



HIGH SCHOOL LIKE YOU'VE NEVER SEEN IT

EASTLOS HIGH



Assessment of *East Los High* (Season 1):

Using Transmedia Storytelling to Promote Safe Sex and Teen Pregnancy Prevention among Latino Communities in the U.S.

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East Los High: A Transmedia Entertainment-Education Program for Latino¹ Teen Pregnancy Prevention Empowered by Community Partnerships

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By 2020, one-quarter of all teens in the U.S. will be Latino; presently, 4 in 10 Latino teens become pregnant, twice the national average, and of these, 86% of births occur to unwed mothers and 65% to high school seniors, leading to school dropout among other negative consequences (National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unwanted Pregnancy, 2013). *East Los High* (ELH) was thoughtfully developed to serve the Latino youth population concerning their sexual and reproductive health, help promote safe sex, and prevent teen pregnancy.

ELH consists of a 24-episode teen drama broadcast online as a Hulu exclusive and another 9 digital platforms to roll out extended content from a high school newspaper, a character's Vlogs, to dance tutorials, and comic strips. The story is set in a fictional high school in East Los Angeles where various characters face complex challenges (e.g., trust and betrayal, health and abuse, life and death). They struggle with difficult decisions and undertake different actions.

ELH has many special characteristics. (1) It is the first English show in the U.S. history that used an all-Latino cast to address issues within the Latino community (Castro, 2013). (2) Its content production process is a modern adaptation of the Sabido methodology of entertainment-education grounded in theories for narrative persuasion and behavioral change (Singhal & Rogers, 1999; Singhal, Cody, Rogers, & Sabido, 2004). Creative writers incorporated findings of not only extensive formative research with local teens, but also other Latino teen pregnancy research using innovative approaches such as Positive Deviance, to develop realistic characters and dialogues. (3) Transmedia storytelling is a new marketing strategy for engaging a diverse audience through a narrative experience across multiple media platforms (Jenkins, 2006; Singhal, Wang, & Rogers, 2013). ELH is the first transmedia program purposefully designed for health promotion and social justice.

ELH is empowered by the partnerships between commercial entities, NGOs, and research experts. Katie Elmore Mota is the show's executive producer and founder of Prajna Productions, foraging a unique collaboration between Population Media Center (a Vermont-based non-profit that excels in

entertainment-education); The Alchemists (a transmedia storytelling company in Hollywood), and various national and local NGOs such as Legacy LA, Advocates for Youth, National Latina Initiative, National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health, Planned Parenthood Federation of America, National Campaign to Prevent Teen & Unplanned Pregnancy, and California Latinas for Reproductive Justice. ELH began streaming on June 3 and was one of the most popular Hulu programs in summer 2013 (Castro, 2013).

Researchers have been conducting a comprehensive evaluation through a viewer survey, a lab experiment, a content and social network analysis of social media interactions, and in-depth interviews. Our preliminary results suggest that ELH has made a significant impact on the audience's knowledge, attitude, and behavioral intention. Despite the prevalent use of digital and social media among youth, specific techniques are needed to optimize the public communication processes and evoke open discussions about taboo topics. This project can provide insights on the design, implantation, and evaluation of similar programs in the future.

Endnote

¹ All labels, whether Latina, Chicana, Mexican, Mexican-American, and Hispanic carry their own baggage, history, and spatial-cultural significance. We use the label Latino with the knowledge and humility that is a broad term signifying the sharing of one common attribute: origin in a Latin American country.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report integrates the specific assessment studies of *East Los High* (Season 1). A comprehensive, innovative, multi-phase, and multi-method approach was used to evaluate audience engagement and program impact. More specifically, the research teams at University at Buffalo, The State University of New York and The University of Texas at El Paso conducted:

(1) A viewer survey of 202 ELH fans, including a sub-sample of 110 from the primary target population group about their evaluation of the web episodes, transmedia extensions, social media messages, interpersonal discussions, knowledge, attitudes, and behavioral intentions related to sexual and reproductive health. Overall, the survey participants were young, predominantly female, of Hispanic/Latino origin (especially Mexican), from poor families, currently attending high school or college, and almost all of them had personal connections to teen pregnancy.

They gave very high ratings to the ELH storyline appeal, production quality, their enjoyment of the web episodes and the transmedia extensions, and their desire to see more shows like ELH. They paid attention while watching the show, understood the characters and their stories, felt they were immersed in the world of ELH, thought they could relate to their real life experiences, reflected a lot on the plots, and were highly emotionally engaged. They felt they knew Jacob, Maya, Jessie, Ceci, Vanessa, and Paulina; the characters they liked the most were Jacob, Maya, Ceci, Paulina, Soli, and Paulie; and the characters they liked the least were Ramon, Freddie, and Abe.

They were active ELH endorsers, disseminators, and advocates on social media. Discussions about ELH also took place in person, through SMS, and on the phone, among other communication channels. Most discussions were with peers such as friends and siblings, but many also engaged parents and relatives. Virtually, everyone agreed on the importance to discuss sex openly, but many didn't feel comfortable, confident, or capable particularly with parents.

About 40-50% of the participants learned information about correct use of condoms that they did not know before. Close to a third learned something new about birth control and emergency contraception. A great majority of the survey participants were aware of the testing services but had not taken any action to get tested. After watching the show, almost all of them reported being willing to get tested themselves and to recommend the service to others. Regarding options for pregnant teens, many survey participants did not know where to go if they or someone they know needed help. After watching the show, most of them said they would be very or somewhat likely to recommend these services to others. They also appreciated the extensive resources provided on the ELH website.

(2) A lab experiment screened 1,379 college students and randomly assigned 136 qualified participants to five conditions, testing the effect of narrative formats on audience's narrative experience and health-related outcomes over time. Condition 1 was a true control group without any intervention. Condition 2 was a non-dramatic text version presented as a newspaper story in *The Siren*. Condition 3 was a dramatic text version, presented as a script. Condition 4 was a dramatic online teen drama version, presented as an abbreviated ELH in the form of a feature length film. Condition 5 was a dramatic transmedia version, presented as the feature length ELH along with selected transmedia extensions.

The content in all of the experimental conditions was carefully selected according to ELH social objectives and the messages presented were essentially the same across all conditions. Repeated measures occurred at T1 (baseline), T2 (immediately after intervention), and T3 (follow-up around two weeks). Specific dependent variables included narrative transportation; character identification; knowledge about contraception; attitude toward testing, sex communication, sex education, and women's rights; and behavioral intention of getting tested.

Results of the lab experiment were mixed. Overall, dramatic narrative formats were more effective than non-dramatic and control. We did not find substantial evidence to demonstrate a significant difference in audience engagement and intended outcomes between transmedia, online drama, and reading a script. However, we did find an ideal example with knowledge about condom use that supported our hypotheses exactly the way as proposed: Transmedia was significantly better than online drama, online drama was significantly better than a script, the script was significantly better than a newspaper story, and the newspaper story was significantly better than not receiving any information; also the knowledge gain was significant from T1 to T2 and retained from T2 to T3. There were a few other examples where the overall tendency appeared despite the lack of statistical significance. These results and trends are encouraging and promising.

(3) A series of social media analysis were carried out of ELH content and network dynamics on popular platforms Facebook (6,544 fans and 342 posts), Twitter (2,136 followers in the hashtag network), Instagram (92 posts), and Tumblr (348 posts) during the first 7-9 months since its launch.

Although a single ELH Facebook post could reach over 10,000 people, on average, each post reached about 2,000 people, engaged around 200 to interact with the content, and prompted more than 50 to provide feedback and word-of-mouth. This means about 10% of Facebook users who saw a post also clicked on it, and out of those 25% liked, shared, mentioned, or commented on the post. We used 10 Facebook Insights indicators to evaluate the posts and found that the most popular posts, or the posts that elicited the most response from ELH fans, were photos posted along with calls for specific actions.

Our ELH hashtag network analyses revealed a clear core-periphery structure among the linked users and a large proportion of isolates in the network. The core group was comprised of ELH and eight of its cast members, whereas the periphery was a sizable mix of ELH viewers, advisors, and other media organizations. A majority of the followers (80.7%) did not use the ELH hashtags to tweet about the show. In addition, we also discovered that most of the advisors, media organizations, and influencers that ELH listed on its official Twitter account did not follow back, or even if they did, they did not tweet about ELH frequently. The non-followers and isolated followers are the latent ties, representing social capital yet untapped. Network analyses and visualizations rendered an onion-like layered structure in the ELH hashtag network. For ELH to build a better Twitter community, we recommended: (1) ELH maintains the enthusiastic hub of core members but also mindfully engages the fans to join their conversations; (2) ELH activates the salient latent ties and encourage their listed advisors and connected media organizations (especially those with high number of followers) to follow back and help promote the show; and (3) ELH converts the isolated followers from passive lurkers to active participants in discussions about the show, the cast, and the social and health issues.

Overall, adopting popular social media platforms does not necessarily guarantee success in user engagement. It is critical to present the messages strategically and engage evangelistic users to build a sustainable community.

(4) An update of widget tracking from the NGO partners showed a notable spike in traffic with about 4,000 visits to Stayteen.org just on June 3, 2013 when ELH was launched, more than double the traffic on a typical day; it continued to attract 566,000 visits during the first month after ELH was premiered on Hulu; likewise, from June 1 to July 12, 2013, Planned Parenthood had 26,414 visits from the ELH website, which made up 22.34% of its total widget visits, and from mid-July to the end of October, 2013, they had 30,868 widget visits from ELH, of those 51.69% were new visits.

Meanwhile, Google Analytics was used to track the number of visitors to the program's website, pageviews, and duration. In 9 months, ELH's website attracted 211,502 visits from 120,562 unique visitors, with 850,045 pageviews and an average duration of 9:21. Moreover, we were able to track geographic information about ELH website visitors' location at the country, state, and city levels. For each level, we exported the raw data from Google Analytics as separate files on a weekly basis then reformatted them to be compatible with the GIS software SpaceStat and ArcGIS. In GIS, a shapefile is the digital representation of the geographic boundaries. We used the shapefile from the UN for the global level visualization, the shapefile from the US Census for the national level visualization, and geographic coordinates of all the populated places in CA for the city-level visualization. We joined the attribute data from Google Analytics (the number of visitors) with shapefiles (geographic data) using the matched names of countries, states, and cities.

The results were spatial-temporal dynamic visualizations of the diffusion of ELH from the U.S. to another 163 countries in the world and the evolution of ELH

spreading across all 50 states and the District of Columbia within the U.S. territory. We correlated the state-level web traffic data with population growth and teen pregnancy reports. High proportions of visitors to ELH website were located in the states (CA, TX, FL, NY, IL, AZ, and NJ) with the highest Hispanic/Latino population, the highest Hispanic/Latino share of the population, and the highest teen pregnancy rate. However, there was still room to reach out to other important states (NM, GA, NV, AL, SC, AR, MS, DE, LA, UT, and PA) which have the highest Hispanic/Latino population growth, the highest Hispanic/Latino teen pregnancy rate, and the highest increase in teen pregnancy/teen birth/teen abortion rates. In addition, even though California attracted the heaviest web traffic among visitors, we were able to use 2D and 3D visualizations to demonstrate how their geographic locations were clustered around bigger cities.

(5) A qualitative analysis of the open-ended viewer survey questions was used to interpret the meaning and impact of ELH from audience's perspective using their own words; highlighting their personal connections to the three Major and three minor ELH social objectives. The three questions were: "What are your most memorable scenes or specific lines from the characters in the show? How did the stories in East Los High reflect your own experience? And has it changed your life in any way?" A well-practiced approach to qualitative data analysis was utilized, through careful inductive and descriptive conceptualization, coding, and categorizing.

Viewer experiences with ELH relate directly to all Major and minor social objectives, for each of the three research questions: Most appealing narrative elements, relevance of dramatic storylines and main characters to audience members' personal life experiences, and the life changes initiated by viewers as a result of ELH. Specific mentions of characters were often described in terms of a character's narrative arc over the course of Season 1 and/or his or her interpersonal relationships and decision-making. Latino culture framing the narrative and specific elements embedded into scenes – from English/Spanish/Spanglish dialogue to family dynamics, the setting of East Los Angeles to everyday situations faced by the main characters – factored heavily into favorite scenes/moments as well as the overall significance of the show as relevant to viewer's personal lives. This holds true for target audience as well as viewers who were older than mid-twenties. Viewers' statements overwhelmingly indicate character identification and narrative transportation.

Two clusters emerge among the impact of ELH on decisions, behaviors, attitudes and knowledge: (1) "the show specifically impacted ME/my personal life" and (2) "the show has enabled me to have a positive impact on others around me." Viewer narration of "ELH impact on me" tended to relate primarily to the Major social objectives – from breaking up with abusive boyfriend to accessing contraception (actual completed behaviors), from better understanding a loved one's experience with teen pregnancy (thinking, empathy) to having a sense of precaution with behaviors in the future in order to avoid ending up like certain characters (behavioral intention, attitude). Responses revealing how ELH "has

enabled me to have a positive impact on others around me” correlated with the minor social objectives, especially advocacy for sexual/reproductive health and education/goals: “I can help my friends better now.”

(6) A study of 15 young Latino, unmarried, and heterosexual couples was conducted in a Southwest region of the U.S. where 81% of the population of the city was accounted as Latino and the university’s student population is majorly Latino/a (78%) and between 18-24 years old (85%). Each couple viewed a feature length version of ELH in a comfortable, private setting and participant observation and in-depth interview were used to collect information about their reaction to ELH and discussion about sexual encounters, outcomes, and resolutions, with a focus on female decision-making and male responsibility.

We found the couples widely used the “pull out” method with tacit consent, having no conversations about sex or contraception, before, during or after sex. They manifested the concept of invincibility after having unsafe sexual intercourse repeatedly. Most couples claimed to be “protected,” however, on probing, they did not exhibit safe sex practices. Efficacy among females to take decisions and males to take responsibility for their actions was perceived to be high, yet, responses suggest little substantive evidence to support these claims. Almost all of the females never practiced saying “no” to their partner. Even though they mentioned that communication about not having sex was as easy as saying “I am tired” or “let’s not do it today,” the partner could very easily persuade them by being insistent. In this light, the decisions that female makes about having or not having sex hold grave consequences for them and their partners. *ELH* narrative affected their (1) female agency, the feeling of being capable, (2) negotiation skills, reaching agreement without argument; and (3) resilience. Most couples actively co-engaged in the interviews and such was evident through overlapping responses, restating and sometimes countering their partners’ response. Even when the questions that were directed for females, some men took the initiative in answering and supporting female’s trust in them. Three types of male behaviors were perceived as being responsible, and seemed to be influenced by their viewing of the *ELH* narrative: (1) enhanced interpersonal communication between partners, (2) care and support for the female partner, and (3) protection of both the partners from pregnancy and STDs.

Taken together, we found the audience enthusiastic about *ELH* and appreciative of its production quality; they resonated with the realistic portrayals and are hungry for more! Furthermore, audience learned about condom use, birth control, emergency contraception, health services for pregnancy and STD testing, and options for pregnant teens. The show reinforced positive attitudes and values, demonstrated alternatives for behavioral change, motivated viewers to take responsibility and initiative for healthy decisions and actions. With a global reach and a national focus, *ELH* has set up the stage to cultivate a community of fans and change makers from the small screens into the digital and social realities.

VIEWER SURVEY

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Participants

ELH viewers volunteered to participate in an online survey embedded on the show's website. Data collection took place from August 15 to September 24, 2013, a few weeks after Season 1 was premiered on Hulu. A total of 444 people accessed the survey link, 139 did not answer any questions, 103 answered only a few questions, 17 answered most questions, and 185 answered all of the questions. The response rate was 68.7% and the completion rate was 60.7%.

Our final sample included 202 viewers who completed all or a substantial portion of the questionnaire, and all of them had watched at least 20 out of the 24 episodes of ELH. Within the final sample, there were 110 Hispanic/Latino female 23 years old or younger, who are the primary target of the show. Table 1 presents the socio-demographic characteristics of the two samples. **All survey participants considered themselves as ELH fans. Overall, these participants are young, predominantly female, of Hispanic/Latino origin (especially Mexican), from poor families, currently attending high school or college, and almost all of them have personal connections to teen pregnancy.**

Table 1. Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Survey Samples

	Total Sample	Primary Target
Sample size	<i>N</i> = 202	<i>n</i> = 110
Sex	90.5% female	100% female
Ethnicity	77.6% of Hispanic/Latino origin (54.6% Mexican)	100% of Hispanic/Latino origin (70.9% Mexican)
Age	12-60 years old (<i>M</i> = 21.75, <i>SD</i> = 7.26) 25.4% (12-17 years old) 50.2% (18-23 years old) 14.8% (24-30 years old) 9.6% (31-60 years old)	12-23 years old (<i>M</i> = 18.55, <i>SD</i> = 2.36) 34.5% (12-17 years old) 65.5% (18-23 years old)
Education completed	1.0% Elementary school 10.4% Middle school 63.5% High school 20.3% Bachelor's degree 4.7% Master's and beyond	1.9% Elementary school 10.5% Middle school 71.8% High school 11.8% Bachelor's degree
Household annual income	39.1% said < \$20K 34.8% said \$20K to < \$50K 19.1% said \$50K to < \$80K 7.0% said ≥ \$80K	42.6% said < \$20K 42.6% said \$20K to < \$50K 7.3% said \$50K to < \$80K
Pregnant teen connection	6.2% said they do not know any 8.7% said themselves 20.5% said their mothers 15.4% said their aunts 14.4% said their sisters 41.0% said their cousins 3.6% said their nieces 68.2% said their friends 35.4% said someone they know but not family or friends	5.6% said they do not know any 4.7% said themselves 22.4% said their mothers 18.7% said their aunts 12.1% said their sisters 47.7% said their cousins 1.9% said their nieces 75.7% said their friends 33.6% said someone they know but not family or friends

Procedure

A hyperlink to an online survey was embedded on the ELH website and subsequently promoted on its social media pages to encourage viewers to provide feedback on the show. Custom incentives (see Figure 1) for survey participants included a Skype call with Gabe/Jacob or Tracy/Vanessa, iTunes/Apple gift certificates, autographed photos of ELH cast, T-shirts, exclusive interview videos with Jacob and Cristian, a private link to the YouTube ELH music playlist, and a copy of Maya's recipe book.

Figure 1. Custom Incentives for Survey Participants



Participants were informed that there is a progress bar on the bottom of each page to indicate the completion rate as well as a NEXT button to proceed and a BACK button to go back and change their answers; and they could only take the survey once. A designated email address was included for participants to raise questions and express concerns although no complaints were received.

Screen shots were carefully selected and incorporated in the online survey to help participants recall relevant scenes and dialogues in certain episodes. The survey questionnaire (see Appendix 1A) was divided into sections to focus on questions about ELH media exposure; viewer ratings of the story appeal, production quality, and enjoyment; various aspects narrative engagement with the show; discussions on social media and elsewhere, and specific outcomes related to the show's social objectives (i.e., awareness, knowledge, attitude, behavioral intention, and likelihood of social service/contraceptive method recommendation).

Results

Media Exposure: Almost all of the survey participants watched the entire show at least once and the majority of them also consumed the content of various transmedia extensions. It was a 60/40 split between the participants who watched the entire show more than once and those who watched the entire show twice or more, showing the enthusiasm of fandom in the making. Viewers from the target population were not significant different from other population groups in their selective exposure to the ELH media content.

Figure 1. Survey Participants' Exposure to ELH Web Series

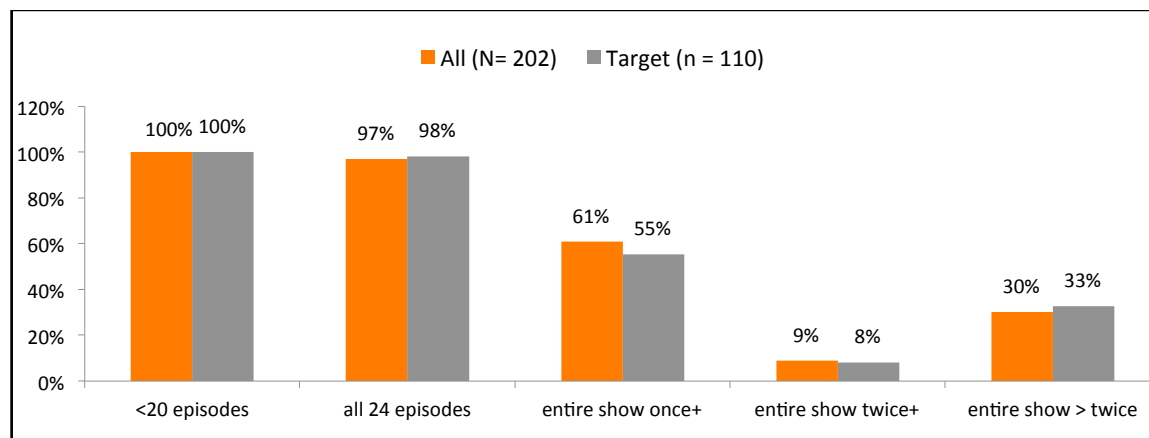
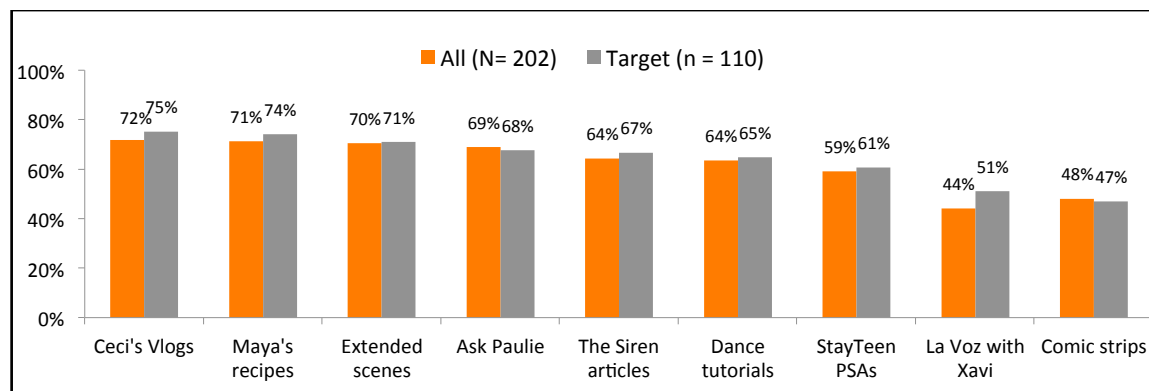


Figure 2. Survey Participants' Exposure to ELH Transmedia Extensions



Program Ratings: A 5-point scale was used for participants to rate how much the stories appealed to them, how much they enjoyed watching the web episodes, how much they enjoyed the extended content beyond the 24 episodes, how well the show was produced, and how much they want more shows like ELH. Table 2 presents the descriptive statistics of the minimum, maximum, mean, and standard deviation of the total sample and target group. Overall, participants gave very high ratings to all five aspects of the program, especially their enjoyment of the web episodes and their desire to see more shows like ELH.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of Audience Ratings of ELH

	Storyline appeal	Webnovela enjoyment	Tranmedia enjoyment	Production quality	Wanting more
Total Sample (<i>N</i> = 202)					
MIN	1	1	1	3	3
MAX	5	5	5	5	5
M	4.68	4.88	4.56	4.74	4.96
SD	0.79	0.45	0.86	0.53	0.23
Primary Target (<i>n</i> = 110)					
MIN	1	4	1	3	4
MAX	5	5	5	5	5
M	4.61	4.93	4.58	4.73	4.97
SD	0.83	0.26	0.83	0.55	0.17

Narrative Engagement: Literature has shown that narrative engagement with the audience is key in entertainment-education. Based Green and Brock (2000) and Russelle and Bilandzic (2009), we measured six aspects of narrative engagement.

(1) Attention focus

- When I was watching the show, nothing could distract me.
- Time went by fast when I was watching the show.
- I found my mind wandering while watching the show. (Reverse coded)

(2) Narrative understanding

- The stories in the show made perfect sense to me.
- At times, I found it difficult to follow what was going on. (Reverse coded)
- I could clearly understand the characters in the show.

(3) Narrative presence

- I could picture myself in some of the scenes.
- I was immersed in the story when I was watching the show.
- I felt I was transported from my physical location into the world of East Los High.

(4) Perceived realism

- This show deals with the kind of difficult choices people in real life have to make.
- The characters in the show are like people I actually know.
- Events in the show are realistic.

(5) Cognitive processing

- It was hard to stop thinking about the show after watching.
- I analyzed the plots to predict what would happen next.
- I found myself thinking about the show even when I was not watching.

(6) Emotional engagement

- I felt I went through the ups and downs with the characters in the show.
- I laughed when it was funny and felt sad when the characters suffered.
- The stories told in East Los High affected me emotionally.

A 5-point scale was used for participants to indicate their agreement or disagreement with the specific statements. For each of the six aspects of narrative engagement, the average rating across all three statements was calculated to represent a participant’s final score in each dimension. Table 3 presents the descriptive statistics of the minimum, maximum, mean, and standard deviation of the total sample and target group.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics of Audience Narrative Engagement with ELH

	Attention focus	Narrative understanding	Narrative presence	Perceived Realism	Cognitive processing	Emotional engagement
<i>1 = strongly agree, 5 = strongly disagree</i>						
Total Sample (N = 202)						
MIN	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
MAX	3.00	3.67	3.33	3.33	3.67	3.67
M	1.34	1.37	1.51	1.35	1.42	1.44
SD	0.50	0.56	0.67	0.51	0.62	0.62
Primary Target (n =110)						
MIN	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
MAX	2.67	2.67	3.33	3.00	3.67	3.67
M	1.35	1.31	1.49	1.30	1.42	1.46
SD	0.49	0.49	0.68	0.48	0.62	0.67

These scores are all amazingly positive and consistent across all the six dimensions, which means overall participants paid attention while watching the show, understood the characters and their stories, felt they were immersed in the world of ELH, thought they could relate to their real life experiences, reflected a lot on the plots, and were highly emotionally engaged.

Character Identification:

Identification with characters plays an important role in the narrative persuasion process.

A 5-point scale was used for measurement of participants’ identification with 15 characters in ELH Season 1 (see Figure 3) and participants were asked:

- How much do you FEEL LIKE YOU KNOW the character?
- How much do you LIKE the character?

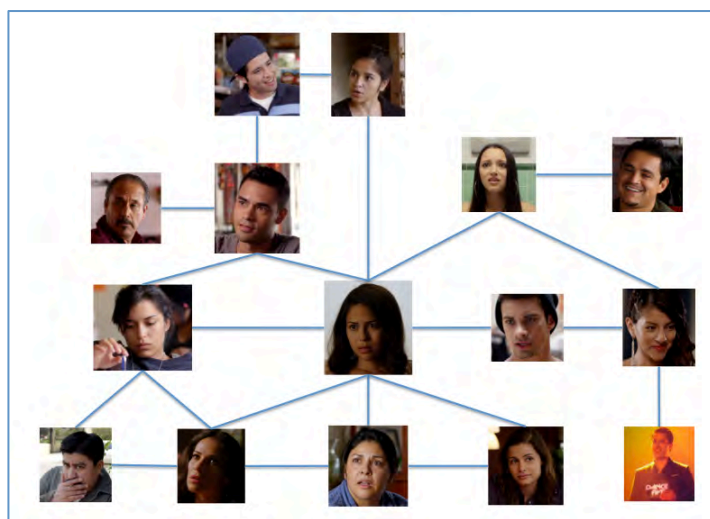


Figure 3. ELH Character Relationship Map

Table 4 presents a summary of the average ratings of character identification. Overall, participants felt they knew Jacob, Maya, Jessie, Ceci, Vanessa, and Paulina; the characters they liked the most were Jacob, Maya, Ceci, Paulina, Soli, and Paulie; and the characters they liked the least were Ramon, Freddie, and Abe.

Table 4. Mean Scores of Character Identification Ratings

How much do	you feel like you know...		you like ...	
	1 = a great deal, 5 = not much			
Characters	Total Sample	Primary Target	Total Sample	Primary Target
Jacob	1.43	1.40	1.31	1.22
Maya	1.45	1.53	1.51	1.52
Jessie	1.57	1.48	2.28	2.21
Cristian	2.63	2.55	2.92	2.60
Ceci	1.72	1.70	1.55	1.51
Abe	3.14	3.19	3.72	3.55
Soli	2.16	2.01	1.94	1.97
Paulie	2.35	2.15	1.90	1.93
Vanessa	1.91	1.91	2.73	2.62
Freddie	3.24	3.13	3.40	3.25
Lupe	2.37	2.24	2.28	2.13
Paulina	2.04	1.85	1.67	1.55
Hernan	2.81	2.68	2.64	2.67
Reina	2.72	2.63	2.69	2.57
Ramon	3.09	2.98	3.76	3.63

Mediated and Interpersonal Discussions:

ELH was promoted on four popular social media platforms: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Tumblr. As Figure 4 shows, since all survey participants were ELH fans, they were very active endorsers, disseminators, and advocates of the show.

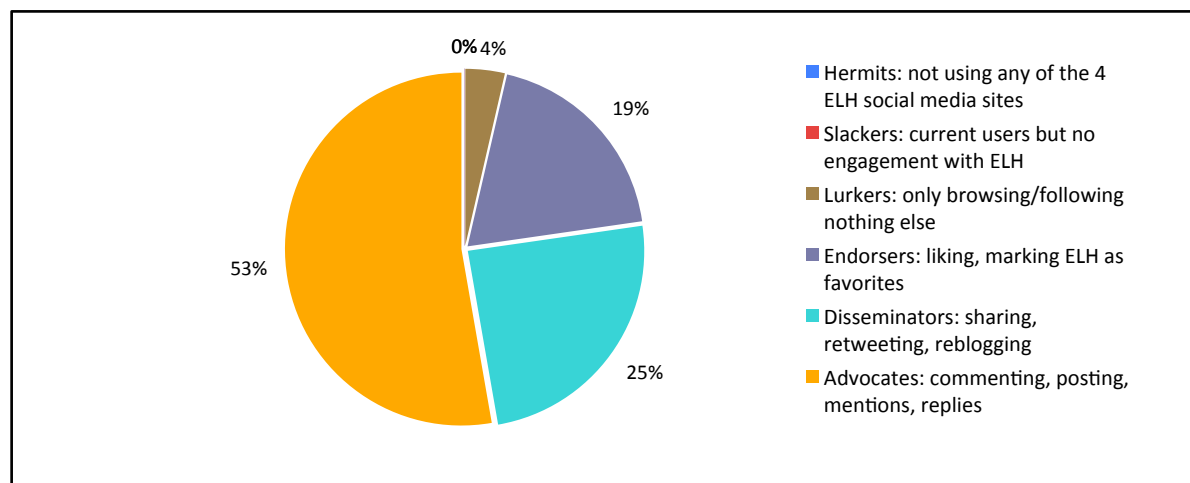


Figure 4. Survey Participants' Reaction on Social Media

Total	Target	
91.6%	89.1%	are Facebook users
87.0%	82.7%	have "liked" East Los High on Facebook
65.9%	64.3%	have "liked" some of the ELH postings
24.9%	22.4%	have "shared" some of the ELH postings
27.0%	26.5%	have "commented" on some of the ELH postings
10.3%	10.3%	have only browsed through ELH Facebook page
8.6%	11.2%	have not yet checked out ELH on Facebook
55.0%	56.4%	are Twitter users
67.6%	62.9%	have been "following" ELH on Twitter
44.1%	45.2%	have "mentioned" ELH in their tweets
41.4%	37.1%	have "retweeted" about ELH
27.9%	24.2%	have "replied" to tweets about ELH
17.1%	14.5%	have added ELH as their "favorite"
9.0%	6.5%	are being followed by ELH on Twitter
27.9%	30.6%	have not yet checked out ELH on Twitter
65.3%	75.5%	are Instagram users
68.9%	66.3%	have been "following" ELH on Instagram
55.3%	59.0%	have "liked" content related to ELH
28.0%	28.9%	have "commented" on content related to ELH
22.7%	22.9%	have "posted" content related to ELH
9.8%	10.8%	have "embedded" content related to ELH
3.7%	3.6%	are being followed by ELH on Instagram
26.5%	25.3%	have not yet checked out ELH on Instagram
24.8%	27.3%	are Tumblr users
60.0%	50.0%	have been "following" ELH on Tumblr
42.0%	33.3%	have "liked" content related to ELH
32.0%	16.7%	have "reblogged" content related to ELH
12.0%	3.3%	have "submitted" content related to ELH
38.0%	50.0%	have not yet checked out ELH on Tumblr

Who have you talked to about ELH on social media?

83.7%	83.6%	said friends in real life
54.5%	65.5%	said siblings
25.7%	30.9%	said parents
23.3%	24.5%	said friend met only online
22.3%	25.5%	said other young relatives
16.3%	20.0%	said aunts and uncles
14.9%	15.5%	said nieces and nephews
7.4%	6.4%	said children
4.5%	5.5%	said grandparents
10.9%	11.8%	said other

Have you talked about ELH through channels other than social media?

80.7%	80.0%	said face-to-face
68.3%	69.1%	said text messaging (SMS)
51.0%	46.4%	said on the phone
26.2%	27.3%	said instant messaging (IM)
18.3%	13.6%	said email
11.4%	13.6%	said video chat
3.0%	5.5%	said no channels used other than social media
4.5%	2.7%	said they have not talked to anyone yet

Who have you talked to about ELH other than on social media?

84.2%	80.9%	said friends in real life
58.4%	66.4%	said siblings
30.7%	38.2%	said parents
25.7%	29.1%	said other young relatives
19.8%	22.7%	said friends met only online
18.3%	20.0%	said nieces and nephews
15.8%	18.2%	said aunts and uncles
7.9%	7.3%	said children
4.5%	5.5%	said grandparents
10.9%	11.8%	said other

The discussions about ELH took place through multiple communication channels. Besides social media, a majority of the survey participants also talked about ELH in person, through SMS, and on the phone, among others. Most discussions were with peers such as friends and siblings, but many also engaged parents and relatives.

Outcomes related to Social Objectives:

(1) Learning new information about correct condom use

Did you know these facts before watching ELH? (% indicating did NOT know...)

30.2%	29.1%	using teeth to open the package can rip the condom
11.9%	15.5%	old condoms can break and they need to check the expiration date
43.6%	50.0%	if it doesn't roll down easily it means it is on the wrong side
43.6%	47.3%	they need to pinch the tip to get rid of bubbles before putting it on
23.8%	31.8%	the penis should be hard before putting the condom on
37.6%	46.4%	they need to leave half an inch at the tip for cum
20.8%	29.1%	the condom needs to fit snug
30.2%	39.1%	they need to remove the condom after sex when the penis is still hard
2.0%	2.7%	they need to use a new condom if having sex again
20.8%	23.6%	they need to use condoms for all types of sex including oral, vaginal, and anal

In addition,

100% **97.5%**
95.4% **91.4%**

said they are likely to use condoms correctly from now on
 said they are likely to use condoms during sex every time

(2) Learning new information about birth control & emergency contraception

Did you know these facts before watching ELH? (% indicating did NOT know...)

31.2%	35.5%	birth control pills take some time to kick in
11.9%	16.4%	birth control pills need to be taken everyday to be effective
7.9%	11.8%	birth control pills will not prevent STIs
24.0%	24.5%	emergency contraception
22.5%	21.8%	Plan B
33.5%	32.7%	anyone can purchase Plan B over the counter without a prescription
20.5%	19.1%	emergency contraception is available at drugstores, Planned Parenthood health centers, and other family planning clinics

In addition,

97.0% **95.4%**

agree that with the statement that “It doesn't matter if you are a girl or a guy, you should take your own responsibility for birth control.”

In the case of unprotected sex,

91.1% **86.4%**

said they are likely to get emergency contraception for themselves or their partners

97.9% **92.7%**

said they are likely to recommend emergency contraception to someone they know

(3) Testing Awareness and Willingness to Get Tested/Recommend (Target)

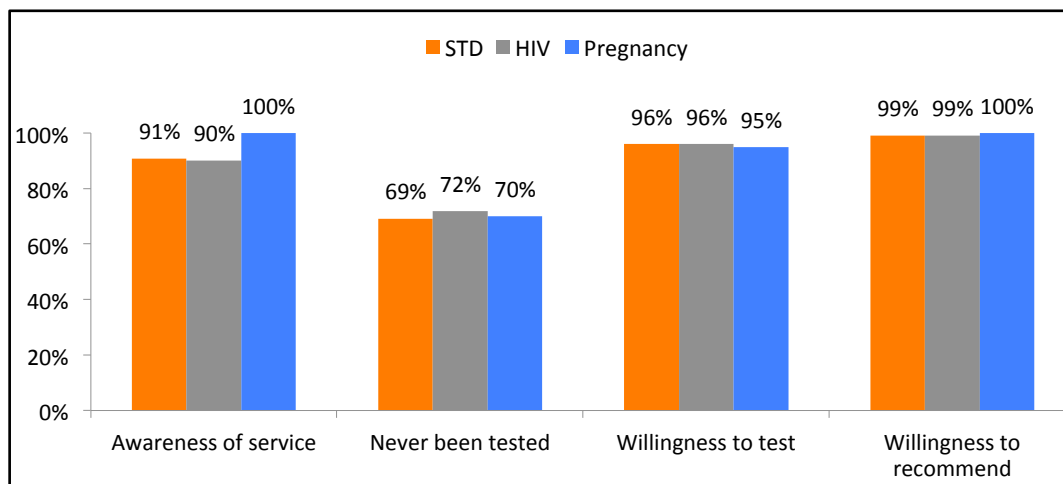


Figure 5. Testing Awareness and Willingness among Primary Target

A great majority of the survey participants were aware of the testing services but had not taken any action to get tested. After watching the show, almost all of them reported willing to get tested themselves and to recommend the service to others.

