other topics, there was also significant differences between the types of media young people enjoy. To some participants, the workshop was empowering and inspired them to communicate about sexual consent in different contexts; however, no one felt compelled to make and disseminate more vlogs. Their feedback contributed to the development of a workshop framework (Appendices J and M), which could provide a foundation for sexualities

education scholars and educators' research and practice. However, in agreement with Guba and Lincoln (1989) that workshops (as interventions) are affected by context, I advise future researchers who wish to use my workshop framework to teach or research sexual consent through YouTube vlog and vlogging that it may not yield similar results.

While it was not the original intent of this study, my evaluation feedback also brought attention to wider issues affecting consent education programming that the students in my study perceived as barriers not only to my workshop and approach, but to consent education in general. Their insight into the lack of time to properly address sexual consent, the absence of male participants, and choice of content echoes some of the larger criticisms of sexual consent education explored in Chapters 1, 2, and 6. These have important implications for practice, which I share in the next section.

Implications of the Study

I summarize here the implications for research and practice that arose from this study and may be useful to sexualities educators, curriculum-makers and institutions concerned about sexual consent education.

Practical Implications

Improving sexual consent education. In the context of this study, the incorporation of vlogs led to divided reactions; while participants enjoyed learning by watching and making YouTube vlogs and videos, several challenges (i.e., disliking making vlogs, lack of time, concerns regarding dissemination) suggest that there needs to be more

research to understand how to, and even whether to, effectively incorporate this approach in postsecondary consent education. These findings further confirm the necessity for sexualities educators and researchers to practice critical thinking, be flexible, and show empathy when asking young people to participate in media-making.

Feedback around the lack of time, the desire to explore sexual consent in more depth, and the absence of male participants make it difficult to critically and meaningfully engage with the topic. This feedback was reminiscent of the criticisms I have heard in past workshops. Yet, universities have few alternatives to deliver sexualities education on campus. This was another reason that I used workshops as a context in my study: I wanted to replicate the reality in North American campuses when investigating my approach. Nevertheless, the implications of this finding suggest a major point: administrators need to consider better ways to deliver sexualities education in higher education that could help reach a better variety of students and provide more space to untangle sexual consent and sexual violence in all their complexity. Participants in my study felt strongly that even innovative approaches like the one we tried would not work if postsecondary institutions do not heed these concerns. As Quebec moves forward with “Bill 151: An Act to prevent and fight sexual violence in higher education institutions” (introduced to the National Assembly in 2017), the identification of these barriers to effective sexual consent education might help inform future educational initiatives. Bill 151 calls for mandatory sexual consent education across all universities and colleges in Quebec by September 1st 2019. As institutions scramble to put into effect new initiatives, the workshop framework and the

larger concerns around sexual consent education could provide some guidance in their work and draw attention to barriers they should avoid.

To scholars interested in taking this work forward, I recommend using and evaluating my workshop design and the approach again. Despite the varied opinions on vlogging and vlogs in general, the workshop itself still received positive evaluations. The revised framework, which was adapted to participants' feedback, could continue to be adapted to different contexts. For future sexualities educators interested in developing the workshop, I also offer insight into some of the topics that my participants wanted to talk about that I did not get a chance to address (see Appendix K). Their interest in other topics that emerged throughout the workshop in evaluation forms inspires one was last piece of advice: it may be useful for facilitators to inquire into youth interests prior to the workshop (e.g., through an email sent to registered participants; during the class before).

Vlogs and the need for critical media literacy skills. This study provides a unique perspective of youth participation and semiotic work in YouTube vlogs on sexual consent. In some ways, the youth vlogs in my study seemingly addressed the issues affecting university sexual consent education, and are in some ways addressing gaps in school and university-based sexualities education. While universities educational resources on consent are currently critiqued for their simplicity and their entrenchment in legal discourse that fails to capture how youth really communicate, vlogs potentially offer youth more engaging, personal, complex, and change-oriented educational resources grounded in the realities of people their age.

However, my findings are not uncritically celebratory. Even within vloggers' discourses about consent and sexual violence, narratives, use of examples, and humorous approaches, they also sometimes offered oversimplified perspectives of consent that fail to acknowledge the complexity of sexual violence and communication in relationships. Moreover, when there was disagreement about current framings of consent, mainly related to affirmative consent and drunk consent, vloggers' criticisms were couched in arguments relying on rape myths around false accusations and survivors, and within negative rhetoric of feminisms. The absent voices in my sample – from people of color, from people with disability, from Indigenous people, about LGBTQ-specific experiences- also reassert that these spaces may not be fully inclusive, nor democratic. The diversity of interpretations and political undertones expressed by vloggers in my sample, the missing voices, and the sometimes-problematic rhetoric around sexual violence suggest that while informative, not all the vlogs paint a complete, or similar, picture of what is consent and what is sexual violence. By no means do these criticisms suggest that these are 'bad' sources of sexualities education. However, I believe that this study highlights the need for more critical media literacy skills that will effectively prepare them to consume, critique, and participate in sexualities-related YouTube vlogs.

These were also are contentious spaces of learning because young people, particularly women and girls, potentially face considerable barriers to participation such as the risk of violence and trolling. While there was not a large amount of violent or problematic responses in my sample, they still emerged in some videos, specifically those produced by women, and they represented a significant barrier to participation with most

women in my study. Again, this points to a need to intersect sexualities education and critical media literacies to effectively participate in these spaces. Such an approach may aid young people in two ways, by 1) identifying how some spaces online may be more harmful than others and providing them with strategies to avoid this harm when participating in these spaces, and 2) by addressing potential perpetrators of online violence, trolling, or problematic participation by encouraging healthy online participation.

Accordingly, I hope that this research contributes to arguments and scholarship supporting the intersection of media education and sexualities education.

Vlog making for sexualities education. This study's findings around vlog making can hopefully inform other practitioners' teaching practices and choices of activities. My quest to understand whether vlog-making would improve sexual learning experiences and agency to promote change in a media education-oriented, critical sexualities framework revealed several hurdles to vlog-making and dissemination related to risk and preference, and the larger constraints of workshops in higher education.

The practical implications of these findings are two-fold. I propose that sexualities educators and researchers who may want to take a different road to avoid concerns around vulnerability and to cater to students/participants' preferences do the following:

1. While suggesting vlog-making in your workshop, encourage students to try alternative genres if they are uncomfortable;
2. Use a participatory approach to media-making and dissemination;
3. Disseminate via an alternative platform;

4. Produce and disseminate under an umbrella group or institution to lift some of the responsibility and risk from participants' shoulders.

Second, this study highlights the importance of 'checking in' with participants when employing media-making tools and encouraging activism and awareness-raising. Inquiring into youth personal relationships and preferences with a social media platform and the genre is a potentially relevant step for critical pedagogues seeking new ways to safely and critically integrate youth media-making and dissemination practices in their classroom, workshops, or campus activities. In a surprising twist, I realized Framework 2, beyond being useful for categorizing and understanding the complex feelings around using YouTube vlogs as sexualities education, may offer a useful evaluation tool for using media approaches in this context. The evaluation tools revealed enthusiasm around the workshop, but it was through seeking out youth perceptions and determining this framework of key categories that represent their feelings around the platform and practice, that I was able to untangle some of the issues related to vulnerability. I believe that sexualities educators may benefit from shaping their evaluation tools on the categories outlined in Framework 2 to capture their students' feelings and concerns.

Research Implications

Pursuing research on YouTube. My analysis offers a glimpse at the education and advocacy work taking place on YouTube, but I urge scholars to continue to investigate these spaces so that we develop a stronger understanding of youth participation in YouTube spaces related to sexual consent and sexual violence. With a plethora of vlogs available

online and new YouTube videos and vloggers appearing daily, I would urge researchers to look at a larger and different sample of vlogs.

While recognizing the limits of generalizability in this study, I believe that Framework 1's broader categories and identified properties (see diagram in Chapter 4) could potentially guide other sexualities education scholars interested in the study of sexual discourses and participation on YouTube and other social media platforms. As I note in my methodology, I used Kress' Multimodal Social Semiotics framework as a guiding tool in this study. From a methodological perspective, I agree with Caron (2017) that this was a useful tool to develop a better understanding of the semiotic work and the agency of young people. Framework 1 varies slightly, maintaining the broad categories of Kress's framework – Discourse/Ideational, Content, and Affect- but also emphasizing the relationships between these categories in sexual consent vlogs and with YouTube audiences. The relationship with audiences confirmed the importance, in the context of this study, to create a framework of the semiotic work that effectively considered the importance of their presence. While I did not extensively engage with audience comments, I found that expanding beyond the study of the vlog alone to include the comments, as well as the general context of the vlog, provided a more inclusive look at the ways in which sexual discourses emerge on YouTube vlog pages and at participation. Reiterating what I said in Chapter 7, I believe that the study of YouTube as a 'space' rather than as a media text alone, in my opinion, may be a useful approach to the study of media and participation on this platform. Moreover, the limits of space and time prevented me elaborating upon my analysis of the audiences, yet I found their responses to offer fascinating insight into

YouTube as a space for sexual discourse. Future research could examine audience engagement and their impact on the semiotic work in these spaces more profoundly.

This study's insight into the efforts at peer education and advocacy of change also raises questions about the impacts of this work on youth. My research scratched the surface of audience' responses and youth perceptions of the platform, however I contend a deeper investigation on the feelings and change these vlogs potentially inspire amongst consumers is needed to unpack how they affect attitudes and behavioral changes amongst youth. This is particularly important in light of some of the problematic or absent representations of sexual consent, survivors, and perpetrators that were identified in YouTube vlogs spaces. As I discuss in Chapter 2, sexual discourses and the ideologies underpinning influence society's treatment of sexual violence (see Chapter 2); the impacts of the discourses, positive or negative, should therefore be explored.

I also think that it may have been useful to delve further into the semiotic work in YouTube 'videos' vs. vlogs alone; workshop participants were enthusiastic about institutionally-produced YouTube media, particularly the video 'Consent as Tea'. This raised valuable questions regarding the potential of other types of YouTube 'spaces' for sexualities education, and the ways that institutions employ discourses and affect to attract audiences.

Pursuing research on YouTube for sexualities education. This research contributes to our understanding of the potential of using YouTube in sexualities education, particularly in the higher education context, by offering university-aged youth perspectives of the watching and making YouTube vlogs and videos in the context of sexualities

education. Framework 2 was a useful tool to gather perspectives of vlogs and vlogging; participants' reflections and insight reflected the importance of investigating perceptions of YouTube, vlogs, and vlog-making practices not as singular, disconnected elements, but interconnecting factors that influence how young people respond to these resources and tools in the classroom. I believe that Framework 2, while situated in such a unique context and study, may offer a useful departure point for other scholars and educators to explore YouTube and social media use and media-making in their classroom and studies. However, future studies should potentially include more male participants, as it would be interesting to see if perceptions of vlogs, vlogging, YouTube and risk resonate with the findings from this study. I also believe that it may be useful for scholars to seek out perspectives from youth outside of school contexts. While this study drew mainly from university students, it would be interesting to see how the experiences of individuals outside formal education spaces might feel about YouTube vlogs and their capacity to inform about sexuality.

The feedback in my study also indicated that youth were cautious about vlogs and vlogging in sexualities education, however they were much more receptive and enthusiastic about other forms of media production that interested them and made them feel safer. Following this finding, it may be relevant for future research on YouTube for sexual consent education to consider alternative approaches to media making (e.g., photovoice and participatory video) that are not vlogs.

Limitations

I also would like to share some of the limitations I faced and considerations for researchers and educators interested in pursuing this work. The first barrier to my research was the limited access to YouTube participants. The enthusiasm I read about youth participation online and their activism meant I expected a stronger response to my call for interviews. However, YouTubers may have been disinterested, or wary of my role as a researcher. I would encourage future researchers to establish a presence in the community beforehand; either by making their own vlogs by using the wide array of social networks to communicate with and befriend other vloggers.

