SEX (RE) EDUCATION

CRACKS IN THE CURRICULUM

MOBILE FRIENDLY VERSION

RESOURCE 1
Cracks in the Curriculum is a workshop series and publishing platform, which aims to bring artists and educators together to think about how to address pressing social issues in the classroom. The series explores key questions and themes that run through the Serpentine Education, Exhibition and Live programmes. The first edition, Sex (re) education, aims to open up a space for teachers and students in Years 9 and 10 to talk about sex and relationships in an anti-sexist, anti-racist and LGBTQ+ positive way. The content emerged from a workshop with Bedfellows, educators and Serpentine Education at the Serpentine Gallery.

The resource features a series of questions for critical discussion, activities for the classroom and a reading list for further study. The sections fold down to A4 so they can be photocopied and used for lesson planning, but please feel free to bend it to fit your overall teaching scheme. Towards the end of the resource is a Humanifesto developed by Bedfellows.
Sex (re) education is a research tool for educators to develop anti-sexist, LGBTQ+ positive and anti-racist Relationships and Sex Education (RSE). It can also be used to teach sex education as part of Personal Social Health Education (PSHE). It can be used by itself or alongside existing guidance: sexeducationforum.org.uk/resources/teaching-resources and pshe-association.org.uk/curriculum-and-resources/resources/sex-and-relationship-education-sre-21st-century. Advice on planning sex education for younger children by the Sex Education Forum can be found in the further study section at the end of the resource.
CRITICAL QUESTIONS

Here's a bunch of things that came up for us when talking to teachers, talking to students and talking to ourselves about pornography:

1. Bodies! We all have bodies; we all watch screens. The bodies we watch on our screens don’t necessarily look like the bodies we have.
   - Who decides which bodies are on our screens?
   - Does everything that looks good, feel good?

2. Masturbation is sex too! Your body is your own, your fantasy is your own, your masturbation is your own.
   - How can someone make their own fantasies without filming them?
   - What are the pros and cons of exploring your desires solo?
Virginity is heteronormative!*

Virginity is a concept based on the idea that:

- A penis has entered your vagina.
- Your penis has entered a vagina.

But waaaaait!... some of us don’t use that combination of body parts! Some people use the words ‘first time sex’ instead of ‘virginity’ since that allows for quite a few more experiences to be included. We hear people talk about ‘normal sex’ a lot. Some acts and feelings might be common (like rushing blood, heavy breathing, enlarged genitals and wetness) and some acts might be less common, but ‘normal’ just doesn’t exist if we accept the beautiful, wide spectrum of human sex.

- If there were no penises and no vaginas but there was still sex, how could someone lose their virginity?

* Heteronormative is a term to describe the promotion of heterosexuality as the ‘normal’ sexual orientation. For more definitions visit the scarleteen website scarleteen.com
Consent! It doesn’t come down to just one person: in every sexual interaction everyone is responsible for asking and telling each other what they want and don’t want to do. But don’t worry. You can change your mind. There should be no pressure. Accept and respect everyone’s desires (including your own)!

Listen to your body! Listen to your heart!
No means no and yes means yes!
- How do you know if you’re feeling good?
- How would you know someone else is enjoying themselves?
Bedfellows is a group of people making tools together to re-educate each other about sex. The tools include a discursive forum to get political about sex called SEX TALK MTG; a queer porn screening with discussion, dinner and dancing called Porn as Pedagogy; a series of workshops for practicing consent and an open-access research centre called Clubhouse.

- Check out our research at wearebedfellows.org
- Tweet us @WeAreBedfellows
- Instagram us @BedfellowsResearch
- Email us bedfellowsresearch@gmail.com
We’re human. We’re sexual and sexualised. We hurt, we love, we want, we fear, we burn, we fight, we cry, we wonder, we imagine. The sex education we receive every day from people in our families, on our TVs, in our House of Commons etc. etc. etc. is pretty sexist, racist, heteronormative, it assumes that ‘perfect’ human bodies can have sex, and upholds the narrative that things like class, race and gender dictate your sexual worth (think of how different the media treats the rape of an upper-class white woman versus a working-class black girl).