(4) Pregnancy Choices: Awareness & Recommendation (Target)

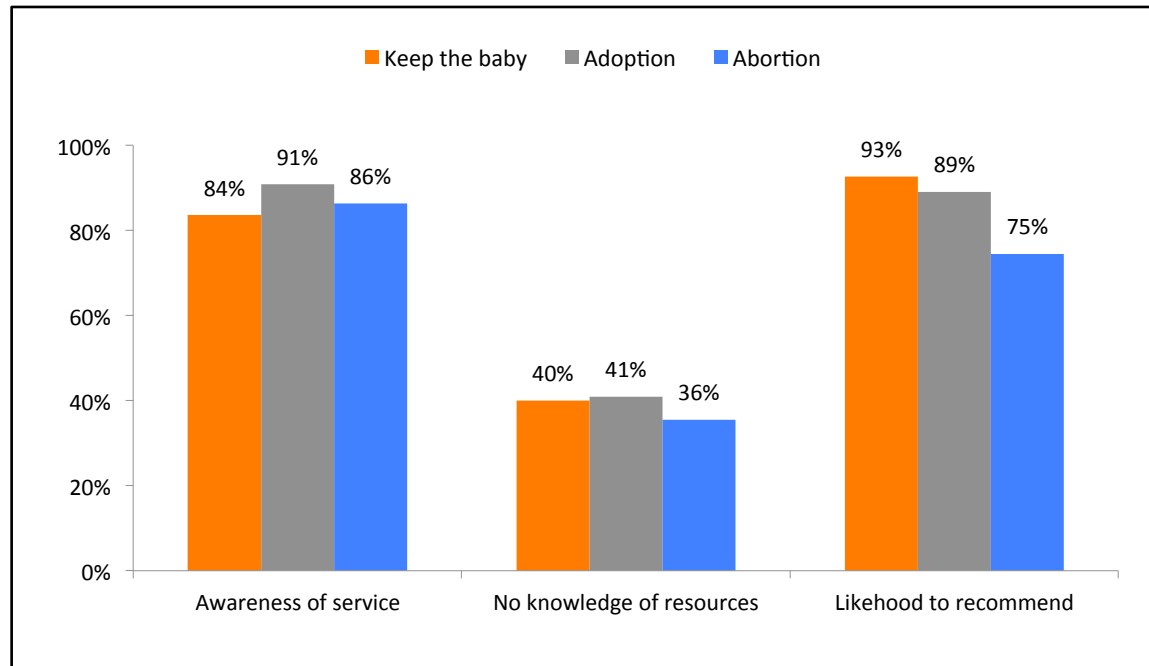


Figure 6. Perceptions of Pregnancy Choices among Primary Target

Overall, a majority of the survey participants knew these services existed, yet many of them did not know where to go if they or someone they know needed help. After watching the show, most of them said they would be very or somewhat likely to recommend these services to others.

(5) Value of Education

Total	Target	(% indicating agreement)
100%	100%	it is important for teens to have goals and dreams
98.5%	98.2%	it is important for teens to stay in school and obtain a degree
79.2%	80.0%	an unplanned/unwanted pregnancy can significantly decrease a teen’s chance of graduating from high school

(6) Use of Resources on ELH Website

Table 5. Primary Target Survey Respondents’ Use of ELH Resources by Topics

Birth control 84.9%	Pregnancy/parenting 77.4%	Abortion 56.6%	STDs/HIV 52.8%	Abuse/violence 47.2%
Sexual rights 48.5%	LGBTQ youth 28.3%	Depression 49.1%	Bullying 49.1%	Stay in school 54.7%
California 35.8%	Public services 39.6%	Breast cancer 35.8%	Parents 34.0%	

48.2% of the target sample visited ELH resources page. When they did visit the page, they browsed through 13 topics, 100% of them found the information helpful 80.6% shared and recommended the resources they learned.

(7) Importance of Open Communication about Sex

Total	Target	(% indicating agreement)
99.5%	100%	important to discuss sex openly
99.5%	100%	important to speak openly about sex with partners
98.0%	100%	important for parents to speak openly about sex with children

However, 42.7% of the target group didn't feel comfortable talking about sex with parents and 38.2% didn't know how to talk about sex with parents.

(8) Overall Mechanism of Entertainment Narrative Persuasion

Based on the extended elaboration likelihood model (or E-ELM) proposed by Slater and Rouner (2002), structural equation modeling technique was used to test the data from the total sample (N = 202) against the conceptual framework through three methods: (a) At the global level, overall goodness of fit tests were assessed with a nonsignificant χ^2 goodness-of-fit statistic, χ^2/df ratios of less than 5, root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) less than .05, and adjusted goodness of fit index (AGFI) close to 1, and expected cross-validation index (ECVI) ideally lower than the ECVI for both the saturated model and independence model; (b) At the local level, the statistical significance of each link was assessed based on t values. The critical values of t are ± 1.96 at the .05 alpha level and ± 2.58 at the .01 alpha level, 2-tailed test; and (c) The model was modified by adding paths based on their modification indices and theoretical reasoning (Byrne, 1998).

Figure 7. Summary of Structural Equation Modeling Results

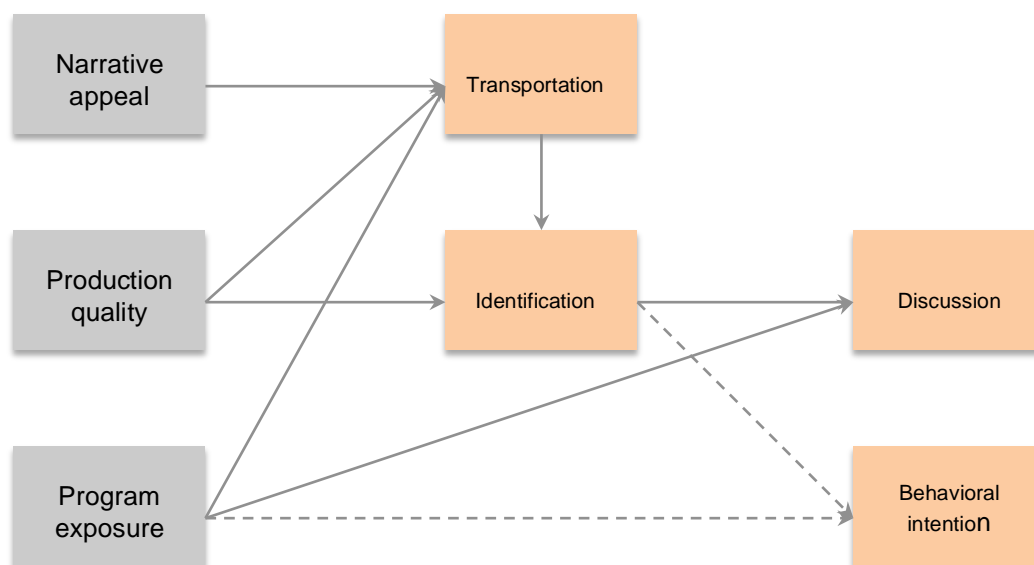


Figure 7 summarized the overall results from structural equation modeling where the conceptual model went through four iterations of modification. In each model, “behavioral intention” was tested as five separate dependent variables regarding condom use, emergency contraception, abortion health service recommendation, testing, and testing recommendation. At the global level, all models converged indicating the overall goodness-of-fit. At the local level, however, not all links were supported. Solid arrows indicate the links that were consistently significant across all models. Dotted arrows indicate the links that were not significant in most models, therefore, not supported with sufficient empirical evidence. More specifically,

- Narrative appeal, production quality, and program exposure significantly predicted audience transportation into the ELH narrative world;
- Production quality significantly predicted audience identification with the main characters in ELH;
- Program exposure significantly predicted audience transportation and discussion about ELH;
- Identification appeared to be a full mediator between transportation and discussion;
- There was no support for a direct link from discussion to behavioral intention during the model revision/modification process;
- The links from program exposure and identification to behavioral intention were not significant in most models with the exceptions of (1) a significant link from program exposure to behavioral intention regarding testing recommendation; (2) a significant link from identification to behavioral intention regarding testing recommendation.

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- Russelle, R., & Bilandzic, H. (2009). Measuring narrative engagement. *Media Psychology, 12*(4), 321–347.
- Slater, M. D., & Rouner, D. (2002). Entertainment-education and elaboration likelihood: Understanding the processing of narrative persuasion. *Communication Theory, 12*, 173–191.

ELH Exposure



East Los High viewers and addicts!

We want to know what you think about the show. Whether you watched the show back in June or more recently, we want to hear from you!

AND.....

If you live in the United States and have watched most of the web episodes, by completing this survey you will be eligible to enter a raffle to win one of our grand prizes:

- 1) a skype chat with Gabe/Jacob or Tracy/Vanessa + \$100 iTunes/apple gift cards (awards will be arranged for one lucky winner per skype chat)
- 2) an autographed photo from the cast + an ELH T-shirt (awards will be mailed to 10 winners),
- 3) a new, exclusive video of interview with Jacob and Cristian (award will be emailed to 100 winners with an access code), or
- 4) a copy of Maya's cook book with 3 new recipes + a private Youtube playlist of all ELH music (awards will be emailed to all eligible participants).

On the bottom of each page, you will see a progress bar that indicates the completion rate as well as a NEXT button to proceed and a BACK button to go back and change your answer. You can only take the survey once.

If you wish to participate in the raffle, please provide a valid email address at the end of the survey. The survey will be closed on September 19, 2013 and the winners will be contacted shortly after that. Your answers will be kept strictly anonymous and separate from your email or any other personally identifiable information. If you have any questions, contact us at thesiren@eastloshigh.com with "viewer survey" in the subject line.

[Please note that the survey deadline has extended and new prizes are added. If you have already completed the survey, you are automatically eligible for the newly added prizes. There is no need to take the survey again.]

Now are you ready? Let's get started!

East Los High has 24 web episodes. How many have you watched?

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="radio"/> All the 24 episodes | <input type="radio"/> 10 to 14 episodes |
| <input type="radio"/> 20 to 23 episodes | <input type="radio"/> 5 to 9 episodes |
| <input type="radio"/> 15 to 19 episodes | <input type="radio"/> 1 to 4 episodes |

How many times have you watched these episodes? Select the option(s) that BEST reflect your viewing experience.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> I have watched the entire show more than twice | <input type="checkbox"/> I have watched some of the episodes twice |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I have watched some of the episodes more than twice | <input type="checkbox"/> I have watched the entire show once |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I have watched the entire show twice | <input type="checkbox"/> I have watched these episodes once |



A wide range of content has been posted on Hulu and East Los High website in addition to the 24 episodes. How much extended online content have you seen?

	All of it	Some of it	None of it	Not sure
The Siren articles	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ask Paulie	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ceci's Vlog	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Maya's Recipes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Dance Tutorials	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
La Voz with Xavi	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Comic Strips	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Extended Scenes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Stay Teen PSAs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Do you consider yourself a fan of East Los High?

- Yes
- No



Next, tell us about your experience with East Los High on Social Media!

East Los High is on Facebook. (Check ALL that apply)

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> I have "liked" East Los High on Facebook. | <input type="checkbox"/> I have only browsed through the Facebook page but no other participation. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I have "liked" some of the postings. | <input type="checkbox"/> I am a Facebook user but haven't checked out the East Los High Facebook page yet. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I have "shared" some of the postings. | <input type="checkbox"/> I am not a Facebook user. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I have "commented" on some of the postings. | |

East Los High is on Twitter. (Check ALL that apply)

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> I have been "following" East Los High on twitter. | <input type="checkbox"/> I have added East Los High as my "favorite" on Twitter. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I have "retweeted" about East Los High. | <input type="checkbox"/> East Los High is following me on Twitter. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I have "mentioned" East Los High in my tweets. | <input type="checkbox"/> I am a Twitter users but I haven't followed the tweets from East Los High yet. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I have "replied" to tweets about East Los High. | <input type="checkbox"/> I am not a Twitter user. |

East Los High is on Tumblr. (Check ALL that apply)

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> I have been "following" East Los High on Tumblr. | <input type="checkbox"/> I have "reblogged" content related to East Los High on Tumblr. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I have "submitted" content related to East Los High on Tumblr.. | <input type="checkbox"/> I am a Tumblr user but I haven't checked out East Los High on Tumblr. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I have "liked" content related to East Los High on Tumblr. | <input type="checkbox"/> I am not a Tumblr user. |

East Los High is on Instagram. (Check ALL that apply)

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> I have been "following" East Los High on Instagram. | <input type="checkbox"/> I have "embedded" content related to East Los High on Instagram. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I have "posted" content related to East Los High on Instagram. | <input type="checkbox"/> East Los High is following me on Instagram. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I have "liked" content related to East Los High on Instagram. | <input type="checkbox"/> I am an Instagram user but I haven't checked out East Los High on Instagram. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I have "commented" on content related to East Los High on Instagram. | <input type="checkbox"/> I am not an Instagram user. |

Who have you talked to about East Los High ON SOCIAL MEDIA? (Check ALL that apply)

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Friends in real life | <input type="checkbox"/> Parents |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Friends met only online | <input type="checkbox"/> Aunts and uncles |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Siblings | <input type="checkbox"/> Grandparents |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Nieces and nephews | <input type="checkbox"/> Children |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other young relatives | <input type="checkbox"/> Other, specify: <input type="text"/> |

Have you talked about East Los High through channels OTHER THAN SOCIAL MEDIA? (Check ALL that apply)

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Face to face | <input type="checkbox"/> Instant Messaging (IM) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> On the phone | <input type="checkbox"/> Email |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Text messaging (SMS) | <input type="checkbox"/> I have not used other channels than social media |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Video chat | <input type="checkbox"/> I have not talked to anyone about the show |

Who have you talked to about East Los High OTHER THAN ON SOCIAL MEDIA? (Check ALL that apply)

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Friends in real life | <input type="checkbox"/> Parents |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Friends met only online | <input type="checkbox"/> Aunts and uncles |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Siblings | <input type="checkbox"/> Grandparents |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Nieces and nephews | <input type="checkbox"/> Children |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other young relatives | <input type="checkbox"/> Other, specify: <input type="text"/> |

ELH Viewer Information

In order for us to compare the feedback from different viewer groups, we would need to know a bit more about you.

How old are you? (Just type a number in the box below. If you prefer not to answer the question, just type "REF")

What is your sex?

- Male
 Female
 Prefer not to answer

If you are Latino/a, which Hispanic or Latino origin do you identify with the most?

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="radio"/> Not of Hispanic or Latino origin | <input type="radio"/> Puerto Rican |
| <input type="radio"/> Spaniard | <input type="radio"/> Cuban |
| <input type="radio"/> Mexican | <input type="radio"/> Dominican |
| <input type="radio"/> Central American | <input type="radio"/> Other |
| <input type="radio"/> South American | <input type="radio"/> Prefer not to answer |
| <input type="radio"/> Latin American | |

What is your race? Select the options that BEST reflect your racial background.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> American Indian or Alaska Native | <input type="checkbox"/> Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Asian | <input type="checkbox"/> White |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Black or African American | <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to answer |

What is the highest level of education you have COMPLETED?

- No formal education
- Elementary school
- Middle school
- High school
- Bachelor's degree
- Master's degree
- Doctoral degree or beyond
- Prefer not to answer

What grade are you in this academic year?

- 7th grade
- 8th grade
- 9th grade
- 10th grade
- 11th grade
- 12th grade
- College freshman
- College sophomore
- College junior
- College senior

What is your annual household income?

- \$19,999 or less
- \$20,000 to \$49,999
- \$50,000 to \$79,999
- \$80,000 or more
- Don't know
- Prefer not to answer

What is your marital status?

- Single, never been married
- Married
- Separated
- Divorced
- Widowed
- Prefer not to answer

Do you have a romantic partner meaning a boyfriend/girlfriend, domestic partner, or spouse?

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to answer

How many children do you have?

- None
- One
- Two
- Three
- Four or more
- Prefer not to answer

Do you know someone who became pregnant as a teen? (check ALL that apply)

- No
- Yes, myself
- Yes, my mother
- Yes, my aunt(s)
- Yes, my sister(s)
- Yes, my cousin(s)
- Yes, my niece(s)
- Yes, my friend(s)
- Yes, someone else not included the the categories above
- Prefer not to answer

Are you sexually active now?

- No, I have never had sexual intercourse.
- No, I have had sexual intercourse, but not in the past 3 months.
- Yes, I am sexually active now.
- Prefer not to answer

Thinking of the **last time** when you had sexual intercourse, did you or your partner ...

	Yes	No	Don't remember	Prefer not to answer
Drink alcohol?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Use drugs?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

The **last time** you had sexual intercourse, which method(s) did you or your partner use to prevent pregnancy, if any at all? (check ALL that apply)

- No contraception used
- Male condoms
- Withdrawal or pulling out
- Birth control pills
- A diaphragm, cervical cap, or female condom
- Tubal or female sterilization
- Emergency contraception such as Plan B
- A vaginal ring such as NuvaRing
- Vasectomy or male sterilization
- A patch such as Ortho Evra
- An IUD such as Mirena or ParaGard
- Other methods not mentioned above
- A shot such as Depo Provera
- An implant such as Implanon or Nexplanon
- Prefer not to answer

ELH Social Objectives



Sex was a big part of East Los High and many related issues were addressed in the stories. We want to know what you think about these issues!



Abe promised he would pull out, but he didn't and got Ceci pregnant. Later he said to Jacob birth control is the girl's job. But Jacob thought the guy should be responsible too. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neutral	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Not sure
Girls are mainly responsible for birth control.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Guys are mainly responsible for birth control.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It doesn't matter if you are a girl or a guy, you should take your own responsibility for birth control.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



Soli is considering having sex with Paulie but she wants to be absolutely safe. Before watching East Los High, did you know these facts about birth control pills? And how often do you play it safe?



Did you see this extended scene at the clinic where Ileana talked to Maya about condom use?

- Yes
- No

In this extended scene, Maya thought she knew how to use a condom but it turned out she didn't know exactly. Did you know these facts before watching East Los High? And how often do you play it safe?

	Did you know?		How often do you play it safe on this one?				
	Yes	No	Always	Sometimes	Never	Not sure	Not applicable
Using teeth to open the package can rip the condom.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Old condoms can break so check the expiration date.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
If it doesn't roll down easily it means the condom is on the wrong side.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Pinch the tip to get rid of any bubbles before putting on the condom.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The penis should be hard before putting the condom on.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Leave half an inch of space at tip for his cum.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Fit snug - not too tight or too loose.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
After sex, remove condom while penis is still hard, tie up and throw away.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
If you have sex again, use a new condom.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Use condoms for all types of sex including oral, vaginal and anal.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

How likely are you to ...

	Very likely	Somewhat likely	Not likely	Not sure
use condoms correctly from now on?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
use condoms during sex every time?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



Jessie didn't know Plan B was an emergency contraception method and that option was available to her. Before watching East Los High, did you know ...

	Yes	No
emergency contraception is a birth control method that may be used up to five days after having had unprotected sex?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Plan B is one of the two brands of morning after pill options?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
anyone, no matter how you are, can now purchase Plan B One-Step over the counter with a prescription?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
emergency contraception is available at drugstores, Planned Parenthood health centers, and other family planning clinics?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

In the case of unprotected sex, how likely are you to ...

	Very likely	Somewhat likely	Not likely	Not sure
get emergency contraception for yourself or your partner?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
recommend emergency contraception to someone you know?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

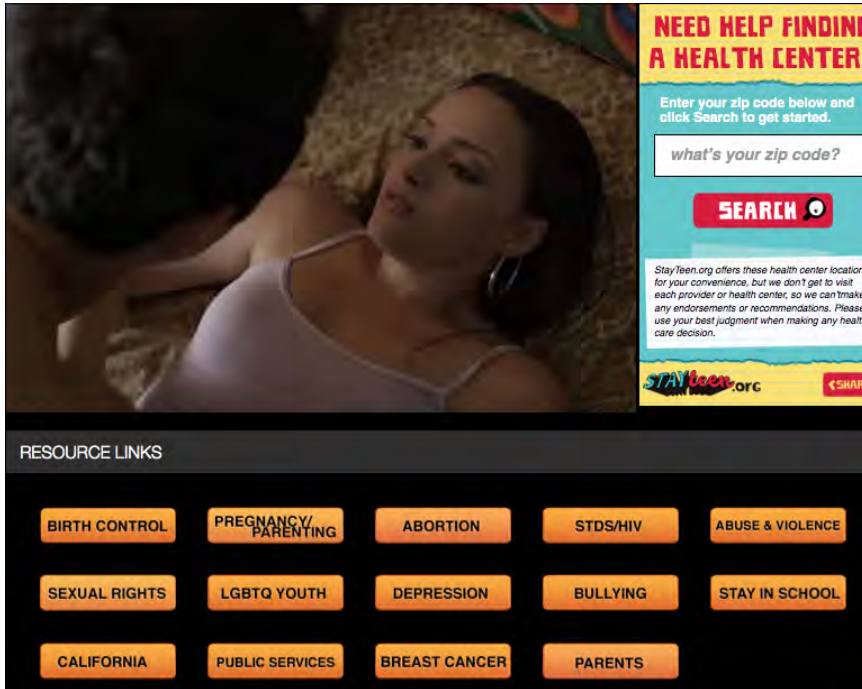


In the extended online content, Jacob and Ceci appeared in the Stay Teen public service announcements (PSAs). They talked about the level of teen pregnancy in the United States. Did you see these PSAs?

- Yes
- No

Before watching East Los High, did you know about these facts?

	Yes	No
A sexually active teen who does not use protection has a 85% chance of pregnancy within a year.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Nearly 3 out of 10 girls in the United States get pregnant when they are teens and a high percentage of them are Latina.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8 in 10 dads don't marry the teen mothers of their babies.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



East Los High website has a comprehensive resources page. Have you had a chance to check out the information on these topics? (check ALL that apply)

- Birth control
- Pregnancy/Parenting
- Abortion
- STDs/HIV
- Abuse & Violence
- Sexual rights
- LGBTQ youth
- Depression
- Bullying
- Stay in school
- California
- Public services
- Breast cancer
- Parents
- Haven't visited the resources page yet.

Overall, how helpful was the information?

- A great deal
- Somewhat
- Not much
- Haven't visited the resources page yet.

Have you shared or recommended any resources you learned from East Los High web episodes and other content on its website?

- Yes
- No

ELH Discussions



Paalie signed up to work for The Siren. He thought it was important for people to discuss sex openly. What do you think?

- | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> Very important | <input type="radio"/> Not important |
| <input type="radio"/> Somewhat important | <input type="radio"/> Not sure |

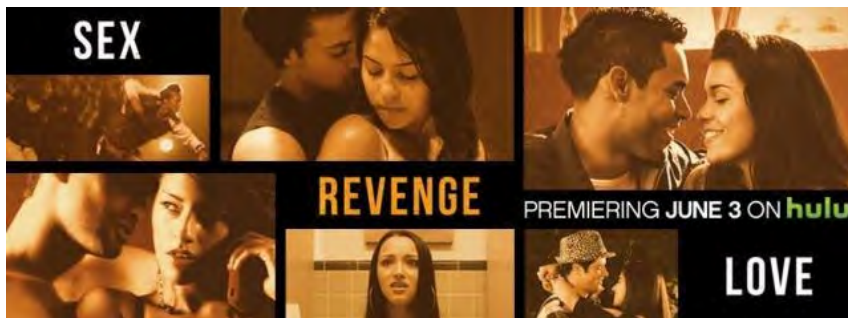


Lupe found out that Jessie got pregnant and she was very upset. But Jessie said to her, "You never told me what to do!"

How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about discussions of sex between parents and children?

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neutral	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Not sure	Not applicable
It is important for parents to have open discussions about sex with their children.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am comfortable talking about sex with my parents.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am comfortable talking about sex with my children.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I know how to talk about sex with my parents.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I know how to talk about sex with my children.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

ELH Narrative Experience



Overall, what you think about the show?

How would you rate the following aspects of the show?

How much did the stories
appeal to you?

How much did you enjoy
watching the web episodes?

How much did you enjoy the
extended content beyond the
24 episodes?

How well was the show
produced?

How much would you want
more shows like East Los
High?

What are your most memorable scenes or specific lines from the characters in the show?

How did the stories in East Los High reflect your own experience? And has it changed your life in any way?

Below are some statements describing possible viewing experiences of the East Los High. Indicate how much you agree or disagree with these statements.

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neutral	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Not sure
When I was watching the show, nothing could distract me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Time went by fast when I was watching the show.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I found my mind wandering while watching the show.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The stories in the show made perfect sense to me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
At times, I found it difficult to follow what was going on.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I could clearly understand the characters in the show.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I could picture myself in some of the scenes.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I was immersed in the story when I was watching the show.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I felt I was transported from my physical location into the world of East Los High.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
This show deals with the kind of difficult choices people in real life have to make.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The characters in the show are like people I actually know.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Events in the show are realistic.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It was hard to stop thinking about the show after watching.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I analyzed the plots to predict what would happen next.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I found myself thinking about the show even when I was not watching.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I felt I went through the ups and downs with the characters in the show.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I laughed when it was funny and felt sad when the characters suffered.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The stories told in East Los High affected me emotionally.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

ELH Character Identification

How much do you LIKE these characters?

		A great deal	A lot	Some	A little	Not much	Not sure
Jacob	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Maya	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Jessie	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Cristian	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ceci	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Abe	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Soli	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Paulie	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Vanessa	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Freddie	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lupe	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Paulina	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Hernan	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Reina	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ramon	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Remember, if you live in the United States and have watched most of East Los High (20 or more episodes), you are eligible to participate in the raffle. If you are eligible and wish to participate in the raffle, please type in a valid email address below and we will contact the winners shortly after the survey closes on September 3, 2013. If you are not eligible or do not wish to enter the raffle, just type in "No raffle."

LAB EXPERIMENT

by

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Experimental Design

A partial 2 x 3 factorial lab experiment (with a control group and three repeated measures) was designed to test the effect of various narrative formats on audience engagement and health-related outcomes.

Table 1. Summary of ELH Experimental Design

Control	C1	
	Narrative form	
Modality	<i>Non-Dramatic</i>	<i>Dramatic</i>
Text	C2	C3
Drama	---	C4
Transmedia	---	C5

- Condition 1 (C1) is the true control group without any intervention.
- Condition 2 (C2) is the non-dramatic text version presented as a newspaper story in The Siren (see Appendix 2A).
- Condition 3 (C3) is the dramatic text version, presented as a script (see Appendix 2B).
- Condition 4 (C4) is the dramatic drama version, presented as an abbreviated ELH of a feature length film (see [link](#)).
- Condition 5 (C5) is the dramatic transmedia version, presented as an abbreviated ELH with additional selected transmedia extensions (see [link](#)).

The content in C2, C3, C4, and C5 was carefully selected according to ELH social objectives and the messages presented were essentially the same across all conditions. Repeated measures occurred at T1 (baseline), T2 (immediately after intervention), and T3 (follow-up around two weeks). Transportability (i.e., an individual’s tendency to be transported into a narrative world) was measured (Dal Cin, Zanna, & Fong, 2004) at T1 as a potential control variable in case there were significant individual differences. Specific dependent variables included narrative transportation (Green & Brock, 2000); character identification; knowledge about contraception; attitude toward testing, discussing sexual health, sex education, and women’s rights; behavioral intention of getting tested.

Research Hypotheses

- H1: Health-related outcomes in all experimental conditions C2, C3, C4, C5 are significantly better than the control condition C1.
- H2: Audience engagement and health-related outcomes in the dramatic text condition C3 are significantly better than non-dramatic text condition C2.
- H3: Audience engagement and health-related outcomes in the online drama condition C4 are significantly better than dramatic text condition C3.
- H4: Audience engagement and health-related outcomes in the transmedia condition C5 are significantly better than online drama condition C4.

Participants

With IRB approval, a research announcement (Appendix 2C) was made in class and via mass email on the campus of the University of Texas at El Paso. Students were invited to participate in an online survey (Appendix 2D). There were 1,379 students who accessed the survey link with a chance of winning one of five \$200 Amazon gift cards. Their answers were used to screen potential experiment participants following the criteria specified below:

- 1) Female
- 2) Age between 18 and 28
- 3) Of Latino origin
- 4) With English proficiency of at least 7 on a 10-point scale
- 5) Not a regular viewer of *East Los High* or similar shows such as *16 and Pregnant* and *Degrassi*.

Qualified students were then approached with a different research announcement (Appendix 2E) and were invited to participate in a separate, 2-part study with the first part answering questions after attending a lab session (Appendix 2F) and the second part completing a follow-up online survey (Appendix 2G). Data collection took place from June to August 2014.

A total of 136 female Latino students fluent in English participated in the lab experiment; their age ranged from 18 to 28 ($M = 20.74$, $SD = 2.39$). Table 2 shows the number of participants in each specific condition.

Table 2. Summary of ELH Experimental Sample

Total Sample ($N = 136$)		
Control	C1 = 30	
	<i>Non-Dramatic</i>	<i>Dramatic</i>
Text	C2 = 21	C3 = 21
Drama	---	C4 = 32
Transmedia	---	C5 = 32

Procedure

Participants were informed about the purpose of this phase of the study, the time and location of the event, and the research procedures. They were randomly assigned to one of the five conditions. The participants in the control condition were asked to come to the computer lab and pick up a small gift, and subsequently completing the posttest survey at T2. The participants in C2 and C3 were asked to have a reading session in a computer lab and subsequently completing the posttest survey at T2. The participants in C4 and C5 were asked to have a viewing session in a classroom and subsequently going to a computer lab next door to complete the posttest survey at T2. The incentive was a \$30 gift card for each participant. About two weeks later, all participants received an email with the URL to the follow-up survey at T3. The incentive was a \$20 gift card for each participant.

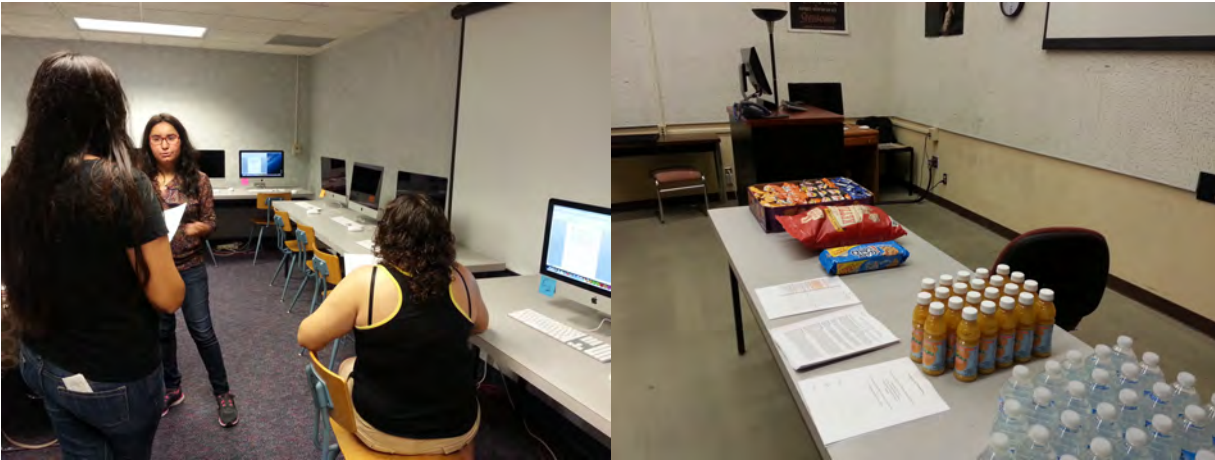


Figure 1. Team Discussion, Lab Setup, and Researcher Briefing Participants

Results

Transportation:

- T1_transportability was only significantly different between C2 and C5; since they are not in direct comparison for hypothesis testing, T1_transportability was not used as a covariate in the analysis. (Note: the results were essentially the same even when controlling for individual transportability)
- Scale reliability: Cronbach's alpha for T1_transportability = .94, T2_transportation = .68, T3_transportation = .80
- C2 vs. C3: significant main effects of time and condition, no interaction; so significant decrease over time but higher transportation in C3 than C2 (only at T2).
- C3 vs. C4: significant main effect of time, not condition or interaction; so transcript and online drama had no difference.
- C4 vs. C5: significant main effect of time, not condition or interaction; transmedia was a bit better but not by much/statistically significant.

Essentially, transportation dropped overtime; but dramatic format of storytelling was significantly better than nondramatic format; and the mode of dramatic storytelling did not make a difference in audience' narrative transportation – in other words, there was no difference between reading a script, watching ELH online drama, and experiencing ELH transmedia.

Identification:

- Tia Paulina: There was a significant difference in identification between C2 and all other conditions, no time main effect. So overall participants identified with Tia Paulina significantly more in the non-dramatic form although there was no distinction between the modes of delivery amongst the dramatic forms.
- Ceci: Nothing significant.
- Maya: Significant main effects of time and condition and interaction between C2 and C3. Nothing else.
- Jessie: Significant main effects of time between C2 and C3. Nothing else.
- Soli: Significant interaction between C2 and C3. Nothing else.
- Jacob: Significant main effects of condition between C2 and C3; C4 and C5! Nothing else.
- Cristian: Significant main effects of time between C2 and C3; C3 and C4; and C4 and C5 (the disliking weakened overtime). Nothing else.
- Vanessa: Significant interaction between C3 and C4. Nothing else.

Overall, participants identified with Maya and Jacob significantly better when reading the script as opposed to a newspaper story. More importantly, they identified with Jacob significantly better in the transmedia version than in the online drama version.

Knowledge about condom:

There was a significant main effect of time, condition, and interaction with a significant increase in knowledge about condom use both from T1 to T2, and from T1 to T3 (indicating overtime knowledge gain), but not from T2 to T3 (meaning the knowledge gain retained); and C5 was significantly higher than C1, C2, C3, and C4!!!!

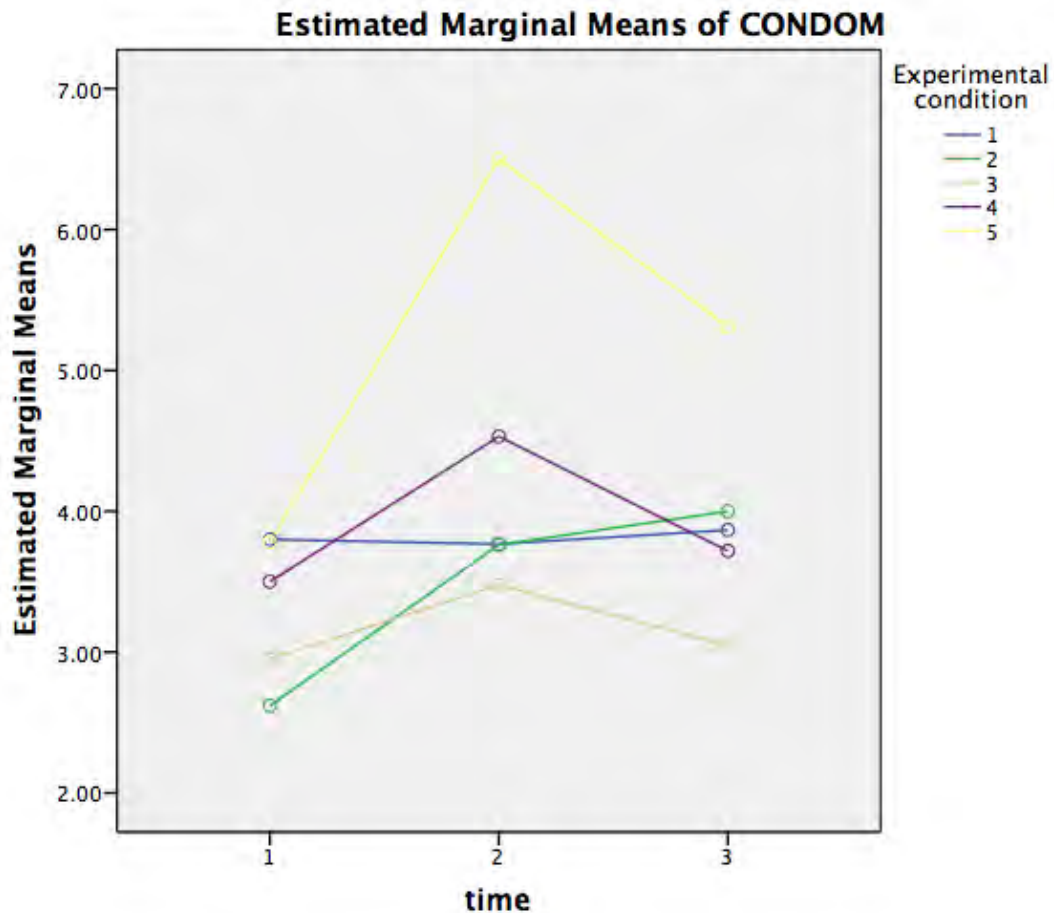


Figure 2. Results of Mixed ANOVA on Condom Knowledge

These results demonstrate that transmedia was the most effective format of narrative presentation, significantly over and above all other formats in educating participants about condom use. This also represents the ideal outcomes we were looking for, although this was the one and only significant evidence we found.