When referring to my sample in the writing of my findings, I struggled with a second issue: the ethical use and reporting of findings related to material produced by youth and shared on the web. I found that my position as an online researcher made me somewhat of a *voyeur* and *lurker*, where I observed and analyzed without the knowledge of many of my study participants (Gerber et al., 2017, p.65) However, I felt reassured by extensive discussions with the Ethics Office at McGill and with scholars in my field, who confirmed that YouTube vlogs are considered part of the public domain and therefore can be studied and reported on without obtaining permission from the producers. Nonetheless, this initial discomfort motivated me to be careful when studying and reporting the data, and to remain faithful to the voices and characteristics of the YouTubers and the vlogs included in my work.

Third, the ambitious design of my methodology means that I collected a wide assortment of data, particularly during my analysis of YouTube vlogs. Unfortunately, this resulted in a lack of space to communicate the voices, media strategies, and audience responses to the full extent and depth that I would have liked. I look forward to being able to do so in future publications.

Fourth, while participatory video screenings offer opportunities to effect social change when communities, policy-makers and researchers become audiences, I was not able to screen these videos outside of our workshops or post them online. I had concerns about my participants' confidentiality, since vlogs typically require producers to show their faces. Moreover, the ethics office at McGill expressed additional concerns over the risks of posting YouTube media on sexuality topics online, and the permanency of online material (should participants have wanted to withdraw from the study). The discussion of dissemination, which I approach in my discussion of findings, suggest that even with ethical approval, showing videos outside the workshop may have proven difficult anyways due to the subject matter and participants' vulnerabilities.

Finally, in both workshops, I lacked male representation. This was identified by my participants in the first workshop as a barrier to consent education in universities. However, I recognize this as a sign of a larger cultural issue, with male students often resistant to consent education classes and workshops (Rick, Utley, Janke, & Moldoveanu, 2010). I would have liked to include more males in this study, and encourage researchers in this area to make additional efforts to attract this population in their workshops.

Final Thoughts

I began this story rather wide-eyed, with all the certainty that my study would illuminate our understandings of YouTube and YouTubers' vlogs about sexual consent as sexualities education resources. However, as my journey through data collection, analysis and write up ends, I am persuaded that a lot more work needs to be done in this area. I believe that social media and youth are both instrumental to the sexualities education of 21st century youth, therefore we need to dig deeper in these spaces and their practices.

The most challenging part of this research was realizing that using media making in sexualities education with the hopes of encouraging young people to change their community by disseminating their videos, was not the best idea. I learnt from my participants the importance of taking two steps back when suggesting activist-oriented type work in the contentious domain of sexual violence and sexual consent. My framework and findings accentuate the importance of looking at different facets and insights into vlogs and vlogging, before using these in the classroom. However, I look forward to more studies on the intersections of media education and of sexualities education; after all, the online landscape has a plethora of texts and practices that are worthy of exploring.

Last but not least, as I encourage new and seasoned scholars to engage in different areas of research related to sexual violence, I bring a message of caution and hope. This work was fueled by emotional labor I had not expected when I proposed my project. In six years, as I untangled my evolving feminisms and delved into the field of sexual violence research, I unmasked my own histories and relationships in illuminating yet often troubling

ways, which came at a hefty personal cost. In addition, I encountered moments of great discouragement, wondering whether we could ever truly dismantle a rape culture. My advice when embarking in this type of research is to treat yourself kindly, and take the time to unpack your feelings consistently and with people who are well-equipped and willing to listen. While anti-sexual violence education still has a way to go, I do sincerely believe that the growing (or at least more visible) amounts of scholars, activists, organizations, teachers, artists, and young people rallying to talk about sexual violence and reimagining a world with equality and justice, means that we are a step closer to a better tomorrow.

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Appendix A: Ethics approval



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Research Ethics Board III Certificate of Ethical Acceptability of Research Involving Humans

REB File #: 105-0816

Project Title: Cultivating consent: a participatory project with digital youth learning about, and advocating for, sexual consent through vlogging

Principal Investigator: Chloe Krystyna Garcia **Department:** Integrated Studies in Education

Supervisors: Prof. Shaheen Shariff
Prof. Christian Ehret

Approval Period: October 13, 2016 –October 12, 2017

The REB-III reviewed and approved this project by full board review in accordance with the requirements of the McGill University Policy on the Ethical Conduct of Research Involving Human Participants and the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct For Research Involving Humans.

Lynda McNeil
Associate Director, Research Ethics

-
- * All research involving human participants requires review on at least an annual basis. A Request for Renewal form should be submitted 2-3 weeks before the above expiry date. Research cannot be conducted without a current ethics approval.
 - * When a project has been completed or terminated, a Study Closure form must be submitted.
 - * Unanticipated issues that may increase the risk level to participants or that may have other ethical implications must be promptly reported to the REB. Serious adverse events experienced by a participant in conjunction with the research must be reported to the REB without delay.
 - * Modifications must be reviewed and approved by the REB before they can be implemented.
 - * The REB must be promptly notified of any new information that may affect the welfare or consent of participants.
 - * The REB must be notified of any suspension or cancellation imposed by a funding agency or regulatory body that is related to this project.
 - * The REB must be notified of any findings that may have ethical implications or may affect the decision of the REB.

(Amendments and extensions not included, but there were some)

Appendix B: Profiling the vlogs

Please note that the information below was collected in June 2018 and has likely changed since then. Where there are no hyperlinks, the vlogs were removed at the time of this study.

#	Vlogger(s)	Type of vlogger *based on their descriptions *celebrity over 15000	Gender -as perceived by the researcher	Length of Video (please note these sometimes vary by seconds on YouTube)	Video Title and Link (when available)	Views	Dislikes	Likes	Comments	Description Summary
1	LifeOfAGay/Alex Naquin	Celebrity vlogger (over 15,000 subscriptions) Channel based on their life and opinions (various topics)	M	03:02:00	Sexual Assault & Consent (2017)	779	1	105	21	This vlogger speaks to the camera, including only minor editing in his vlog (music). He addresses the topic of sexual assault, focusing his talk on pornography. He also advocates for saying no.
2	Blair	Channel based on opinions (various topics) (0- 50 subscriptions)	F	07:52:00	Let's Talk: Consent (2016) (Recently changed to Consent & Coercion)	97	0	4	1	Opera Hippy edited her vlog to include sounds and a colored screen. Seated on her couch, this vlogger focuses her discussion on sexual

										violence in the media and sexual assault.
3	Shades of Mindfall	Non-specific (0-50 subscriptions)	F	06:15:00	Defining Consent and Sexual Assault (2015)	57	0	0	0	The background of a dimly bedroom looms behind this vlogger, who uses little editing outside the addition of music. She discloses an incidence of sexual violence, and proceeds to untangle sexual assault and sexual consent.
4	MarissakWood	Making music (subscriptions n/a)	F	04:22:00	Rape, Consent, ETC ...(2016)	64	0	5	1	This vlogger used no editing in her vlog, and focused her discussion on a recent incident related to sexual violence that involved allegations against a famous YouTuber. She addressed sexual consent, and critiqued responses to the incident, the victim, and the perpetrator.
5	Venaloid	Celebrity vlogger (over 15,000 subscriptions) Channel based	M	12:34:00	Mutually Drunk Sex (2015)	8140	11	362	124	This vlogger uses minor editing, and some graphics, to talk about sexual consent and drinking. He expresses concerns

		on opinions (various topics)								over double standards related to men and perpetration of sexual violence, and reacts to media that promotes double-standards.
6	Meghan Hughes	Celebrity YouTuber (over 400,000 subscriptions) various topics- beauty, fashion, positivity, etc.	F	12:01:00	LET'S TALK ABOUT CONSENT BIG SIS ADVICE MEGHAN HUGHES (2016)	76633	56	9K	1334	Meghan talks about consent in her video, and expresses support towards survivors. Her video includes an emotional testimonial. She also critiques political and university climates. Her vlog uses a thumbnail at the beginning, on-screen wording, and music to communicate to her viewers
7	shoeonhead	Celebrity vlogger- (over 1million subscriptions) Comedic social commentary and sharing opinions.	F	07:56:00	consent (2015)	723278	793	37K	7424	Shoeonhead's video is a vlog; however she also invites a 'guest' with whom she performs short, comedic skits to make her point, and uses various imagery, voiceovers, and some music. This vlogger talks about sexual consent and affirmative consent laws. Her vlogs

										offers some critique of the way sexual consent and sexual violence is framed in North American society.
8	Dion Yorkie	Celebrity vlogger (over 800,000 subscriptions) Sharing opinions	M	04:01:00	Consent! (2015)	9965	5	1K	205	This vlogger performs slam poetry that addresses rape myths and stereotypes, as well as consent. Their vlog has been edited to include pop up messaging, music and flashing colors.
9	How to Adult	Edutainment channel (over 250,000 subscriptions) vlogger is a celebrity sex ed vlogger invited as a guest speaker (over 500,000 subscriptions)	F	02:48:00	Sexual Consent 101 (ft. Hannah Witton) (2015)	29322	164	900	205	This popular vlogger is a guest on this channel, however the background reflects a usual space from which she vlogged at the time. Against a faded background of fairy lights, Hannah talks about sexual consent. Her video has some minor editing, including a thumbnail and scene splicing.
10	Just between us	Celebrity vloggers (over 700,000 subscriptions)	FF	03:29:00	What is consent? (2015)	248626	46	7K	463	This pair of vloggers operate a channel together, with a talk-show style setting for their vlog. They use

		Comedic duo								some scene splicing, and a thumbnail at the beginning. Their talk consists of a humorous discussion of sexual consent.
11	Allie Tricaso	Vlogger (over 20,000 subscriptions) Songs about gender, sex, etc.	F	03:35:00	Consent// Song (2016)	7253	19	820	162	This vlogger plays the guitar and sings about sexual consent and sexual assault in her vlog. Some other minor editing includes writing on screen.
12	new green shoe	Vlogger (over 7,000 subscriptions) Opinions about various topics	M	12:55:00	Consent is key (2015)	1607	1	156	36	New green shoe discussed victim-blaming, sexual consent, and rape culture in his vlog. He used minor editing techniques, including splicing, changing screen colors, including writing on the screen and using a thumbnail.
13	Blake Steven	Vlogger (over 30,000 subscriptions) Fashion and music	M	06:24:00	Consent (2015)	20929	12	1K	81	Speaking to the camera with a white kitchen and entrance in the background, Blake speaks about a recent event related to sexual violence allegations against a YouTuber. He critiques responses to the incident, the victim,

										and the perpetrator. His vlog also discusses sexual consent. He uses some splicing as well.
14	Rantswers	Vlogger (over 3,000 subscriptions) Opinions about various topics	M	17:15:00	Bearing asks about consent (2015)	1249	3	90	107	This vlogger addresses sexual consent in the context of intoxication. He speaks about the double-standard against men regarding perpetration of sexual violence in cases where both parties are drinking. He also strongly reacts to media that promotes double-standards. This vlogger incorporates music, other media and an introductory thumbnail.
15	Geony Rucker	Vlogger (0- 50 subscriptions) Sexual violence education	F	02:54:00	Drunk consent? (2015)	275	0	0	23	Geony's vlog addresses sexual assault, sexual consent, and drinking. Her vlog was not edited.
16	Jack and Dean	Comedians on YouTube (over 600,000 subscriptions)	MM	03:23:00	Consent (2014)	1398209	762	76K	4335	Jack and Dean are two popular vloggers who created this music video to talk about sexual consent and bystander intervention. While this video is not a standard vlog, I included it in this

										sample because it is the product of vloggers and was recommended by participants.
17	Andrew Quo	Vlogger (over 300,000 subscriptions) Opinions about various topics	M	03:14:00	Why Consent Doesn't Matter (2014)	112919	187	5.8K	380	This vlogger addresses a recent case of sexual violence involving a YouTuber. He explores the concept of sexual assault, and also critiques the perpetrator. The vlog includes some graphics and music as well.
18	Jenna	Not provided (interview participant)	F	08:04:00	Jenna's vlog (2017)	N/A	0	8	7	Jenna's vlog addresses various rape myths. She uses some splicing and writing on the screen.
19	Harriet	Not provided (interview participant)	F	18:23:00	Harriet's vlog (2016)	N/A	0	1	0	Harriet's vlog featured her reaction to a film about sexual violence. She also discussed victim-blaming and the university climate. No editing was used.
20	Leia	Not provided (interview participant)	F	08:31:00	Leia's vlog (2015)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Leia described sexual consent and sexual assault, focusing on the treatment of the latter in society. Her editing strategies included some splicing and music.

