EmpowerED

Integrating Comprehensive Sexual Violence Education into Post-Secondary Curricula for Student-Driven Solutions

Rebecca Hall: Professor Global Development Studies

Joshua Marshall: Director at Ingenuity Labs, Electrical & Computer Engineering

Rebecca Rappeport: Human Rights Office
The Problem

• According to Statistics Canada, there were more than **34,200 reports of sexual assault countrywide in 2021**.

• However, this number may not reflect the true extent of the problem, as **only 5% (use with caution)** of sexual assaults in Canada were reported to the police in 2014.

• **4 out of 5** undergraduate students surveyed at Canadian universities reported experiencing dating violence; **29% of them reported sexual assault** (DeKeseredy, 2011)
A Wicked Problem

- Sexual and gender-based violence positioned as a WICKED problem
- Relates solutions, problem-solving to what students are studying
- Case study locates issues here and helps students build awareness of supports/resources and policies
- Accessing students where they are at, not asking more from them
DESIGN FEATURES

• Beyond guest speakers: embedding content in curriculum
  - Integration: encouraging place-based learning
  - Incentives: participation and grading
  - Empowerment: Solution-focused learning
Example: STEM Course Integration

• MREN 203: Mechatronics & Robotics Design II is about solving problems with technology
  • 15-25% female enrolment

• Students often focused on technical matters without explicit connection to socio-economics
  • Engineers emphasize professional practice and stakeholder co-creation

• Our workshop: Use technical and problem-solving skills to formulate practical solutions
  • 1 h background and Q&A, 1 h team brainstorm and pitches

• Overwhelming enthusiasm!
EmpowerED Pilot

Over 1,150 students trained in the 2023/2024 school year

There were 996 student survey entries, with a completion rate of 94.9%.

- APSC 200: 375 (37.7%)
- DEV 102: 172 (17.3%)
- GLBH 281: 137 (13.8%)
- HLTH 333: 64 (6.4%)
- KNPE 167: 129 (13.0%)
- KNPE 366: 37 (3.7%)
- MECH 200: 27 (2.7%)
- MREN 203: 55 (5.5)

“It’s always 'Sit,' 'Stay,' 'Heel'—never 'Think,' 'Innovate,' 'Be yourself.'”
Survey Results: EmpowerED 2023/2024 school year

Strongly Agree: I feel I have more knowledge about how to contribute to ending gender-based and sexual violence
Agree: I feel I have a better understanding of the impact and intersections of sexual violence
Neutral: I feel I have more knowledgeable of the resources and services available on campus
Disagree: 
Strongly Disagree: 
THE END: QUESTIONS & THANKS!