Knowledge about birth control pills and emergency contraception:

There was no significant result when using the composite scores. When analyzing specific items, the results were mixed:

- T2_PILLS1R no difference, but T3_PILLS1R sig diff between C2 and C4, and C2 and C5; although the general trend was for C4 and C5 to be higher indicating correct understanding that birth control pills won't take effect as soon as the first pill is taken, no substantial difference between C4 and C5 though.
- Significant time effect from T1 to T2 increase for participants to disagree that birth control should only be a girl's responsibility; although the general trend was the C5 was highest there was no sig condition main effect.
- On emergency contraception can be obtained over the counter without a prescription (key knowledge in ELH) nothing significant and C5 was the worst; no significant condition main effect.
- About birth control pills can still be effective even if you forget to take it once in a while...significant time effect and interaction within subjects; but negative outcomes; no significant condition main effect.
- On morning after pills may be used up to 5 days after having had unprotected sex...significant time effect from T1 to T2 with positive increase, but no significant condition effect.

Attitudes toward sex education:

- C2 vs. C3: there was a significant increase from T1 to T2 and then a significant decrease from T2 to T3 within subjects and the condition main effect was not significant.
- C3 vs. C4: there was a significant increase from T1 to T2 within subjects, and nothing else was significant.
- C4 vs. C5: nothing was significant, although C5 did have higher scores than C4, an increase from T1 to T2, and maintained from T2 to T3.

Attitudes toward women's rights:

- No significant results

Importance to get tested:

- Significant time main effect with an increase from T1 to T2 and no significant difference from T2 to T3 (so the effect remained over time). Although C5 was the highest the condition main effect was not significant.

Willingness to get tested:

- C2 vs. C3: Significant increase from T1 to T2 but also significant decrease from T2 to T3
- C3 vs. C4: No significant results
- C4 vs. C5: Significant increase from T1 to T2 for time main effect, nothing else.

Importance to talk about sexual health:

- C2 vs. C3: No significant results
- C3 vs. C4: Significant increase from T1 to T2 but also significant decrease from T2 to T3
- C4 vs. C5: Significant decrease from T2 to T3, nothing else.

Talk about sexual health

- C4 and C5 both had significant increase from T1 to T2 but no difference between conditions. Nothing else.

What participants did after learning about ELH at T2:

- 56.6% (n = 77) took some actions
- 22.8% (n = 31) talked to others about the show
- 22.8% (n = 31) searched about the show online
- 4.4% (n = 6) watched season 1
- 1.5% (n = 2) started watching season 2

- Among 95 active Facebook users, 1.1% (n = 1) started following ELH on Facebook
- Among 30 active Twitter users, 6.7% (n = 2) started following ELH on Twitter
- Among 27 active Tumblr users, no one started following ELH on Tumblr
- Among 72 active Instagram users, no one started following ELH on Instagram

IN SUMMARY

Results of the lab experiment were mixed. Overall, dramatic narrative formats were more effective than non-dramatic and control. We didn't find substantial evidence to demonstrate a significant difference in audience engagement and intended outcomes between transmedia, online drama, and reading a script. However, we did find an ideal example with knowledge about condom use that supported our hypotheses exactly the way as proposed. In addition, there were a few other examples where the overall tendency appeared despite the lack of statistically significant difference. These trends and significant results are very encouraging and promising.

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TOP STORY

East Los High Alumni Making Strides

On a Saturday afternoon on the grounds of East Los High, Jessie Martinez giggles as four-year-old Isela Camayo plays in the grass. A junior pre-med major at the University of San Francisco, Jessie is taking a break from studying for her midterm exams while babysitting her friend Ceci Camayo's daughter. Jessie marvels at the rollercoaster of emotions and decisions during her junior and senior years in high school, and how they led her to where she is now.

Jessie agreed to meet with East Los High Siren reporters today, and she found herself filled with nostalgia: We sat under the same tree where she and then-dance teammate Ceci had their first serious conversation about Ceci's unexpected pregnancy. Ceci had been going steady with her older boyfriend for a while and she trusted him to pull out during their many sexual encounters. One afternoon he didn't, and although he promised for the next time, Ceci's reproductive system was already conceiving a child.

Recounting this story, Jessie went on to describe how she had been a proud, professed member of the "Virgin's Club" with her best friend (and former Siren student editor), Soli Gomez. When she started dating Jacob Aguilar, she clearly communicated her choice to not have sex, even when he expressed his desire. But one day, she did decide to have sex with attractive and seductive Cristian Camacho, her dance team coach who had been giving her one-on-one practice sessions. He told Jessie he loves her; when she asked if he had a condom because she's not on the pill or anything, Cristian said "don't worry, I'll take care of you, I'll pull out."

A week after her first sexual encounter, Jessie surprised her boyfriend Jacob at a party, hoping to win him back from her cousin, Maya Martinez. Days earlier, Soli had seen Jacob and Maya making out. When Jessie heard the news, she felt as if the only way to compete was to have sex with Jacob.

Just as Jessie paused to take a breath, Isela walked over and burped. This small interaction left Jessie shaking her head as she recalled how she had vomited right before a big dance performance and feared it wasn't the flu. When Jessie went to the clinic for a pregnancy test, her fears were confirmed.

Along with verifying the test's accuracy, Jessie asked about the effectiveness of condoms, which work 98% of the time if they are used correctly. During that visit, Jessie also learned that condoms can help protect against HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases. But that information wouldn't help Jessie with the real decision about her pregnancy. The doctor explained the three options for Jessie: Have the baby and become a mother, bring the baby to term and pursue adoption, or terminate the pregnancy - an abortion. Given the weight of the decision ahead, Jessie decided to think things through and return to the clinic a week later.

Jessie recalls feeling scared and incredibly alone. When she told Cristian that she was pregnant, he brushed it off and told Jessie it was her responsibility. Jessie didn't tell Soli about the sex with either Cristian or Jacob for a while, knowing Soli would be upset. But when they did talk, Jessie learned that had she talked with Soli right away, the pregnancy might have been averted. Since she was 17 at the time, Soli would have been willing and able to go to a pharmacy and pick up emergency contraception—the Plan B pill—for Jessie (who was 16). If she would have taken Plan B within up to five days of having unprotected intercourse, Jessie probably could have avoided the pregnancy altogether.

But it was too late for that by the time Jessie sought support from her loved ones. And while the clinic doctor was telling Jessie that abortion is an option, Jessie's mother was fiercely opposed to it, and Jessie felt as if she couldn't go against her mother's wishes. So Jessie decided that she would go through with the pregnancy. Jessie told Jacob the news while hoping the pregnancy was the result of having sex with him – and he also brought up abortion, telling her that neither of them was ready to be parents and to think about what it meant for them being in high school. Then Jessie's mother - who was dying of cancer - made a request: she asked Jacob to marry Jessie; She wanted to make sure that her daughter was taken care of and not left as a single mother like herself.

Jessie's mother died before the wedding. Shortly after the funeral, Jessie and Soli talked. Soli shared that one of her cousins - Catholic, like Jessie - belonged to a pro-choice group. With Soli's words ringing in her ears - *'you wouldn't be the first Catholic girl to get an abortion'* - Jessie returned to the clinic. Thinking she was 9 weeks along in the pregnancy, Jessie learned that she could take the Mifeprex pill, which causes an abortion. However, the doctor explained that she was actually at 10 weeks - too far along to take the pill. So now Jessie's option for an abortion was through a simple procedure.

Jessie continued to deliberate, but plans to uphold her mother's wishes went on. However, on the big day, Jessie decided she had to confess to Jacob - having realized that the baby could be Christian's - and the wedding ended up being called off at the last minute. Then another secret came to light, as Jessie's aunt Paulina consoled her. It turned out that Paulina had gotten pregnant when she was about the same age as Jessie - and had an abortion.

Jessie was shocked! Paulina didn't seem like the teen pregnancy type, and she went to college after graduating from East Los High, then became a successful business executive before she was 30! And Paulina's mother, Jessie's grandmother, had been fiercely opposed to abortion. Paulina explained that she knew becoming a mother at that time was not the right decision for her. Choosing the abortion was difficult yet she knew it was the right choice for her. It was hard, but at the same time, she was happy because there was something she could look forward to in the future.

Jessie thought long and hard - about what Soli had said, about aunt Paulina's experience, about the conversation with a doctor who knew her family well, who had pointedly asked "What do YOU want, Jessie?" Ultimately, Jessie chose to abort the pregnancy before the end of her junior year.

Jessie completed high school the following year and then boarded a train to San Francisco to begin college. School is challenging and wonderful, and she still comes back to East Los to visit her friends from high school, including Ceci. Jessie recalled how the two - total opposite personalities - became friends while on the dance team together, but developed an especially close bond when Jessie helped Ceci deliver her baby - which was not long after Jessie herself had become pregnant. Jessie marveled at how different her life could be had she made the same decisions about her pregnancy as Ceci had made.

Ceci came to pick up Isela as The Siren was finishing the interview with Jessie and talked about her own decision making process. She first looked into an abortion but decided against that. Then she met with an adoptive family, but it just didn't seem right. So Ceci chose to go through with the pregnancy and keep the baby. These choices were not easy. Ceci gave up her independence when she moved into a shelter for pregnant teens and mothers. She ended up dropping out of school and eventually got a part-time job and enrolled in GED classes, but life was never the same. And now, although she has rebuilt her life to fit her daughter, there have been many difficult adjustments. With a toddler to take care of, Ceci is limited in the amount of time she has to pursue her own interests. However, she makes the most of what she does have to further her options by taking one or two classes per semester at East Los Angeles Community College, working toward her future.

This rings true with the message that Paulina delivered as the commencement speaker for East Los High three years earlier. At the time, Jessie sat in the audience as a junior, having recently had the abortion; Ceci wasn't there - she would need more time to complete her GED while parenting and working. Both girls' lives in high school took them down different paths than the ones they had imagined. Jessie quoted these words from aunt Paulina's speech: 'But what is life really? It's a series of choices. We can't choose what life hands us, but we can choose how to deal with it - and it's these choices that make us who we are today and who we will be in the future.' Paulina told the graduates that they could learn from their mistakes, take responsibility for them, and follow them up with right actions.

Yes, a few years later, both Jessie and Ceci continue to learn from their experiences and make decisions - choice by choice - that honor their dreams and their best self. They have become stronger women as a result of their choices, and they are determined to be their best.

East Los Angeles High School is hosting its Annual Winter Formal. The school gym has been transformed into a party hall, and a ton of students have turned out for the event in fine evening wear. The nominees for Winter Formal King and Queen - 3 guys and 3 girls - stand shoulder to shoulder on the stage, as Mr. Rivera, the school counselor, prepares to announce the winners. Soli and Jessie, best friends, watch with a mix of disdain (Soli) and delighted anticipation (Jessie).

MR. RIVERA

It is my honor to announce this year's East Los High Winter Formal king and queen.

Soli & Jessie gossip quietly, ignoring whatever it is that Mr. Rivera is saying about the nominees.

SOLI

Yawn.

JESSIE

Check out Vanessa's dress. I think it's designer.

SOLI

Yeah, with her daddy's money it better be designer.

JESSIE

I couldn't decide whether to vote for Vanessa or Ceci. Ceci's really popular.

SOLI

Yeah, and really ghetto. Look at her dress. It's a knockoff of a knockoff.

JESSIE

I just hope Jacob wins for king. He's such a cool guy.

SOLI

Jacob Aguilar, again? Stop drooling over him already. You're going to ruin your dress.

MR. RIVERA

This year's winter king and winter queen are... Jacob Aguilar and Vanessa De la Cruz.

[Cheers] [Soft music] [Applause]

Mr. Rivera crowns Vanessa, as Ceci watches in disgust. Vanessa in turn places the crown upon Jacob's head. They finalize their moment of triumph with a kiss, before stepping off of the stage hand-in-hand.

MR. RIVERA [still on stage]
Okay, now your king and queen will dance their first dance.

VANESSA
I knew you'd win.

JACOB
I knew you'd win!

VANESSA
Oh? Why? Wha'd you hear?

JACOB
Nothing. The hottest girl in school always wins.

VANESSA
I know. Huh?

JACOB
Yeah.

VANESSA
Yeah!

SOLI [standing next to Jessie in the crowd, watching the couple dance]
You should totally go for him.

JESSIE
Are you crazy? He's dating Vanessa.

SOLI
So? What does she got that you don't got?

JESSIE
Everything.

SOLI
Come on. Let's go dance.

JESSIE
Let me put my purse down.

[Fast dance music] [Vanessa's phone buzzes.]

JACOB
Who's that?

VANESSA
Oh, it's just my dad. He's wishing me luck.

JACOB

That's nice of him.

VANESSA

Yeah, whatever. Ummm, listen, I got to pee. So, I'll be right back.

JACOB

Yeah.

SOLI

Here's your chance! Go ask him to dance.

JESSIE

No way.

SOLI

Come on. I'll introduce you.

Soli taps Jacob on the shoulder, then bolts as he turns toward Jessie. Unbeknownst to either of the girls, someone has just reached into Jessie's purse and taken something. Soli watches from afar as Jessie tentatively introduces herself.

JESSIE

Hi...

JACOB

Jessie, right?

JESSIE

Yeah...

JACOB

I'm Jacob.

JESSIE

I know.....Uhh so did you finish that chemistry homework?

JACOB

Nah. I'll finish it this weekend, though.

JESSIE

Oh right. You're probably busy getting crowned and stuff. Um, congratulations. I voted for you.

JACOB

You did? Thanks!

PAULIE

Hey, King Taco! They want to take a picture of the king and queen for the newspaper.

JACOB

A'ight lets go.

PAULIE

So where's Vanessa?

Outside in the parking lot, not all is quiet. The backseat windows are down and the back window steamed over in one vehicle that is rocking back and forth. Someone captures Vanessa's face on cell phone video - complete with grunts and cries of pleasure - and then leaves. Completing the sexual escapade, Vanessa walks back towards the building, to be greeted by a stern-looking Jacob.

VANESSA

Hey boo! You been try'n call to call me. What's wrong?

JACOB

I got something to show you.

VANESSA

In the parking lot? So nasty!

JACOB

So are you.

[Jacob holds his phone in front of her face, as Vanessa sees and hears herself in the video]

VANESSA

Oh my God. Were you spying on me?! Jacob, listen to me. Jacob! Wait! Come back here!

Jessie and Soli depart the Winter Formal with Soli giving her friend a ride home. Jessie croons in the front seat and the two chat for a bit as they arrive in front of Jessie's house.

SOLI

Hey, Jessie?

JESSIE

Yeah?

SOLI
You really like Jacob, huh?

JESSIE
Yeah.

SOLI
Enough to give up your membership to the virgin's club?

JESSIE
No way!

SOLI
Secret virgin handshake!

[Giggles] [Laughter]

JESSIE
We're such nerds.

SOLI
Hell yeah! And proud of it.

JESSIE
I better go. Some thief's been hitting our hood. Good night!

SOLI
Good night!

[Dog barks] [Screen door squeaks as Jessie enters the house]

[Later the dog barks again] [Screen door squeaks again]
Jessie slowly rises from bed and walks toward the front door.

JESSIE
Mami? ... [long pause] Mami?

Jessie closes the front door, which had been opened somehow. Turning around to return to bed, Jessie screams, seeing a dark figure in the entry way.

JESSIE
Get out! I'm calling the cops!

MAYA
And tell them your cousin's here?

JESSIE
I don't have any cousins.

Maya wrestles Jessie to the ground, trying to grab the phone away from her. A vase and bowl crash to the floor.

MAYA
Calm down!

[door opens]

LUPE (JESSIE'S MOM)
Jessie? What's going on?

JESSIE
She broke into the house! Call the police!

MAYA
I'm Maya. Reina's daughter.

LUPE
Maya?

Jessie
You know her?

LUPE
How'd you know where we live?

MAYA
I got the address off a Christmas card.

LUPE
Your face! Are you okay?

JESSIE
Why didn't you tell me I had a cousin?

MAYA
You have any food?

LUPE

Yes, of course mija. I'll get it for you. You go clean up. Jessie, go get her a towel so she can take a shower.

The three eventually go to bed. Maya hears voices echoing in her dreams; she twists and turns in her sleep, recalling a violent episode during which she was beaten.

MAYA (V.O)

No. stop it. Get away from me.

MAN (V.O)

This is going to be our little secret.

MAYA (V.O)

No, get off of me.

MAN (V.O)

Nobody has to know.

MAYA (V.O)

Don't take it away from me.

MAN (V.O)

Come here, bitch! You know you want it.

MAYA (V.O)

Ramon, just stop it. Please.

MAN (V.O)

Shut up.

MAYA (V.O)

Get away from me. I said get away from-

MAN (V.O)

Come here, bitch! Come here! Say you like it!

MAYA (V.O)

Stop it.

Maya awakens with a start and stares at the wall for awhile until eventually falling asleep.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~

The first day back at school after the Winter Formal, Jacob and his best friend Paulie talk in the ELH boy's locker room.

[Showers and steam]

PAULIE

Damn! You check out Vanessa's sex tape? Winter queen? More like home-cumming queen! Did you see her face? She's like ohhhhh God!

JACOB

Hey. Shut up pendejo.

PAULIE

Come on, man. You got it made! Vanessa cheated on you. Now you go ahead and cheat on her! You got half the girls in school wanting to have sympathy sex.

JACOB

Yeah, that's a perfect plan, except that's not me. Fool, that's you.

PAULIE

Shh! Sexaholic and proud of it. Mmm!

JACOB

I can't believe I fell for her.

[Locker door slams]

Jacob ends up running into Jessie in the hallway while walking to class.

JACOB

Are you ready for that chemistry test next week?

JESSIE

Uhh... Yeah.

JACOB

I'm so lost.

JESSIE

Well, let me know if you have any questions.

JACOB

How 'bout we study together?

JESSIE

Sure.

JACOB

Are you free today after school?

JESSIE

Oh, no. I have science club. But... I could do tomorrow?

JACOB

Can't. I've got work. And Friday I have a game.

JACOB

So how about Saturday?

JESSIE

Saturday? Sure! What time?

JACOB

Seven?

JESSIE

Wow. You like to get up early.

JACOB

7:00 PM

JESSIE

You want to get together Saturday night?

They turn the corner, just missing Ceci and Vanessa.

CECI

So what happened?

VANESSA

That stupid sex tape just cost me my crown.

CECI

So you're not the Winter Formal queen anymore?

VANESSA

No.

CECI

Wait. So that means I'm the new Winter Formal queen!

VANESSA

What?!


~~~~~

***Saturday evening. Jessie and Jacob sit on the couch at his house, as Jessie tutors him in chemistry. Jacob inches closer...***

JESSIE (CONT'D)

So with disassociation the compound gets broken down into ions instead of atoms.

JACOB

But the equation looks the same.

JESSIE

Well, sort of, but with disassociation there's a charge on the product side of the equation. Look.

JACOB

I think I just felt it.

JESSIE

Excuse me?

JACOB

The charge.

JESSIE

What are you talking about?

[Kiss]

JACOB

Uhh...I didn't plan that. I swear.

JESSIE

Yes, you did.

***Jacob leans in to kiss her again, and Jessie kisses him back. They grab one another's arms and the kiss becomes more intense. Jacob climbs on top of Jessie, lying her down on the couch...***

JESSIE

Wait... wait wait wait. I like you and everything, but I've never... I mean, I...

JACOB

Jessie, are you a virgin? ... Jessie, it's cool.

JESSIE

I totally understand if you think I'm lame and you don't want to hang out no more.

JACOB

Hey, I don't think you are lame. It's my fault... I kinda lost control.

JESSIE

It's okay.

JACOB

You know I wouldn't take it any further.

JESSIE

You wouldn't?

JACOB

I mean, I want to, but - I mean, I like you and everything, but if you don't want to take it that far I respect that.

JESSIE

I just need more time.

JACOB

Coo...

~~~~~

The following afternoon, Jacob bursts into the Taqueria, the restaurant owned by his father, Hernan, who is at the front counter.

JACOB

The recruiter said I have a great arm. All I have to do is say the word and I'll get a full scholarship.

HERNAN

No shit? But what about-

JACOB

And they'll even send me a jersey right away.

HERNAN

Yeah, but you also got- what? Arizona and SC knocking on your door.

JACOB

Yeah, but they haven't made a commitment yet. And I guess I figure Indiana they must want me pretty-

HERNAN

What's the matter, son?

JACOB

Pa, I cant just go away and leave you stuck like this.

HERNAN

Woah! Of course you can. The tacqueria is gonna be fine with out you.

JACOB

Yeah, but this was Abuelo's place- You and ma – and I cant just –

HERNAN

No! I don't want to hear it. You are going away to school and that's that. My boy is gonna be the first one in his family to get a college degree! Hmm? k?

[Fist bump]

~~~~~

***Monday morning at East Los High. The school bell sounds as Ceci catches up to Vanessa in the hallway.***

CECI

So what's the emergency?

VANESSA

I found out who recorded my sex tape.

CECI

How?

VANESSA

I traced it. And you wouldn't believe whose phone it was.

***Vanessa and Ceci part ways; Vanessa lingers in the hallway.***

[Locker slams]

VANESSA

I know what you did.

JESSIE

What? Study with Jacob?

VANESSA

Don't give me that shit.

JESSIE

Aren't you guys broken up?

VANESSA

Yeah, because of you I lost my boyfriend and my crown.

JESSIE

What are you talking about?

VANESSA

You wanna play it like that? Fiiine. I'll see you at dance auditions!

~~~~~

That afternoon, Vanessa and Jessie dance head-to-head during Jessie's audition for Bomb Squad, the East Los High hip-hop dance team. Jacob and Soli wind up watching, along with the rest of the dancers. Audition results are posted just a couple of days later. Jacob and Soli congratulate Jessie, who is shocked and amazed that she made the team; Ceci and Vanessa talk as walk past Jessie and her friends.

JACOB

I guess you made it, huh?

SOLI

This is gonna be so good for you.

CECI

I can't believe you let her on the dance team.

VANESSA

Why? Cause she made a sex tape of me, stole my boyfriend and made me lose my crown?

CECI

If I was you I'd want to keep that little bitch as far away from me as possible.

VANESSA

Its like they say. "Keep your friends close and your enemies closer."

Ceci pauses, recalling a vivid memory: herself holding Jessie's phone, taping Vanessa's sex in the parking lot.

CECI

You're right. Keep your enemies really close.

VANESSA

Ceci, come on!

~~~~~

***The following day, during dance practice after school...***

VANESSA

Ceci, show her how it's really done. Ceci? Ceci? Where the hell is Ceci?

***Ceci is lying on her back in bed, a half-naked man on top of her.***

CECI

Already? Pull out! Pull out! Abe, you got to stop doing that, you dick!

ABRAHAM

My bad. It just felt so good.

[They both laugh]

ABRAHAM

Alright. We'll do it again and I'll pull out this time. Might need a couple minutes, though. [Door opens in another room] Aww shit. My mom's here. You got to go.

CECI

Again? When am I gonna meet her already?

ABRAHAM

Uhh...soon. Apurate! My mom doesn't like it when there's girls here. She gets pissed off.

CECI

Girls?!

ABRAHAM'S MOM

Abraham! Donde estas?

ABRAHAM

Mande, Jefa. Hurry!

CECI

Abe, this better be the last time. You said you would introduce me to your mom a long time ago.

***Meanwhile, over at the Taqueria, a person dressed in dark clothing is finishing up a plate at the front dining counter.***

HERNAN

You want to help? I think one of your Yelpers is getting ready to pay. Get the bill ready... Everything okay? Hey! Hey!

***Without paying, the person runs out of the restaurant.***

JACOB

Hey, get back here! Get back here, punk!

***Jacob chases the thief through alleys, finally catching up with him. Pinning the thief to a fence, Jacob is met with a huge surprise: the thief is actually a female. Jacob freezes, and Maya pushes him away, sprinting down the alley.***

~~~~~

Later that week after school, Jessie and Maya are hanging out at home.

[Doorbell]

JESSIE

Shit, that's Jacob. Could you get that for me? and Maya? Don't hit him.

JACOB

You.

MAYA

How did you find me?

JACOB

Find you? I wasn't look'n. what are you doin' here?

JESSIE

Jacob! Did you meet my cousin?

JACOB

She's your cousin?

JESSIE

Maya, this is Jacob. Jacob, Maya... Okay, you ready?

JACOB

... Yeah, let's go...

Jacob looks back at Maya as he leaves with Jessie. Maya decides to leave the house as well, heading in a different direction. She walks to the Taqueria.

[Maya clears her throat, dings the bell at the front counter]

HERNAN

How you doin'? umm... Counter? Booth?

[Maya places some money on the counter]
Here.

HERNAN
What's the catch?

MAYA
I stole two enchiladas from you the other night.

HERNAN
Hey, so, wait up. Get over here! Come here. Now, two enchiladas, rice, beans.
\$6.95 plus tax. Here's your change.

MAYA
No, that's- that's fine.

HERNAN
Let's call it a late fee. So why did you steal from me?

MAYA
I was hungry and broke.

HERNAN
Yeah? So get a job.

MAYA
Yeah, sure. Who's gonna hire me?

HERNAN
I tell you what. I need a new bus boy. Dishwasher. You interested? ... You see
how easy that was?

MAYA
I just stole from you. You're gonna give me a job?

[Hernan laughs]

HERNAN
Mija, you can handle the trash, not the cash. So do you want a job or what?

MAYA
Yeah...

HERNAN

Yeah. Smart. Let's see here. So what are you waiting for? A background check? Huh? Kitchen's to your left. Dirty plates is to your right.

[Door jingles. Jacob walks in]

HERNAN

Hey mijo! I want you to meet our new bus boy. Uhh... bus girl. What's your name again?

MAYA

Maya.

HERNAN

Maya. This is my son, Jacob. I think you two already met...

~~~~~

***Later that week, Maya and Hernan talk at the Taqueria after the restaurant had closed.***

MAYA

Why did you hire me anyway?

HERNAN

Cause I used to be a hood rat like you. I know it's rough.

MAYA

You don't know my rough.

HERNAN

Mija, I been around. I'm old school. My mom worked two jobs. I never knew my dad. I got drug into a gang when I was 12. Okay? Friend of the family. I did a lot of messed up things. Did some time. I should be dead 10 times over by now.

MAYA

Glad you're not.

HERNAN

Yeah, me too. Long story short. If I can straighten out anyone can. Even you Maya.

~~~~~

Vanessa sits in bed, wearing only a bra, snuggled against the bare chest of an attractive guy as the two look at a laptop screen. Beer bottles clutter a side table.

[Vanessa's sex tape plays]

CHRISTIAN

How come you get all the close ups? You can't even tell it's me.

VANESSA

You're lucky that no one can tell it was you. Jacob would have killed you.

CHRISTIAN

Come on. I could take that dude.

VANESSA

Yeah, right. A backup dancer against a football player. He would have broken you in half.

CHRISTIAN

Did you talk to your father about booking me as a dancer on his next tour?

[Kisses]

VANESSA

I've thought about it. But what's in it for me? [CHRISTIAN kisses her bare neck]
Again- what's in it for me?!

CHRISTIAN

What the hell do you want?

VANESSA

Remember that girl you danced with, Jessie?

CHRISTIAN

Yeah. The straight girl. You know like 'em nasty. Come here, bitch!

VANESSA

Here's the deal. You de-virginize Jessie and you'll get to dance on my father's next tour.

CHRISTIAN

Done.

VANESSA

Not so fast... This one's gonna take a little work.

CHRISTIAN

I'll have her in no time.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~

One evening, Vanessa quietly enters a TV production studio, as a show host speaks into the camera and the studio audience cheers. A dance team walks off the stage.

FREDDIE

Alright, let's hear it for Washington High! And to Dance 5, where 5 dancers get 5 minutes to win \$5,000 dollars! Will you high school make the cut? Tune in next week to find out!

DIRECTOR

And cut!

[Freddie sighs]

VANESSA

Hey, Freddie! Remember me?

FREDDIE

Ehh... Yeah, sure I do.

Freddie walks away, clearly disinterested. Vanessa trails him, and soon they are in the bathroom - Vanessa atop the sink, back to the mirror.

[Moans of passion]

VANESSA

Wait aren't you going to bag it?

FREDDIE

Why? Aren't you on the pill?

VANESSA

Something like that.

FREDDIE

So what's the problem?

[Vanessa fakes moan of pleasure]

~~~~~

***At Bomb Squad dance practice just a couple of days later...***

VANESSA

I used my connections to get us an audition for...Dance 5!

CECI

No way! We get to meet Freddy Garcia?

CHRISTIAN

Not if you keep dancing like that.

Let's take it from the top. 5,6,7,8. 1 and 2,3,4,5 and 6,7,8... What- what the hell, Ceci? Are you hung over again?

***Ceci, nearly puking in the dance studio, sprints to the bathroom. She sits there for awhile and looks at something she's holding in her hand.***

CECI

Shit! I'm pregnant!

[Bathroom door slams]

~~~~~

[Ambulance siren]

Jessie and Maya enter the hospital room where a Doctor is talking to Lupe, who is wearing a hospital gown and is lying on a hospital bed.

P.A. SYSTEM

Doctor Carros to surgery please.

DR. SANCHEZ

You're going to start making decisions. Do you have anyone that we could call?
Or-

[Jessie and Lupe cry]

JESSIE

Mami, are you okay?

LUPE

I'm fine. Hi, mija, mijita. Give me a hug.

DR. SANCHEZ

I'm sorry. Your mother's very sick. I diagnosed her with breast cancer over two months ago. She's refusing to let me schedule her surgery.

JESSIE

My God, mami! Why didn't you tell me?

LUPE

Mija, I don't have time for surgery. I have to work and pay for the bills. I'll do it this summer.

DR. SANCHEZ

She can't wait until summer. I suspect the cancer has already spread to her lungs.

JESSIE

Mami, you've got to get surgery now.

MAYA

I'll work and pay for the bills while you get better.

DR. SANCHEZ

So it's settled. I'll schedule your surgery for the end of the week. In the meanwhile you can go back home with your daughters. I already signed the discharge paper.

LUPE

Thank you. Thank you.

~~~~~

***Lupe and the girls head home. Later that day, Maya answers a knock at the door.***

JACOB

Hi... Can I come in?

MAYA

Jessie's not here.

JACOB

Oh. I bought these for your aunt.

MAYA

My aunt's asleep...I'll put 'em in water.

[Faucet runs; Jacob follows Maya into the kitchen]

JACOB

So... Do you think your aunt will like these?

MAYA

They're carnations. Who wouldn't?

JACOB

Are you make'n fun of my flowers?

MAYA

No...I couldn't make fun. Nobody's ever given me flowers.

***Jacob pulls out a flower from the bunch and tentatively hands it to Maya.***

JACOB  
Here.

MAYA  
Thanks!

~~~~~

On another afternoon, Maya tends to the counter at the Taqueria.

JACOB
Where is everybody?

MAYA
No customers, so your dad and Don Pepe went to the store.

JACOB
They left you here alone?

MAYA
I didn't steal noth'n. You can check the register.

JACOB
Chill. I was kidding. Anyways, I gotta go eat.

MAYA
Why don't you eat here?

JACOB
Naww, I can't eat this stuff. I'm in training.

MAYA
Oh. Well, I could cook you something healthy.

JACOB
You cook?

Maya gives him a smug look and heads into the kitchen, as Jacob looks on with bewilderment. Maya prepares a few dishes and brings them out to Jacob with a huge smile.

JACOB
This is really good. You made this?

MAYA
No, Don Pepe did.

JACOB
So what's in it anyway?

MAYA
It's basically a #5 with a lot less lard and a lot more vegetables.

JACOB
Vegetables? In Don Pepe's kitchen?

MAYA
I snuck 'em in. Don't tell no one.

JACOB
Deal. But... Only if you make me more.

MAYA
Only if you say please.

JACOB
...Please.

MAYA
Okay.

~~~~~

***A couple of days later, as Bomb Squad practice is ending and the girls are packing up their stuff...***

CHRISTIAN  
Jessie, can I talk to you for a minute?

JESSIE  
Yeah.

CHRISTIAN  
Listen, you've really been stepping it up lately, and I'm really proud of you. But I don't think you have what it takes.

JESSIE  
Oh.

CHRISTIAN

See, we really have a chance at winning Dance 5, and I really, really like you, but I don't think-

JESSIE

I can work harder. I'll do anything.

CHRISTIAN

Anything?

JESSIE

Well almost anything...

***Jessie heads home from practice. She answers a knock at the door, although they're not expecting any visitors at home. A familiar face greets Jessie with a huge hug.***

PAULINA

Whassup fool?

JESSIE

Tia Paulina! I can't believe you're here! How's Fashion's Top Exec Under 30?

PAULINA

Since when do you read Fashion 46 magazine?

JESSIE

Since you sent me five copies with you on the cover.

PAULINA

Oh! Did I do that?

LUPE

Wow!

PAULINA

Hi, big sis!

JESSIE

How long are you here for?

PAULINA

Til you guys get sick of me or I run out of cute clothes!

JESSIE

Like that's ever gonna happen!



LUPE  
You look so skinny.

PAULINA  
Cause I can't find good tacos in New York.

LUPE  
Maybe Mayita can make you some.

PAULINA  
Maya?

MAYA  
Hi.

JESSIE  
This is our tia Paulina. She's the head buyer for Fashion 21.

PAULINA  
You grew up so beautiful.

MAYA  
Thanks.

***Tia Paulia takes Maya and Jessie out for coffee at the mall.***

JESSIE  
Is that your man? He's cute!

PAULINA  
He went to Yale.

MAYA  
For what?

PAULINA  
Not jail... Yale. University. Plus, he's no drama and he's got no baby mama.

JESSIE  
So are you gonna marry him?

PAULINA  
Girl! I'm 26!

JESSIE  
I know. That's old.

PAULINA

No it's not! I want to be a VP by the time I'm 30 and marriage isn't really a priority right now.

MAYA

What about 'cho man.

PAULINA

Eddie's down with that. If a man really loves you he'll wait.

[Jessie's phone rings and she excuses herself]

JESSIE

Speaking of boyfriends that's Jacob... Hello?

PAULINA

What about you?

MAYA

I don't have a boyfriend.

PAULINA

There's nothing wrong with that. Do you hook up?

MAYA

I'm not a virgin lie Jessie if that's what you're asking.

PAULINA

Play safe?

MAYA

...Yeah

PAULINA

So, you use protection? Like, the guy wears a condom, you take the pill...

MAYA

That's personal.

PAULINA

I know it is, but nobody really got personal with us and both of my sisters got pregnant by the time they were your age.

***Later that day at the Taqueria...***

MAYA  
What are you doing?

JACOB  
Is this your diary?

MAYA  
No, its just my- my- my recipes. Give it back!

JACOB  
Well, this is the money book.

***Maya grabs at Jacob, trying to get her recipe book back.***

JACOB  
Hey, I... There's something I wanna talk about.

MAYA  
... Okay

JACOB  
I didn't want to say anything before, because I didn't want anybody to get hurt.

MAYA  
... Okay

JACOB  
Don Pepe.

MAYA  
Don Pepe?

JACOB  
Face it. His food sucks.

MAYA  
Oh yeah. Yeah, it does.

JACOB  
If I'm gonna change things around here we got to start with the menu. And I was thinking... Why not start with what you made me the other night?

MAYA  
... You wanna put my food on the menu?

JACOB

Yeah! It's tasty. This is how we're gonna make a bank!

MAYA

Give it to me!

[Door opens with a jingle]

PAULINA

Well this looks like a fun place to work!

Maya

Tia Paulina, what are you doing here?

PAULINA

You know what they say about East LA. You run from the bullets but you stay for the tacos.

JACOB

Well, you came to the right place. Maya makes the best food.

PAULINA

Really?

MAYA

Tia, this is Jacob.

JACOB

Pleased to meet you.

PAULINA

You're Jessie's boyfriend, right?

JACOB

Yeah.

MAYA

Let me make you something to eat.

PAULINA

Yeah.

JACOB

Can I get you something to drink?

PAULINA

No, I'm good.

[Jacob nervous raps his knuckles on the counter]

***Maya brings a plate of tacos and sits with Tia Paulina. Maya grins sheepishly, clearly proud of her food and humbled by the compliment.***

PAULINA

Mmm! You make one sick taco!

MAYA

It's low carb too.

PAULINA

Mmm! You're a genius in the kitchen! How about in school?

MAYA

Yeah, not so genius. I tried to drop out but tia Lupe wouldn't let me.

PAULINA

Good for her! But I get it. School's not for everybody.

MAYA

I'd be lucky if I got a C.

PAULINA

You don't got to be a straight A student to have big dreams.

MAYA

College is Jessie's trip not mine.

PAULINA

You gotta have goals! Seriously, what are your plans after graduation?

MAYA

I'm gonna go to San Francisco.