21	Gaby Dunn	Vloggers (same as vlog 10 but different channel) (over 95,000 subscriptions) General topics	FF	06:08:00	A SEXY GUIDE TO SEXUAL CONSENT FT. ASH HARDELL (2017)	39252	45	3.2K	248	This vlogger and her friend are the same duo at 'Just Between Us', but this video was featured on a different channel. They discuss consent and bodily autonomy. Their vlog includes some minor editing, with words appearing on the screen.
22	Marina Estrella	Vlogger (over 2000 subscriptions) Sharing opinions about various topics (lifestyle)	F	06:45:00	Let's Talk About Consent #chatswithmarina (2017)	247	0	11	2	Talking to the camera against a white background, and clad in black and white herself, Marina discusses sexual consent and sexual assault. She uses some splicing and words on her screen.
23	Shaynainshambles	Vlogger (over 200 subscriptions) Opinions about content ranging from art to advocacy	F	05:42:00	Climax of Consent 5 Secrets to Safe Sex (2018)	76	2	4	7	Shayna's vlog pertained to safe sex, which she then relates to sexual consent. Her vlog included some minor editing, and words appearing on the screen.
24	Lauren Hogan	Vlogger (over 500 subscriptions)	F	04:57:00	Lets talk about consent (2018)	256	1	4	5	With fairy lights lighting up her background, this vlogger engaged in

		about various subjects like body image and relationships								discussion about sexual consent and communication. She uses some editing techniques, including splicing, a faded background, and media images.
25	Abby Williamson	Vlogger (over 25000 subscriptions) About various topics	F	07:09:00	Let's talk about consent (2016)	841	6	79	18	Sipping her drink in her bedroom, Abby talks about rape culture, sexual consent, sexual assault, and notably, Donald Trump. Her production strategies include splicing and music.
26	Grapefruit_spoon	Vlogger (over 200 subscriptions) General topics, sexualities education	F	10:42:00	Pillow Talk ep. 01 Consent (2017)	63	3	59	2	Seated on her red couch, this vlogger explores topics such as sexualities education, sexual consent and communication. She relied on minor editing techniques such as adding wording to the screen and incorporating music.
27	Cassie Rattray	Vlogger (over 1,000 subscriptions)	F	07:15:00	Sex & Consent (2018)	357	2	11	6	Cassie's vlog explores sexual consent. She uses some splicing.

		Beauty, consent and sexuality topics								
28	Laci Green	Vlogger (over 1million subscriptions) Sex edutainment	F	05:55:00	Wanna have sex consent 101 (2014)	3085914	16K	29K	16012	Laci Green's video included a varied mix of techniques- including music, splicing, background color changes, writing on screen. She discusses sexual consent and sexual assault.

Appendix C: Workshop 1 Participants' Profiles

Pseudonym	Age	Program	Level	Gender/ pronouns	Previous Consent Education	Previous Education about using or producing online media	Involvement in activities that may lead to social change
Megan	20	Education	undergrad	female, she/her	college, media (video, articles), family	self-taught	<i>[left blank]</i>
Pudding	21	Education	undergrad	female, she/her	media (Facebook videos), friends	yes and self-taught	I spend summers volunteering at a child/adolescent psychiatric center and at a ranch that saves injured + neglected animals
Maria	22	Education	undergrad	female, she/her	college (rez project, gender and sexuality courses, religion and sexuality courses), media (sex + Laci Green), family (not exactly one I rely on), friends, partner	yes, a little in media class	not at this time
Paloma	25	Computer science	graduate	female, she/her	family, friends, partner	self-taught	University animal rights association
Mathilda	18	Political science	undergrad	female, she/her	Workshop- race project	self-taught	no

Amalie	19	Economics	undergrad	female, she/her	workshop (rez), media (articles)	<i>[left blank]</i>	yes at school
Juliette	22	Education	undergrad	female, she/her	intro to feminist and social issues at mcgill, partner	yes, media course in education	no
Pace	21	Education	undergrad	female, she/her	media (text messaged a hotline), family, friends, partner	yes, media course in education	Soccer team
Artemisia	25	art history	graduate	female, she/her	elementary and high school, course in college-university called human sexuality, media (articles on sexuality and consent, feminist podcast, a sex advice podcast), friends, partner,	no	campaigning for political candidates, protesting, volunteering at a soup kitchen
MJ	19	Psychology	undergrad	female, she/her	Residence Workshop	self-taught	culture clubs
Katie	19	International developmen t studies	undergrad	female, she/her	workshop (rez project, McGill frosh leader training, panel on rape culture and sexual violence @ community engagement), partner (not really some good stuff, just mansplaining), other	self-taught	amnesty international

					(unspeakable things by laurie penny, bad feminist by roxane gay, both had interesting approaches/information)		
Charlotte	21	Education	undergrad	female, she/her	sex ed workshop	yes, media course in education	no

Appendix D: Consent Form Workshop

Workshop participants consent form

Researchers: Chloe Krystyna Garcia, PhD candidate in the department of Integrated Studies in Education, at McGill University. Can be contacted by phone at 514-802-0261 or email at chloe.garcia@mail.mcgill.ca

Co-Supervisors: Dr. Shaheen Shariff, department of Integrated Studies in Education. Tel: (514) 398-4527 Ext. 094764. Email: shaheen.shariff@mcgill.ca
Dr. Christian Ehret, department of Integrated Studies in Education. Tel: (514) 398-4527 Ext. 089777. Email: Christian.ehret@mcgill.ca

Title of Project: Cultivating consent: A participatory project with digital youth learning about, and advocating for, sexual consent through vlogging

Sponsor(s): Fonds de Recherche du Québec- Société et culture

Purpose of the Study: You are being asked to participate in a study on the uses of media education and vlogging to teach about sexual consent. More specifically, I will be developing and participating in workshops with you, to better understand how you learn from media on sexual consent. I will investigate how the analysis and production of videos impact your experiences learning about sexual consent. This will allow me to establish how vlogging may be a relevant learning tool in sexualities education.

Information about participation : I am using a methodology called 'participatory research', which means you will have an active say in different aspects of the project. Therefore, participants are asked to commit approximately 8-10 hours in total, tentatively divided as follows:

- ☐ 1 hr group meeting.
- ☐ 2-4 workshops that will last approximately 2 hrs each.*
- ☐ Approximately 1-2 hours of work making your vlog outside the workshops (this can range from a 60 second to 5 minute video)
- ☐ Optional: input on the research may be provided at a later date. The researcher will contact you by email with this option. You do not have to be involved at this point if you choose not to.

*This may be subject to change based on participants' feedback in the first meeting.

Study Procedures: The study is divided in three phases, and will require a commitment of 8-10 hours.

Meeting 1: All participants will be meeting at an agreed upon location with the remainder of study participants. The group discussion and activities will last approximately 1 hour, and be video recorded. During this meeting, we will discuss the project as a whole.

Workshops: Following the first meeting, once I have taken into account your feedback, I will schedule the workshops, which should take approximately 2-3 hours each. They will also be video recorded. All participants and myself will be present at these workshops. The workshop itself will involve the following:

- ☐ Talking about various aspects of sexual consent
- ☐ Watching and discussing youth-made YouTube videos on sexual consent
- ☐ Discussing the production of a vlog on sexual consent (length and specific content to be decided by the participants in the workshop). I will recommend using cell phone videos, also called cell films, as a way to create the vlogs.
- ☐ Filling out reflective journals after workshops (this can be done in a provided journal, or through an audio/video mobile phone recording).
- ☐ Watching participants' vlogs and sharing our experiences
- ☐ Review the workshop and vlogging as a sex education tool

You will be asked to create a vlog (60s to 5min) using your cell phone or tablet outside of the workshops. These can be edited or not. The estimated time to create these videos is an hour. All of the participants' journals and vlogs will be handed over to the researcher for this study. Research findings for this study will be included in my dissertation, and be disseminated through journal publications and conference presentations.

Voluntary Participation: Participation in this study is voluntary, and you are free to withdraw at any point in time or refuse to participate in certain parts of the study. This may include declining to answer a question or not wanting to discuss certain topics. Please note that the \$75 compensation fee is provided to each person for their participation. All participants are eligible for the final \$100 gift card draw. Should you choose to withdraw, your input in the focus groups and journals, your vlog and any mention of you in my observation notes will be omitted and destroyed where possible, unless you give permission otherwise.

I reserve the right to terminate your participation in the study without compensation if your participation in the workshops causes harm to other participants. Harmful behavior can include distasteful or offensive remarks, physical violence, derisive laughter at others' perspectives or feelings, or overly sexual comments towards other participants that fall outside the realm of our workshop.

Your participation in this study will be confidential. The information you share in your reflective journals (written, audio, or video), in your vlogs and in your workshops, will be kept confidential by myself and other participants in the study.

Please note that in order to ensure your confidentiality, the researcher will collect the reflective journals (written, audio, or video) and vlogs for analysis at the end of the last workshop. Participants are required not to share, publish, or show their journals and vlogs outside the workshops, during or after the study, to ensure that their identities and those of other participants remain confidential. The words expressed in participants' journals (written, audio, or video) and in the vlogs will be transcribed and analyzed and may be quoted in the research and future publications. However, the physical, visual or auditory journals themselves and the vlogs will not be shown or played to anyone but the researcher outside the workshops.

The video recordings of the workshops may inform the researcher's notes, but will not be shown to anyone else. The transcripts of these videos will be analyzed, and some information may be quoted in the research and future publications. The transcripts, journals, or researcher's notes will be kept private and in a secure locked file on my computer. A copy will also be left on a hard drive, in a locked file cabinet. If quotes from the journals, vlogs and workshop transcripts are published, the information will be provided under a pseudonym, so you will remain anonymous to people who are not involved in this study.

Potential Risks: There are few associated risks in this research. We will be discussing sexual consent, and looking at how it is portrayed in media that are created by youth between 14 and 35. All participants will play an active role in designing the workshop, so it can be adapted to the comfort level and the expectancies of all involved. As a researcher in this field, I do recognize that sometimes, talking about sexual consent can be difficult. I will be monitoring all conversations and be available for support in my capacity as the researcher and the workshop facilitator. No offensive material or discussions, understood as potentially harmful or insulting to participants, will be tolerated. You will also not be exposed to nudity or lewd acts in the videos; all videos can be found on YouTube and are created by young people seeking to inform about sexual consent.

Potential Benefits: You will have an active say in the analysis of the data in this study, and the design of the workshop. This means that you will be contributing to the development of a teaching framework that may be used in future classrooms or other learning spaces. Together, we will explore the positive and negative consequences of watching and producing vlogs on sexual consent. This will likely increase your knowledge on the impact of online media production. Moreover, I hope that these workshops will help you develop a stronger understanding of sexual consent and help you hone your overall media and digital literacies.

Compensation: You will receive \$75 as a compensation fee for your participation, and be eligible for the final draw for a \$100 gift card.