We’re interested in the deep, nuanced intersections of the blatant messages we receive and the constant, accidental learning that seeps in through both pop culture and formal education. Let’s take mainstream pornography as a really obvious example of this informal sex education.

Pornography is everywhere and it makes enough money for enough people that we can assume it’s here to stay. Whenever I want to learn anything about anything, I want to type it into Google.
Sex is no different and you can imagine the search results. This makes me wonder: how can we learn about sex without pornography? So, the point of most porn is to make money for the people who make it, NOT to teach us about sex! But a lot of us watch porn to try to figure out how to do sexual things or who or what turns us on. This would be fine except in mainstream porn the scenarios are often violent, the bodies often look the same and the pleasure is often reserved for those of us with penises.

We, and many people we talked to, crave depictions of genuine female pleasure and expanded representations of sexuality to include all genders, all bodies and all desires. Some feminist pornographers are doing this and so we learned from their practice, their politics, their fair-trade work policies and their imagery to think critically about porn and its potential. If it’s being looked to as education anyways, we wanted to know what we could bring back to the classroom. We looked to them for inspiration and hope.
Come up with some rules with your students to make your conversations as safe (and as brave) as possible. Here are some examples:

- Respect everyone’s experiences, they will often be different from your own.
- Everyone’s allowed to change their mind.
- Disagree with the statement, not the person.
- Only share what you feel comfortable sharing.
- It’s totally OK to step out for a minute and take a break.
Ask your students to follow the instructions below:

- Tape a marker pen to the end of a broomstick.

- In groups of 4, put all of your 8 hands on the stick.

- Keeping all of your hands on the stick, draw a picture of a clitoris, discussing as you go. Together, you will share what you know both about drawing, and this exciting part of the body!
This article talks about the importance of visualising an organ that has been left out of the sex education conversation for so long.

theguardian.com/education/2016/aug/15/french-schools-3d-model-clitoris-sex-education

- Use the article to continue the conversation about the clitoris with your students:
  - How does your drawing compare to the model in the article?
  - What does the clitoris do?
  - Why do you think we rarely see images of it?
(Read all of the instructions first!)

- Ask students to choose their jelly flavour in advance. Taste is important and everyone has their particular likes and dislikes. You’ll also need a big 5l bowl, 5 packs of jelly per bowl and enough rubber gloves for the whole group. Make the jelly before you leave school and let it set overnight.

- Set up the bowls around the classroom. Ask students to find a partner. Invite the young people to get their hands right in there and greet each other in the goop. First they will need to decide if they want to wear rubber gloves or not. This must be agreed between partners before they start. Now...DUNK! As they shake hands ask the students to discuss what it feels like. Is it cold? Is it warm? Is their skin turning to prunes? What does it sound like?

- Devise a secret handshake in the jelly. Then, if they want to, invite students to swap partners.

- You can use the exercise to reflect on consent, sexual health, preferences, individuality and embarrassment.
Here are a few questions you could try:

- What do you need to take into account when you’re deciding whether or not to use a barrier (like a glove, condom or dental dam)?

- If you’re trying something out together and you’re not sure what it’s going to be like, how can you make sure both of you are able to express how it feels?

- If you prefer to be on top and go slow and someone else prefers to be on the bottom and go fast, how can you shake hands together in a way that both of you could enjoy?
We don’t always feel like we have the space to talk about sex. But making a space to test out our needs and wants can be important. A manifesto is a public declaration of a group’s wants and needs. You can see the one written by Bedfellows over the following pages. We wrote it as a way to solidify our dreams. And as a way to say, ‘Listen up world! This is the sex education we deserve! And this is what we need to make it happen’!

Use our Humanifesto and the instructions below to work with students and make up a new manifesto:

- First, let’s map out a space to do this in. Take a roll of tape and make a shape on the ground that starts and ends at the same point. Make sure each person in your group has a moment to place a section of the shape. When you finally have this closed shape, step inside together.

This is your space!
EXERCISE 3
WRITE YOUR OWN HUMANIFESTO!

- Now, as a group, cross out bits of the Humanifesto that don’t apply to you; put circles around the bits that do. Or just start with a blank page if you feel ready!