~~~~~

A few days later, Jacob and Maya give the restaurant a makeover.

JACOB

The place looks great.

MAYA

Yeah, it does.

JACOB

So how much money do we need for food?

MAYA

\$50 should cover it... So, how far is Vegas from here?

JACOB

I think I'd better go with you.

MAYA

Why? You don't trust me?

JACOB

Not with my last \$50. Let's go.

Jacob and Maya shop for food at the market. They take a break to share a snack, sitting down at a table. Maya suddenly sees something over Jacob's shoulder that terrifies her. Without a word, she bolts on foot, sprinting and looking backwards to see who is chasing her. She runs all the way to Jessie's house, bursting in the front door.

PAULINA

You okay? Maya, what's wrong?

MAYA

I need to borrow \$500.

PAULINA

Okayyyyy. What for?

MAYA

I need to leave LA.

PAULINA

What? Why?

MAYA

Are you gonna give me the money or not?!

PAULINA

Are you gonna tell me why you need it or not?

MAYA

I was raped, okay? And now the guy who did it is after me!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Tia Paulina takes Maya straight to the police station. Paulina fills out some paperwork and then sits with Maya as they wait.

PAULINA

The detective is gonna want to interview you.

MAYA

I don't want to talk to nobody. I just want to get to San Francisco. I'm too scared to stay here.

DETECTIVE

Maya Martinez

PAULINA

Please go talk to the detective.

~~~~~

***The next day, Paulina takes Maya to a women's health medical clinic. Maya is resistant and clearly nervous, as they check-in for the appointment and sit in the waiting room.***

MAYA

She is just going to ask me a bunch of questions and I don't want to go through that again.

PAULINA

I know it's hard, but have you ever been tested for STDs?

MAYA

No.

PAULINA

You might even be pregnant.

MAYA

I'm not pregnant!

PAULINA

There's only one way to find out and I'll be right here with you.

***Paulina accompanies Maya into the Doctor's office.***

ILEANA (DOCTOR AT THE CLINIC)

That's your number. It will keep you anonymous. I'm so, so sorry this happened to you.

MAYA  
Yeah, whatever.

ILEANA  
Did you know the person who attacked you?

MAYA  
No. no I never seen him before.

ILEANA  
Any injuries? Cuts, bruises...

MAYA  
Um... he beat me up pretty bad. And there was uhhh... bleeding? Down there.

ILEANA  
Well that's common in cases of rape.

ILEANA  
The test will be for pregnancy and certain STDs including HIV.

MAYA  
But I don't have any rashes or noth'n.

ILEANA  
You know, sometimes it takes a while for symptoms to show up, and then some STDs never show any symptoms. But it's best to take a test to be sure, right?

MAYA  
Yeah. Okay. What do I got to do?

ILEANA  
Nothing big. Just gve me a little blood. Pee into a cup. And then I've got to give you a pelvic exam and swipe your cervix. That's a pap smear. Don't worry. It won't hurt.

PAULINA  
When will you know the results?

ILEANA  
I can have the HIV and pregnancy results in half an hour. The rest in a few days.

MAYA  
A few days?!



ILEANA

Well, in the meantime I'm going to give you a recommendation for a psychologist.

MAYA

I ain't crazy.

ILEANA

You've been through a major trauma. A psychologist can help you cope.

MAYA

Yeah. I'm okay.

ILEANA

Now. But these things have a way of coming back to you.

***Following the appointment, the two head over to the Taqueria for a bite to eat.***

PAULINA

So you're not pregnant. You don't have HIV. Aren't you glad you went?

MAYA

Yeah... Can I get the money now?

PAULINA

Not 'til we get the rest of the results in a few days.

MAYA

What?! That wa- That wasn't part of the plan!

PAULINA

Well, now it is! And remember, we've got to get you retested in three months. Make sure you're in the clear.

MAYA

In three months?! I'm gonna be in San Francisco!

***Maya stays at the Taqueria to work a shift; Paulina takes off. Maya is setting tables at one point when she overhears a distressed Jacob talking on the phone.***

JACOB

Are you sure? Is there anyone - Is there anybody else I could talk to? [Jacob sighs]

MAYA

You cool?

JACOB

Another bank just turned down our loan application. How are we supposed to turn this place around now?

MAYA

You can do it.

JACOB

You mean... We can do it... Right?

MAYA

I been meaning to tell you. I'm leaving to San Francisco in a couple days.

JACOB

I thought we had an agreement?

MAYA

No. We didn't.

JACOB

Yes, we did. You said you would help me save the tacqueria.

MAYA

I did help you.

JACOB

Just stay for another month.

MAYA

No. I can't.

JACOB

I really need you, Maya. I can't do this without you.

MAYA

I'm sorry.

***Meanwhile, as Bomb Squad practice is ending...***

CRISTIAN

Hey, so, you coming over to my place?

JESSIE

I thought about it. I can't.

CRISTIAN

No worries. You're gonna kick ass tomorrow. No matter what.

JESSIE

Yeah, cause of you.

***They hug and stay close.***

CRISTIAN

So, one last practice?

JESSIE

Sure. Where do you want to start?

CRISTIAN

How about right here?

***Cristian gets close to Jessie, cradles her head in his hands and kisses her on the lips.***

JESSIE

I gotta go.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~

***A few days later, Maya returns to the clinic with Tia Paulina.***

ILEANA

I got some good news! No gonorrhea, chlamydia or herpes! No pre- cancerous cells, so that's a clean bill of health! Rock on!

[Maya breathes in audibly in relief]

MAYA

..... Cool.

ILEANA

Not so fast, Maya. Isn't the prom coming up?

MAYA

Does it look like I give a shit about prom?

PAULINA

Hey hey hey. Girl, you want your \$500? Sit your ass down and shut up.

ILEANA

Do you want to know the best method to prevent pregnancy and HIV?

MAYA

I don't know. Be ugly?

PAULINA

Not really. Some guys will screw anything!

ILEANA

And some of those guys have STDs! The only way to prevent pregnancy and HIV is to not have sex at all. Abstinence.

MAYA

Yeah. Right.

ILEANA

But if you are going to have sex this [holding up a condom] will save your life. Do you know how to use one the right way?

MAYA

Sure.

ILEANA

Good. Show me.

***Ileana grabs a banana and hands it to Maya.***

MAYA

Damn!

PAULINA

That looks like my boyfriend!

ILEANA

Mmmm! Lucky girl!

PAULINA

I know!

MAYA

Really?

***Maya and Tia Paulina head over to the Taqueria after the appointment, so that Maya can get back to work. They have a few moments to sit and chat.***

PAULINA

Here. It's the \$500 like we agreed.

MAYA

Thanks.

PAULINA

I still think you're safer here in LA. If anybody's after you, you'll be protected. There's people here who got your back.

HERNAN

Maya! Break's up!

MAYA

I gotta go. Thank you.

***Later that evening, as Maya and Jacob are closing up the restaurant.***

JACOB

So when is your last day?

MAYA

Maybe tomorrow.

JACOB

Where else am I gonna find a bus boy who can cook?

MAYA

Don Pepe cooks.

JACOB

Yeah, but he doesn't cook the popular dishes. Those are the ones you make.

MAYA

Jacob, I've got to leave LA.

JACOB

We're barely hanging on now. If you go away now it'll be the end of this place.

MAYA

I'm sorry I can't stay.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~

***The next day, Paulina comes to the Taqueria to pick up Maya.***

[Front door opens, jingles]

PAULINA

Hey! Are you ready?

MAYA

Here's your money back.

PAULINA

Change of plans?

MAYA

Yuh... I guess soooo.

PAULINA

Well, if that's the case... Let's go shopping!

MAYA

I don't have any money.

PAULINA

I do! I just got 500 bucks!

MAYA

I hate shopping.

PAULINA

Let's go!

***Meanwhile, at Abe's house, Ceci is sleeping during the day. She looks unwell.***

CECI

What the hell, Abe? Where you been? You been gone for days!

ABRAHAM

Shop's been busy. Plus, I need my own time.

CECI

You asshole! I heard you went to Vegas! You left me here alone with your mother!

ABRAHAM

So what? She's been taking care of you!

CECI

She's been try'n 'a poison me. She's a witch!

ABRAHAM

Hey, shut your mouth! Your lucky you're my baby's momma or I'd beat that ass! Now get that ass up and go to school!

***A couple of hours later, Tia Paulina returns to her sister's home, where Lupe, Jessie, and Jacob are visiting around the kitchen table.***

LUPE

Mija's gonna dance on TV?

JESSIE

Yeah, it's so exciting! We're all over Facebook and the Dance 5 website!

JACOB

You better not forget about me when you make it all famous!

JESSIE

You know I won't.

[Front door opens]

LUPE

Hey, Pau! Jessie's gonna dance on TV! Hey, where's Maya? I thought she was with you.



***Maya walks through the door slowly, holding a couple of shopping bags. She is wearing a new outfit, has a new haircut and is wearing makeup.***

LUPE

Wow! Mayita, is that you?

JESSIE

Maya, you're so cute!

JACOB

Yeah, she is!

PAULINA

... So... What is this about Jessie being on a TV show?

***That evening, Maya and Jacob head over to the Taqueria. Maya prepares some new dishes. She sits with Jacob at the front counter as he savors each morsel.***

MAYA

Have you tried one of these?

JACOB

No. What are those?

MAYA

They're like sopas, but on nopales instead.

JACOB

They're so good.

***Jacob takes Maya's hand, and they lean in close. Just before they're lips meet for a kiss...***

[Door opens, jingles]

JESSIE

What the hell's going on?!

~~~~~

The next day - a weekend afternoon at Jessie's house...

MAYA

You want some chilaquiles?

JESSIE

No. Maybe you should call Jacob. See if he does.

MAYA

I told you. We were working.

JESSIE

Stay away from him. He's my boyfriend.

MAYA

I don't want him.

JESSIE

I saw you guys. I know what you were doing.

PAULINA

What's going on?

MAYA

Nothing.

PAULINA

Right. Well, this "nothing" better not get in the way of taking care of Lupe. Especially now that I'm leaving.

JESSIE

Where are you going?

PAULINA

One of the other buyers just quit and I have to take his flight to Korea.

MAYA

When?

PAULINA

Well, it leaves in a few hours.

After Paulina leaves for the airport, Jessie sits in her room and works on homework. She checks an incoming text - from Cristian. He's outside her house with his motorcycle, inviting her to go for a ride. She can't resist. Cristian helps her climb onto the back of the bike and they take off.

Maya heads to the Taqueria to work a shift. She and Jacob chat in the kitchen, as Maya gathers up a bag of trash to take out to the dumpster in the alley.

JACOB

Here, lemme help you.

MAYA

I got it.

JACOB

Listen... I don't wanna pretend no more.

MAYA

God! God, you're my cousin's boyfriend. My aunt's sooo sick.

JACOB

Just listen. Just admit it. You feel somethin'.

MAYA

Even if I did, there's nothing we could do about it.

JACOB

So then you do feel somethin'?

MAYA

Just leave me alone.

~~~~~

***A few days later, Ceci goes to the women's health medical clinic. She's in total distress.***

CECI

You're not gonna tell nobody that I want an abortion, right?

ILEANA

This is confidential, Ceci. Nobody has to know. Not even your parents.

CECI

They don't?

ILEANA

Not in the state of California.

CECI

What about Abe? He's the baby daddy.

ILEANA

He doesn't have to know either. This is your body.

CECI

Is it expensive?

ILEANA

It usually depends on how far along you are. Termination within 12 weeks is easier, safer and costs less. But it looks like you're twenty weeks along.

CECI

Twenty weeks?! But I'm not even showing.

ILEANA

Girls your age often don't show until five, even six months.

CECI

So what should I do?

ILEANA

I can't tell you what to do. It's your decision. But Ceci, you have to decide soon, because after 24 weeks we can only terminate for serious health reasons.

CECI

How am I supposed to know what to do?... Damn, why did I have to get pregnant? [Ceci sobs]

***Ceci heads to school after the appointment, and Jessie consoles her on the lawn during lunch.***

CECI

I don't know if I want you to keep the baby or not. I just want my old life back. But then I think about having a little baby that loves me... I never had someone love only me, before.

JESSIE

How would you support it?

CECI

I guess get a job.

JESSIE

And...who would watch the baby while you were at work?

CECI

It sure as hell won't be Abe. If I keep this baby I'm on my own.

~~~~~

After school, Jessie and Cristian meet up at the park.

JESSIE

Aren't they cute?

CHRISTIAN

Yeah, they are. I want a million of them.

JESSIE

Well, I only want two.

CHRISTIAN

You'd make such a great mom.

JESSIE

You're right. But not until I get married... Do you think you'll ever get married?

CHRISTIAN

If this is a proposal aren't you supposed to be down on one knee?

JESSIE

You're the one who gets down on one knee.

CHRISTIAN

Okay, if that's what you want.

JESSE
Stop it.

CHRISTIAN
But yes, I do want kids. And I do want to get married.

JESSIE
Me, too... it's getting late. Please take me home?

CHRISTIAN
I thought you'd never ask.

JESSIE
My home. Not yours.

CHRISTIAN
Okay. But first, there's something I want to show you.

Cristian takes her hand, and they leave the park together.

Meanwhile, over at the Taqueria, Jacob rushes out to the alley when he realizes that Maya is there by herself.

MAYA
What do you want?

JACOB
You shouldn't be out here by yourself.

MAYA
So what, I can't ever go out again?

JACOB
No. Not into no dark alleys.

MAYA
I ain't afraid of that carbon. He ain't gonna run my life.

JACOB
Was he your boyfriend?

MAYA
Yeah, right. I beat up all my boyfriends.

JACOB
Who is Ramon?

MAYA
Stop asking me that.

JACOB
I'm not going to stop asking 'til you tell me! What the hell is going on, Maya?

MAYA
You really wanna know? Ramon was my mother's boyfriend. And the man who raped me.

Maya turns to go back inside the Taqueria, as Jacob stares at her in disbelief.

Meanwhile, Jessie and Cristian have arrived at his house. They're sitting on his bed, watching a video of them dancing together at the East Los High dance studio.

CHRISTIAN
Check this out... So, what do you think?

JESSIE
I didn't know you did this.

CHRISTIAN
I was just watching you one day, and you were dancing so beautifully.

As the video continues, Cristian leans in and the two begin to kiss.

Meanwhile, at the Taqueria, Jacob goes back inside and approaches Maya.

JACOB
Maya...

MAYA
Just leave me alone. I'm trouble...

JACOB
Don't say that.

MAYA
Haven't you been listening? I've lied, cheated. I'm bad news. My life's a mess.

JACOB
Then clean it up.

MAYA
It's too late.

JACOB
No, it's not. You're in a new city now. You have a family. And you have people that love you.

MAYA
Yeah. Who?

Maya turns to walk away. Jacob grabs her arm and pulls her in towards him. He kisses her, and she pulls away. Again, Jacob pulls Maya toward him, and they kiss passionately.

MAYA
Aw, Jacob. We shouldn't be doing this.

Meanwhile, at Cristian's house, Jessie and Cristian are making out on the bed, their bodies much closer now.

CHRISTIAN
You are so beautiful.

JESSIE
We should slow down. I'm not on the pill or anything.

CHRISTIAN
That's okay. I'll take care of you. I love you, Jessie.

JESSIE
I love you, Christian.

They undress one another and continue making out and begin to have intercourse.

JESSIE Do you have a condom?

CHRISTIAN
No. Don't worry. I'll pull out.

JESSIE
Promise?

CHRISTIAN

I swear.

JESSIE

Ow!

CHRISTIAN

I'm sorry. I'll take it easier.

JESSIE

Slow! You're hurting me.

CHRISTIAN

It's okay. You're tight. Just relax, babe. Just relax.

Meanwhile, over at the Taqueria, Maya and Jacob continue making out. Soli, talking on her cell, is walking by on the street and happens to look in the windows of the Taqueria...

SOLI

...Naw, I'm not bringing Jessie. We're not talking. She's all stuck up now that she's on Bomb Squad. Oh my god! Hey, I'm gonna call you back. [slams the phone shut] Puta! Tramposa! I'm gonna text Jessie. Oh my God I can't believe her.

Meanwhile, back at Cristian's house. Night has fallen, and Cristian and Jessie are lying awkwardly next to one another in bed.

CHRISTIAN

I've got to get up early.

JESSIE

Yeah. I guess it's getting kinda late.

CHRISTIAN

I'm gonna take a shower. When I get out I'll take you home.

~~~~~

***The next day at school, Soli and Jessie find some time to talk. Jessie has tears in her eyes.***

JESSIE

You saw Jacob and Maya? Are you sure they were making out?

SOLI

Hell yeah! I saw them with my own eyes. Wait- I thought that's what you were bummed about.

JESSIE

Umm... Yeah. But I thought it was a rumor.

SOLI

Well in East Los High all rumors are true.

JESSIE

Did you tell anybody else?

SOLI

Hell no. what kind of ex-friend do you think I am?

JESSIE

It's my fault. I haven't really been there for him.

SOLI

No reason for him to go running off with your cousin. So, when you break'n up with him?

JESSIE

I dunno. I feel like we never really had a chance. I should have slept with him.

SOLI

Mensa! If sex is the only reason a guy's with you then you shouldn't be with him.

JESSIE

Jacob's not like that. He's really a great guy. Not like the other dickfools around here.

SOLI

So you want him back.

JESSIE

Back? He's still my boyfriend. I'm gonna give him what he wants.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~

***A couple of days later, Ceci goes to an adoption agency to meet with a social worker there. She flips through a photo album, looking at different adoptive families.***

CECI

All these people want to adopt my baby?

ADOPTION SOCIAL WORKER

Uh huh.

CECI

I don't know. They all seem to nice.

ADOPTION SOCIAL WORKER

They are. We screen every applicant. Any of them can provide an excellent and loving home for your baby.

CECI

All these people want to have babies, huh?

(ADOPTION SOCIAL WORKER)

Yes, they do, Ceci. This couple, the Medinas, are even willing to take in the expectant mother.

CECI

You mean I could live with them?

ADOPTION SOCIAL WORKER

Uh huh.

CECI

You know, I think they're my favorite.

~~~~~

That same day, Jessie goes to Cristian's house. She knocks frantically at his front door. He comes to the door without a shirt and seems clearly annoyed.

CRISTIAN

Hey, Jessie! What are you doing here? What's up?

JESSIE

I've been trying to reach you since yesterday. Are you okay?

CRISTIAN

I'm fine. I'm sorry. I've been busy. What's going on?

JESSIE

Are you mad at me? did I do something wrong?

CHRISTIAN

No... you were great. Listen, I can't talk right now. Lets talk tomorrow at practice. Okay?

JESSIE

Okay, but call me tonight. I really want to-

Cristian closes the door in Jessie's face and locks it. Vanessa emerges and saunters toward him.

VANESSA

Was that the virgin?

CHRISTIAN

Not anymore.

VANESSA

So, show me the video.

CHRISTIAN

What video?

VANESSA

Don't play stupid. The one with you and your laptop screwing Jessie?

CHRISTIAN

Oh, that video.

VANESSA

Well, hurry up. I have to send it to Jacob!

CHRISTIAN

Okay.

~~~~~

***Mrs. Medina comes into the bedroom where Ceci is staying, to check in on how Ceci is doing. Ceci has only been there a few days. But she is nowhere to be seen. On the nightstand us a note:***

*"Mister and Missus Medina, you guys are cool and everything but I decided to keep my baby. Peace out. Ceci."*

~~~~~

On a weekend night, Paulie and Jacob drink together in the backyard at a huge house party.

PAULIE

Aren't you glad I dragged you to this party?

JACOB

You, but I think I'm gonna get going soon. I'm not in the mood.

PAULIE

No way, man! This is the only way you're gonna get over those two crazy primas and all their drama.

JACOB

She looks nice, foo! Go for it.

PAULIE

I did. And I got gonorrhoea!

JACOB

What! For real?

PAULIE

For real!

JACOB

But she looks like such a nice girl.

PAULIE

You can never tell, can you? I thought my dick was going to fall off.

JACOB

So that's why you're so obsessed with condoms now.

PAULIE

Hey, yeah man. A lotta girls got funk their junk. Especially that one. I got some extra if you need some.

JACOB

Naw, I got my own.

PAULIE

I'm just say'n, a pack of ten, ten bucks. Not having to scream every time you piss? Priceless.

Soli walks by.

PAULIE (CONT'D)

Whassup girl?

SOLI
Hey, Paulie.

PAULIE
mmmm...I'm gonna get me some of that.

JACOB
I didn't know you were into Soli.

PAULIE
Not yet, but I will be soon. Mmmmm. Hey Soli! Ven pa' aca!

Paulie trails after Soli. Jacob finds a bench and takes a seat. He flashes back to a recent encounter with Maya...

JACOB (V.O)
Maya, look me in the eye and tell me you don't love me.

MAYA (V.O)
I don't love you.

Jacob is startled out of his reverie...

JESSIE
Jacob?

JACOB
Jessie- Wow!

JESSIE
Come on. Let's grab a drink.

JACOB
All right. Let's go.

The two sit down together and take a look at the crowd of people that is dancing. They notice Soli and Paulie dancing closely and kissing.

JACOB
I knew that was going to happen.

JESSIE
Really? I didn't see that coming. Especially with that hat...

Jessie pulls Jacob close, and they kiss. After a bit, Jessie pulls away slightly.

JESSIE
Let's go upstairs.

JACOB
Are you sure?

JESSIE
Come on. Let's go.

JACOB
Let's go.

They walk upstairs hand-in-hand and undress. Jacob eagerly lies Jessie down on the bed and kisses her as he climbs on top. Jessie "gives him what he wants."

~~~~~

***The next day at work, Jacob and Maya are in the kitchen together.***

JACOB  
Maya, table 5 wants more mole... Did you hear me? Table 5 wants more mole.

MAYA  
Get it yourself!

JACOB  
What the hell, Maya!

MAYA  
What the hell you, jackass?! First you tell me you want to be with me and then you're bang'n my cousin at some party?! Well, which is it?!

JACOB  
What's it to you? Huh? I did exactly what you told me to do! Go back to Jessie! Now gimme that damn mole!

[Maya furiously spoons out the mole]

~~~~~

Later that week, Ceci goes to see a different social worker. She left the Medina's and she can't live with Abe.

SOCIAL WORKER
Says here you're pregnant, homeless, single, unemployed and a high school drop out. Girl, you're ready for Jerry Springer!

CECI

What should I do? I want to keep my baby but I don't wanna live on the street.

SOCIAL WORKER

Well, there are programs that provide shelters for homeless pregnant teens.

CECI

Hey, for reals? Well shit, where do I sign up?

SOCIAL WORKER

Hang on. It ain't that easy. First you gotta sign a contract saying you'll go to school or some kinda job training. Then there's curfews, parenting classes and constant supervision.

CECI

What?!

SOCIAL WORKER

I'm not done! Which means that people are gonna be up in your business 24/7 so if you break one rule you will be back out on the street.

CECI

Dang, that sounds like a baby boot camp.

SOCIAL WORKER

Mmmhmm. You got yourself in a tight squeeze Ceci, but if you want help you gotta help yourself.

CECI

Yeah. Ain't no one else to help me.

[Ceci sighs heavily]

~~~~~

**ONE MONTH LATER**

***Jessie and Vanessa are in the bathroom, just before the first big performance on Dance 5 TV show. Vanessa, at the sink, here's the sound of barfing and then the toilet flushing. Jessie emerges from the stall looking unwell.***

VANESSA

Jessie! You okay?

JESSIE

Nerves.



VANESSA  
Sure about that?

JESSIE  
I'm fine.

VANESSA  
Good.

***Following the performance, Jessie looks for Cristian. She finds him in a hallway with some other dancer, making friendly small talk.***

JESSIE  
Hey, I need to talk to you.

CHRISTIAN  
[To the other dancer] Gimme a sec... [To Jessie] You did good.

JESSIE  
I think I'm pregnant.

CHRISTIAN  
... Nice try.

JESSIE  
You were supposed to pull out and you didn't.

CHRISTIAN  
Aren't you on the pill?

JESSIE  
Why would I be? You knew it was my first time.

CHRISTIAN  
You still shoulda taken care of yourself. You're- you're the girl.

JESSIE  
I never would have slept with you if I'd known how you really are.

CHRISTIAN  
I gotta go.

~~~~~

A couple days later, Jessie heads to the women's health medical clinic.

JESSIE

Couldn't the test be wrong?

ILEANA

I'm afraid not, Jessie. The pregnancy test is pretty accurate.

JESSIE

So do condoms always work?

ILEANA

When used correctly they're 98% effective. Did you use a condom every time?

JESSIE

Yah... He said he was gonna pull out.

ILEANA

Guys usually can't predict when they are going to ejaculate, and it doesn't protect you against HIV. Only a condom can do that.

JESSIE

Oh my God.

ILEANA

Well, you have three options. 1) you can go ahead with the pregnancy and raise a baby, 2) Adoption, or 3) Terminate the pregnancy.

JESSIE

Terminate means abortion, right?

ILEANA

Yes.

JESSIE

I don't think I could get an abortion. My mom would never let me.

ILEANA

And I understand Jessie, but ultimately it's your decision.

JESSIE

Don't I have to get my mom's permission?

ILEANA

Not in the state of California.

JESSIE

I am not ready to be a mother, and I don't think I could give a baby away once I had it.

ILEANA

None of these options are easy, so why don't you take some time to think about it and we'll meet again next week.

Jessie heads home. Lupe is sitting on the couch, waiting for her arrival. Lupe is holding a pregnancy test.

LUPE

Is this yours? I asked you a question Jessica. Is this yours?... Didn't I teach you anything?

JESSIE

Mami... I'm sorry.

LUPE

Don't even talk to me.

JESSIE

Mami, please -

LUPE

I said don't talk to me!

Lupe storms off. Jessie sobs.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

A couple of days later, Jessie goes to see Ceci at the shelter for pregnant teens. They watch the video of the Bomb Squad performance on Dance 5, over the sound of a baby crying in another room.

CECI

Ugh. I shoulda been there. My life sucks. It's the pinche baby.

JESSIE

I shouldn't have let you watch.

CECI

Please! It woulda been worse watching it by myself... Great. Time to take care of Jilla... [a staff person hands Ceci a baby] we gotta take turns taking care of kids

while the mothers are out working. Man, I lost everything when I got pregnant- my body, my man, dancing. You're lucky as shit. You've still got all that.

JESSIE
Not for long.

[Jessie cries]
CECI
Wait- you?! Aww hell no!

~~~~~

***Soon thereafter, Jessie and Jacob agree to meet up in the park.***

JESSIE  
So...

JACOB  
So...

JESSIE  
Listen, I've got something-

JACOB  
I've got something- I'm sorry. You go first.

JESSIE  
I'm pregnant.

JACOB  
You're what? How can you be pregnant?

JESSIE  
I know. I still can't believe it either.

JACOB  
We only did it once. Are you sure?

JESSIE  
I even went to the clinic and the test was positive.

JACOB  
But I used a co- [Jacob just wheezes]

JACOB  
Damn. Why didn't we just wait?

[Jacob breathes heavily, trembles]

***Jacob gives her a ride home. They talk for a bit in the car.***

JACOB

You know... Take care of it?

JESSIE

An abortion? I can't do that!

JACOB

Why not? We're not ready to be parents, Jessie. We haven't even finished high school.

JESSIE

I can still finish school, especially if you're there to help me.

JACOB

How? I'm go'n away to college, and you know the only way I can afford college is to play ball. I don't have time to be a father.

JESSIE

My mom's really sick. I can't get an abortion. She would never...forgive me.

JACOB

Then you should be take'n care of her instead of worry'n about have'n a baby.

JESSIE Jacob... I can't!

JACOB

Why not? Jessie, please. Think about it. You're talk'n about both our futures here.

***Jessie sobs and gets out of the car. Jacob drives off.***

***Jessie walks into the house, where Maya is waiting in the living room.***

MAYA

Jessie, I'm so sorry.

JESSIE

You should be! I'm pregnant and it's all your fault!

MAYA

What?!

JESSIE

The only way I could compete with you was to have sex with Jacob... and look what happened.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

***A couple of days later, Jessie and Soli talk at school.***

JESSIE

You told her to get lost?

SOLI

Hell yeah! Maya's got to go and I'll run her out of East LA myself if I have to.

JESSIE

I don't need you looking out for me.

SOLI

Obviously you do. If you'd have told me you had sex without using a condom I could have gotten you the Plan B pill.

JESSIE

What is that? Like an abortion pill?

SOLI

No. Don't you know anything? It's a pill you can take a couple of days after having unprotected sex. It keeps you from getting pregnant in the first place.

JESSIE

So where do you get these Plan B pills?

SOLI

Oh, at the panadería. Stupid, you get it at the pharmacy. You don't even need a prescription or nothing if you're over seventeen.

JESSIE

But I'm not.

SOLI

But I am! I could have gotten it for you. Or you could have gone to the clinic. All you had to do was say something.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

***Jacob visits Lupe at home. She's lying in bed, very weak.***

LUPE

I'm not doing well, Jacob.

JACOB

I'm sorry, senora.

LUPE

I need to know that someone will be there for Jessie.

JACOB

I'll be there for her, but she's also got my father and Maya.

LUPE

No, mi'jo. That's not good enough. I can't leave Jessie to lead the same life I did. I don't want her to be alone with the baby.

JACOB

Jessie won't be alone.

LUPE

Yes, she will! Yes, she will. All my life I've worked hard and made sacrifices. I dropped out of school, mopped floors, cleaned toilets, so that Jessie would have a better life than me.

JACOB

She will, seniora. She will.

LUPE

Not if she's a single mother, Jacob. I want you to marry her.

JACOB

But we're too young to get married.

LUPE

Do you love my daughter Jacob?

JACOB

I care for her. Very much.

LUPE

Good, because I won't be able to die in peace unless I know you'll always be there for Jessie.... Please, Jacob... Please promise you'll marry her.

~~~~~

Within a week, the two families gather in Jessie's living room for the formal proposal. Hernan and Jacob, Lupe and Jessie. Soli is ready with the video camera. Maya happens to come home as Jacob gets down on one knee. She turns right around to leave.

LUPE

No, Maya! Wait! Maya! Esperate!

MAYA

No, tia. No. Tia, I forgot -

LUPE

Come on in. Come on in. You forgot what?

MAYA

My phone.

LUPE

Come on. You're family. You need to be here to see this too.

SOLI
Yes, Maya, you need to see this.

LUPE
Ay, Soli.

JACOB
Jessie, will you marry me?

JESSIE
Yes. I will.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

A day or so later, Soli visits Jessie at home, bringing a large box with her.

SOLI
There you go. Free maternity clothes. I got them from my cousin Letty. She finally got her tubes tied. Six kids later.

JESSIE
Thanks.

SOLI
I'm sorry. They're kinda ugly, huh?.... Are you sure you want to do this?

JESSIE
I don't have a choice.

SOLI
Of course you have a choice. You still have time. You still have time to end it and get your life back.

JESSIE
I couldn't do that to my mother.

SOLI
Mom ain't the one who's pregnant.

JESSIE
And how could I ever go to church again?

SOLI
You think you'd be the first Catholic girl to get an abortion? Remember my cousin, Teresita?

JESSIE
The one at USC?

SOLI

Yeah, and she's not the only one. She's even on a website for pro-choice Catholics... You got to stop thinking about what everybody else wants. What do you want?

JESSIE

I want to go back in time.

SOLI

Yeah, right?

~~~~~

***A day later, Jessie is hanging out in her room. Maya's phone is there and beeps. It's a text from Jacob. Just then, Maya walks into the room.***

JACOB'S TEXT: "gotta talk. call me."

JESSIE

Why is Jacob texting you?!

MAYA

Why you goin' through my phone?!

JESSIE

I wouldn't if it wasn't my fiancé texting you.

MAYA

Then tell your fiance to stop. I don't even want to talk to him.

JESSIE

I'm sure you don't, and I'm sure you didn't want to kiss him either. I know all about it. Soli saw you guys making out.

MAYA

That shoulda never happened.

JESSIE

God, Maya, why you gotta ruin everything?

MAYA

It's not ruined. You have Jacob.

JESSIE

Not while you're around.

MAYA

If it wasn't for my Tia Lupe I woulda been gone a long time ago.

JESSIE

I can take care of her just fine.

MAYA

You don't need me? I'm gone.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

***Maya hastily leaves the room and grabs a bag. She throws items in there and zips it up. She then walks over to Tia Lupe's room and looks in. Lupe is awake but really drowsy and in a lot of pain.***

MAYA  
Tia...

LUPE  
Mija, you going to work?

MAYA  
I came to say goodbye.

LUPE  
Ay, why so serious? Is everything okay?

MAYA  
Tia, I'm leaving.

LUPE  
Oh. You spoke to your mom.

MAYA  
... Yeah. We're cool. She umm – she helped me find a job.

LUPE  
I'm glad things are going better with you guys.

MAYA  
Thank you for all you've done for me, tia.

LUPE  
Ay! Por favor, Mayita. I'm very proud of you, mi'ja. You come along way since you got here.

MAYA  
Thanks to you.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

***Maya heads downstairs to leave. Jessie is in the kitchen.***

JESSIE

Where are you going?

MAYA

Away, just like you wanted. Here's the cell phone tia Paulina got for me. Please get it back to her.

JESSIE

How will we get a hold of you?

MAYA

You won't.

JESSIE

My mom and tia Paulina are going to want to know where you are.

MAYA

I'll keep in touch with them.

JESSIE

Okay. Take care of yourself.

MAYA

Yeah. You too.

JESSIE

Listen, if you ever need anything -

MAYA

I won't.

~~~~~

One afternoon, Vanessa goes to the women's health medical clinic.

ILEANA

You have the flu. We did some blood work to see if that's all it was, and since you authorized us to test for pregnancy and STDs we have the results.

VANESSA

Okay?

ILEANA

Vanessa, you're HIV positive.

VANESSA

I'm what?!

ILEANA

I'm sorry, Vanessa. You're HIV positive. HIV often doesn't have any symptoms so the fainting wasn't related. I know this was really scary, but it's good that you got tested. We can help you.

VANESSA

It's - So you're saying I'm gonna die?

ILEANA

It's no longer a death sentence when you take the right medication and learn to take care of yourself.

VANESSA

I do take care of myself! I have 16% body fat.

ILEANA

Well, eating and staying fit is a great start, but we can set you up with an HIV specialist to get the right treatment and live a normal life with HIV.

VANESSA

No! I can't have HIV! Okay? I'm not gay! I'm not a junky!

ILEANA

HIV doesn't just happen to gays and IV drug users. It can happen to anyone.

VANESSA

This is bullshit! This isn't happening!

ILEANA

I can see how unsettled you are about this Vanessa. But you know, anger is a natural response. Have you ever discussed HIV with your sexual partner?

VANESSA

No. Nobody talks about HIV. And I've slept with more than one guy.

ILEANA

It's important to notify all your partners to keep it from spreading, and we can help you with that. So, I'm gonna go get your prescriptions.

At the conclusion of the appointment, Vanessa calls her sex partners.

CRISTIAN

What's up, V? I just got your message. Not funny.

VANESSA

No joke. I have HIV.

CRISTIAN

Shit. I'm sorry.

VANESSA

You should be sorry. You probably gave it to me.

CRISTIAN

Naww, not me. I tested negative two weeks ago. Maybe Jacob gave it to you.

VANESSA

No, it couldn't have been him. I haven't hooked up with him in eight months. Plus he always uses a condom.

CRISTIAN

Smart dude. Good luck on finding whoever gave it to you.

VANESSA

Jerk!

[Freddie's cell phone rings]

FREDDIE

Six calls, a dozen texts -- you stalking me?

VANESSA

It's an emergency.

FREDDIE

Alright. You want it that bad? Get your ass over here.