Questions: The researcher in this study is Chloe Garcia, and I can be contacted at chloe.garcia@mail.mcgill.ca. If you have any ethical concerns or complaints about your participation in this study, and want to speak with someone not on the research team, please contact the McGill Ethics Manager at 514-398-6831 or lynda.mcneil@mcgill.ca.

Statement of consent:

Please sign below if you have read the above information and consent to participate in this study. Agreeing to participate in this study does not waive any of your rights or release the researchers from their responsibilities. **A copy of this consent form will be given to you and the researcher will keep a copy.**

To ensure the study is being conducted properly, authorized individuals such as a member of the Research Ethics board, may have access to (your/your child's) information. By signing the consent form, you are allowing such access.

Signatures

Participant's Name (please print):

Participant's Signature:

Date:

Researcher's Signature:

Date:

In addition to agreeing to participate, I also agree to (indicate by circling answer):

-To having the three meetings/workshops video-recorded: (YES) (NO)

**please note that these videos will not be shown to anyone but the researcher. The workshops are video recorded to identify speaking participants when writing transcripts and observation notes.*

-To keeping the identities, words and actions of the other participants in my study confidential. (YES) (NO)

Participant's Name (please print):

Participant's Signature:

Date:

Researcher's Signature:

Date:

Addendum consent form (follow up with workshop participants)

Researchers: Chloe Krystyna Garcia, PhD candidate in the department of Integrated Studies in Education, at McGill University. Can be contacted by phone at 514-802-0261 or email at chloe.garcia@mail.mcgill.ca

Co-Supervisors: Dr. Shaheen Shariff, department of Integrated Studies in Education. Tel: (514) 398-4527 Ext. 094764. Email: shaheen.shariff@mcgill.ca

Dr. Christian Ehret, department of Integrated Studies in Education. Tel: (514) 398-4527 Ext. 089777. Email: Christian.ehret@mcgill.ca

Title of Project: Cultivating consent: A participatory project with digital youth learning about, and advocating for, sexual consent through vlogging

Sponsor(s): Fonds de Recherche du Québec- Société et culture

Requested Amendment: The video you created may be played and/or partially shown through screenshots in research publications, the researcher's dissertation, and academic/educational settings (teaching, conference presentation). Only clips without the participants' or any other interviewees face will be played and/or screenshotted. Your real name will not be associated with the video you produced and/or any associated images.

Potential Risks: If you select the option to have the video played, there is a minimal chance that audiences in research and educational settings may recognize your voice.

Please highlight your selection. I have read this addendum and:

- **I agree to having screenshots of my video published or shown without my name associated to the pictures.**

YES

NO

- **I agree to having my video played for research and educational purposes without my name associated to the video.**

YES

NO

To provide consent, please respond to this email with a sentence stating that you have read and understood the information in the consent form, and agree with its terms. Please also highlight your selection above.

Appendix E: Consent Form/Follow-up Reflection and Feedback October 2018

Workshop participant/media-maker

Thank you for participating in our workshop and/or event!

I would like to gather feedback on the workshop as well as your video production process to get a sense of your learning experience. This feedback may inform my research and future publications that examine how the intersection of youth media-making and sexuality education in university and online contexts contribute to education and social change. It may also inform the development of future workshops or events that employ media-making and screening (via YouTube, on campus) to teach about sexual violence and advocate for change.

- **Your participation in this study is voluntary.** You do not have to complete this feedback form to attend the workshops or screenings.
- **Your participation in this study is anonymous.** You are asked not to write your name on the feedback form. If completing this form online, your IP addresses will not be recorded. Any comments reported in research publications or presentations will be identified with a pseudonym.

Risks associated to providing feedback are minimal, as I will take the precautions outlined above to ensure your anonymity.

If you have any questions or concerns, I can be contacted at chloe.garcia@mail.mcgill.ca. If you have any ethical concerns or complaints about your participation in this study, and want to speak with someone not on the research team, please contact the McGill Ethics Manager at 514-398-6831 or lynda.mcneil@mcgill.ca

In completing the answers below, you are agreeing to participate in this study. Please note that participation cannot be withdrawn once this anonymous form is submitted.

1. How did you feel watching and discussing the 3 YouTube videos (Just between Us vlog, Laci Green vlog, and Tea as Consent video) contributed to your learning and to the workshop? (prompts: what parts were useful, what could have went better?)
2. How did you feel that making the YouTube video contributed to your learning and to the workshop? (prompts: what parts were useful, what could have went better?)
3. Why did you choose not to make a vlog?

4. How do you feel about using YouTube videos, YouTube vlogs, and YouTube video-making as a teaching tool for consent education in university workshop/classrooms? (prompt: would it be relevant, helpful, distracting, ...)
5. Overall, how do you feel about YouTube as an online resource to learn about sexual consent and to promote social change?
6. After this workshop, do you think you might use YouTube or other media platforms to talk about consent or advocate for change? (feel free to elaborate)
7. Today's workshop reached its stated objectives (scale: Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree)
 - a. Deepen understandings about sexual consent (from personal definitions to legal), consent culture, and barriers to consent culture.
 - b. Explore how media – online media in particular- acts as both a tool to perpetuate sexual violence and provide means to promote consent culture.
 - c. Build digital and media literacy skills watching and making consent videos.
 - d. Encourage reflection about ways we can accomplish social change and promote consent culture, from personal to collective standpoints.
8. Other feedback- what would you have done differently?

Information about the researcher:

Chloe Garcia, PhD Candidate in the Faculty of Education

Supervised by:

Dr. Shaheen Shariff, department of Integrated Studies in Education. Email: shaheen.shariff@mcgill.ca

Dr. Christian Ehret, department of Integrated Studies in Education. Email: Christian.ehret@mcgill.ca

Appendix F: Consent Form Vloggers

Researchers: Chloe Krystyna Garcia, PhD candidate in the department of Integrated Studies in Education, at McGill University. Can be contacted by phone at 514-802-0261 or email at chloe.garcia@mail.mcgill.ca

Co-Supervisors: Dr. Shaheen Shariff, department of Integrated Studies in Education. Tel: (514) 398-4527 Ext. 094764. Email: shaheen.shariff@mcgill.ca

Dr. Christian Ehret, department of Integrated Studies in Education. Tel: (514) 398-4527 Ext. 089777. Email: Christian.ehret@mcgill.ca

Title of Project: Cultivating consent: A participatory project with digital youth learning about, and advocating for, sexual consent through vlogging

Sponsor(s): Fonds de Recherche du Québec- Société et culture

Purpose of the Study: You are being asked to participate in a study on vlogging and sexual consent. I am studying how young people use vlogging to learn and talk about sexual consent. The aim of this study is to gain young people's thoughts on using video production in sex education programming.

Information about participation : The first phase of my study will involve an interview with young vloggers aged 14-35 to find out about their vlogging habits.

You will be asked to answer approximately 12 questions in a 45-60 minute Skype interview. These are some topics we will talk about:

- How and why are you using vlogging to talk about sexual consent?
- How did making a vlog affect your understandings of sexual consent?
- Why is vlogging important in sex education?
- What would you recommend for if we are to use vlogging to teach about consent at school?

Study Procedures: During this phase of the study, I will be meeting with you online to discuss your vlog. Previous to the interview, I will analyze your vlog to gain a better understanding of your work and to inform my study. After our interview, I will create a summary of findings, which I will share with you in case you want to provide feedback or if you wish me to remove information. The research findings for the analysis and the interview will be included in my dissertation, and be disseminated through journal publications and conference presentations.

Voluntary Participation: Participation in this study is voluntary, and you are free to leave the study at any point in time. You can also refuse to participate in certain parts of the study. This

may include not answering a question or asking me not to include the information you gave me. A \$50 compensation fee is provided for your participation.

Your participation in this study will be confidential. Having your participation be confidential means that people will not be able to recognize you from the interview in the study, in publications or conferences. I will take steps to make sure of this, such as keeping the title of your vlog out of the interview and discourse analyses, refraining from posting pictures or show clips of the vlog, and using a pseudonym. The information you share during the recorded interview will be kept private and in a secure locked file on my computer. A copy will also be left on a hard drive, in a locked file cabinet. If I publish what you tell me in your exact words, the information will be provided under a pseudonym.

Potential Risks: There are few associated risks in this research. First, as with any data submitted over the Internet, there is a low risk of interception because of our email exchange and Skype interview. Second, part of my analysis may involve referring to content and media in your vlog. Although this will still be under a pseudonym and your vlog name will not be revealed, there is a low risk that these pieces of information could help someone search YouTube for your video. Third, we will be discussing the sexual consent information that you shared in your vlog, and your vlogging and learning experience. I know that sometimes, talking about sexual consent can be difficult. If you feel the need to stop talking about it, we can end the interview or change the subject.

Potential Benefits: You will have an active say in how youth learn from vlogging, and your input will be valuable for sex educators and curriculum developers. Your interview and the analysis of your video will help build an understanding of the potential of vlogs and vlogging for educating youth in the classrooms, and audiences online.

Compensation: You will receive a \$50 compensation fee for your participation.

Questions: The researcher in this study is Chloe Garcia, and I can be contacted at chloe.garcia@mail.mcgill.ca. If you have any ethical concerns or complaints about your participation in this study, and want to speak with someone not on the research team, please contact the McGill Ethics Manager at 514-398-6831 or lynda.mcneil@mcgill.ca.

Statement of consent:

Please sign below if you have read the above information and consent to participate in this study. Agreeing to participate in this study does not waive any of your rights or release the

researchers from their responsibilities. **A copy of this consent form will be given to you and the researcher will keep a copy.**

To ensure the study is being conducted properly, authorized individuals such as a member of the Research Ethics board, may have access to (your/your child's) information. By signing the consent form, you are allowing such access.

Signatures

Participant's Name (please print):

Participant's Signature:

Date:

Researcher's Signature:

Date:

1) In addition to agreeing to participate, I also agree to (indicate by circling answer):

-To having the interview audio recorded:

(YES)

(NO)

Participant's Name (please print):_Tasia Clemons

Participant's Signature:

Date:

Researcher's Signature:

Date:

Appendix G: Demographic Data Sheet

Let's get to know each other: participant data sheet

- 1) Name:
- 2) Preferred Pseudonym:
- 3) Age:
- 4) University:
- 5) University Program:
- 6) University Level:
- 7) Preferred Pronoun:
- 8) Gender:
- 9) Sexual Preference:
- 10) Did you receive previous education on sexual consent?
 - ☐ Elementary and/or high school
 - ☐ Course in College/University:
If so, please state which one(s)
 - ☐ Workshop:
If so, please briefly state what it was:
 - ☐ Media
If so, please describe:
 - ☐ Family
 - ☐ Friends
 - ☐ Partner
 - ☐ Other:
Please specify:
- 11) Did you ever receive education about using and/or producing online media?
 - ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No
 - ☐ Self-taught
Where?

12) Are you involved in any type of activities that may lead to social change (e.g. organizations, education, etc.?)