- Fill in the gaps: how do you want to learn about sex?

- Put things in there that make you sad and angry, put parts in capitals that make your heart race.

- You don’t have to agree on everything! But make sure it’s real. Make sure everyone understands.

- Read it out together. Read it out to others.

- Put it on the wall.
THIS HUMANIFESTO CALLS FOR A SEX EDUCATION THAT IS LIFELONG AND COMPLICATED.

NORMATIVITY IS A MYTH.

THIS HUMANIFESTO CALLS FOR THE END OF SWEEPING THINGS UNDER THE CARPET: LET’S ACKNOWLEDGE SEX.
LET’S TALK ABOUT SEX,
LET’S SING ABOUT SEX.
LET’S WRITE ABOUT SEX.
LET’S LAUGH ABOUT SEX,
LET’S CRY ABOUT SEX,
LET’S DANCE ABOUT SEX.

THIS HUMANIFESTO CALLS
FOR A SEX EDUCATION
THAT REFLECTS WHO ALL
OF US ARE:
ALL OUR BODIES, ALL OUR DESIRES, AND ALL OUR COMPLEXITIES.

SPECIFICALLY THIS HUMANIFESTO CALLS FOR A FEMINIST, QUEER, TRANS-INCLUSIVE, ANTI-RACIST, ANTI-ABLEIST, ANTI-CLASSIST, AND INTERSECTIONAL SEX EDUCATION.
THIS HUMANIFESTO CALLS FOR A SEX EDUCATION THAT ACKNOWLEDGES SURVIVORS OF SEXUAL ASSAULT, RAPE AND ABUSE.

THIS HUMANIFESTO CALLS FOR A SEX EDUCATION THAT TAKES PLACE IN SCHOOLS,
COLLEGES, WORKPLACES, HOMES AND SHOPPING CENTRES.

ON THE PHONE,
IN THE POOL,
IN THE CLINIC,
ON THE INTERNET.

IN THE FLESH,
IN THE MIND,
IN THE HEART,
IN OUR IMAGINATIONS.
**FURTHER SUPPORT**

Here are some support helplines if you find there’s more work to be done than you feel capable of supporting:

- **The Survivors Trust** represents more than 130 organisations working with male and female victims of sexual violence across the UK
  (0808 801 0818 / thesurvivorstrust.org)

- **Mermaids** supports children and young people exploring their gender identity
  (0344 334 0550 / mermaidsuk.org.uk)

- **LGBT Foundation** gives information and support to people exploring their sexuality
  (03453 303 030 / lgbtfoundation.org.uk)

**FURTHER STUDY**

- BBC Three’s *Inside Britain’s Queer Porn Industry* – Youtuber Riyadh Khalaf talks to our faves Shine Louise Houston and Jiz Lee about their work:
youtube.com/watch?v=3RC-K3v54eU

- **Scarleteen** – an incredible and comprehensive sex education website for young people that we LOVE:
scarleteen.com/article/advice/
yes_no_maybe_so_a_sexual_inventory_stocklist

- **Brook’s** – *The Good Sex Project* – films about young people’s experiences and thoughts on having sex for the first time:
brook.org.uk/our-work/good-sex-project-videos

- **Rookie’s** – *The Body Says Whoa* article – it’s on self love:
rookiemag.com/2013/02/the-body-says-whoa/

- Trans student’s **Gender Unicorn** – for the difference between sexuality, gender and sexual preference:
transstudent.org/gender

- **Sex Education Forum (SEF)** – for advice on planning sex education for children and young people from 3 to 16+. SEF talk about the importance of developing and revisiting core concepts over each developmental stage with increasing complexity:
sexeducationforum.org.uk

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Developed by Chloe Cooper, Phoebe Davies, and Jenny Moore, co-founders of Bedfellows, with Serpentine Education. Published in January 2019. Designed by In the shade of a tree (Sophie Demay & Maël Fournier-Comte). This resource is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution, Non-Commercial-Sharealike 3.0 Unported License (CC BY-NC-SA 3.0). This means that this material can be reused freely with due credit.