VANESSA

I have HIV.

FREDDIE

You skanky hoe! You better not have given it to me!

VANESSA

You gave it to me!

FREDDIE

There is no way I have AIDS.

VANESSA

How do you know? You never wear a condom. Have you ever been tested?

FREDDIE

I don't have AIDS.

[Freddie hangs up]

~~~~~

***The next weekend, Jessie is spending time with Lupe at home. They are talking about wedding plans. Jessie leaves the room to grab a picture of the veil she likes. She returns to show Lupe, who is not moving and is not breathing.***

JESSIE

Ma - mami, please! Mami! Ma, wake up! Mami please wake up! Mami wake up please. Mami Don't leave me. Please mami. [Jessie sobs]

~~~~~

The wake/rosary for Lupe is held a few days later. Soli is at the door to the church, greeting everyone as they arrive.

SOLI
Ceci? Wow.

CECI
Yeah, it's me. A whole lot more of me.

SOLI
You look nice.

CECI
Neta! I look like a cow.

SOLI
How is it?

CECI
I mean, if I'd known then what I know now -

SOLI
You wouldn't have had sex.

CECI
Hell yeah I'd have sex. But I'd also be on the pill, I'd get the Norplant, I'd be on the Depo-shots, and most importantly I'd have that sonofabitch wear a condom.

SOLI
Hey, girl! Watch your mouth. We're at church.

CECI
I'm just saying that if we'd talked about these things more, less of us would get pregnant.

SOLI
That's what I've been saying.

CECI
How's Jessie doing?

SOLI
She's a mess. And the wedding's in a week.

CECI
Wait, still? I thought she might have to postpone cause of all this.

SOLI
Oh no. The wedding is on.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

The day after the wake, Jessie returns to the women's health medical clinic.

ILEANA

I'm glad you kept your appointment, Jessie. I'm so sorry about your mom.

JESSIE

Thank you.

ILEANA

So, you're interested in taking the abortion pill?

JESSIE

Yeah, I was thinking about it.

ILEANA

Well, it looks like it's too late.

JESSIE

I thought you could take it up to 9 weeks?

ILEANA

It looks like you're closer to 10 weeks.

JESSIE

Really?

ILEANA

Are you positive of when you had unprotected sex?

JESSIE

Yes, of course I am.

ILEANA

Even at 10 weeks you can still terminate this pregnancy. At this point it's still a simple procedure.

[Jessie sighs]

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Everyone gathers at the church for Lupe's funeral. Paulie talks to Soli just before they head into the church.

SOLI

This is a funeral.

PAULIE

I know. You know, funerals always make you realize life is short. Hey, look at me. I could get shot in a drive-by any minute. So you wanna come over?

SOLI

No... I got the birth control pills but they won't take effect for another week.

PAULIE

A week?!

SOLI

Keep it down.

PAULIE

That's like a year for a guy with blue balls! We - I promise I'll put a cap on Big Paulie.

SOLI

Oh, you will wear a condom. Even after the pills kick in. I don't wanna get pregnant. I don't want to get gono or mono. Whatever.

PAULIE

Hell no! Condom, pill. Whatever you want, baby! We're on! In the meantime can I just get a little handjob or something? You know? Just a -

SOLI

You're nasty!

PAULIE

I got my tia's car right there. I'm not saying here in the church! Hey, so you down? I promise I'll be quick! For real? Are you down?

JACOB

You coming in?

MAYA

Yeah, in a sec..... I'll see you inside.....

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Jacob sits next to Jessie, his arm around her shoulder. Everyone is crying.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

After the wake, Soli and Ceci go to Jessie's house to keep her company. They're all in the kitchen, washing dishes and cleaning up.

JESSIE

Do any of you guys want these flowers?

CECI

Sure. Anything to make that fugly shelter look better.

SOLI

Watch out! You're spilling the vase!

CECI

That's not from the vase. I think my water just broke! My baby water!

SOLI

Gross! You just got your vag water all over my new shoes!

JESSIE

But Ceci, you're only 8 months pregnant.

CECI

Aghhhhh! Tell that to the baby!

JESSIE

It's okay. We'll get you to the hospital. Soli, time the contractions while I call 911.

Soli and Jessie help Ceci onto the couch and then the floor in the living room.

CECI

Aghhh! Oh God!

CECI

Ohh! Where's the ambulance? This is an emergency!

SOLI

A teenage girl having a baby in this hood is not an emergency.

CECI

Ohh! Get it out of me!

SOLI

That was only a minute between contractions.

CECI

Ohh! I can feel the baby coming out! It's coming out!

SOLI

Don't - Don't let it! Cross your legs!

JESSIE

Oh my God! I can see the head! Where's the ambulance?

SOLI

Gross! I'm gonna throw up my pozole!

JESSIE

My friend is having a baby! I called an ambulance but the contractions are only a minute apart. What?! Deliver the baby?!

CECI

Oh hell no! AAAAAAAGHHHHH! Oh Je - Oh God!

[Ceci screams and cries in agony]

JESSIE

Soli, what are you doing?

SOLI

I've got to get this on camera.

JESSIE

Operator, are you there?

OPERATOR

Where is the mother now?

JESSIE

She's on the floor! What now?

OPERATOR

Okay. Can you see the head?

JESSIE

Yes. I can see it. What do I do?!

OPERATOR

Nothing. The mother needs to push so the baby can come out.

CECI

I'm pushing!!! It's gonna rip me open! It's gonna kill me! Get it out of me! Please!
Ohhhhh no!

OPERATOR

Put your hands directly under her vagina and cradle the head if it comes out.

JESSIE

It's turning! The head's out!

[Ambulance sirens]

OPERATOR

Good. Continue to cradle the head and guide the shoulders. Don't pull. Just support.
You're doing good, honey. Just keep doing what you're doing.

JESSIE

Is she supposed to look angry?!

OPERATOR You're doing fine.

CECI
Get him out of me!!!

OPERATOR
The mother needs to push hard again.

CECI
God damn!

OPERATOR
All the way. The baby has to come out.

JESSIE
Push, Ceci! Push!

SOLI
Yeah, push! Like you're crushing Abe's stupid face!

[Ceci screams at the top of her lungs]

JESSIE
Okay. She's out. I'm holding her.

OPERATOR
Quick, wipe the nose and mouth so the baby can breath.

[The baby cries, the operator laughs]

OPERATOR
That's the sound! Congratulations! You did it!

SOLI
That's it. I'm never having sex.

~~~~~

***Jessie visits Ceci in the hospital later that day.***

CECI  
Thank you so much for what you did. You were off the hook.

JESSIE  
Me? You. I don't think I could do what you just did.

CECI  
Well, you're going to have to in about seven months, and believe me it hurts like hell.

DR. SANCHEZ  
There you are! Everyone in the hospital is talking about what you. Do you realize

what you did?

JESSIE

I just did what the 911 operator told me to.

SOLI

Stop being so modest.

DR. SANCHEZ

Doctors study for years to be able to do what you just did. You're a natural.

SOLI

She wasn't scared or nothing. She just did it. She helped Ceci pop that baby.

DR. SANCHEZ

You know, Jessie, we have a program here that introduces high school students to medical careers. I'd be happy to recommend you.

JESSIE

You mean, like, to be a nurse?

SOLI

Nurse? Hell, you could be a doctor!

JESSIE

But I don't think I can. I'm going to be kinda busy. Jacob and I are getting married and...

DR. SANCHEZ

Jessie, could I talk to you for a minute?

JESSIE

You don't mind, right?

SOLI

Of course I don't mind.

~~~~~

Jessie follows Dr. Sanchez into her office.

DR. SANCHEZ

So, you decided to go through with the pregnancy?

JESSIE

I did go to the clinic.

DR. SANCHEZ

Oh.

JESSIE

But it was too late for the Mifeprex pill.

DR. SANCHEZ
I thought -

JESSIE
I found out I'm actually 10 weeks pregnant.

DR. SANCHEZ
Did they discuss the other options?

JESSIE
Yeah. She said it was a simple procedure. I thought about it, but my mom... I know it's not what she would have wanted.

DR. SANCHEZ
Yes. But what do you want, Jessie?

~~~~~

***A few weeks pass. It's the day of the wedding. Everyone is getting ready.***

[Vanessa's phone rings]

VANESSA

What?! You're outside? Okay. I'll be right out.

***Vanessa climbs into the car that is in the driveway of her house.***

VANESSA

Thank you for being my date!

CRISTIAN

Do I have a choice?

~~~~~

The church is decorated with simple white and yellow flowers. Lots of students from East Los High are present in the pews. Paulina and Soli, the bridesmaids, are in bright pink summer dresses. Paulie, Jacob's best man, stands by his side. Hernan walks Jessie down the aisle. Maya is watching everything from behind a pillar; she doesn't go inside and sit down. Ceci sits alone. Cristian sits uncomfortably beside Vanessa, who has a smug

look on her face. Jacob looks terrified as Jessie approaches down the aisle. As she nears, he imagines Maya wearing the wedding dress and veil. A smile spreads across his face. But the music breaks his reverie, and he takes Jessie's hand to turn toward the priest.

PRIEST

Then do you, Jacob Hernan Aguilar, take Jessica Maria Martinez to be your lawfully wedded wife, to have and to hold, from this day forward, forsaking all others, for as long as you both shall live?

[Jacob takes a deep breath]

JACOB

I - I do.

[Cristian exhales]

PRIEST

And do you, Jessica Maria Martinez, take Jacob Aguilar to be your lawfully wedded husband, to have and to hold, from this day forward, forsaking all others, for as long as you both shall live?..... Jessie?

JACOB

Jessie? Jessie?

[long pause, as Jessie looks around]

JESSIE

Jacob and I need to talk.

PRIEST

Now?

Jacob follows Jessie into a side room, just outside of the main room of the church.

JACOB

Hey...

JESSIE

I'm sorry, Jacob! I'm so, so sorry!

JACOB

What is it? What's wrong?

JESSIE

I can't let you marry me.

JACOB
What are you talk'n about? What's wrong?

JESSIE
... I lied.

JACOB
Lied?

JESSIE
I don't think you got me pregnant.

JACOB
You're - you're not pregnant?

JESSIE
No! I'm pregnant... But I don't think it's yours.

JACOB
If it's not mine then whose is it?

JESSIE
... Cristian.

JACOB
The dancer?!..... You told me that you were a virgin!

JESSIE
And I was!

[Cristian takes off]
[The congregation gossips]

JESSIE
I wanted it to be yours so bad. I even convinced myself it was. I'm so, so sorry.

JACOB
I've given up everything for you... Do you have any idea what I've lost?

JESSIE
I wish I'd never lied. I'd do anything to fix it.

JACOB
No... You've done enough!

JESSIE
Jacob...

Jacob runs back into the church and approaches Paulie.

JACOB
Gimme the keys.

HERNAN
Jacob, where are you going?

JACOB [yelling as walks down the aisle to exit the church]
The wedding's off!

Vaness runs after Jacob, yells as he runs down the steps in front of the church.

VANESSA
Did she tell you about Cristian?

JACOB
You knew this whole time?

VANESSA
You thought Jessie was so much better than me... Well you were wrong! Look!

[Vanessa plays the sex tape]
[Jacob smacks the phone out of Vanessa's hand and leaves]

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Paulina goes into the side room to talk with Jessie.

PAULINA
How could you do this to Jacob? And to your family?

JESSIE
My mom just died. I couldn't handle being pregnant alone.

PAULINA
But you're not alone. You have me. Besides, you have other options. Jessie, you don't have to go through with this.

JESSIE
An abortion?

PAULINA
Why not?

JESSIE
Because... Good girls don't have abortions.

PAULINA
Yes, we do.

JESSIE

How old were you when you got pregnant?

PAULINA

I was around your age. I struggled with my decision.

JESSIE

Did your parents know?

PAULINA

No. It was my decision. Besides, your grandmother was so religious that I knew she would think it was wrong.

JESSIE

But you don't think it was wrong?

PAULINA

No, I didn't. And I still don't. That's not to say it was easy.

JESSIE

What was the hardest part?

PAULINA

I just wondered if there was a spirit that was getting ready to come and be with me. And I had to tell that spirit to wait. That was hard. But at the same time I was happy, too, because there was something I could look forward to in the future.

JESSIE

Did you ever regret it?

PAULINA

No. It was difficult, but it was the right thing for me..... Now you see why I'm always on your backs about wearing condoms and birth control. So we never end up in a position like this to begin with.

JESSIE

What will everyone think if I don't have a baby?

PAULINA

Ay... You live your life. It's your decision.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

It's a few weeks after the wedding that didn't happen. Graduation day at East Los High. A crowd is gathered at the school amphitheater for the ceremony.

MR. RIVERA

Guests and graduates, we have a very special graduation speaker... Less than 10 years ago she was sitting where you're sitting and now she's the Vice President of Product Development for Fashion 46. I am proud to welcome to the podium East Los High alumni Paulina Martinez.

[Graduates cheer and whistle]

PAULINA

Graduates in the house! Like you I walked these halls. I grew up on these streets. Which is why I'm so in awe of all of you. I know just how hard you all worked to get here today.

But let's face a hard fact. Over half of the kids that you grew up with - who sat next to you in 3rd grade, 5th grade, 7th grade and even 11th grade - are not here today.

They won't be walking up here and picking up a diploma that says they did it: they completed their high school education. Maybe they will some day, but for now life has taken them down a different path. And what is life, really? It's a series of choices.

Each one spins us in one direction or another. Each one shapes us in some way.

Now, not everything feels like a choice. We don't get to choose our family or how they live their lives, but we get to choose how we live our own lives. Our parents success is not our success, just like their failures are not our failures. We can't choose what life hands up, but we can choose how to deal with it... and it's these choices that make us who we are today, and who we will be in the future.

All sorts of paths will open up before you. Right now the future might seem overwhelming. Sometimes the more options we have the more confused we feel.

And sometimes you'll make the wrong choice. Everybody does. If not we wouldn't be human. The key is in how we respond to those choices. What's right for you may not be right for someone else.

But we can learn from our mistakes, take responsibility for them, and follow them up with right actions. This is how we grow into fulfilled, happy, productive adults.

So as you go out into the world to begin building a future choice by choice, pick choices that honor your dreams and your best self. This way you'll begin to build a future that's worthy of you. Because from up here you all look pretty great. Congratulations y felicidades East Los High graduates!

As Paulina speaks, the different students visualize how her words relate to their own lives. Jessie thinks of Ceci - how she's working as a nanny and her GED. Maya and Jessie recall the day that they went to the clinic together - and Jessie got an abortion. Paulie grins as he thinks about the day that he and Soli got together to finally have sex - and they both grabbed a condom at the same time! Jacob feels proud about how the Taqueria is doing.

[The graduates roar with joy and toss graduation caps into the air]

Families and friends hug in celebration.

MAYA

Can you believe I'm a high school graduate?

JACOB

I told you that you could pass the GED.

MAYA
Well, chef school here I come!

JACOB
Official food taster... right here.

MAYA
Yeah!

[Kisses]

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

ONE YEAR LATER...

Jacob and Maya accompany Jessie to the train station.

JACOB
I'm gonna go check in the bags.

JESSIE
I'm gonna miss you... so much.

MAYA
There's this.

JESSIE
What is it?

MAYA
St. Jude.

JESSIE
Saint of Lost Causes...?

MAYA
No. You're not a lost cause... But it did keep me safe while I was on my own.

JESSIE
Maya? I just want you to know -

MAYA
Shut up! I'm gonna miss you too... I love you.

JESSIE
I love you too.

JACOB
Hey, you're gonna do great in college.

P.A. SYSTEM

Northbound from Los Angeles to San Francisco now boarding on track 8.

JESSIE
That's me.

***Jessie hugs both Maya and Jacob, and then walks out to the platform.
Maya and Jacob linger.***

JACOB
Goodbyes are tough, huh?

MAYA
Mmmhmm. At least I don't have to say goodbye to you.

JACOB No, you don't.

[Soft kisses]

***As Jessie climbs aboard the train, she reflects on lessons of the last year.
She fingers the St. Jude charm and looks out the window as the sunset
fades into dusk and the LA skyline fades into the distance.***

JESSIE
Advice for other girls? 1) Don't cheat on your boyfriend. 2) Don't
lie to your family or to yourself. And 3) Make sure you get to know a guy really, really,
really well before you have sex with him. Oh, and make sure he wears a condom.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

THE END.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

T1 Email Announcement

Subject: Research Opportunity to Win a \$200 Amazon Gift Card

Dear UTEP students,

UTEP Communication Professor Arvind Singhal is teaming up with University at Buffalo on an exciting research project! And we need your help!

If you are 18 or older, by taking about 20 minutes answering an online survey, you will be eligible to enter a raffle and win one of five \$200 Amazon gift cards!

The questions are about your habits and preferences of entertainment media consumption as well as knowledge, attitude, and behavior related to health and relationships. Your participation is voluntary. You don't have to answer all the questions if you don't want to and you may choose to withdraw from the study at any time.

You can access the survey before {insert deadline} here: {insert URL}

You can double your chance of winning by completing the survey within the next 48 hours!

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Dr. Helen Wang (hwang23@buffalo.edu) or Dr. Arvind Singhal (asinghal@utep.edu).

Thanks for your time and input!

Arvind Singhal
Endowed Professor of Communication
The University of Texas at El Paso

Helen Wang
Assistant Professor of Communication
Research Assistant Professor of Community Health and Health Behavior
University at Buffalo, The State University of New York

UTEP Student Survey

Thanks for your interest in participating in this survey! First, please tell us a bit about yourself.

1. How old are you? (Just type a number in the box below. If you prefer not to answer the question, please type "REF")

99 – Prefer not to answer
2. What is your sex?
 - 1-Female
 - 2-Male
 - 99-Prefer not to answer
3. What is your race? Please select the options that BEST reflect your racial background.
 - 1-American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 2-Asian
 - 3-Black or African American
 - 4-Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 5-White/Anglo/Caucasian/Middle Eastern
 - 99-Prefer not to answer
4. Are you Hispanic or of Latino origin?
 - 1-Yes
 - 2-No
 - 99-Prefer not to answer
5. Who in your family members were born outside of the U.S.? (Please check all that apply)
 - 1-Yes
 - 2-No
 - 99-Prefer not to answer
 - My father
 - My mother
 - Myself
6. How would you rate your English proficiency?
 - 1 – Not at all proficient

10 – Very proficient
99-Prefer not to answer

7. What year are you at UTEP?

1-Freshman
2-Sophomore
3-Junior
4-Senior
5-Other
99-Prefer not to answer

8. Has at least one of your parents completed the following education?

1-High school or less
2-Some college
3-College or more
99-Prefer not to answer

9. Do you worry about being able to pay for tuition?

1-Never
2-Once in a while
3-Every semester

10. Where do you currently live?

City: _____ Country: _____ Zip Code: _____

This next section asks about your media consumption habits, preferences, and experiences.

11. Where and how do you access Internet for entertainment?

1-Never
2-Sometimes
3-Frequently
99-Does not apply

- At home – computer/laptop
- At home – tablet
- At home – smart phone
- At UTEP – computer/laptop
- At UTEP – tablet
- At UTEP – smart phone

- At work – computer/laptop
- At work - tablet
- At Work – smart phone
- Other, specify: _____

12. How often do you engage in the following activities for entertainment and relaxation?

1-Never

7-Multiple times a day

- Reading hard copies of magazines or newspapers
- Reading hard copies of books
- Watching television programs
- Going to movie theatres
- Attending sports games
- Chatting with friends
- Shopping at malls
- Reading magazines or newspapers online or on a tablet
- Reading ebooks
- Watching television programs streamed online
- Watching movies downloaded or streamed online
- Watching sports games online
- Playing video games
- Chatting with friends via text messaging, social media, Skype, etc.
- Shopping online

13. (IF answer to Q12 is watch TV programs) What kind of television programs do you like to watch?

1-Not at all

7-Love it

- Action/Adventure
- Comedy
- Documentary
- Drama
- Fantasy
- Horror
- Kids/Family
- Mystery/Thriller
- Reality TV
- Sci-Fi

14. (IF answer to Q12 is watch TV programs) Have you been a regular viewer of the following shows in the past 12 months?

1-Yes

2-No

- The Colbert Report
- The Ellen DeGeneres Show
- Jerry Springer
- Maury
- Gilmore Girls
- House of Cards
- Mom
- Degrassi
- Breaking Bad
- Last Man Standing
- The Secret Life of the American Teenager
- Orange is the New Black
- 16 and Pregnant
- East Los High
- Beverly Hills 90210

15. On a scale of 1-9, how much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your experience with stories when reading books or watching movies/television for pleasure. [Transportability scale]

1-Strongly disagree

9-Strongly agree

- I can easily envision the events in the story.
- I find that I can easily lose myself in the story.
- I find it difficult to tune out activity around me. (R)
- I can easily envision myself in the events described in a story.
- I get mentally involved in the story.
- I can easily put stories out of my mind after I've finished. (R)
- I sometimes feel as if I am part of the story.
- I am often impatient to find out how the story ends.
- I find that I can easily take the perspective of the character(s) in the story.
- I am often emotionally affected by the story.
- I have vivid images of the characters.
- I find myself accepting events that I might have otherwise considered unrealistic.
- I find myself thinking what the characters may be thinking.

- I find myself thinking of other ways the story could have ended.
- My mind often wanders. (R)
- I find myself feeling what the characters may feel.
- I find that events in the story are relevant to my everyday life.
- I often find that the story has an impact on the way I see things.
- I easily identify with characters in the story.
- I have vivid images of the events in the story.

This next section asks about your overall health status as well as knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors about relationships.

16. How would you rate your overall status of physical health in the last 12 months?

- 1-Poor
- 5-Excellent
- 99-Prefer not to answer

17. How would you rate your overall status of mental health in the last 12 months?

- 1-Poor
- 5-Excellent
- 99-Prefer not to answer

18. In general, how often do you use the following options when you need to look for health-related information?

- 1-Never
 - 5-Very often
 - 99-Does not apply
-
- Health professionals such as doctors and nurses
 - Family members
 - Friends
 - Books
 - Newspapers
 - Magazines
 - Radio
 - Television
 - Websites
 - Online discussion (not counting family/friends)

19. What is your current relationship status?

- 1-Never had a romantic relationship
 - 2-Have had a romantic relationship before, but not currently in one
 - 3-Currently in a romantic relationship, but not long term
 - 4-Currently in a romantic relationship, with long-term commitment
 - 5-Other, specify: _____
 - 99-Prefer not to answer
20. What is your marital status?
- 1-Single, never been married
 - 2-Married
 - 3- Separated
 - 4-Divorced
 - 5-Widowed
 - 99-Prefer not to answer
21. How many children do you have? (Just type a number in the box below. If you prefer not to answer the question, please type "REF")
- _____
- 99-Prefer not to answer
22. (If Q2 = 1 and Q21 is not 0) How many pregnancies have you had? (Just type a number in the box below. If you prefer not to answer the question, please type "REF")
- _____
- 99-Prefer not to answer
23. (If Q2 = 1 and Q21 is not 0) How old were you when you first became pregnant? (Just type a number in the box below. If you prefer not to answer the question, please type "REF")
- _____
- 99-Prefer not to answer
24. Do you know someone who became pregnant as a teen? (Check ALL that apply)
- 1-No
 - 2-Yes, myself
 - 3-Yes, my mother
 - 4-Yes, my sister(s)
 - 5-Yes, my cousin(s)

- 6-Yes, my niece(s)
- 7-Yes, my aunt(s)
- 8-Yes, my friend(s)
- 9-Yes, someone else not included the categories above
- 99-Prefer not to answer

25. Has a friend or family member ever asked you for help with an unplanned pregnancy?

- 1-No
- 2-Yes
- 99-Prefer not to answer

26. (If Q25 = No) Hypothetically, if a friend or family member asked you for help with an unplanned pregnancy, what would you do?

(If Q25 = Yes) When a friend or family member asked you for help with an unplanned pregnancy, what did you do?

27. Has a friend or family member ever asked you for information about emergency contraception (often called "Plan B") or asked you to help them obtain emergency contraception?

- 1-No
- 2-Yes
- 99-Prefer not to answer

28. (If Q27 = No) Hypothetically, if a friend or family member asked you for help with emergency contraception, what would you do?

(If Q27 = Yes) When a friend or family member asked you for help with emergency contraception, what did you do?

29. How confident are you to find reliable sources of information for a friend or family member who is seeking help from you regarding unprotected sex or unplanned pregnancy?

- 1-Not at all
- 5-A great deal
- 99-Prefer not to answer

This next section asks about your knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors related to sexual and reproductive health. Please be reminded that your answers are strictly anonymous. We greatly appreciate your honest input for the purpose of our research.

30. How much do you know about the following birth control or contraception methods?

- 1-Never heard of it
 - 2-Have only heard of it but don't know much
 - 3-Know a few things about it
 - 4-Know a lot about it
 - 5-Know everything about it
- Male condoms
 - Withdrawal or pulling out
 - Birth control pills
 - A diaphragm, cervical cap, or female condom
 - Tubal or female sterilization
 - Emergency contraception such as Plan B
 - A vaginal ring such as NuvaRing
 - Vasectomy or male sterilization
 - A patch such as Ortho Evra
 - An IUD such as Mirena or ParaGard
 - A shot such as Depo Provera
 - An implant such as Implanon or Nexplanon

31. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements about male condoms. (Randomize the order)

- 1-Strongly disagree
- 4-Strongly agree

- I know how to put on a condom correctly.
- Condoms have a 99.9% chance of pregnancy prevention.
- If the condom doesn't roll down easily, it means it is on the wrong side.
- The penis should be hard before putting on the condom.
- Don't leave any space at the tip of the condom when putting it on.
- The size of the condom doesn't matter.
- After sex, condoms should only be removed when the penis is not hard any more.
- Condoms can be reused for multiple times.
- Condoms are for vaginal intercourse, not oral or anal sex.

32. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements about birth control/contraception.

1-Strongly disagree

4-Strongly agree

- Birth control pills will take effect as soon as the first pill is taken.
- Birth control pills can still be effective even if you forget to take it once in a while.
- Birth control pills can protect girls from getting sexually transmitted diseases.
- Birth control is mainly a girl's responsibility.
- Morning after pills (also known as "emergency contraception") may be used up to five days after having had unprotected sex.
- Emergency contraception can be obtained over the counter without a prescription.

33. Are you aware any of the following services in the community where you live in?

1-No

2-Yes

- Facilities that can test for HIV/STDs
- Facilities that can test for pregnancy
- Services that assist with pregnancy
- Services that assist with adoption
- Services that assist with abortion

34. Which of the following facilities or services have you used?

1-No

2-Yes

- Facilities that can test for HIV/STDs
- Facilities that can test for pregnancy
- Services that assist with pregnancy
- Services that assist with adoption
- Services that assist with abortion

35. Which of the following facilities or services have you recommended to others?

- 1-No
- 2-Yes

- Facilities that can test for HIV/STDs
- Facilities that can test for pregnancy
- Services that assist with pregnancy
- Services that assist with adoption
- Services that assist with abortion

36. How much do you support sex education in general?

- 1-Not at all
- 5-A great deal
- 99-Prefer not to answer

37. How much do you support women's rights to choose when it comes to pregnancy?

- 1-Not at all
- 5-A great deal
- 99-Prefer not to answer

38. On average, how often do you have sex?

- 1-Never
- 2-Less than once every few months
- 3-Less than once per month
- 4-A few times per month
- 5-More than once per week
- 6-Almost daily
- 99-Prefer not to answer

39. (If Q38 is not 1) How many sexual partners have you had over lifetime?
(Just type a number in the box below. If you prefer not to answer the question, please type "REF")

99-Prefer not to answer

40. (If Q38 is not 1) When is the last time you had sex?

1-More than 12 months ago

2-6 to 12 months ago

3-3 to 6 months ago

4-1-3 months ago

5-1-4 weeks ago

99-Prefer not to answer

41. Thinking about the last time when you had sex, did you or your partner ...

1-No

2-Yes

99-Don't remember

99-Prefer not to answer

- Drink alcohol?
- Use drugs?

42. Thinking about the last time when you had sex, did you or your partner use any of the following methods for protection? (Check ALL that apply)

- Didn't use any protection
- Male condoms
- Withdrawal or pulling out
- Birth control pills
- A diaphragm, cervical cap, or female condom
- Tubal or female sterilization
- Emergency contraception such as Plan B
- A vaginal ring such as NuvaRing
- Vasectomy or male sterilization
- A patch such as Ortho Evra
- An IUD such as Mirena or ParaGard
- A shot such as Depo Provera
- An implant such as Implanon or Nexplanon
- Prefer not to answer

43. (If Q38 = 1) If you were to have sex one day, how likely would you or your partner use protection?

- 1-Not very likely
- 5-Very likely
- 99-Prefer not to answer

44. (If Q38 is not 1) How important is it for you to be tested for HIV/STDs?

- 1-Not at all
- 5-Very important
- 99-Prefer not to answer

45. How willing are you to get tested for HIV/STDs in the next 6 months?

- 1-Not at all
- 5-A great deal
- 99-Prefer not to answer

46. How important do you think it is to discuss sexual health with ...

- 1-Not at all
- 5-Very important
- 99-Does not apply
- 99-Don't remember
- 99-Prefer not to answer

- Your significant other/partner/boyfriend/girlfriend
- Your mother
- Your father
- Your sibling(s)
- Your other family members/relatives
- Your friend(s)
- Health professionals

47. Have you discussed sexual health in the last 2-3 weeks with ...

- 1-No
- 2-Yes
- 99-Does not apply
- 99-Don't remember
- 99-Prefer not to answer

- Your significant other/partner/boyfriend/girlfriend
- Your mother
- Your father
- Your sibling(s)
- Your other family members/relatives
- Your friend(s)
- Health professionals

Thanks for taking the time to participate in this study! You are now eligible to be entered in a raffle for one of the ten \$200 Amazon gift cards! We will notify the winners within the next 2 weeks. For identification purpose only, please provide the following information:

Phone number: _____

Email: _____

Date of birth: _____

First three letters of your mother's first name:

T2 Email Recruitment

Hi _____,

Thanks so much for taking the time to participate in the online survey from the research project conducted by UTEP Communication Professor Arvind Singhal and his collaborator Helen Wang at University at Buffalo. We greatly appreciate your input!

We are excited to announce that you are one of the five winners of the Amazon \$200 gift card! In addition, you are invited to take part in another segment of the project! You will be rewarded with a \$30 gift card by attending a reading session/a film viewing session/ or picking up a small gift and completing a 10-minute online survey about your response to the story/film. Not only that, you can get another \$20 gift card by completing a 7-minute follow-up online survey two weeks later!

OR

We are sorry to tell you that you are not one of the five winners of the Amazon \$200 gift card. However, you are invited to take part in another segment of the project! You will be rewarded with a \$30 gift card by attending a reading session/a film viewing session/ or picking up a small gift and completing a 10-minute online survey about your response to the story/film. Not only that, you can get another \$20 gift card by completing a 7-minute follow-up online survey two weeks later!

Please let us know if you are interested within the next 48 hours!

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Dr. Helen Wang (hwang23@buffalo.edu) or Dr. Arvind Singhal (asinghal@utep.edu).

Thanks for your consideration!

Arvind Singhal
Endowed Professor of Communication
The University of Texas at El Paso

Helen Wang
Assistant Professor of Communication
Research Assistant Professor of Community Health and Health Behavior
University at Buffalo, The State University of New York

East Los High T2 Survey

Thanks for taking the time to participate in our study!

1. Please briefly describe what you just read/watched.

2. Please indicate how much is true for the following statements while you were [reading the article/script/watching the film](#) of East Los High. [Green & Brock, 2000; Transportation scale]

1-Not at all
7-Very much

- I could easily picture the events in it taking place.
- Activity going on in the room around me was on my mind. (Reverse)
- I could picture myself in the scene of the events described in it.
- I was mentally involved in it while reading/watching it.
- After finishing it, I found it easy to put it out of my mind. (Reverse)
- I wanted to learn how it ended.
- It affected me emotionally.
- I found myself thinking of ways it could have turned out differently.
- I found my mind wandering while reading/watching it. (Reverse)
- The events in it have changed my life.

3. How much do you feel like you know ...

1-Not at all
7-A great deal
99-Not sure

- Jacob Aguilar
- Jessie Martinez
- Maya Martinez
- Ceci Camayo
- [Vanessa De La Cruz](#)
- Cristian Camacho
- Soli Gomez
- [Paulie Hernandez](#)
- Tia Paulina

4. How much do you feel like you can relate to ...

1-Not at all
7-A great deal
99-Not sure

- Jacob Aguilar
- Jessie Martinez
- Maya Martinez
- Ceci Camayo
- [Vanessa De La Cruz](#)
- Cristian Camacho
- Soli Gomez
- [Paulie Hernandez](#)
- Tia Paulina

5. How much do you like ...

1-Not at all
7-A great deal
99-Not sure

- Jacob Aguilar
- Jessie Martinez
- Maya Martinez
- Ceci Camayo
- [Vanessa De La Cruz](#)
- Cristian Camacho
- Soli Gomez
- [Paulie Hernandez](#)
- Tia Paulina

6. How often do you use the following social media?

1-Never
2-Not often
3-Very often [OPTIONAL: If so, please share your username]

- Facebook
- Twitter
- Instagram
- Tumblr

This next section asks about your knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors related to sexual and reproductive health. Please be reminded that your answers are strictly anonymous. We greatly appreciate your honest input for the purpose of our research.

7. How much do you know about the following birth control or contraception methods?

- 1-Never heard of it
- 2-Have only heard of it but don't know much
- 3-Know a few things about it
- 4-Know a lot about it
- 5-Know everything about it

- Male condoms
- Withdrawal or pulling out
- Birth control pills
- A diaphragm, cervical cap, or female condom
- Tubal or female sterilization
- Emergency contraception such as Plan B
- A vaginal ring such as NuvaRing
- Vasectomy or male sterilization
- A patch such as Ortho Evra
- An IUD such as Mirena or ParaGard
- A shot such as Depo Provera
- An implant such as Implanon or Nexplanon

8. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements about male condoms. (Randomize the order)

- 1-Strongly disagree
- 4-Strongly agree

- I know how to put on a condom correctly.
- Condoms have a 99.9% chance of pregnancy prevention.
- If the condom doesn't roll down easily, it means it is on the wrong side.
- The penis should be hard before putting on the condom.
- Don't leave any space at the tip of the condom when putting it on.
- The size of the condom doesn't matter.
- After sex, condoms should only be removed when the penis is not hard any more.
- Condoms can be reused for multiple times.
- Condoms are for vaginal intercourse, not oral or anal sex.

9. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements about birth control/contraception.

1-Strongly disagree

4-Strongly agree

- Birth control pills will take effect as soon as the first pill is taken.
- Birth control pills can still be effective even if you forget to take it once in a while.
- Birth control pills can protect girls from getting sexually transmitted diseases.
- Birth control is mainly a girl's responsibility.
- Morning after pills (also known as "emergency contraception") may be used up to five days after having had unprotected sex.
- Emergency contraception can be obtained over the counter without a prescription.

10. How much do you support sex education in general?

1-Not at all

5-A great deal

99-Prefer not to answer

11. How much do you support women's rights to choose when it comes to pregnancy?

1-Not at all

5-A great deal

99-Prefer not to answer

12. On average, how often do you have sex?

1-Never

2-Less than once every few months

3-Less than once per month

4-A few times per month

5-More than once per week

6-Almost daily

99-Prefer not to answer

13. (If Q12 is not 1) How many sexual partners have you had over lifetime? (Just type a number in the box below. If you prefer not to answer the question, please type "REF") _____ 99-Prefer not to answer

14. (If Q12 is not 1) When is the last time you had sex?

- 1-More than 12 months ago
- 2-6 to 12 months ago
- 3-3 to 6 months ago
- 4-1-3 months ago
- 5-1-4 weeks ago
- 5-This week
- 99-Prefer not to answer

15. Thinking about the last time when you had sex, did you or your partner ...

- 1-No
- 2-Yes
- 99-Don't remember
- 99-Prefer not to answer

- Drink alcohol?
- Use drugs?

16. Thinking about the last time when you had sex, did you or your partner use any of the following methods for protection? (Check ALL that apply)

- Didn't use any protection
- Male condoms
- Withdrawal or pulling out
- Birth control pills
- A diaphragm, cervical cap, or female condom
- Tubal or female sterilization
- Emergency contraception such as Plan B
- A vaginal ring such as NuvaRing
- Vasectomy or male sterilization
- A patch such as Ortho Evra
- An IUD such as Mirena or ParaGard
- A shot such as Depo Provera
- An implant such as Implanon or Nexplanon
- Prefer not to answer

17. (If Q12 = 1) If you were to have sex one day, how likely would you or your partner use protection?

- 1-Not very likely
- 5-Very likely
- 99-Prefer not to answer

18. (If Q12 is not 1) How important is it for you to be tested for HIV/STDs?