Appendix H: Workshop Design (Original)

	<u>Workshop 1</u>	<u>Workshop 2</u>	<u>Workshop 3</u>
Overall Aim	Introduction to consent and barriers to consent.	Using media, and media and digital literacy, to deepen understandings of consent and barriers, and to empower young people with tools for social change (YouTube vlogs).	Reflection on YouTube media as a learning resource and as a tool for social change.
Individual Objectives	<p>Participants will develop their understandings about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Sexual consent (from personal to legal perspectives) -Barriers to a culture of consent 	<p>Participants will build skills and motivation by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Learning how media and digital literacy skills can help participants develop their understandings of consent through analysis and production of video resources. -Learning how to create a video for YouTube using story boarding and media literacy skills, as a 'tool' for social change. 	<p>Participants will reflect on their learning by discussing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Their experiences using media as ways to inform and learn about consent. -Their roles in fostering a consent culture, from individual and collective standpoints.
Materials/Resources	<p>Materials:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Consent forms ➤ 15 Hilroy books ➤ Easel ➤ Poster sheets ➤ 20 markers ➤ 20 pens ➤ Water pitcher 		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Blue sticky tak <p>Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Ground rules sheet ➤ PPT that explores: ➤ Consent Definition Sheet ➤ Consent Barriers Sheet ➤ Stanford case: Three media perspectives 		
Workshop Activities	<p><u>6:45 to 7:00:</u> Each participant brainstorms on a ½ a poster paper.</p> <p><i>What is sexual consent?</i> <i>Before we start, if I asked you to make a video on consent, what would it be about?</i></p> <p><u>7:00 to 7:10:</u> Facilitator covers PPT content. Show video of Laci Green then Provide definition</p> <p><i>-Provide definition of consent and explain why it is important to talk about about legal definitions.</i> <i>-For over youth over 16: Consent must be voluntary, ongoing, informed, clear, given personally, and enthusiastic (affirmative consent). It can be retracted at any time.</i> <i>-Consent is not given when there is absence of consent, if the person is</i></p>	<p><u>6:00 to 6:15:</u> Continue conversation about barriers and change. Introduce slide highlighting the use of online media as a resource to learn and to dismantle barriers to consent culture.</p> <p><i>First, encourage them to share their ideas: How do you imagine you or others can help dismantle barriers to consent? Validate their suggestion.</i></p> <p><i>Suggest individual and collective change through online education/activism.</i> They are going to create a video that would <u>potentially</u> go online to inform others about the sexual consent topics they feel are important to address to help promote consent culture at the university level.</p> <p><i>Explain that social media like vlogs have multiple purposes:</i></p>	<p><u>6:00 to 6:30:</u> Viewings and discussions videos. Have them show each other.</p> <p>In the end: <i>What was the purpose of their video? As in, what would be the desired outcome, whether or not they chose to publish (in their terms of informing others, bringing issues to light, resisting a message, etc)</i></p> <p><u>6:30 to 7:00:</u> Review of challenges they might have felt during the production process and the outcomes they would predict. Example: YouTube as a platform, their message, producing, publishing the audiences' reactions.</p> <p><u>7:00 to 7:40:</u> Continue questions about workshop in focus group. Based on their experiences and the workshops, ask:</p>

	<p><i>incapacitated, under coercion, influenced by power dynamics as play.</i></p> <p>7:10 to 7:30: Explain that today, in spite of legal definitions and policies, consent and assault are still issues for debate. These are often reflected in media.</p> <p><i>Briefly show three examples of media around Stanford case as prompts.</i></p> <p><i>Each participant brainstorms on a ½ a poster paper for a few minutes: What are barriers to consent?</i></p> <p>7:30 to 7:50: Show the list of barriers compiled and explain that this is not a limit! For the sake of the workshop, problematize <u>social, popular and news media's role</u> in creating or perpetuating barriers to consent culture. Prompt reflection about this.</p> <p><u>Barriers revolve around:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Lack of intersectionality (LGBTQ, race, gender) -Gender stereotypes about women, men, and trans. -‘grey zones’ -hook up culture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -To inform (peer to peer education) -To offer a space for vulnerable populations, like women, LGBTQ and survivors -To react to world issues, media, etc. -To build or participate in a community. -To shift power in sexual discourses <p><i>They can also create issues:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Trolling -Harmful messages -Threats <p>6:15 to 6:30: Show definition of vlog on the screen+ have them watch an example:</p> <p><i>Definitions should be: Monologue, authentic, some editing possible.</i></p> <p><i>Show Laci Green as example. Engage group in answering:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Is it a good resource?</i> <i>Does it differ from other ways you have learnt about consent?</i> <i>Why or why not?</i> <p><i>State: Before we go into producing a video, it is important to to be critical reading and producing online material.</i></p>	<p>We looked at what consent is, and talked about the issues around the topic we see in online and offline communities, like social media and the university. We examined the importance of being critical of how media, and ourselves, talk about sexual consent and assault. We also explored how we can use the media as a tool for change.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1)How did the workshop go? <i>What went well, less well, suggestions.</i> 2)How did you feel about the approach of learning about consent topics and the ways to promote consent culture through media education? 3)Was the process of watching and making youtube videos useful to your learning about the 4)Overall, would you describe YouTube as a space for learning? What are the pros and cons? 5)Would you find this a relevant workshop in a university context, within or outside a classroom?
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	<p>-binge drinking</p> <p>-Miscommunication about desire, fear, consent, rejection.</p> <p>-Negotiation-related issues (couples)</p> <p>-Survivors' reactions to assault (fight flight and freeze)</p> <p>-Interplay of power dynamics</p> <p>-Myths about victims and perpetrators.</p> <p>-Problematic policies that are not survivor centered</p> <p>-Media (online, news, social) and how they influence how we perceive gender, etc.</p>	<p><i>Tie into previous content about how we talk about sexual consent, and larger themes like gender, race, sexuality, makes a difference.</i></p> <p>6:30 to 7:00: Go over media and digital literacy (production, representation, audience, language):</p> <p><i>Use the Media Smarts.ca framework that is stronger than Buckingham's</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Media are constructions 2. Audiences negotiate meaning 3. Media have commercial implications 4. Media have social and political implications 5. Each medium has a unique aesthetic form <p><i>Together, return to Laci Green, and re-examine the text using 5 points using media smarts prompts for each.</i></p> <p><i>Ask: whose perceptions of Laci Green changed?</i></p> <p><i>Prompt for reasons.</i></p> <p><u>PLANNING THE VIDEO</u></p>	<p>7) Do you see potential in this working for leading to change in personal or community lives?</p>
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		<p><u>7:00 to 7:15:</u> As a group, discuss and write down how to go about creating a video by answering:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -<i>What issue/topic are you targeting, and what message would you send to the university community about this issue/topic?</i> -<i>Who is your audience?</i> -<i>What are is the purpose of your video?</i> -<i>What, if any, production or linguistic tools will you use to communicate your message?</i> <p><i>State: reflect on these factors together, imagining how your message and how you communicate it might be received by audiences. This is an ongoing process when producing</i></p> <p><u>7:15-7:50:</u> Explore production process together-</p> <p><i>Resources: Brainstorm together, then individually list potential resources.</i></p> <p><i>Ethical use of media and persons:When resoruces such as stats or media are introduced, indicate they need to</i></p>	
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		<p><i>reference. They should also avoid including other stakeholders.</i></p> <p><i>Editing: Discuss, if they so choose, editing options (Splice, Movie Maker)</i> <i>If they choose to edit, what platforms are they or could they be using?</i></p> <p><i>Offer the possibilities of 'faceless videos' if vlogs make them uncomfortable.</i></p> <p><i>Storyboarding: Model example and practice storyboarding a vlog.</i></p>	
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Appendix I: Workshop Materials (reflection, activity, feedback)

Most of questions that participants were asked are listed here. Please note that extra questions came up during the workshop that are not illustrated, but may be represented in the data. Moreover, the focus group questions posted here are the original ones; however they varied slightly in conversation.

Get to know you segment- Focus group	<i>Participant introductions</i> <i>Who they are</i> <i>Why they are here</i> <i>Questions about consent form</i> <i>Discussion of workshop design and goals, and workshop expectations</i>	
		Participant name
Workshop 1 evaluation	<i>circle whether workshops reached its objectives</i> <i>Today's workshop reached its stated objectives:</i> <i>"Participants will develop their understandings about:</i> <i>-Sexual consent (from personal to legal perspectives)</i> <i>-Barriers to a culture of consent"</i>	Strongly Agree/Agree/Neutral/Disagree/Strongly Disagree

	<i>what could have been done differently</i>	
	<i>what information was new</i>	
	<i>what do they still want to know</i>	
Workshop 2 evaluation	<i>circle whether workshops reached its objectives</i>	
	<i>what could have been done differently</i>	
	<i>what information was new</i>	
	<i>what do they still want to know</i>	
Workshop 2 Media-making activity (they started this in the workshop, and could use this tool to guide them as they moved forward with their media-making)	<p><i>Preparing our video (please map changes after vlogging)</i></p> <p><i>What is the purpose of your video?</i></p> <p><i>What will be the takeaway message(s) of your video?</i></p> <p><i>Whose voices will be represented (or not)? Why?</i></p>	

	<p><i>Who is your audience?</i></p> <p><i>How might publishing on YouTube affect your message?</i></p> <p><i>What resources will you be drawing from?</i></p> <p><i>What techniques of production are you thinking of using to convey your message?</i></p> <p><i>-Tone: humoristic, friendly, serious?</i></p> <p><i>-Language: informal vs formal vocabulary? Are there terms you will be addressing, or careful to use?</i></p> <p><i>-Video Format: vlog, presentation style, music clip with signs?</i></p> <p><i>-Editing (<u>not necessary</u>): trimming clips, adding text/media, using imagery?</i></p> <p><i>-Other?</i></p> <p><i>Will you use a software? Which one.</i></p>	
Vlog reflection (completed before the third workshop)	<p><i>Vlog reflection:</i></p> <p><i>1) Did the activities and information in workshops 1 and 2 help you create your video? Why or why not?</i></p>	

	<p>2) Did your plan change when producing the video? Please elaborate on how and why.</p> <p>3) Would you publish your vlog online if you had the chance? Why or why not?</p>	
Workshop 3 evaluation and post workshop	<p>circle whether workshops reached its objectives</p> <p>Participants will build skills and motivation by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Learning how media and digital literacy can help foster a culture of consent -Learning how to develop a video for YouTube using storyboarding and media literacy skills 	Strongly Agree/Agree/Neutral/Disagree/Strongly Disagree
	what could have been done differently	
	what information was new	
	what do they still want to know	
	<p>Post-workshop reflection</p> <p>1. Now that the workshop is completed, do you feel your</p>	

	<i>understanding of consent has developed? If yes, what helped your learning? If no, what could have be better addressed in the future?</i>	
	<i>2. Do you feel that how you read, watch or produce media might change? How or why not?</i>	
	<i>3. Are your perceptions of YouTube vlogs and the YouTube platform different from when you started the workshop? How?</i>	
	<i>4. Did you feel the workshop provided you with tools and motivation to promote consent culture in your life and your community? Why or why not?</i>	
Focus Group questions (semi-structured)	<p><i>How would you feel about publishing your video on YouTube? Would you show it or share it? Why or why not?</i></p> <p><i>How did watching your peers' videos inform your understanding of consent?</i></p> <p><i>Do you think YouTube videos would help inform people about consent culture? Why or why not?</i></p>	

	<p><i>Would you find this a relevant workshop in or outside the university classroom, to teach about consent and social change?</i></p> <p><i>How did you feel about using media to learn about consent and activism? (examples, analysis using media and digital literacy, production)</i></p> <p><i>Would you describe YouTube as a good 'learning' space? What are the pros and cons?</i></p> <p><i>Are videos/vlogs a good tool for social change? What are the pros and cons? Is it useful to teach this tool to promote consent culture?</i></p> <p><i>In your opinion, what are the greatest barriers to social change, and the ways to tackle these?</i></p>	
Post workshop reflection (5-6 months later, two emails sent)	<p><i>a) In the last three months, do you feel that what you learnt in the workshop impacted in any way how you think, talk, and act (online and offline)? In other words, were there moments that</i></p>	

	<i>you found yourself thinking about or integrating the skills and knowledge from the workshops in your daily life? Please elaborate. Feel free to provide one or more examples.</i>	
	<i>b) If you answered 'yes' the above question, what elements of the workshop may have influenced you?</i>	
Vlogs (I wrote observation notes when watching the videos and workshop	<i>Video type</i>	
	<i>Responses re: video (observation of transcripts</i>	
	<i>Themes and approach taken (descriptive observation notes)</i>	