- 1-Not at all
- 5-Very important
- 99-Prefer not to answer

19. How willing are you to get tested for HIV/STDs in the next 6 months?

- 1-Not at all
- 5-A great deal
- 99-Prefer not to answer

20. How important do you think it is to discuss sexual health with ...

- 1-Not at all
- 5-Very important
- 99-Does not apply
- 99-Don't remember
- 99-Prefer not to answer

- Your significant other/partner/boyfriend/girlfriend
- Your mother
- Your father
- Your sibling(s)
- Your other family members/relatives
- Your friend(s)
- Health professionals

21. Have you discussed sexual health in the last 2-3 weeks with ...

- 1-No
- 2-Yes
- 99-Does not apply
- 99-Don't remember
- 99-Prefer not to answer

- Your significant other/partner/boyfriend/girlfriend
- Your mother
- Your father
- Your sibling(s)
- Your other family members/relatives
- Your friend(s)
- Health professionals

This next section provides you some hypothetical scenarios about you being approached for help. Please offer suggestions as specific as you can. Feel free to open up a web browser and search online if it can help you find more concrete information.

22. A friend of yours whom you have known for years sent you a text and a Facebook message this morning, saying that she just had unprotected sex and is terrified that she'll get pregnant - which is the last thing in the world that she wants. She asks you to go online to find information on two things - if there's anything she can do now to prevent pregnancy, and if there are any places she can go in the Downtown/Central area of El Paso for help. What are you going to tell her?

23. Last weekend at a family gathering, a teenage cousin of yours told you that she just found out she's 6 weeks pregnant. Like Ceci, she's not quite sure what she wants to do yet. You're going to meet her for lunch in an hour. What will you tell her about her options? Are there any online resources that can help her?

24. After class yesterday, a classmate started crying as she left the classroom. You politely asked her if she was okay, and she said that she was raped last weekend. You said that you are sorry and asked if you can help or support her in any way. She asked you to locate a health clinic somewhere on the far East Side (she lives in the Lower Valley but sometimes stays with her cousin in Montana Vista) where she can get tested for STDs and pregnancy. She gives you her number and asks you to text her info. What would you text to her?

Thank you for participating in this part of the study. We appreciate your time and honest answers!

For identification purpose only, please provide the following information:

Phone number: _____

Email: _____

Date of birth: _____

First three letters of your mother's first name:

East Los High T3 Survey

Thanks for taking the time to participate in this survey!

1. You learned about East Los High about a few weeks ago. Since then, have you explored ELH further? (Check ALL that apply)

- 1-Nothing at all
- 2-Searched online about the show
- 3-Watched some episodes from Season 1
- 4-Started to watch Season 2
- 5-Started following East Los High on Face book
- 6-Started following East Los High on Twitter
- 7-Started following East Los High on Tumblr
- 8-Started following East Los High on Instagram
- 9-Talked to people about the show
- 10-Other, please specify: _____

2. (If Q1 = 3 or 4) How many East Los High episodes or additional videos have you watched?

Season 1:
 Number of episodes: _____
 Number of additional videos: _____

Season 2:
 Number of episodes: _____
 Number of additional videos: _____

3. How much is true for the following statements when you were [reading about/ watching](#) East Los High? [Green & Brock, 2000; Transportation scale]

1-Not at all
 7-Very much

- I could easily picture the events in it taking place.
- Activity going on in the room around me was on my mind. (Reverse)
- I could picture myself in the scene of the events described in it.
- I was mentally involved in it while reading/watching it.
- After finishing it, I found it easy to put it out of my mind. (Reverse)
- I wanted to learn how it ended.
- It affected me emotionally.
- I found myself thinking of ways it could have turned out differently.

- I found my mind wandering while reading/watching it. (Reverse)
- The events in it have changed my life.

4. How much do you feel like you know ...

1-Not at all

7-A great deal

99-Not sure

- Jacob Aguilar
- Jessie Martinez
- Maya Martinez
- Ceci Camayo
- [Vanessa De La Cruz](#)
- Cristian Camacho
- Soli Gomez
- [Paulie Hernandez](#)
- Tia Paulina

5. How much do you feel like you can relate to ...

1-Not at all

7-A great deal

99-Not sure

- Jacob Aguilar
- Jessie Martinez
- Maya Martinez
- Ceci Camayo
- [Vanessa De La Cruz](#)
- Cristian Camacho
- Soli Gomez
- [Paulie Hernandez](#)
- Tia Paulina

6. How much do you like ...

1-Not at all

7-A great deal

99-Not sure

- Jacob Aguilar
- Jessie Martinez
- Maya Martinez
- Ceci Camayo
- [Vanessa De La Cruz](#)
- Cristian Camacho

- Soli Gomez
- [Paulie Hernandez](#)
- Tia Paulina

This next section asks about your knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors related to sexual and reproductive health. Please be reminded that your answers are strictly anonymous. We greatly appreciate your honest input for the purpose of our research.

1. How much do you know about the following birth control or contraception methods?

- 1-Never heard of it
- 2-Have only heard of it but don't know much
- 3-Know a few things about it
- 4-Know a lot about it
- 5-Know everything about it

- Male condoms
- Withdrawal or pulling out
- Birth control pills
- A diaphragm, cervical cap, or female condom
- Tubal or female sterilization
- Emergency contraception such as Plan B
- A vaginal ring such as NuvaRing
- Vasectomy or male sterilization
- A patch such as Ortho Evra
- An IUD such as Mirena or ParaGard
- A shot such as Depo Provera
- An implant such as Implanon or Nexplanon

2. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements about male condoms. (Randomize the order)

- 1-Strongly disagree
- 4-Strongly agree

- I know how to put on a condom correctly.
- Condoms have a 99.9% chance of pregnancy prevention.
- If the condom doesn't roll down easily, it means it is on the wrong side.
- The penis should be hard before putting on the condom.
- Don't leave any space at the tip of the condom when putting it on.
- The size of the condom doesn't matter.

- After sex, condoms should only be removed when the penis is not hard any more.
- Condoms can be reused for multiple times.
- Condoms are for vaginal intercourse, not oral or anal sex.

3. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements about birth control/contraception.

1-Strongly disagree

4-Strongly agree

- Birth control pills will take effect as soon as the first pill is taken.
- Birth control pills can still be effective even if you forget to take it once in a while.
- Birth control pills can protect girls from getting sexually transmitted diseases.
- Birth control is mainly a girl's responsibility.
- Morning after pills (also known as "emergency contraception") may be used up to five days after having had unprotected sex.
- Emergency contraception can be obtained over the counter without a prescription.

4. How much do you support sex education in general?

1-Not at all

5-A great deal

99-Prefer not to answer

5. How much do you support women's rights to choose when it comes to pregnancy?

1-Not at all

5-A great deal

99-Prefer not to answer

6. On average, how often do you have sex?

1-Never

2-Less than once every few months

3-Less than once per month

4-A few times per month

5-More than once per week

- 6-Almost daily
99-Prefer not to answer
7. (If Q12 is not 1) How many sexual partners have you had over lifetime? (Just type a number in the box below. If you prefer not to answer the question, please type "REF")

99-Prefer not to answer

8. (If Q12 is not 1) When is the last time you had sex?

1-More than 12 months ago
2-6 to 12 months ago
3-3 to 6 months ago
4-1-3 months ago
5-1-4 weeks ago
5-This week
99-Prefer not to answer

9. Thinking about the last time when you had sex, did you or your partner ...

1-No
2-Yes
99-Don't remember
99-Prefer not to answer

- Drink alcohol?
- Use drugs?

10. Thinking about the last time when you had sex, did you or your partner use any of the following methods for protection? (Check ALL that apply)

- Didn't use any protection
- Male condoms
- Withdrawal or pulling out
- Birth control pills
- A diaphragm, cervical cap, or female condom
- Tubal or female sterilization
- Emergency contraception such as Plan B
- A vaginal ring such as NuvaRing
- Vasectomy or male sterilization
- A patch such as Ortho Evra

- An IUD such as Mirena or ParaGard
- A shot such as Depo Provera
- An implant such as Implanon or Nexplanon
- Prefer not to answer

11. (If Q12 = 1) If you were to have sex one day, how likely would you or your partner use protection?

- 1-Not very likely
- 5-Very likely
- 99-Prefer not to answer

12. (If Q12 is not 1) How important is it for you to be tested for HIV/STDs?

- 1-Not at all
- 5-Very important
- 99-Prefer not to answer

13. How willing are you to get tested for HIV/STDs in the next 6 months?

- 1-Not at all
- 5-A great deal
- 99-Prefer not to answer

14. How important do you think it is to discuss sexual health with ...

- 1-Not at all
- 5-Very important
- 99-Does not apply
- 99-Don't remember
- 99-Prefer not to answer

- Your significant other/partner/boyfriend/girlfriend
- Your mother
- Your father
- Your sibling(s)
- Your other family members/relatives
- Your friend(s)
- Health professionals

15. Have you discussed sexual health in the last 2-3 weeks with ...

- 1-No
- 2-Yes

99-Does not apply
 99-Don't remember
 99-Prefer not to answer

- Your significant other/partner/boyfriend/girlfriend
- Your mother
- Your father
- Your sibling(s)
- Your other family members/relatives
- Your friend(s)
- Health professionals

16. Have you discussed sexual health in the last 2-3 weeks online?

- 1-No
 2-Yes, on Facebook
 3-Yes, on Twitter
 4-Yes, on Tumblr
 5-Yes, on Instagram
 6-Yes, on other online community website(s); please specify:

17. What are your concerns about discussing sexual health issues on social media, if anything at all?

Thank you for participating in this part of the study. We appreciate your time and honest answers!

For identification purpose only, please provide the following information:

Phone number: _____

Email: _____

Date of birth: _____

First three letters of your mother's first name:

SOCIAL MEDIA ANALYSIS

by

Hua Wang

University at Buffalo, The State University of New York

Weiai Xu

University at Buffalo, The State University of New York

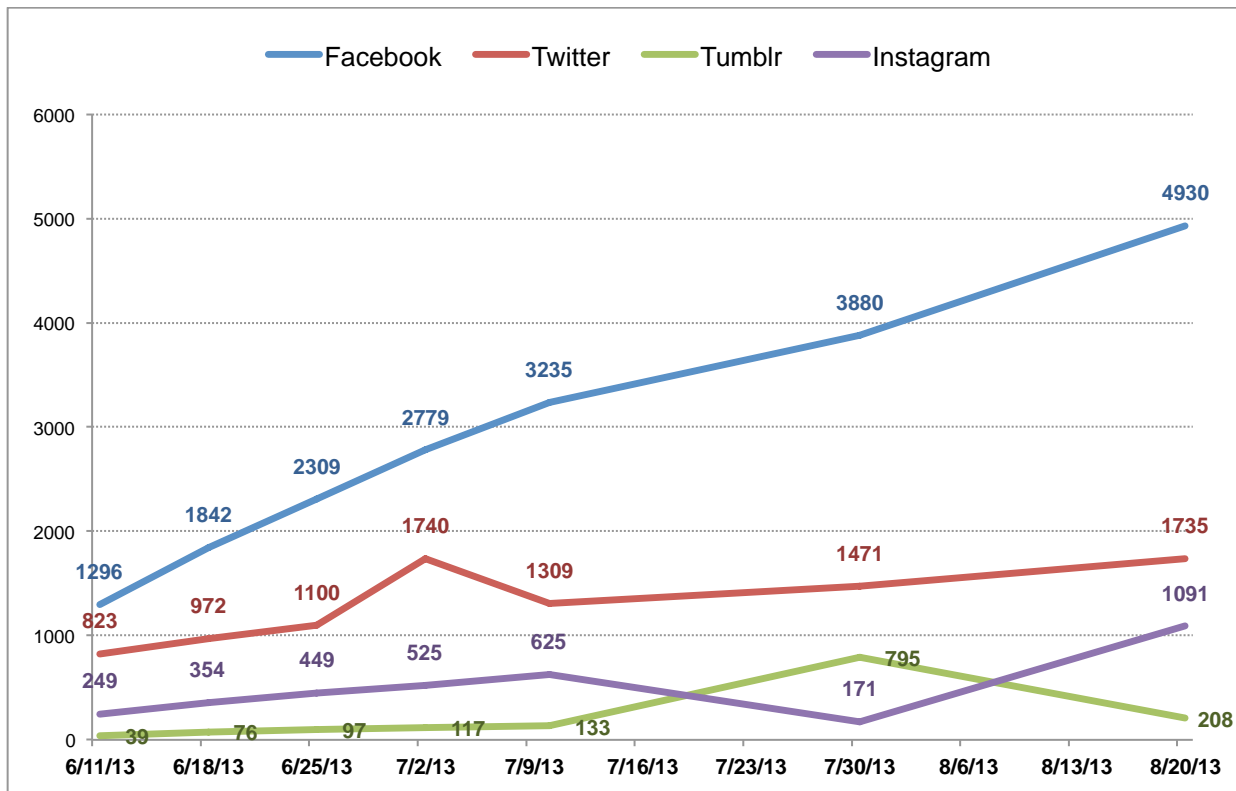
Gregory D. Saxton

University at Buffalo, The State University of New York



ELH Social Media Accounts

Figure 1. Overview of ELH Social Media Presence (1st three months of Season 1)



Note: This chart is based on the social media reports by Lindsey Jurca.

@ 3 months (as of 8/20/13)

@ 9 months (as of 2/27/14)

- Facebook: 4,930 likes
- Twitter: 1,735 followers
- Instagram: 1,091 followers
- Tumblr: 208 posts

- Facebook: 6,544 likes
- Twitter: 2,083 followers
- Instagram: 1,381 followers
- Tumblr: 382 posts

Cultivating A Fan Base on Facebook for Public Health Promotion

Presented at the Medicine 2.0 Conference in Maui, HI in November, 2014

Background: Social networking sites are increasingly adopted by public health programs to attract users and promote health messages. However, empirical research has yet to suggest effective strategies for leveraging the social features on these sites. Moreover, rarely do program evaluators investigate the underlying message and user structures to help content producers build a vibrant and meaningful user community. East Los High (ELH) is an award-winning online teen drama designed to promote safe sex and prevent teen pregnancy among Latino youth in the United States. Additional materials were rolled out on the program's website and four popular social networking sites during and after its Hulu premier to help develop a fan base and achieve the social objectives.

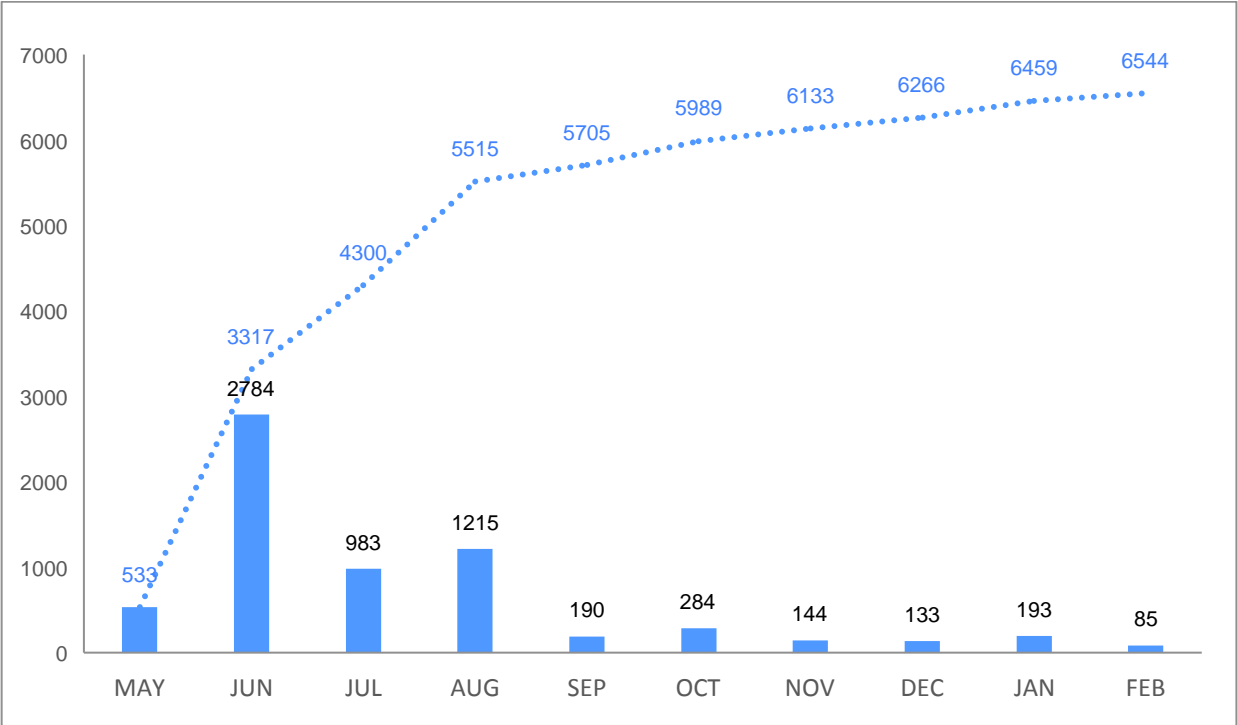
Objective: As part of a comprehensive program evaluation, the goals of this study were two-fold: (1) To identify attributes of ELH Facebook posts that elicited the most successful user responses, and (2) To uncover the patterns of user behavior and user-generated content associated with the most successful posts.

Methods: Data from May 1, 2013 to January 31, 2014 were extracted from the ELH Facebook Fan Page using Facebook Insights and custom Python code. For objective 1, the most successful posts were selected based on 10 indicators (e.g., daily reach, likes, shares, and comments). Their message framing, intent, and media type were coded to identify salient attributes. For objective 2, focusing on the most successful posts, a series of bimodal user-post networks and semantic networks were analyzed using NodeXL to reveal influential individual users, subgroups, and topical interests.

Results: In nine months, ELH accumulated 6,459 likes on its fan page. ELH content producers used six message types to present 342 posts. Although a single post could reach over 10,000 people, on average, each post reached over 2,000 people, engaged around 200 to interact with the content, and prompted more than 50 to provide feedback and word-of-mouth. This means about 10% of Facebook users who saw a post also clicked on it, and out of those 25% liked, shared, mentioned, or commented on the post. Twelve posts were considered the most successful and they were predominantly photos of the show and cast combined with short texts calling for action. Network analysis results revealed that the ELH official account played a central role in facilitating user commenting, and a dedicated set of evangelistic users actively commented on and promoted ELH posts. The top word pairs reflected positive program feedback and discussions related to the show's social objectives.

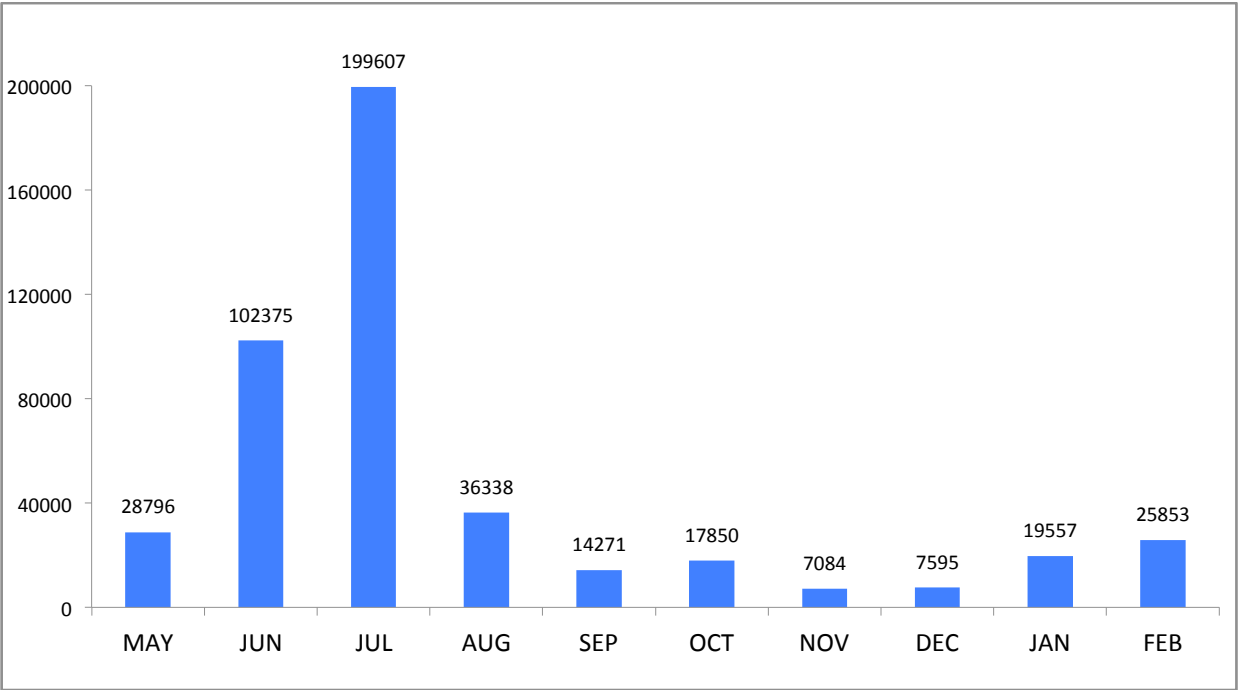
Conclusions: Adopting popular social media platforms does not necessarily guarantee success in user engagement. Content producers need to present their messages strategically and engage evangelistic users to build a sustainable community. Public health program developers can benefit from understanding basic structures of information and social networks to effectively monitor user dynamics, provide tailored feedback, and cultivate a strong fan base.

Figure 2. ELH Facebook Fan Page Likes



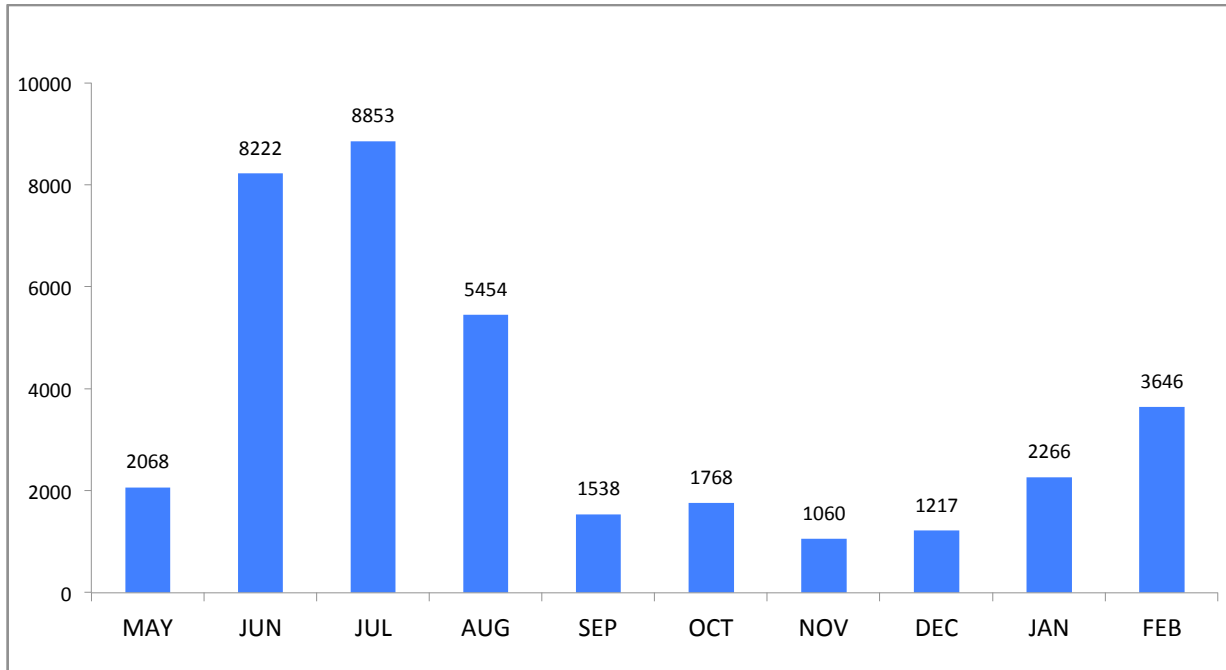
Note: The bar chart shows monthly likes and the line chart shows the total likes accumulatively.

Figure 3. ELH Facebook Fan Page Monthly Total Reach



Note: This chart is based on Facebook Insights past 28 days of audience reach with the number of unique users who saw any content related to the ELH fan page.

Figure 4. ELH Facebook Fan Page Monthly Engagement



Note: This chart is based on Facebook Insights past 28 days of user engagement with the number of unique users who clicked on the ELH fan page or created stories.

There were 342 posts on ELH Facebook fan page from May 1, 2013 to January 31, 2014. They are categorized by 6 types of posts as seen in descending order below:

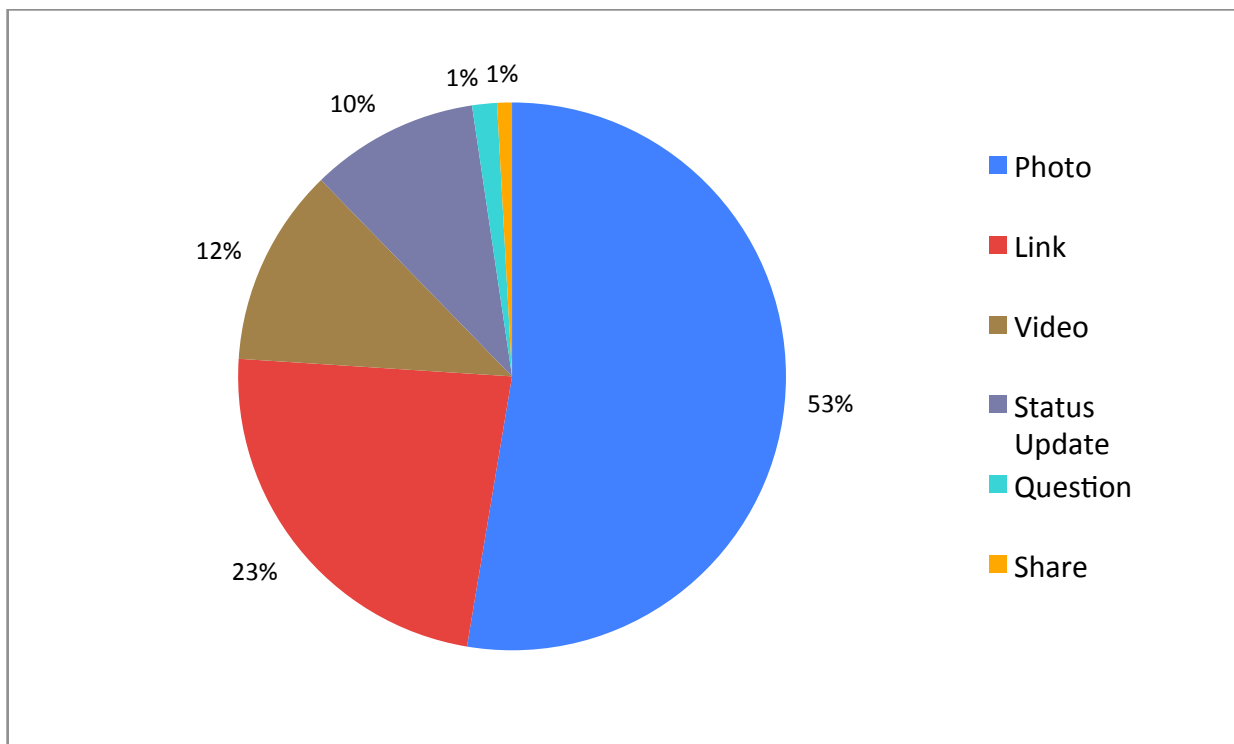


Figure 5. Types of ELH Facebook Posts

Table 1. Summary of Post-Level ELH Facebook Insights

Measure	Definition	Max	Median	Mean	SD
Lifetime total reach	The number of unique users who saw your post	10,780	1,858	2,046.93	1,215.51
Lifetime engaged users	The number of unique users who clicked anywhere in your posts	1,222	167	197.04	195.67
Lifetime talking about this	The number of unique people who created a story by interacting with your Page post.	940	29	56.13	85.41
Lifetime talking about post among fans	The number of people who have liked your Page and who are sharing stories about your Page.	822	25	45.05	69.03
Lifetime stories posted by fans	The number of stories generated about your Page post by people who have liked your Page.	1,176	34	64.75	102.61

- This table shows that in a Facebook post’s lifetime, it can reach up to **10,780** people and engage up to **1,222** of them to interact with the content.
- On average, each post can reach more than 2,000 people, engage **around 200** of them to interact with the content, and prompt more than 50 of them to generate stories about the post – meaning about 10% of the people who saw the post would take some kind of actions by clicking anywhere on the post, and out of those about a quarter would generate a story by liking, sharing, mentioning, commenting on the post.
- On average, **80.3%** of the people who talk about the post are the ELH Facebook fans and they each on average create **1.44** stories.
- The standard deviations are higher or close to the mean score of the measures – this means people’s Facebook behavior varied a great deal.

Most popular FB posts were determined through 10 indicators:

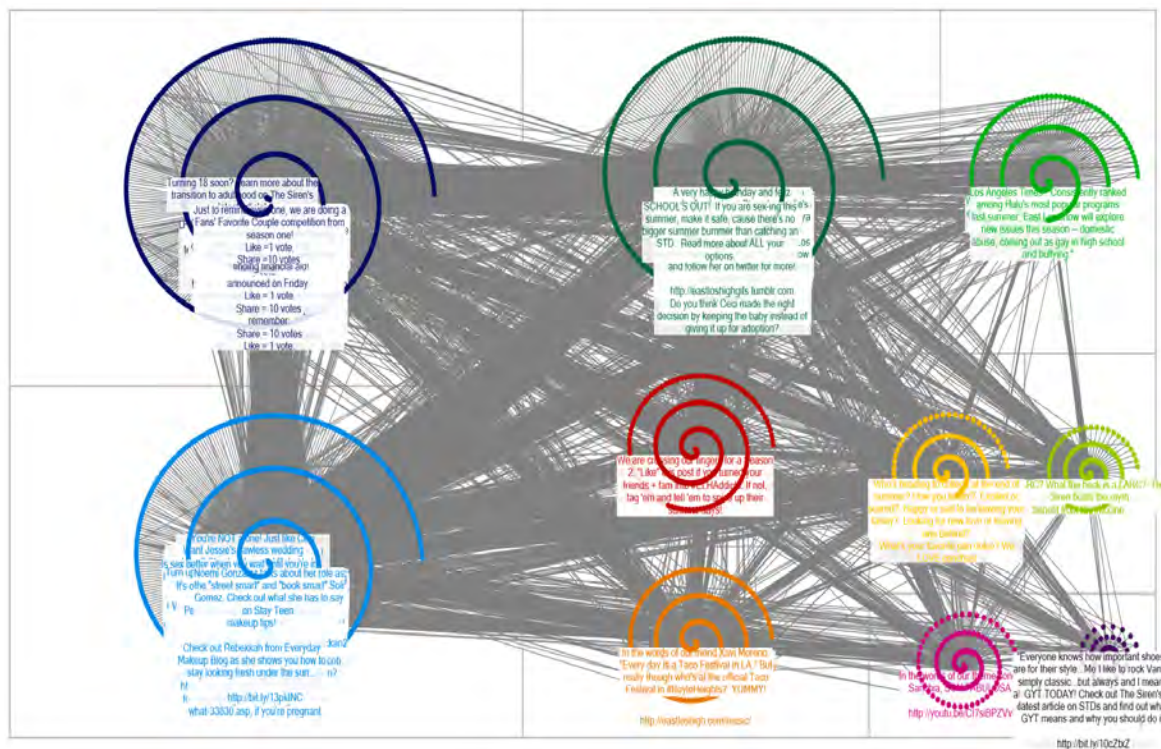
1. Lifetime total reach (total number of unique users who saw the post)
2. Lifetime engagement (total number of unique users who clicked on anything on the post)
3. Lifetime consumption (total count of interactions with the post)
4. Daily reach (average number of unique users who saw the post divided by the number of days it has been posted)
5. Content cycle
6. Engagement per content cycle (average number of unique users who clicked on the post divided by the number of days between original posting and the last time any action taken related to the post)
7. Consumption per content cycle (average number of interactions with the post divided by the number of days between original posting and the last time any action were taken related to the post)
8. Likes
9. Shares
10. Comments

Most popular posts are photos posted with a call for action.

Figure 6. Examples of popular ELH Facebook posts



Figure 7. ELH Facebook Bimodal User-Post Liking Network



Note: A user and a post are connected when the user likes the post. The content of each post is shown as label text.

ELH on Twitter

As of February 1, 2014, the account had 2,033 followers, itself followed 1,798 other Twitter users, had sent a total of 1,602 tweets, and had favorited 614 tweets.

Figure 10 shows monthly tweeting activity from May 1 to December 31, 2013. The 8-month period shown by this figure includes 1,534 tweets sent, which covers the bulk of @EastLosHighShow’s 1,602 tweets to date. Figure 11, in turn, shows weekly tweeting activity from 4/30/2013 to 1/28/2014, while Figure 12 shows daily tweeting activity. Each figure shows for a different period of time the number of tweets sent along with the number of those tweets that were *public reply messages* (“public emails”), retweets of other users’ tweets, or included a user mention, a hashtag, a URL, a photo, a photo link, or a video link. These figures thus show both the account’s overall tweeting activity and its use of the primary tools available within any given tweet (Lovejoy, Waters, & Saxton, 2012). What is visible in these figures is the presence of significant spikes and gaps in @EastLosHighShow’s tweeting activity. While spikes are to be expected given the seasonality of the show, the gaps are somewhat troublesome. From a stewardship perspective, ELH may be missing an opportunity to keep the public engaged. In effect, using Twitter, at least, @EastLosHighShow is not cultivating relationships equally over the course of 8 months.