Appendix J: Workshop design (after second workshop)

<i>Let's talk about consent and consent culture! A video-making workshop</i>	
Location/age	University workshop intended for undergraduate and graduate students
Length	One 3-hr workshop (or can be divided according to parts highlighted below)
Objectives	<p>The workshop aims to accomplish the following:</p> <p>Deepen understandings about sexual consent (from personal definitions to legal), consent culture, and barriers to consent culture.</p> <p>Explore how media – online media in particular – acts as both a tool to perpetuate sexual violence and provide means to promote consent culture.</p> <p>Build digital and media literacy skills watching and making consent videos</p> <p>Encourage reflection about ways we can accomplish social change and promote consent culture, from personal to collective standpoints.</p>
Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Computer/laptop, with projector -Ground rules poster -Resource list (I recommend them to be made based on context) -Blank cardboard or paper poster size sheet (1 per participant) -Markers -Handouts (1 per participant) (see Appendix I) -Feedback forms (see Appendix I) -PowerPoint slides on USB and printed copies for each participant (see Appendix M)
Workshop set-up	<p>Before beginning the workshop, put up the ground rules poster in a visible location.</p> <p>Participants should sit in groups of 3–4 for discussion and collaborative activity.</p> <p>Prepare space for groups/individuals to break up to film vlogs/videos (within the classroom, the hallways, separate room, or outside)</p> <p>Leave list of resources and copies of the slides (Appendix M) at each seat.</p>
Steps	<p><u>Part 1 (45 minutes)</u></p> <p><u>Talk about safe(r) space (5min)</u></p> <p>Explain elements on poster and clarify rules for participants who have questions.</p> <p><u>Prompt activity: Personal definitions of sexual consent (5 minutes brainstorm)</u></p> <p>Participants write out their response to the following question: “What does consent mean to you?”</p>

Encourage them to talk amongst themselves. Once participants have written down their ideas, facilitator moves to next step, but reminds participants to keep track of these personal definitions and add to them throughout the workshop. They can also contribute ideas if we have not discussed an aspect they wrote down throughout the workshop.

Facilitator explanation of sexual violence, consent and consent culture (15 minutes)

Begin by explaining what sexual violence is (Slides 3–7). Explain that legal definitions of sexual harassment and assault vary per context, so it is important to know the definitions that apply to them.

Offer a definition of consent (Slide 8). Watch video of Laci Green to complete definition: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_EqhCp2tPss.

Discussion over barriers to consent consent culture (20 minutes)

Explain that today, in spite of legal definitions and policies, people still often misunderstand what consent means and how sexual violence manifests. We see these debates around consent and sexual violence in movements like #MeToo. Therefore, we still have strides to make to build a consent culture (show slide 7).

Ask students: What are common issues/misconceptions/myths/norms around sexual violence that contribute to victim-blaming and sexual violence, creating barriers to consent culture?

Show the list of barriers compiled (slide 10–11) and explain that this is not a limit.

Discuss any unclear points or points on which participants want to focus their discussion.

Briefly show example of media around Stanford case as examples of the debates and misunderstandings around sexual violence (show slide 12). Go over the barriers to consent culture in this case, e.g. media supporting perpetrator, no sanctions against perpetrator, victim-blaming. **use alternative case if participants offer one.

Part 2: Creating media to promote consent culture (1hr) (slide 13)

Presentation and discussion of ways to promote consent culture, with a focus on media (10 minutes).

Open up this part of the workshop with the question: “*Now that we have talked about barriers to a consent culture, how do you imagine you or others can help dismantle them? How can we create change?*”

Once they have shared a couple of ideas, show examples of ways to promote social change (Slide 14-15). Specify that in the context of this workshop, the focus is on media-based activism, but other forms exist! Examples can include:

Tessa and Lia's documentary
Concordia's fruit campaign
The "I believe you" Campaign

Introduce the activity, and address the benefits and risks of producing media for social change. Go over the information in slides 16-19.

Introduce YouTube and vlogging (5 minutes)

Go over the information in slides 20-21

Media and digital literacy skills: What to know when watching and producing media about sexual consent? (25 minutes)

Address the importance of media and digital literacy, particularly in the context of media production (Slides 22-24).

Activity: Promote reflection on the ways that YouTube videos can inform/ affect how we think of consent. Examples of YouTube videos include: [Laci Green, Just Between Us](#), [Shoe on Head](#), and [Consent as Tea](#) (not a vlog but interesting to critique with vlogs).

Discuss each vlog- Laci Green and Shoeonhead, or others- using the questions on slide 19 as guidelines. In addition, prompt students to reflect about:

What do you think about the messages?

How does the platform influence vloggers' messages? (e.g. commercialism, fear of trolling)

Follow-up: Explore the comment feeds to encourage discussion on the implications of activism online (positive and negative) for the producers of the video and their audience.

Once this activity is concluded, discuss the responsibility of producers to think about their online footprint, and the importance to being responsible, ethical and media literate when producing social media. Reiterate that YouTube is a complex platform in which to participate, with positive and negative aspects. Go over slide 25.

Explanation: Steps to creating our own vlogs/videos (26)

Show example of a vlog/video and provide definition to indicate expectations for participants.

Explain the process of making vlogs and do step 1 (slide 27-28).

	<p>Encourage discussion about the type of videos/vlogs they want to create, individually or in groups. While vlogs are recommended for practical purposes, participants can use alternative modes of filming.</p> <p><u>Part 3: Filming, screening and discussion (1hr and 15 minutes)</u></p> <p><u>Have participants split in groups or individually to practice filming their vlog or video (30)</u></p> <p>Use slides 24 and 25 to guide them. Remind participants to use their planning sheet.</p> <p>Participants can email vlogs to facilitator or post on the YouTube channel under private (unless they indicate otherwise).</p> <p>Screening and discussion (30). Show vlogs. Reflect on process and messages with participants. Prompt questions are included on slide 26. Discuss further dissemination (slide 27).</p>
Follow-up	This activity can be followed up with a larger audience screening, whereby videos from this and other workshops are viewed by these participants and other audiences.
Evaluation of workshop	Feedback form (see Appendix I)
Other recommendations	

Appendix K: Other recommendations

What they wanted to see or wanted more of

Session 1: Recommendations

More vlogs

Ways to educate about consent culture

Prevalence of issues of sexual violence

Media education

Language in consent education

How to dismantle rape culture

How to spread awareness of violence prevention initiatives

Access to resources

More time

More explanation that rape happens to men too

How to respond to harmful jokes safely

Why an issue in Canada, a sensitive culture

How to discuss with children or people who don't care

Difference between assault and rape.

Discussion of Indigenous women

How to respond as a bystander

More discussions of barriers to rape culture

Session 2

How to effectively convey a message while avoiding (to a certain extent) negative reactions

How to make a video

Other cultures' concept of consent

Are vlogs effective medium to teach consent

How to shut down people who think consent has gone too far

What the curriculum says about consent

Limits of consent/rape (is sex with partner for their pleasure and not yours an issue)

Why the second vlogger was more popular than Laci Green online, but not in the workshop

More male vision

How to be assertive

How to communicate without aggressivity

More time to discuss consent culture,

More time (4)

More intersectional content

Relating consent to real life situations rather than abstract situation

Sharing everyone's video ideas

External factors affecting consent

Deeper analysis of videos

Session 3

Ways to persuade people

Watch all the videos

Debunking rape myths

Other venues for activism

More ways to reach out to people who don't care

Less focus on vlogs, more on general activism

Sexualities education and disabled folks

Sexualities education and people from other cultures

Want to speak to more people with alternative views

A critique of their own videos troll-style

Longer or more workshops

More political aspects of consent

Discussing which videos should be included- shoeonhead or someone else.

assertiveness

Appendix L: Interview Questions

	QUESTIONS – SEMI STRUCTURED
1	Name, age, education, career.
2	How did you learn about sexual consent?
3	Why did you start a vlog about sexual consent?
4	Why post it on YouTube?
5	Tell me about your vlog.
6	What messages about consent did you intend on sending when you created it? Are there any aspects you felt you didn't cover at all or enough? To whom were you speaking?
7	How did you choose the content and media?
8	What skills do you feel were needed when creating this vlog?
9	What resources did you use and why? (ask if she used sites, how she knows about consent?)
10	How do you feel that making this vlog affected how you think and what you know about sexual consent?
11	How do you feel it affected how you act online and offline ? (Prompt: Do you feel more politically involved, worried, etc?)
12	How do you feel that making and publishing this vlog affected your identity?
13	How do you think that learning how to analyze and producing videos like this could be useful/not useful in sex education?
14	How do you think doing this in a classroom might make young people feel about the approach and the content?
14	What recommendations would you give to someone who wants to teach young people how to create YouTube vlogs about sexual consent?

Appendix M: Workshop PowerPoint final



***Let's talk
about consent
and consent
culture!
A video-
making
workshop***

***Trigger warning: this workshop involves dialogue about sexual violence. If you are uncomfortable, feel triggered, or seek any other form of support, please advise the facilitators. You may leave at any point.

Workshop Format

- Go over our understandings of sexual violence and consent, consent culture, and barriers to consent culture.
- Explore social change: what is happening? How can we be a part of it? What does YouTube have to do with it?
- Make and watch very short movies 😊

From safe spaces to brave spaces (Arao and Clemens, 2013)

From safe spaces to brave spaces (Arao and Clemens, 2013)

- Controversy with civility
- Own your intentions and their impact
- Challenge by choice
- Respect
- No attacks



<https://www.abravespace.org/written-resistance/>

Sexual violence and Rape culture

Sexual violence occurs across a spectrum.



Rape culture manifests everyday through sexism, gender stereotypes, problematic social norms, homophobia, and transphobia, problematic media representations, etc. Rape culture normalizes sexual violence.

Sexual Harassment definition (Canadian Federation of Students)

Includes, but is not limited to

- Gender-related comments about an individual's physical characteristics or mannerisms
- Unwelcome physical contact
- Suggestive or offensive remarks or innuendoes about members of a specific gender
- Propositions of physical intimacy
- Gender-related verbal abuse, threats, or taunting
- Leering or inappropriate staring
- Bragging about sexual prowess
- Offensive jokes or comments of a sexual nature about an employee or client
- Rough/vulgar humour or language related to gender
- Display of sexually offensive pictures, graffiti or other materials, (including through electronic means)
- Demands for dates/sexual favours

Can be found here: <http://cfsontario.ca/wp-content/uploads/sites/50/2016/09/Consent-Toolkit.pdf>

Sexual Assault definition (Canadian Federation of Students)

Sexual assault is a form of sexual violence, and it includes

- rape (such as forced vaginal, anal or oral penetration or drug facilitated sexual assault)
- Groping
- forced kissing
- child sexual abuse, or
- the torture of the person in a sexual manner.

The term includes but is not limited to, sexual harassment, the threat of sexual assault, criminal harassment (stalking and cyber harassment), and intimate partner violence.