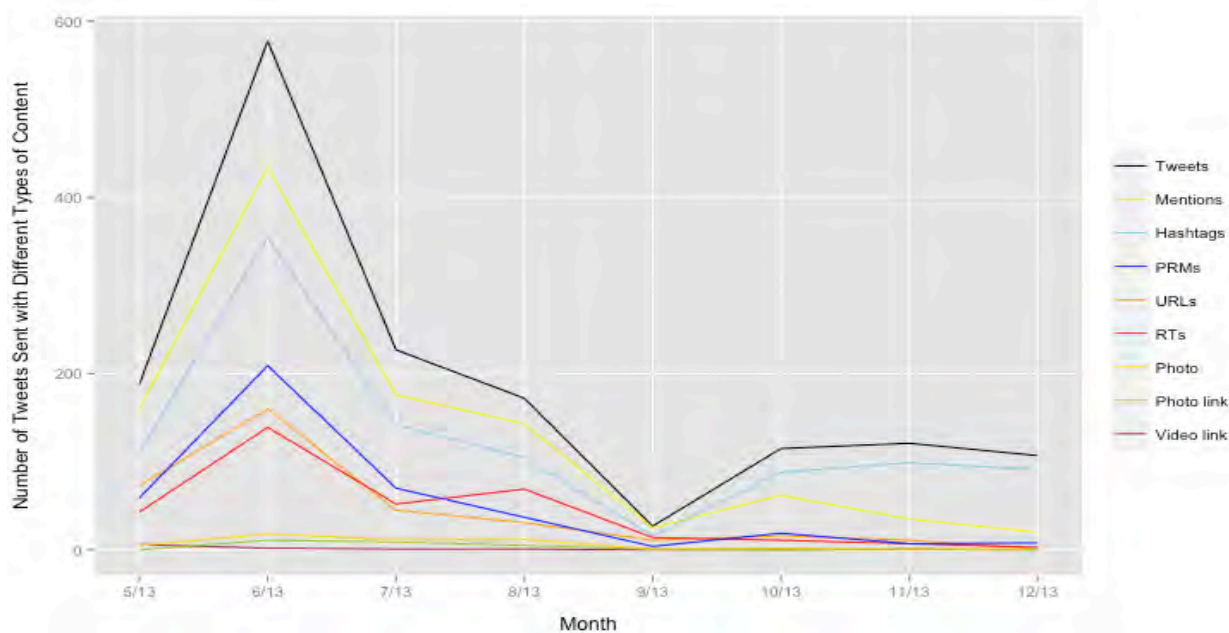


Figure 10. Number of Different Types of Tweets sent per Month by @EastLosHighShow, May – December, 2013

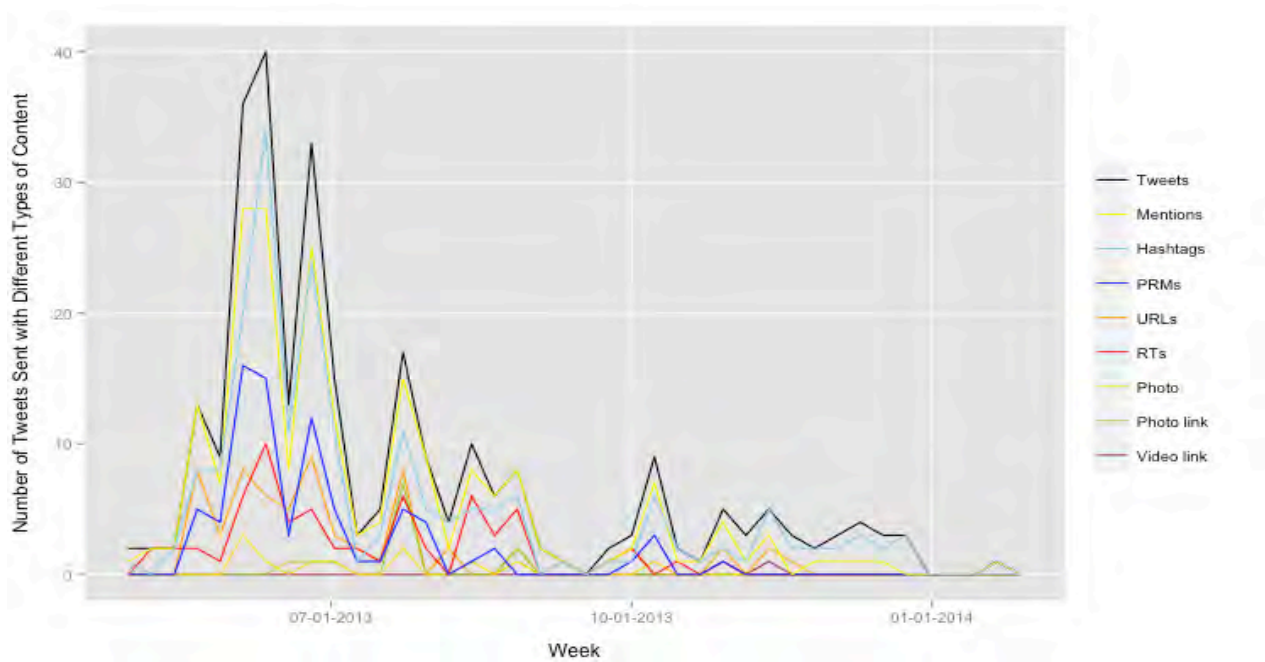


Figure 11. Number of Different Types of Tweets sent per Week by @EastLosHighShow, 4/30/2013 – 1/28/2014

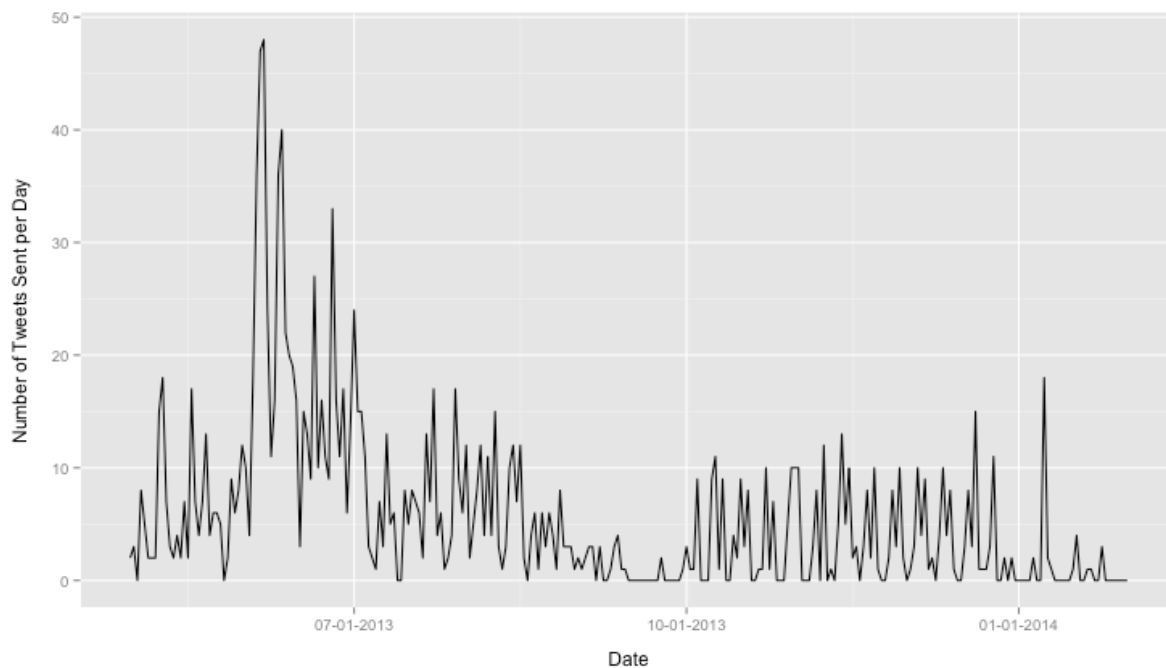


Figure 12. Number of Tweets sent per Day by @EastLosHighShow, 4/30/2013 – 1/28/2014

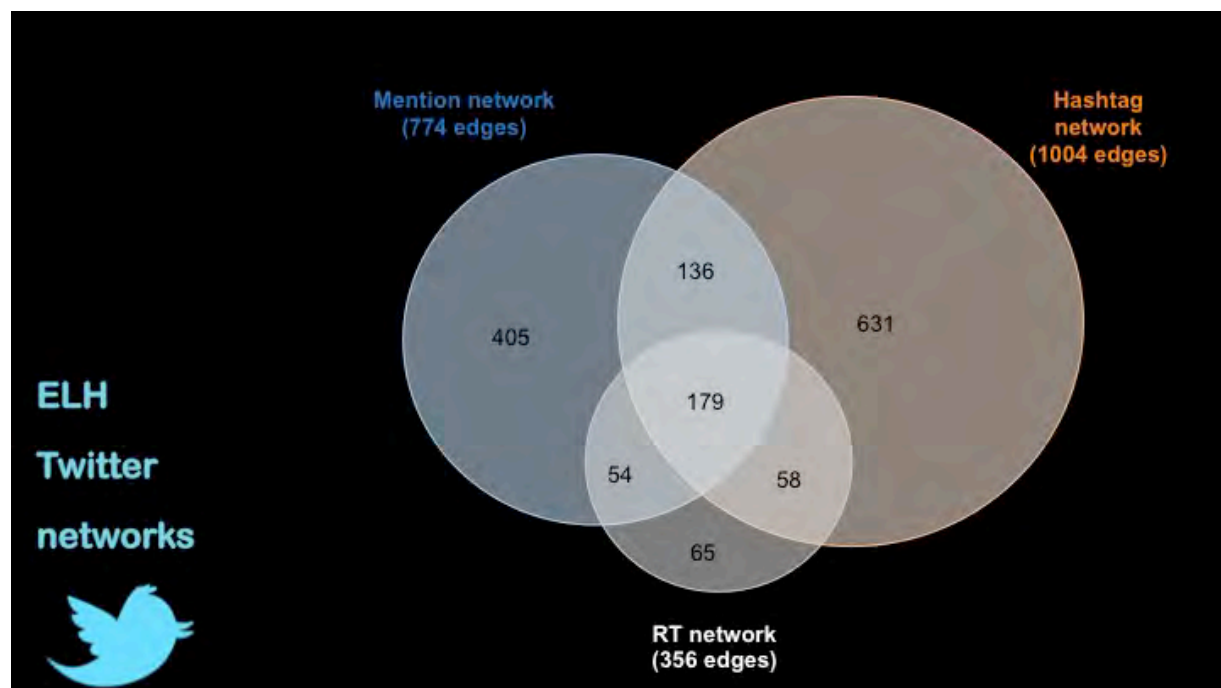
Network Structures for A Better Twitter Community

Presented at the Social Media & Society Conference in Toronto in September, 2014

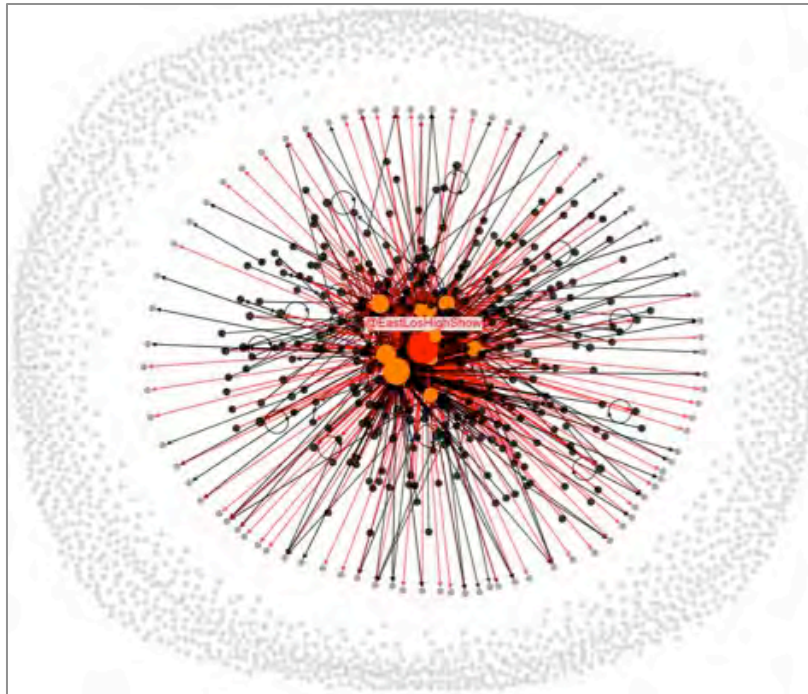
Background: East Los High (ELH) is a teen drama purposefully designed to promote safe sex and teen pregnancy prevention among Latino youth in the United States. This 24-episode TV show was premiered exclusively on Hulu in June 2013. It features transmedia storytelling by using a variety of digital media platforms to roll out additional content, engage viewers, enrich their narrative experience, and promote health and social messages. Twitter has an important social media platform for these efforts.

Objective: As part of a comprehensive, multi-phase, multi-method program evaluation, this study aimed to understand the structures of the ELH Twitter hashtag network and explore the potential to build a better community around the show, enhance the efficacy of its health messages, and ultimately help obtain its social objectives.

Methods: Social network analysis is a useful method for understanding the structures of social media networks (Gruzd & Haythornthwaite, 2013). We used NodeXL to calculate key network indicators and generate visualizations of the interactions between @EastLosHighShow and its 2,136 Twitter followers with tweets that included #ELH, #ELHaddict(s), and/or #EastLosHigh from May 1, 2013 to January 31, 2014.

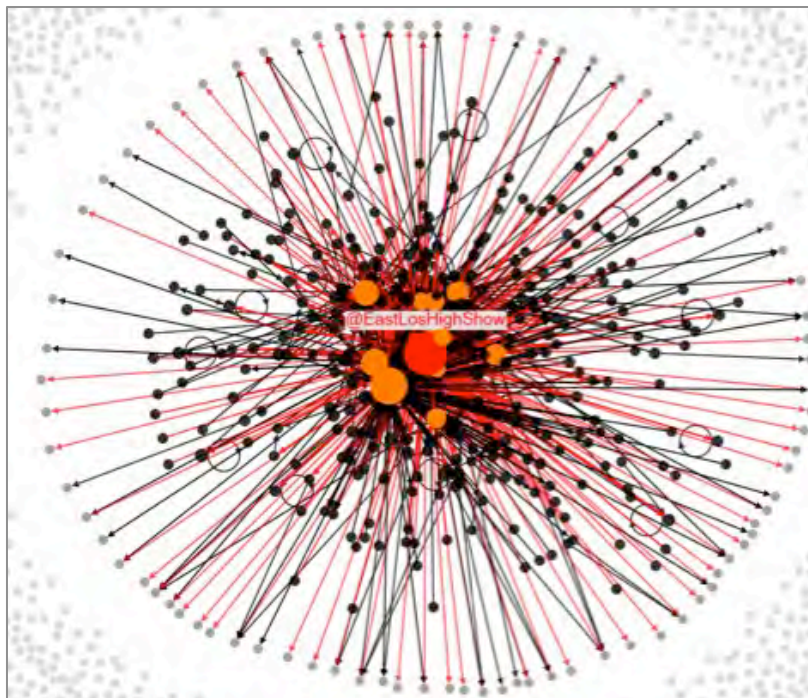


Results: Network analyses revealed a clear core-periphery structure among the linked users and a large proportion of isolates in the network. The core group was comprised of ELH and eight of its cast members, whereas the periphery was a sizable mix of ELH viewers, advisors, and other media organizations. A majority of the followers (80.7%) did not use the ELH hashtags to tweet about the show.



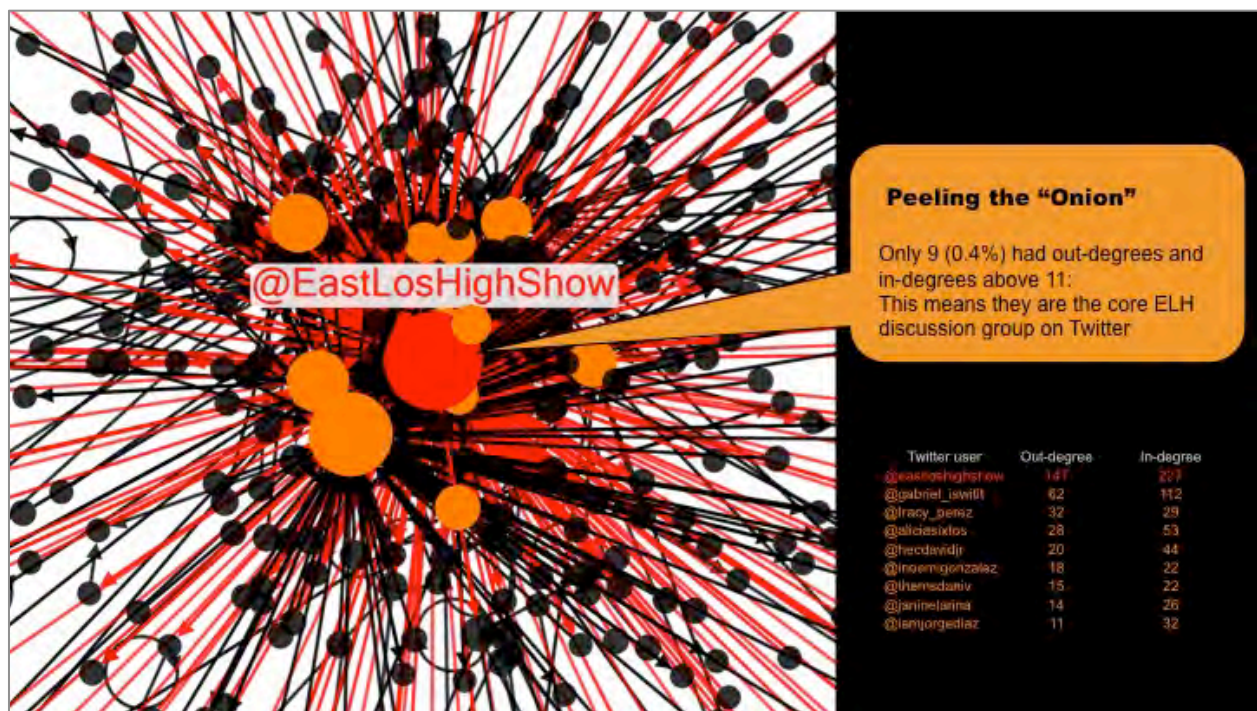
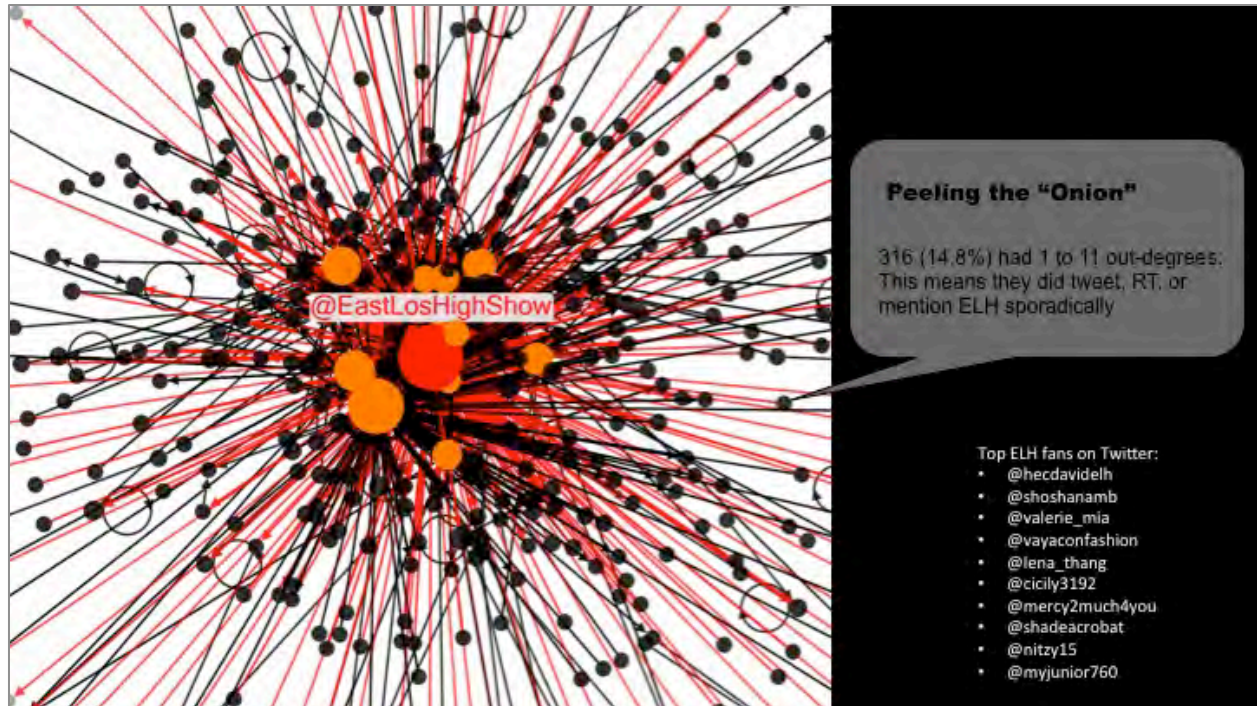
Peeling the "Onion"

1,724 or 80.7% were isolates:
This means they are following ELH
but didn't tweet, RT, or mention ELH



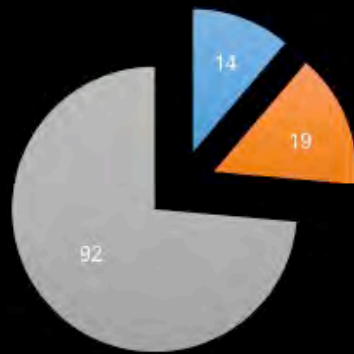
Peeling the "Onion"

85 (4.0%) had 0 out-degree:
This means they were RT/mentioned,
but not vice versa



In addition, we also discovered that most of the advisors, media organizations, and influencers that ELH listed on its official Twitter account did not follow back, or even if they did, they did not tweet about ELH frequently. The non-followers and isolated followers are the latent ties, representing social capital yet untapped.

ELH Twitter List (N=125)



■ Cast members

■ Advisors

■ Youth media/
Influencers

- All cast members are following and actively interacting with ELH.
- Only 7 (37%) advisors are following ELH; 1 used ELH hashtags, 1 mentioned ELH, and 1 retweeted ELH.
- Only 12 (13%) influencers are following ELH; 4 used ELH hashtags, 4 mentioned ELH, and 3 retweeted ELH.

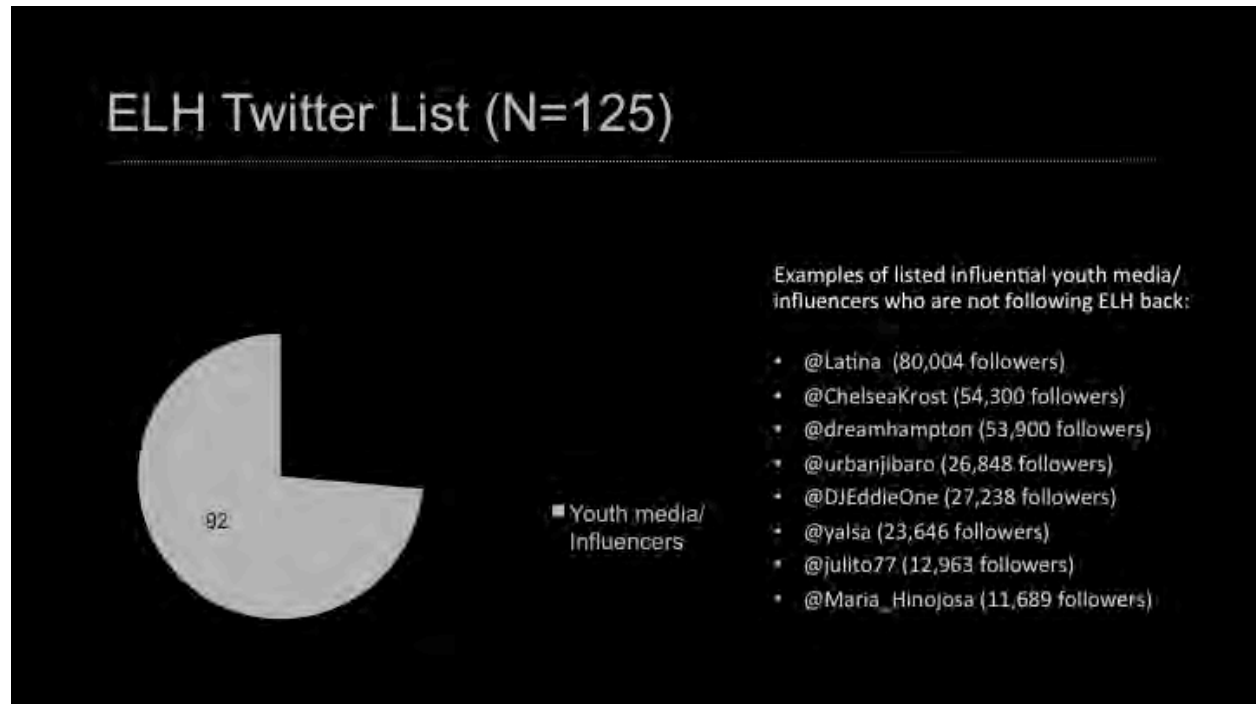
ELH Twitter List (N=125)



■ Advisors

Examples of listed influential advisors who are not following ELH back:

- @PPact (104,000 followers)
- @getschooled (46100 followers)
- @WahtToExpect (25,000 followers)
- @BedSider (20,300 followers)
- @loveisrespect (14,900 followers)
- @NDVH (12,200 followers)



Conclusions: Network analyses and visualizations rendered an onion-like layered structure in the ELH hashtag network. For ELH to build a better Twitter community, we provide recommendations based on Smith, Rainie, Shneiderman, and Himelboim’s (2014) Pew Report: (1) ELH maintains the enthusiastic hub of core members but also mindfully engages the fans to join their conversations; (2) ELH activates the salient latent ties and encourage their listed advisors and connected media organizations (especially those with high number of followers) to follow back and help promote the show; and (3) ELH converts the isolated followers from passive lurkers to active participants in discussions about the show, the cast, and the social and health issues.

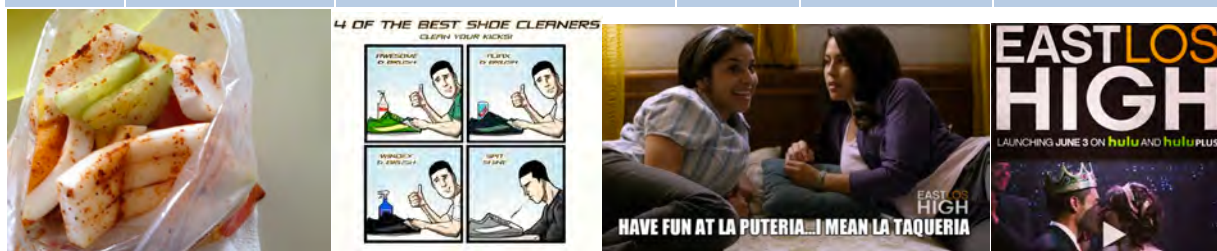


Figure 13. ELH Researchers Presenting at the Social Media & Society International Conference in Canada

ELH on Instagram

There were 92 posts from May 18, 2013 to Feb 19, 2014. Of all the posts, 92.3% were still images and the others were short digital clips. Of the 85 posts of still images, 16 were the comic strips, 15 were photos with a saying, 14 were photos of the scene, 13 were ELH ad, 11 were photos of the cast, the rest include drawing, painting, food, street art, etc. All of the posts were “liked” and the number of likes ranged from 29 to 310 with an average of 100. 80 out of the 92 posts (about 87%) had comments, which ranged from 1 to 96 with an average of 6.3 comments per post for the ones that had comments. In general, the photos of the cast and the scenes were very popular. Below is a list of the most popular posts:

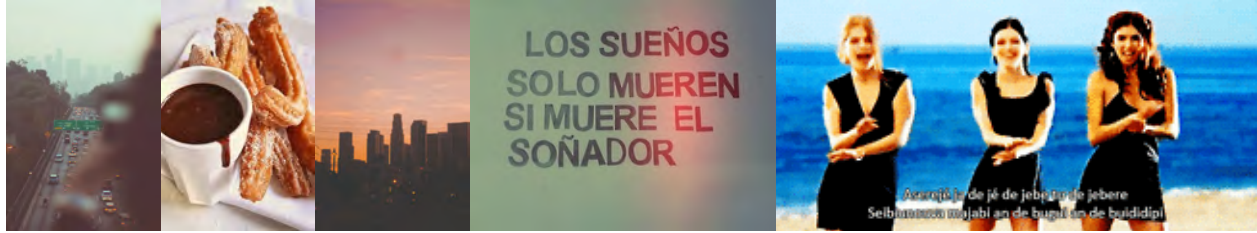
ID	Type	Content	Likes	Comments	Date
I003	Still Image	ELH ad	310	76	11/9/13
I009	Still Image	Photo of cast	210	4	8/27/13
I010	Still Image	Photo of cast member	209	4	8/24/13
I011	Still Image	ELH ad	169	13	8/23/13
I032	Still Image	Pic Stitch	212	2	7/18/13
I001	Still Image	Photo of cast member	155	12	2/19/14
I073	Still Image	Photo (with saying)	142	16	6/10/13



ELH on Tumblr

There were 348 posts from May 15, 2013 to Nov 22, 2013. 92% of them were still images about food and drinks, LA, street art, etc. and there were also 15 GIFs, 7 Youtube videos, and 6 other type of digital videos. 94% received notes, which ranged from 1 to 535,421. 18% received more than 100 notes. 6% received over 1000 notes. Below is a list of the most popular posts:

ID	Media Type	Content Type	Number of Notes	Date
T044	Still Image	Photo	535,421	8/29/13
T041	Still Image	LA Photo	287,489	8/29/13
T095	Still Image	Food	113,640	8/10/13
T230	Still Image	LA Photo	56,663	6/26/13
T011	Still Image	Spanish quote	39,861	11/18/13
T185	GIF	Cast members	36,320	7/11/13
T190	Still Image	Pic Stitch	27,138	7/11/13



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ANALYTICS TRACKING

by

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NGO Partners (Widget) Tracking

• Stayteen.org

- On June 3, 2013, there was a notable spike in traffic with almost **4,000 visits in one day**, more than double the traffic on a typical day; about half of those visits were from direct traffic (atypical), which indicates the something was compelling users to type in the URL
- From June 3 to July 3, 2013, Stayteen got about **566,000 visits**, about 11% higher than a comparable time period. There was a 53% increase in direct traffic and 50 referrals from the ELH website.

Updated on November 22, 2013 by Alexandra Gonzalez and Marisa Nightingale

NGO Partners (Widget) Tracking

• Planned Parenthood

- From June 1 to July 12, 2013, they had **26,414 visits** from the ELH website, which made up 22.34% of total widget visits.
- From mid-July to the end of October, 2013, they had **30,868 total widget visits** from the ELH website, of those 51.69% were new visits; and **4,795 visits** directed from the ELH website to the Planned Parenthood website, of those 71.91% were new visits

Updated on November 4, 2013 by Jennifer Johnsen

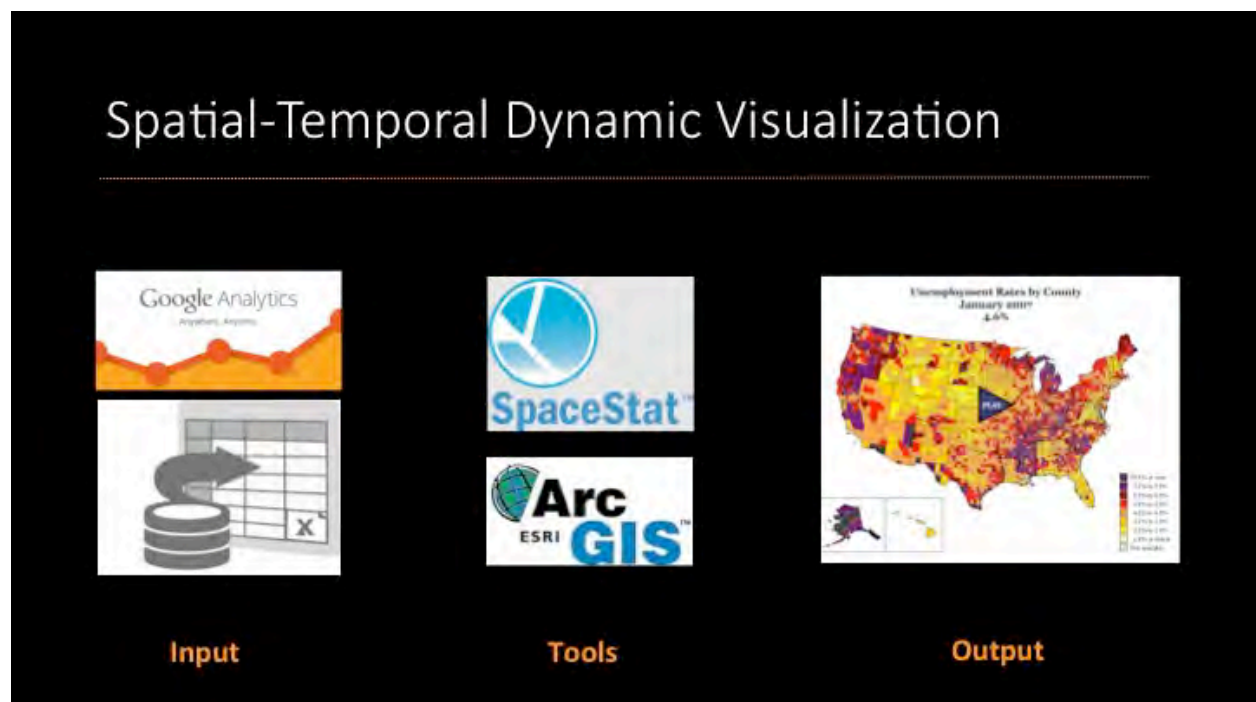
Local Stories, National Concerns and Global Reach: *East Los High* for Safe Sex Promotion and Teen Pregnancy Prevention

Presented at the American Public Health Association Annual Meeting Session on Innovative Programs in Sexual and Reproductive Health, in New Orleans, LA, in November 2014

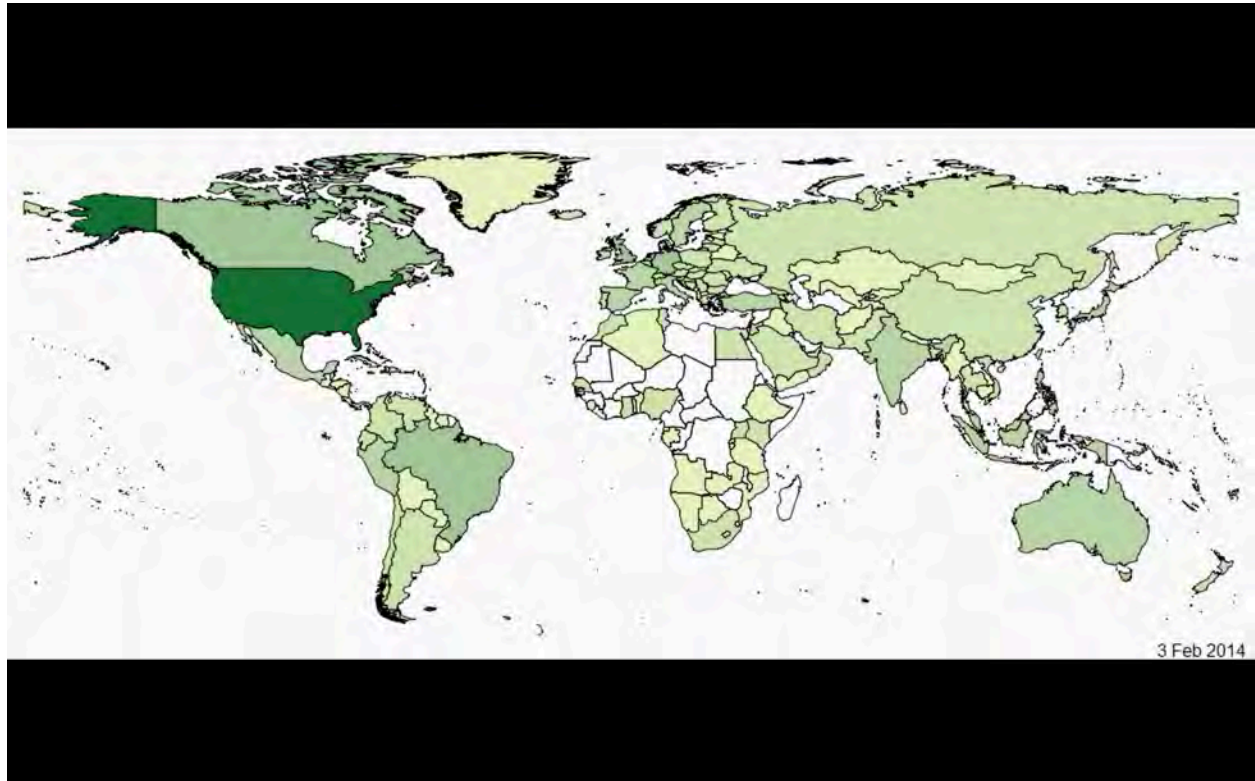
Background: *East Los High* is an entertainment-education health program designed to promote safe sex and teen pregnancy prevention, especially among Latino youth in the United States. It was released in June 2013 as an online teen drama at a fictional high school in East Los Angeles, where residents are predominantly Latinos facing economic, social, and health challenges. Additional transmedia contents and resources were provided to help achieve social objectives. It has innovative features in intervention design, dissemination, and assessment.

Objectives: To evaluate the scale of audience reach through digital technologies and to demonstrate the geographic distribution of the visitors to the program's website.

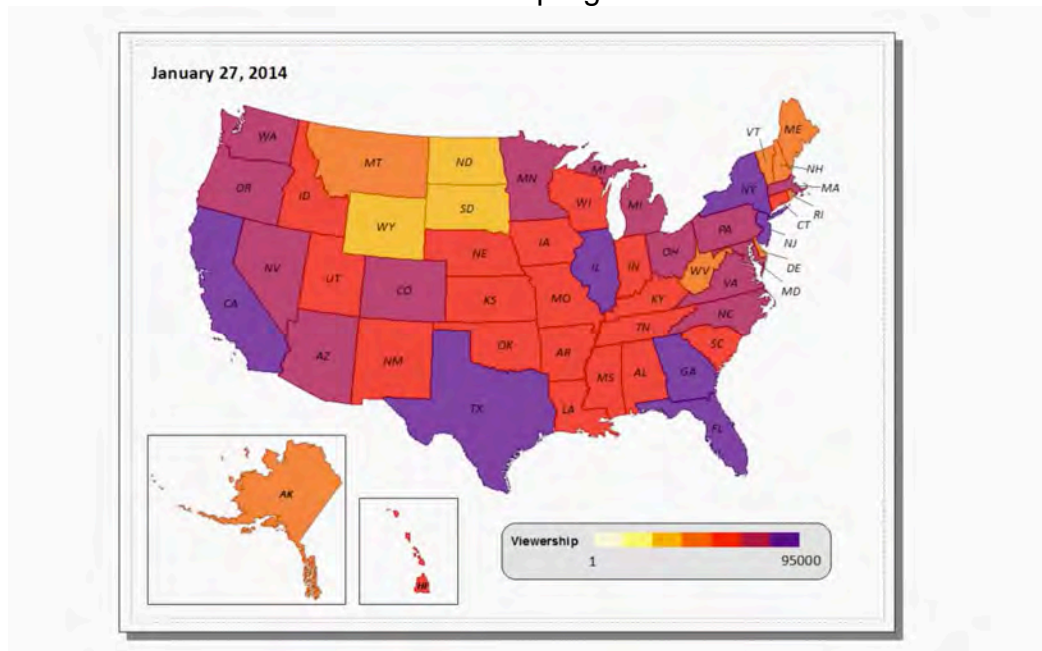
Methods: Google Analytics was used to track the number of visitors to the program's website, pageviews, duration, device, and location at country, state, and city levels. For each level, we exported the raw data from Google Analytics as separate files on a weekly basis then reformatted them to be compatible with the GIS software SpaceStat and ArcGIS. In GIS, a shapefile is the digital representation of the geographic boundaries. We used the shapefile from the UN for the global level visualization, the shapefile from the US Census for the national level visualization, and geographic coordinates of all the populated places in CA for the city-level visualization. We joined the attribute data from Google Analytics (the number of visitors) with shapefiles (geographic data) using the matched names of countries, states, and cities.