Can be found here: <http://cfsontario.ca/wp-content/uploads/sites/50/2016/09/Consent-Toolkit.pdf>

Sexual Assault in the Criminal code

Section 265

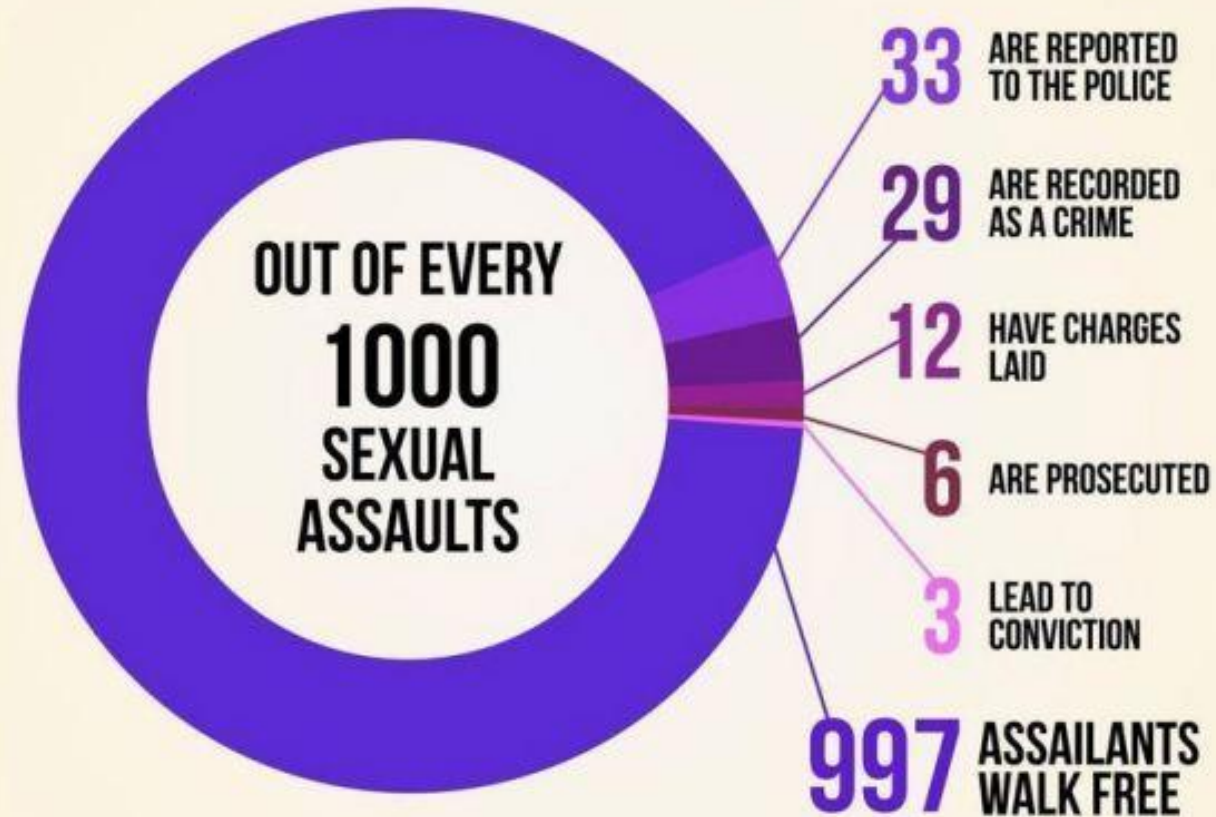
265. (1) A person commits an assault when

- (a) **without the consent** of another person, he applies force intentionally to that other person, **directly or indirectly**;
- (b) he attempts or **threatens**, by an act or a gesture, to apply **force** to another person, if he has, or causes that other person to believe on reasonable grounds that he has, present ability to effect his purpose; or
- (c) while openly wearing or carrying a **weapon** or an imitation thereof, he accosts or impedes another person or begs.

Prevalence

Canadian statistics (2012)

THERE ARE **460,000** SEXUAL ASSAULTS
in Canada every year



Source: Johnson, "Limits of a Criminal Justice Response: Trends in Police and Court Processing of Sexual Assault," in Sheehy, *Sexual Assault in Canada: Law, Legal Practice and Women's Activism*, 2012.

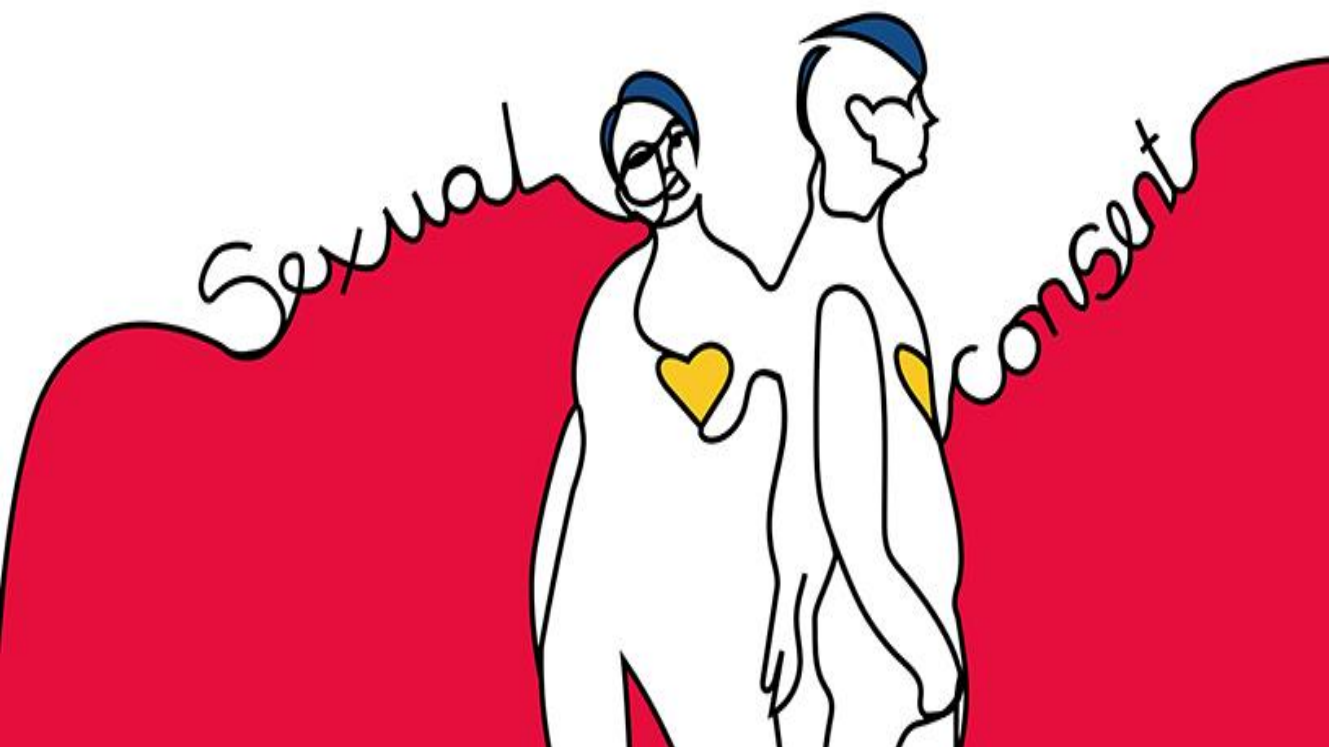


YWCA
CANADA

A TURNING POINT
FOR WOMEN
UN POINT TOURNANT
POUR LES FEMMES

WWW.YWCACANADA.CA

YWCA Canada



-Above age 16 in Canada

-Voluntary (No force, coercion, threats, fraud or inherent power dynamic problems)

-Communicated, not assumed, through words and actions

(silence or an absence of a no does not mean yes!)

-Enthusiastic

-Ongoing and can be retracted at any time- a yes last week is not a yes today

-Not possible when intoxicated, unconscious or asleep.



Laci Green Vlog

Wanna have sex? Consent 101

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TD2EooMhqRI>

Building a Consent Culture

Consent culture is a culture in which asking for consent is normalized and condoned in popular culture. It is respecting the person's response even if it isn't the response you had hoped for. We will live in a consent culture when we no longer objectify people and we value them as human beings. Consent culture is believing that you and your partner(s) have the right over your own bodily autonomies and understanding that each of you know what is best for yourselves.

See more at onlywithconsent.org



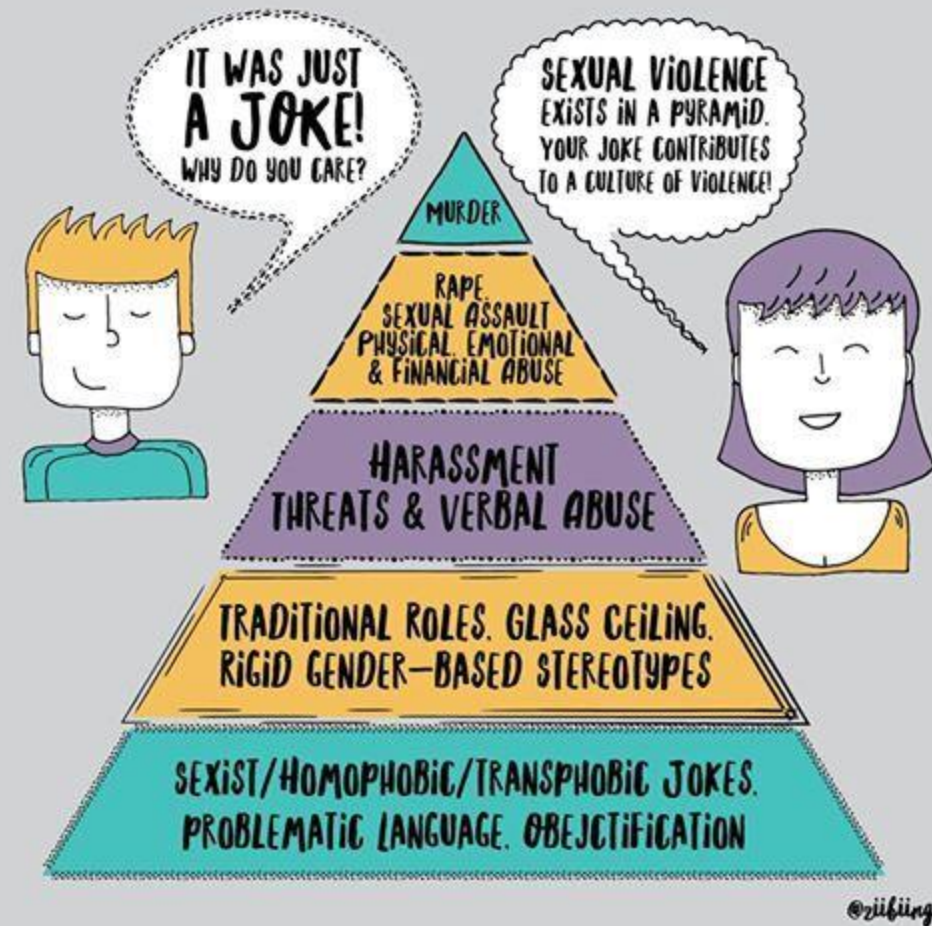
So what are barriers to consent culture that you see/know of/heard of/think of?

What are some of the barriers to consent culture?

- *Rape Myths* → about victims and perpetrators, about rape and assault, about harassment, “gray zones”.
- *Stereotypes* → about gender, sexuality, LGBTQ persons, different ethnicities and cultures, persons with disabilities, and others.
- *Relationships/sexual scripts* → Different understandings/fears around communicating consent/rejection, negotiation, power dynamics.
- *Judicial systems/policies* → not survivor-centered/intersectional; bias.
- *Cultural representations* → of love, sex, violence, gender, etc...
- *Lack of knowledge/understanding about survivors’ reactions to assault* → fight flight and freeze, around reporting, etc.
- *Lack of, or problematic forms of sexuality education*
- *Cultural norms* (for example, around courtship)
- *Religious beliefs* (for example, around gender)

In schools/universities....

Dress codes
problematic sexual assault policies
frosh/hazing
fraternities and sororities cultures
Power dynamics (e.g faculty/students)
Campus geography
Residences
Barriers to reporting
Sexist behaviors
....

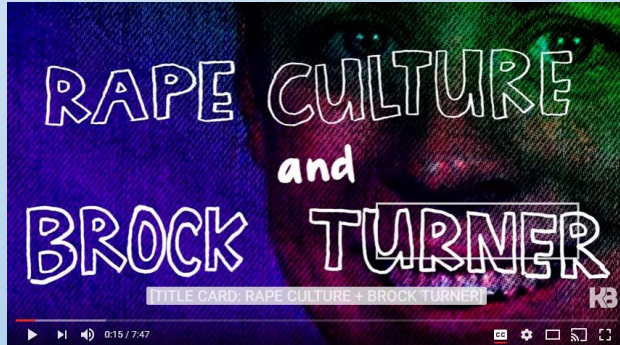


<http://blueandgoldonline.org/wp/2016/11/23/psa-rape-culture-real/>

The case of Brock Turner

Mic.com: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EC9NjqKInuc>

- Bias reporting favoring the perpetrator over the survivor
- Engendered strong response, online and offline



Vlog by Kat
Blaque



Rallies
against
Judge
Persky

This case is representative of some of the barriers we face to building a consent culture.

Part 2:

Creating media to promote consent culture



Social change can happen in many ways:

- Language- normalising consent and asking for consent.

Consent videos for teens: <https://www.plannedparenthood.org/teens/relationships/consent-and-rape>

- Acknowledging rape culture and the harmful ways it can affect different people.

Example: Laughter (or non-laughter) as resistance

- Being an active bystander/Bystander intervention.

Example: McGill Frosh video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NRU3pTOR5HE> (4:#0)

- Volunteering in your community at different organizations and promoting the values of respect, empathy and equity that guide consent culture.

- Normalizing the right to say no

Projet Angelo example

- Starting to talk about it at young ages (consent is not just about penetrative sex)

Social change can happen in many ways:



Twitter: #rapecultureiswhen #MeToo #WhyIdidntreport



<https://www.concordia.ca/students/sexual-assault/consent.html>

Consent Campaign



<http://ibelieveyou.info/campaigns/>

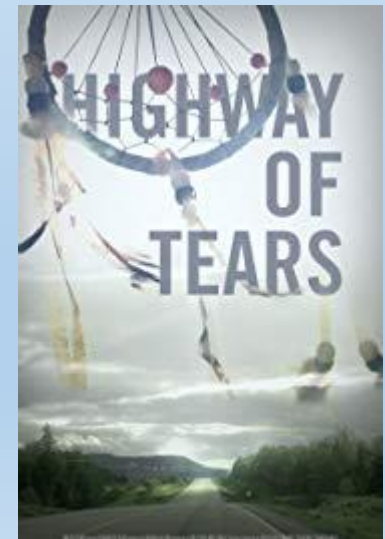
**#Ibelieveyou
Campaign-
Collaborative effort
with AASAS, medan
and universities**



8th grade documentary by **Tessa and Lia** on rape culture leads to curriculum change in Ontario
(Picture from Huffington Post)



Monument Quilt



ABOUT THE
MISSING
AND
MURDERED
INDIGENOUS
WOMEN AND
GIRLS

How we will aim for change today!

- For this workshop, you are asked to film a short video (approx. 30s to 2 minutes)
- While filming a vlog is advised because it is easier, you can be creative and try alternative modes of filming (do not film other people's faces without their consent).

PROMPT: Create a video about any aspect of consent and consent culture you feel is important to you and/or to your community.

What can your online videos do for you and others?



- *Inform (education, reporting, etc)*
- *Build community/space for your topic and those affected by it*
- *Provide a space to 'talk back' to world issues, media, etc.*
- *Speak to a personal event (testimonial)/Space to be heard*
- *Shift 'POWER' in sexual discourses*
- *Communicate to an individual or members of a community*

Where can online production go wrong?

“mobile and online technologies [may be] used as tools to blackmail, control, coerce, harass, humiliate, objectify or violate another person” (Henry & Powell, 2016)

- *Trolling*
- *Harmful messages*
- *Threats*
- *Revenge Porn*
- *Technology-facilitated assault*
- *Coercion*
- *Harassment/stalking*

Laci Green, for instance, is a vlogger who is frequently harassed.

Example:

“Literally shook my head the whole video LMAO.
Dumb fucking bitch”

“Laci, you are a fat cow. Already said this before,
but another reminder will do no harm”

Communicating about consent and sexual violence

It is important to acknowledge that it is never easy to talk about issues of consent and sexual violence. Potential fears or concerns related to communication can include:

- Fear of being trolled, insulted, harassed, etc.
- Triggering
- Discomfort talking about sexuality
- Shyness
- Fear of losing friends, partner, family.

What else? How can we address these fears and concerns?

Producing our video

Vlogs are a popular form of communicating on YouTube. They are generally non-scripted, and involve one person in a shot who is speaking to the camera (Frobenius, 2011)- like the LACI GREEN VIDEO.

However, YouTube videos can take many other shapes, such as

- Filming without showing the speakers (locations, images, signage,...)
- Presentation-style, with images and audio
- Graphic (with animations, drawings)
- News format style (similar to news broadcast)
- Documentary style (interviewing or speaking to people)

Knowing YouTube

OWNED BY GOOGLE

PRODUCTION AND DISSEMINATION OF VIDEOS

AUDIENCE FEEDBACK

POTENTIAL EXPOSURE TO VIOLENCE

POTENTIAL SUPPORT NETWORKS

EDUCATIONAL PLATFORM

ENTERTAINMENT PLATFORM

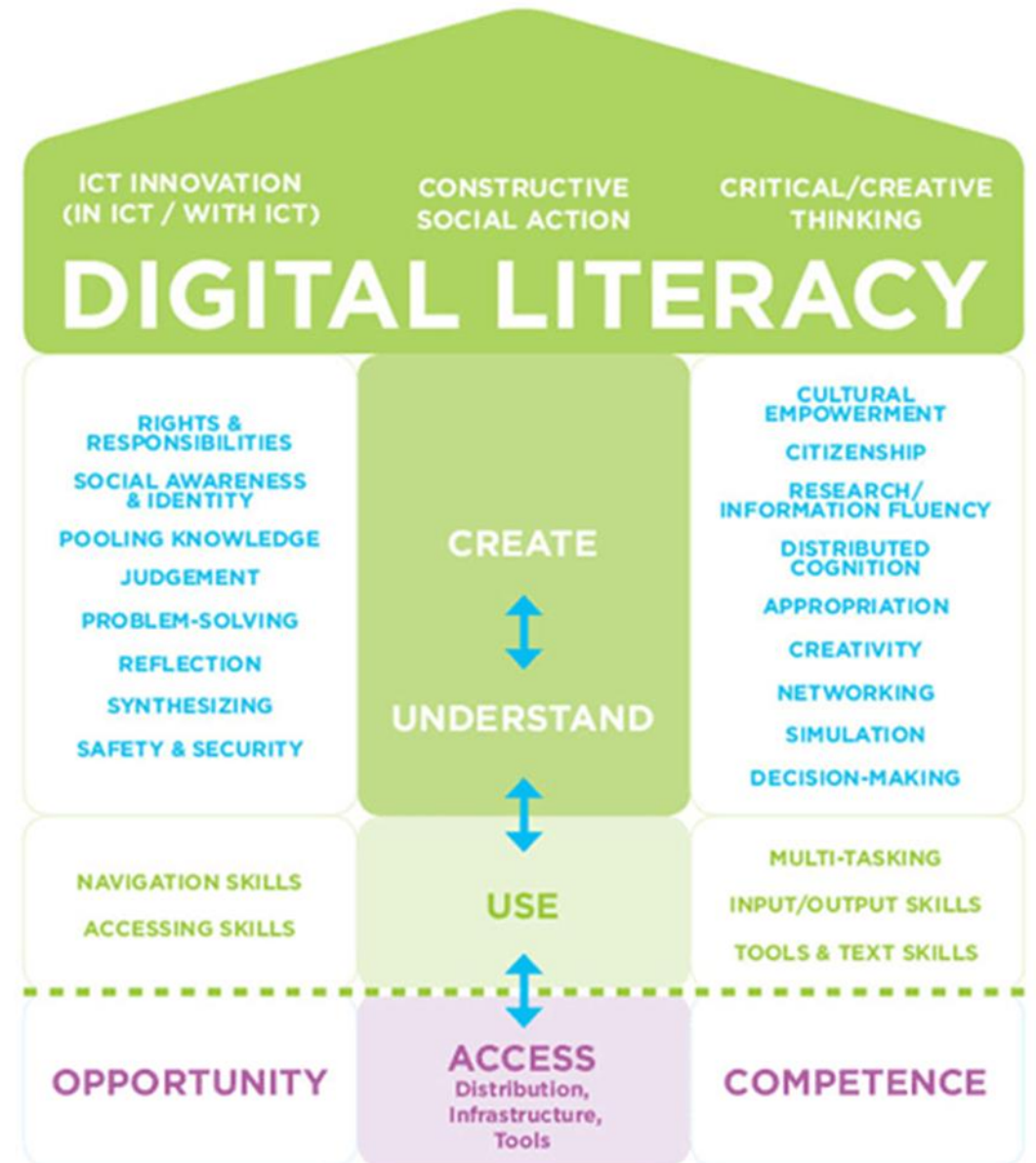
COMMERCIAL PLATFORM/COMMERCIALY DRIVEN



Producing our video

Embracing DL:

- ACCESS
 - USE
 - UNDERSTAND
 - CREATE
 - DIGITAL LITERACY
- (Mediasmarts.ca)



Media Smarts Framework

Reading or producing media needs to be done critically and responsibly.



- **Media are constructions**
- **Audiences negotiate meaning**
- **Media have commercial implications**
- **Media have social and political implications**
- **Each medium has a unique aesthetic form**

Questions to ask when watching/producing media:

- **Media Construction:** Who is producing the text? How might their beliefs be reflected here?
- **Audiences:** Who is the intended audience? How might others see the text differently?
- **Commercial implications:** How is the content influenced by who create the media? How might commercialization (of YouTube) influence production?
- **Social and political implications:** What values and voices are being represented (and whose aren't? How might this affect a message?
- **Aesthetic form:** How are the messages communicated? What about the genre and platform?



Ethics to consider

Publishing online means:

- Asking for consent to film/photograph/audio record people
- Referencing materials
- Speaking in ways respectful to your audience
- Managing/avoiding conflict



STEPS FOR VLOG/VIDEO MAKING

1. Activity 1: Map the idea
2. Activity 2: Film! (edit if needed)
3. Activity 3: Screen and discuss
4. Activity 4: Disseminate?

Activity 1: Map the idea

1. What is/are the takeaway messages you want to send to your audiences?
2. What resources might you need to accomplish this video?
3. What is the purpose of your video?
4. Who is your audience?
5. What video format would you like to use?

Do you need information like definitions, statistics, reports of events?

Your media should be informed by credible resources (organizations, researchers, well-reputed news sources e.g. BBC and the Guardian). See list of resources.

Survivor testimonials and activist work are sensitive material that must not be appropriated.

Activity 2: Production (editing if needed)

- For this workshop, film a short video! (approx. 30s to 2 minutes)
- While filming a vlog is advised because it is easier, you can be creative and try alternative modes of filming (do not film other people's faces without their consent).

PROMPT: Create a video about any aspect of consent and consent culture you feel is important to you and/or to your community.

Activity 3: Watch and Talk! (Screening and discussion)

Questions for discussion:

For producers:

How was your experiences filming?

What did you aim to do/say in your video? Why?

For audiences:

What did you learn from these videos?

What actions to promote culture were discussed?

Were you inspired to take action in some way following this process or these videos?

Do you think it would be useful to post these videos on YouTube as tools to shift consent culture?

How do these messages resemble or divert from those in media or in sexuality education?

How else can we disseminate these messages and promote change?

Activity 4: Publishing and Dissemination via YouTube

When posting on YouTube, the platform gives you options for:

- Editing the video
- Filling in Description
- Considering fair use ethics
- Adding Tags
- Managing closed captioning
- Adding/removing comments
- Choosing to make the video Public vs Private
- Commercializing the video

Resource List- to be completed