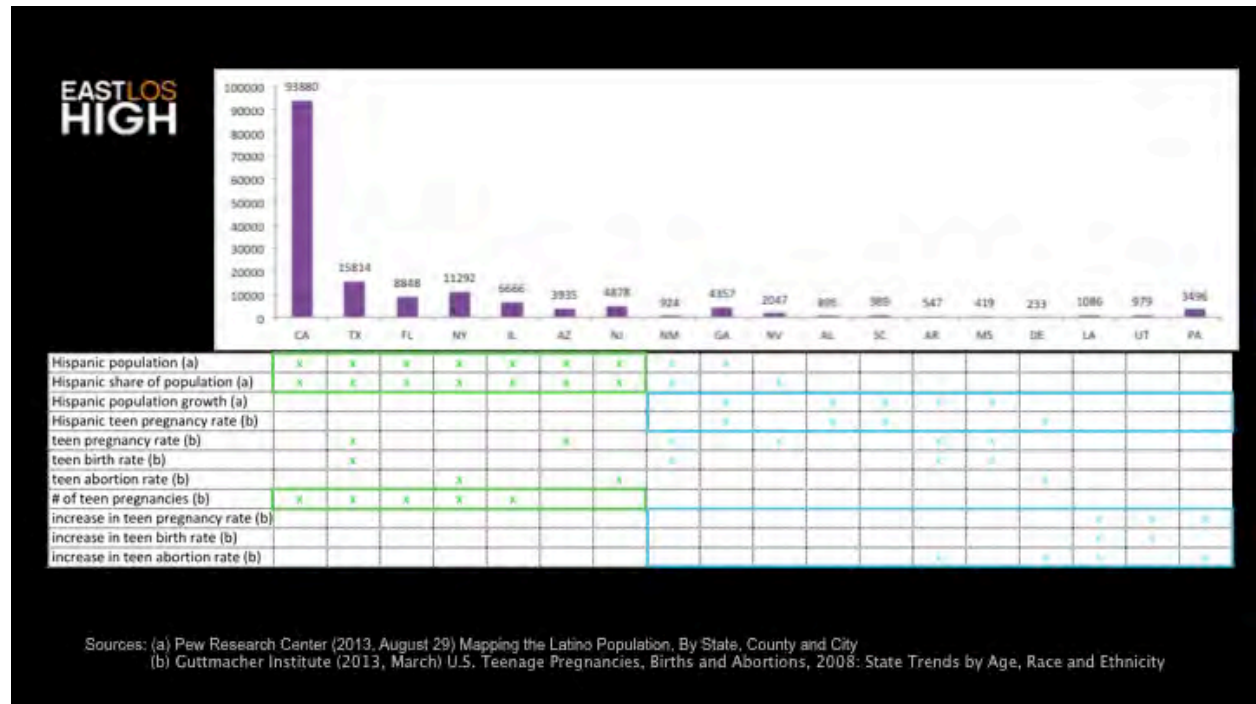
Results: In 9 months, the program's website attracted 211,502 visits from 120,562 unique visitors, with 850,045 pageviews and an average duration of 9:21. [A spatial-temporal dynamic visualization](#) was created to show the diffusion of ELH from the US to another 163 countries overtime.



[A spatial-temporal dynamic visualization](#) was created to show that people from all 50 US states and the District of Columbia visited the program's website.

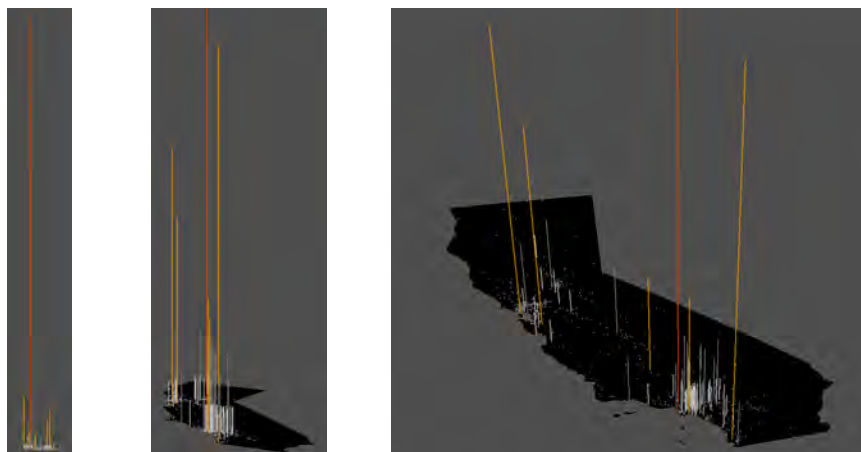


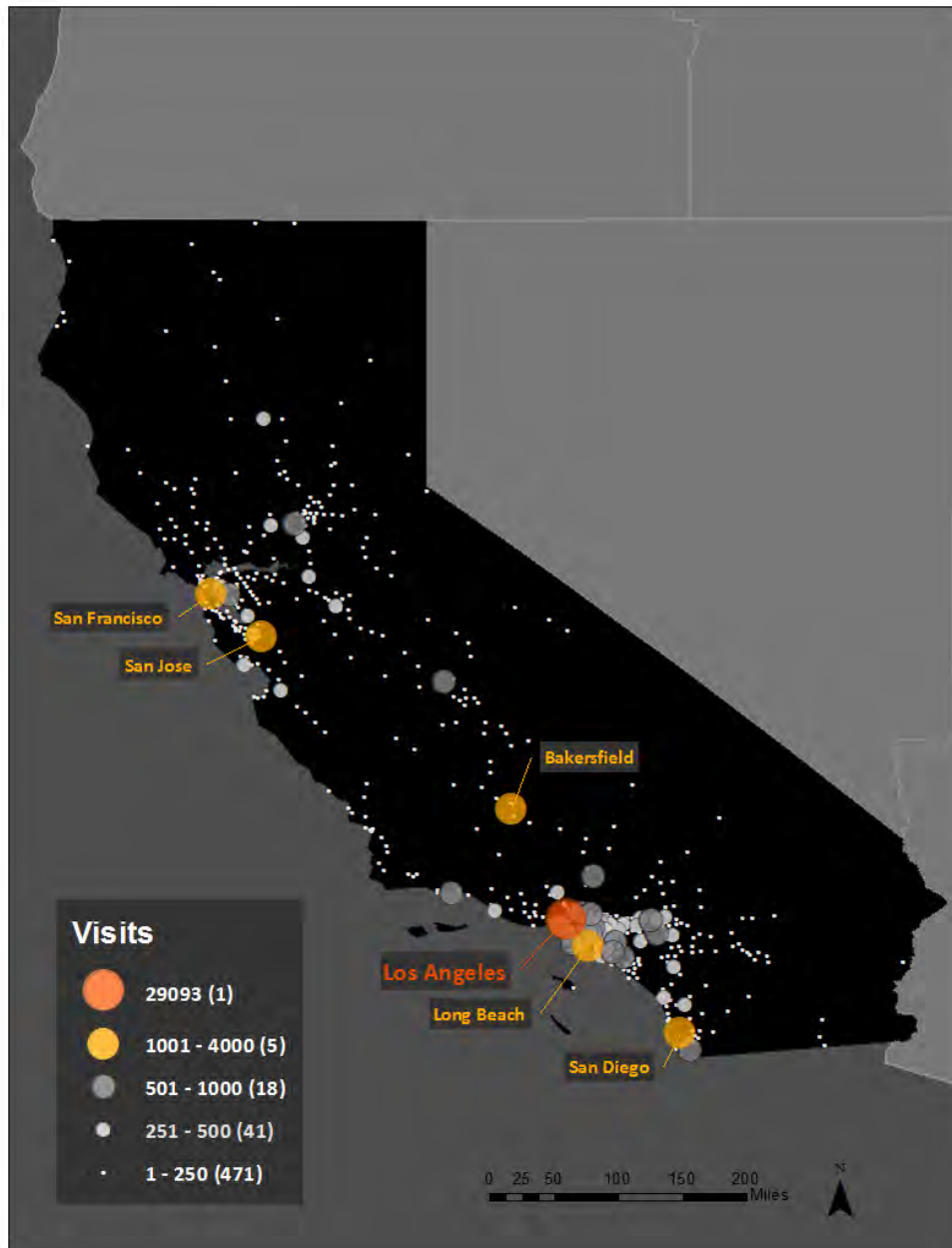
According to the most recent reports by Guttmacher Institute (2013) and Pew Research Center (2013), high proportions of visitors to ELH website were located in the states (CA, TX, FL, NY, IL, AZ, and NJ) with the highest Hispanic/Latino population, the highest Hispanic/Latino share of the population, and the highest teen pregnancy rate.



However, there was still room to reach out to other important states (NM, GA, NV, AL, SC, AR, MS, DE, LA, UT, and PA) which have the highest Hispanic/Latino population growth, the highest Hispanic/Latino teen pregnancy rate, the highest increase in teen pregnancy/teen birth/teen abortion rates.

In addition, even though California attracted the heaviest web traffic among visitors, their geographic locations were also clustered around bigger cities as shown in the 2D and 3D visualizations below.





Conclusions: Entertainment media coupled with digital technologies can effectively deliver social and health messages and engage large scales of audience over time. Entertainment-education health programs like *East Los High* hold great potential to address sexual and reproductive health issues among youth and minority groups.

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QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

by

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Audience Interpretations of *East Los High*, a Transmedia Entertainment-Education Initiative for Latino Teenage Pregnancy Prevention

Manuscript in preparation (December 31, 2014)



Abstract

The *East Los High* (*ELH*) intervention was designed to transform traditional sex education practices, especially among the Latino population in the U.S.¹ A 24-episode teen drama with nine additional digital platforms for extended video and textual content, this Entertainment-Education (E-E) transmedia web-series was organized around social objectives to increase knowledge and strengthen decision-making for improved sexual and reproductive health outcomes, specifically among young adult Latino/as – who have the nation's highest rates of teen pregnancy. A pioneering E-E production, *ELH*'s unique characteristics include: (1) first English-language show with an all-Latino cast to address issues within the Latino community; (2) content produced through a modern adaptation of the Sabido methodology for E-E incorporating theories for narrative persuasion and behavioral change, developing realistic characters and dialogues by incorporating findings of extensive formative evaluation; (3) first transmedia program purposefully designed for health promotion and social justice; (4) *ELH* initiative is empowered by the partnerships between commercial entities, NGOs, and research experts. Qualitative survey data from audience members of *ELH* Season 1 indicates strong character identification and efficacy, and that the E-E intervention, in the words of its audience members, met its stated social objectives.

Audience Interpretations of *East Los High*, a Transmedia Entertainment-Education Initiative for Latino Teenage Pregnancy Prevention

“The show really brought to light the subject of teenage sex and pregnancy.... because they didn't glorify it, they brought up the real struggles and life altering effects it could have.”

An audience member of *ELH*

“East Los High changed my life a lot because it was so realistic and it showed how it can happen to anyone. I learned a lot of things that my sex-ed class didn't talk to us about such as abortion and other options. It taught me that I have choices and responsibilities. I know now because of East Los High that I need to follow my dreams and... change my whole life.”

An audience member of *ELH*

By 2020, one-quarter of all teens in the U.S. will be Latino. Young Latinas disproportionately experience pregnancy (Kost & Henshaw, 2012): 4 in 10 become pregnant, twice the national average; of these, 86% of births occur to unwed mothers and 65% to high school seniors, leading to high rates of school dropouts (National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unwanted Pregnancy, 2013). Additionally, sexually transmitted infection (STI) rates for Latino/a adolescents are approximately two times higher than white non-Latino Americans (CDC, 2011).

Many interventions address problems related to youth sexuality (Sachdev, 2014), ranging from school-based sex education programs to more community-based skill building programs that help form negotiation skills (Kohler, Manhart & Lafferty, 2008) and risk reduction programs promoting contraception use (Chin et al., 2012). Several such interventions employ the use of mass media, which makes sense given Hispanics are 40% more likely than the general population to watch television or video online (or on a smartphone). Hispanic youth are three times more likely to check and be influenced by what programs their friends are watching, via social media networks (Razzetti, 2012). Yet many mass media campaigns lack compelling stories and rely on “telling” [facts, desired behaviors – “you should”] rather than “showing” [engaging narratives that create new worlds].

Cue *East Los High* (ELH), an E-E webseries with transmedia elements created by Latinos for Latinos, one of the most popular shows on the prominent web channel Hulu during the summer of 2013. *Transmedia storytelling* is a new communication strategy for engaging a diverse audience through a narrative experience across multiple media platforms (Jenkins, 2006; Singhal, Wang, & Rogers, 2013), with a mindset centered on experimentation, co-creation, and collective action (Singhal, Wang, &

Rogers, 2013). Compared to single medium campaigns, transmedia storytelling is open-ended, exploratory, non-linear, and fun; the multi-platform storytelling format offers audience different points of entry and ongoing engagement.

ELH Season 1 (S1) was a 24-episode teen drama broadcast online as a Hulu exclusive with another nine digital transmedia platforms to roll out extended content including a high school newspaper, a character's Vlogs, dance tutorials, and comic strips. The story is set in a fictional high school in East Los Angeles where various characters face complex challenges and struggle with difficult decisions (e.g., trust and betrayal, health and abuse, life and death).

Harnessing the power vested in fast-paced narratives, ELH weaves a multitude of youthful encounters, struggles, and resolutions to impact viewers' understandings about sexual and reproductive health, practice of safe sex, and prevention of unplanned/unwanted teen pregnancy. Narratives such as ELH work on the principle of social learning and social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986, 2009), i.e. viewers learn by modeling and observing. In ELH, complex social problems, such as safe sex, family planning, and violence against women were portrayed in an engaging form to arouse emotions and evoke interpersonal dialogue (Sachdev, 2014).

ELH has many attributes of note:

1. It is the first English-language show that used an all-Latino cast to address issues of salience to the Latino community (Castro, 2013).
2. Its content production processes suitably adapted the Sabido E-E methodology of producing television and radio drama serials to new digital platforms grounded in theories for narrative persuasion and behavioral change (Singhal & Rogers, 1999; Singhal, Cody, Rogers, & Sabido, 2004). Creative writers incorporated findings of extensive formative research with local teens, including innovative approaches such as Positive Deviance, to develop realistic characters, situations, and dialogues.
3. ELH is the first transmedia program purposefully designed for health promotion and social justice.
4. ELH engendered unique partnerships between commercial entities, NGOs, and research experts.

So ELH is highly worthy of study, with many valuable research questions. Here, we begin with a literature review of E-E, narrative engagement and persuasion, and Latino demographics specifically related to sexual and reproductive health. Then this paper analyzes the rich narratives of 200-plus ELH viewers who responded to a Viewer Surveyⁱⁱ, specifically distilling the insights from the three open-ended questions that were posed: (1) the most appealing narrative elements of ELH, (2) the relevance of dramatic storylines and main characters to personal life experiences, and (3) concrete changes ELH spurred and sparked among its audience. Method of data collection and coding schemata of qualitative data are explained, findings reported, and implications raised for the use of transmediated narratives for influencing behavior change.

Entertainment-Education Strategy with Transmedia: the Power of Stories in Mass Media

“Entertainment-education” is a purposive communication strategy to address social problems using popular genres in radio, television, music, films, and interactive digital media (Singhal, 2013a; Singhal, Cody, Rogers, & Sabido, 2004; Singhal & Rogers, 1999; Wang & Singhal, 2009; Lacayo & Singhal, 2008). In its initial decades, *entertainment-education* (E-E) was broadly defined as “the process of purposely designing and implementing a media message both to entertain and educate, in order to increase audience members’ knowledge about educational issues, create favorable attitudes, shift social norms, and change overt behavior” (Singhal, Cody, Rogers, & Sabido, 2004, p. 5; also see Singhal & Rogers, 1999, p. 9).

With the exponential growth in the development and popularity of digital interactive entertainment, Wang and Singhal (2009) proposed a reformulation of the definition “Entertainment-education is a theory-based communication strategy for purposefully embedding educational and social issues in the creation, production, processing, and dissemination process of an entertainment program, in order to achieve desired individual, community, institutional, and societal changes among the intended media user populations” (pp. 272-273).

In television, E-E was discovered more-or-less by accident in Peru in 1969, when the television soap opera *Simplemente María* (Simply Maria) was broadcast (Singhal, Obregon, & Rogers, 1994). The main character, a migrant named María, worked as a maid, enrolled in adult literacy classes, and climbed the socioeconomic ladder of success through her hard work, and stupendous sewing skills with a Singer sewing machine. *Simplemente María* attracted record audience ratings, and the sale of Singer sewing machines boomed in Peru. So did the number of young girls enrolling in adult literacy and sewing classes; audience identification with María was strong, especially among poor, working-class women.

Inspired by the audience success and the unintentional educational effects of *Simplemente María*, the E-E strategy was systematized and codified for use in long-running serial dramas. Instrumental in this codification was the pioneering work of Miguel Sabido, a television writer-producer-director in Mexico, who developed and broadcast a series of long-running E-E soap operas for social change: to motivate enrollment in adult literacy classes, encourage the adoption of family planning, and promote gender equality. Underpinning Sabido’s methodology was Social Cognitive Theory – positing and observing that people can learn vicariously by observing media role models (Bandura, 2002) - the most commonly applied theoretical tool for understanding E-E audience effects (Bandura, 1986, 2004; Singhal & Rogers, 1999, Sood et al., 2004). As such, television models can transmit “knowledge, values, cognitive skills, and new styles of behavior” to viewers (Bandura, 2004, p. 78).

The Sabido production method snowballed globally, especially since the mid-1980s (Singhal, Wang, & Rogers, 2013). In the past three decades, the E-E strategy has spread to thousands of global projects, spurred by the efforts of dozens of global and local organizations. However, transmedia adaptation of the Sabido E-E method occurred very recently – with ELH.

Transmedia, or *cross-media*, *storytelling* is a strategically designed process where elements of a narrative are strategically designed and implemented across different communication platforms to create a coherent entertainment experience (Davidson et al., 2010; Jenkins, 2007; Singhal, Wang, & Rogers, 2013). Each communication platform carries the story independently but the interwoven tapestry makes a richer whole, deepening the audience members' relationship with the characters, the plotlines, and the issues. Transmedia storytelling would not have been possible without digitization, miniaturization, and convergence of media technologies and participatory audience culture (Jenkins, 2006).

A notable distinguishing feature of E-E programs compared to most purely entertainment programming is its unflinching attention to formative and summative research. Research evidence suggests that audiences, in general, find E-E to be highly engaging, and E-E campaigns to be effective for raising awareness and knowledge, changing individual attitudes and behaviors, and creating conditions to change social and cultural norms (Singhal, Cody, Rogers, & Sabido, 2004; Singhal & Rogers, 1999; Singhal, Wang, & Rogers, 2013). A number of researchers are developing and testing E-E interventions specifically for sexual and reproductive health outcomes, primarily in an experimental environment (Moyer-Guse & Nabi, 2011); ELH as applied intervention and research is unprecedented!

Narrative Engagement and Persuasion: Stories can change lives

An audience member experiences many simultaneous cognitive and affective processes while watching an E-E narrative. A viewer can identify with a specific character (identification) and feel transported into the narrative while losing sense of the reality (transportation). These processes highlight different components of audience engagement (Sachdev 2014).

Identification and Transportation

During identification, a viewer imagines "being that character and replaces his or her personal identity and role as audience member with the identity and role of the character"

(Cohen, 2001, p. 251). This process involves four dimensions: empathic (shared feelings with the character); cognitive (sharing the character's perspective); motivational (internalizing the character's goals); and absorption (the loss of self-awareness during exposure) (Cohen, 2001).

A good deal of empirical evidence points to the function of identification for an audience member to be influenced by the narrative (Moyer-Gusé, 2011).

A concrete aspect of character identification comes in the form of audience members taking cues from dialogues modeled by the characters. Moyer-Guse, Chung, & Jain (2011) found that "some combination of modeling a social script for these conversations [about sex and sexual health] as well as providing a context in which to bring up the topic" are both important (p. 401).

Transportation, the most commonly used metric for narrative involvement, is

defined as “a convergent process, where all mental systems and capacities become focused on events occurring in the narrative” (Green & Brock, 2000, p. 701). This premise also differentiates E-E from messages that are overtly persuasive (Green, Brock, & Kaufman, 2004). Findings from two experimental studies indicate that intensity of emotional response to a narrative is not affected whether the story is labeled as fact versus fiction (Green, Chatham & Sestir, 2004).

Transportation and identification often co-occur: the viewer experiences events as the character, temporarily losing his or her own perspective and. “Wishful identification” moderates the range, with the viewer simultaneously aware of his or her own perspective (an awareness of his or her own desire to be like the character) while also imagining him or herself as the character in a wishful way (Moyer- Gusé 2008). The cooccurrence is not always the case. Given that entertainment narratives are designed to be engaging, a viewer may feel highly transported into a narrative although they do not specifically identify with a particular character (Slater & Rouner, 2002).

East Los High: Entertainment-Education Transmedia Storytelling

East Los High (ELH) was a thoughtfully designed EE transmedia storytelling project, consisting of a 24-episode Internet web series targeted at Latino/a youth. Scripted by Latino/a writers, ELH was shot in East Los Angeles. Its director, Carlos Portugal, wished to show Latino characters in roles beyond the stereotypical “gardener, maid, and gang member” (Caceres, 2013). ELH S1 aired June-July 2013 and Season 2 during the summer of 2014 on Hulu, a web-based platform available in the U.S. that offers advertiser-supported, on-demand streaming video of popular television shows, movies, trailers, and behind-the-scenes footage.

ELH’s purpose is to inform, educate, motivate and inspire positive behavioral changes among Latino and Latina youth around reproductive health, sexuality, and life decisions. Over three years in development but shot in a record 67 days, ELH was the brainchild of Katie Elmore Mota (now with Wise Entertainment), who served as the show’s executive producer and forged a unique collaboration between Population Media Center (the Vermont-based international non-profit that excels in E-E); The Alchemists Transmedia Storytelling Company in Hollywood; and various other national, state, and city-based partners including Legacy LA, Advocates for Youth, National Latina Initiative, Girls, Inc., National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health, Planned Parenthood Federation of America, National Campaign to Prevent Teen & Unplanned Pregnancy, and California Latinas for Reproductive Justice.

ELH S1 was one of the most watched Hulu programs (see Castro, 2013). In-depth analysis of the audience chatter on its social media sites suggests that ELH audience members love the characters, identify with their dilemmas and portrayed circumstances, and involved viewers are consuming the rich tapestry of transmedia extensions, each building on the other (Wang, et al, 2014).

ELH is a love triangle between teenage cousins, Jessie, a 16-year-old virgin, and Maya, a troubled runaway who is Jessie’s cousin, and Jacob, a popular football player. The setting is East Los High School in East Los Angeles. The various

characters face complex and intriguing challenges, struggle with difficult decisions, and undertake different kinds of actions with different consequences. Ceci and Jessie each become pregnant without planning to have a baby; Ceci explores options and decides to give birth, while Jessie opts for an abortion in spite of cultural and religious barriers. Vanessa is sexy and she knows it, but the sex isn't always safe and contracts HIV. Jacob's best friend, Paulie always uses a condom, and his girlfriend, Soli keeps him at bay as she maintains her membership in the Virgin's Club. See Table 1 for a description of key characters of ELH, the primary protagonist relationships, and their key decisions.

Table 1: Characters of *East Los High – Season 1*

Character	Actor/Actress	Character Description
Jacob Aguilar, central male character	Gabriel Chavarría	Jacob is the only child to his single father, and the two run a family Taqueria (restaurant) business. He is an extremely good-looking popular senior and star of the football team. Jacob initiates a romantic relationship with Jessie and respects her desire not to have sex. Yet he soon falls in love with Maya. Ready to break up with Jessie to pursue Maya, Jacob learns that Jessie is pregnant – with his baby. Bewildered because he used protection during sex, he is met with expectations from his father and Jessie's mother. He turns down a full-ride college scholarship to marry Jessie and take care of the family business and his fiancé and child. When Jessie reveals having had sex with Cristian, he immediately calls off the wedding and searches for Maya, his true love.
Jessie Martinez, central female character	Janine Larina	A nerdy junior in high school, Jessie is the only daughter to her single mother. Compassionate, aspiring, and studious, Jessie is an involved student who cares for her mother, ill with breast cancer. A member of the Virgin Club with best friend Soli, she enjoys a sweet relationship with Jacob, until being seduced by Cristian - losing her virginity along with her boyfriend. She becomes pregnant and is caught in a web of family expectations and religious tradition. Uncertain about the pregnancy and devastated by her mother's death, Jessie clings to Jacob and forges ahead with a wedding, while kicking Maya out of the house. At the last moment, she admits the baby may not be Jacob's, and she ultimately decides to abort.
Maya Martinez	Alicia Marie Sixtos	Maya travels hundreds of miles to LA and moves in with her cousin Jessie to escape a broken home and the man who raped her. Desperate and hungry, she steals a meal from Jacob's Taqueria, only to be confronted by Jacob's father and given a second chance – a job offer. Maya falls in love with Jacob tentatively while working together, as her healthy Mexican recipes revitalize the business and Jacob promises to break up with Jessie. Everything changes with Jessie's pregnancy, and Maya's safety and sense of security in LA is threatened when the aggressor tracks her down, Jessie kicks her out, and Jacob finds her working at a strip club. While Jacob prepares to marry, Maya is reunited with her estranged mother and survives a violent encounter with the aggressor. She and Jacob finally reconcile when Jacob calls off the wedding and seeks her out.
Vanessa De La Cruz	Tracy Perez	Vanessa is a dance diva and senior captain of the school's hip hop group, Bomb Squad. Popular, gorgeous, and flirtatious, she's the perfect girlfriend for Jacob - until she cheats, and Jacob falls for Jessie. She plots revenge, conspiring for Cristian to "de-virginize" Jessie. Unprotected sexual intercourse with Freddie leads to contraction of HIV at the end of the first season.
Freddie Garcia	David Warshol	Freddie hosts the dance competition TV show "Dance 5" and accepts Vanessa's offer for sex in exchange for granting Bomb Squad's audition for Dance 5. He refuses to wear a condom and later refuses to be tested when Vanessa notifies him that she is HIV positive.
Ceci Camayo	Danielle Vega	Also a senior co-captain of Bomb Squad, Ceci is Vanessa's best friend and best enemy. Ceci and steady older boyfriend Abe enjoy unprotected sex leading to unplanned pregnancy, during which she explores options from abortion to adoption to motherhood. She brings the pregnancy to term and chooses to parent, experiencing the consequences of dropping out of school, moving into a shelter for pregnant teens, and losing her boyfriend, and working as a nanny.
Abraham (Abe)	Jessie Garcia	Ceci's boyfriend. Older than high school age, he leaves Ceci a couple months into her pregnancy.
Cristian Camacho	Hector David	Cristian is an opportunistic dancer who is sexy and knows it, and he's a casual sex partner with Vanessa. To advance his dance career, he goes along with her plot to seduce Jessie and insists on

	Jr.	unprotected sex while doing so. He denies any responsibility for Jessie’s pregnancy.
Paulie Hernandez	Jorge Diaz	Paulie is a high school senior and Jacob’s best friend. A self-proclaimed sex addict, Paulie is a likeable quirky class clown. Joining the school newspaper on a whim, he develops his own “Ask Paulie” segment to answer real questions about sex with humor. His experiences with STI inform his show and conversations with friends, including Jacob. He gradually falls in love with his boss, Soli, and grows to appreciate open communication about sexual and reproductive health behaviors.
Soli Gomez	Noemí González	Soli is a junior in high school and Jessie’s best friend. A spirited, confident individual, she’s the editor and journalist for the school newsletter - and a member of the Virgin’s Club. Soli hesitatingly allows Paulie to join the school newspaper, and the two work together to produce “Ask Paulie”. Soli defends Jessie at multiple points and proves to be a trusted resource and advocate for sexual and reproductive health – from information about emergency contraception access to a story about her a cousin who belongs to a Catholic pro-choice organization. She slowly falls for Paulie and communicates assertively about her commitment to safe, protected sex – to avoid STIs and pregnancy so she can graduate and study journalism in college. When they do have sex for the first time – which is after Soli has been on the pill for some time - she and Paulie each reach for condoms at the same time.
(Tia) Paulina	Catalina Rodriguez	Paulina is the younger sister of Jessie’s mother – and thus aunt to both Jessie and Maya. A graduate of East Los High, Paulina completed college and is enjoying career success in the fashion industry. She returns to East LA to help when her sister is diagnosed with breast cancer. During her stay, Paulina spends a lot of time with Maya and Jessie, including multiple conversations about sex – because she didn’t have anyone to talk with in high school, and both of her sisters got pregnant before age 16. Paulina leads Maya to the clinic for testing when Maya reveals that she was raped, and in the dramatic wedding scene, she informs Jessie of her abortion in high school. Paulina delivers an inspirational commencement address to mark the end of Season 1.

Sources: *East Los High* website (eastloshigh.com) and imdb.com. Format is sourced from Singhal & Rogers (1999, Page 30); adapted from Sachdev (2014).

ELH is rewriting what is programmatically possible in the EE mediascape in the 21st century. As a media package, it brings together the social and the commercial, the public and the private, and the digital and the real. Simply put, *ELH* breaks new ground in its strategic conception of E-E and transmedia storytelling, both in terms of width and depth. It meets audience members on different platforms in their space (real and virtual) and on their time. It connects wholesome, research based entertainment-education fare with ground-based service delivery, building a social movement where ideas, interests, and aspirations converge.

The Stories of Change: Measuring Impacts of ELH

ELH was developed with a set of carefully-thought out social objectives (Table 2) and monitoring and evaluation of the intervention, from day one, was a priority.

Table 2. Social Objectives of *East Los High*

Major Theme 1: Birth Control and Family Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increase consistent use of condoms and contraceptives - Prevent unplanned/unwanted pregnancies - (Increase) knowledge of emergency contraception - (Improve) partner communication about birth control, reproductive health, and sexual activity - (Depict, educate about) dealing with an early pregnancy: prenatal care, the couple, and psychological aspects of the pregnancy
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Major Theme 2: Safe Sex	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increase consistent use of condoms and contraceptives - Encourage safe sex for pregnancy prevention <u>and</u> prevention of HIV/AIDS and STI transmission - Prevent HIV in teen population by promoting testing and use of condoms - Increase knowledge about testing and treatment of HIV - Prevent other STIs by encouraging teens to go to clinics to get tested
Major Theme 3: Abortion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Normalize abortion as an option - Increase support for teens making decisions about abortion and pregnancy
minor theme 1: importance of Advocacy on Sexual and Reproductive Health Issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - (Depict, amplify) sexual and reproductive health issues and why they are important - (Increase) knowledge of organizations working on sexual and reproductive health advocacy issues embedded within ELH narrative and transmedia - (Promote) ways to become an advocate and support sexual and reproductive health initiatives
minor theme 2: violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Decrease sexual and domestic violence
minor theme 3: education / goals and gender equity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Encourage teens to pursue their dreams and/or stay engaged in school - Encourage teens to create goals/dreams to prepare for the future

Source: PMC RFP

ELH S1 evaluation included a three-prong approach: (1) web-based viewer survey of highly engaged audience members, (2) an investigation of the social media participation of ELH consumers, and (3) an experimental research design to look at the differential impacts of the ELH intervention, varying in narrative intensity and transmediated elements. This article draws upon the data collected from the open-ended items on the web-based viewer survey of highly engaged audience members, and is centered around answering three research questions.

RQ1: *What narrative elements are most appealing to the ELH audience?*

RQ2: *How would ELH audience relate the dramatic storylines and main characters in the show to their personal life experiences?*

RQ3: *What changes, personally and socially, did ELH initiate among its audience?*

METHOD

Participants

Participants of this study were ELH viewers who volunteered to participate in an online survey embedded on the show’s website. A total of 444 people accessed the survey link: 139 did not answer any questions, 103 answered only a few questions, 17 answered most questions, and 185 answered all the questions. The response rate was 68.7% and the completion rate was 60.7%.

Our final sample included 202 ELH viewers who had watched at least 20 out of the 24 episodes of the webnovela and who completed all or a substantial portion of the questionnaire. Within the final sample, there were 110 Hispanic/Latino female 23 years old or younger, who are the primary target of the show. Overall, these participants are young, predominantly female, of Hispanic/Latino origin (especially Mexican), from poor families, currently attending high school or college, and almost all of them have personal connections to teen pregnancy. See details in the section Viewer Survey in this report.

Procedure

A hyperlink to an online survey was embedded on the ELH website and subsequently promoted on its social media pages to encourage viewers to provide feedback on the show. The survey was activated on August 15, 2013 and closed on September 24, 2013. The survey included questions about viewer's ELH narrative experiences, discussions on social media and elsewhere, and specific outcomes related to the show's social objectives. This study focused on the following open-ended questions: "What are your most memorable scenes or specific lines from the characters in the show? How did the stories in East Los High reflect your own experience? And has it changed your life in any way?"

Coding Schemes

A well-practiced approach to qualitative data analysis was utilized, through careful inductive and descriptive conceptualization, coding, and categorizing (Miles and Huberman, 1994). Analysis began with the first 100 responses, which were grouped according to each Research Question. It became readily apparent that favorite lines/scenes, relevance to life, and impact on personal life related directly to the Major and minor themes underpinning the entire creation of the ELH narrative. The matrix method (Miles and Huberman, 1994) facilitated coding the data into these discrete yet interrelated themes (also called "social objectives"; see Figure 2). Many responses to survey items centered around two additional distinct yet related categories: Latino/a culture, and the overall significance of the show. Further examination revealed many specific mentions of characters – both narrative arcs and interpersonal relationships and decision-making. With these four primary categories established (Major/minor themes; Latino/a culture; overall significance; and character identification), the remaining responses were coded. Nuances – including salience of character interpersonal relationships and two distinct types of impact on life - emerged within each RQ, which are detailed in the Results section.

RESULTS

Here we organize the results around the three research questions that were asked previously.

Narrative Appeal of ELH

RQ1 asked: *What kind of narrative elements are most appealing to the ELH audience?*ⁱⁱⁱ

Audience members resoundingly reported the appeal of characters who enacted sexual and reproductive health decision-making -- and who lived with the consequences -- in social and familial contexts. Indeed, these responses thoroughly illustrated all of ELH’s Major and minor themes (social objectives). Among the Major themes, the greatest prevalence of responses were for lines and scenes about birth control and family planning (M1), followed by safe sex (M2), and finally abortion (M3). Furthermore, these characters are complex: as individuals and in relationships, they face many real-life situations (issues, opportunities and challenges at/with: school, work, sex, health, parents, immediate and extended family, friends, relationships) which are representative of and resonate with cultural experiences that are Latino/a. Look for the section on beloved characters. Within these character interactions, one of the most cited favorite moment was a specific line of dialogue, nearly all of which included some Spanglish and/or a distinguishable Latino/a cultural color. And, although qualitative coding does not prioritize statistical frequencies, it is notable that the most common response was “too many”/“I loved them all”.

Salient quotations appear at left, preceded by a letter allowing for reference within the descriptive text, and annotated with a number at the end, which corresponds to the specific social objective (see Figure 2). A note about results format: the quotations below represent a small fraction of all participant responses. Quotations appear in the left column, with a reference letter preceding the phrase. A bracketed number immediately following the quote indicates the Major/minor theme(s) closely associated with the participant response.

Major Social Theme #1: Birth Control and Family Planning

<p>(A) <i>“when Jacob respected Jessie’s decision of not being ready to have sex. It’s very hard to be comfortable telling someone you’re a virgin, when everyone around you is sexually active.” [1.4]</i></p> <p>(B) <i>“when Jacob is talking to Jessie in regards to having sex. Now a day it’s much harder to find guys willing to wait for the girl to be ready. It touched a special place in my heart.” [1.4]</i></p> <p>(C) <i>“when Jessie is drunk at the party. When Jacob comes, they are dancing pretty seductively and then... are making out in his car when Jessie realizes she does not want to go farther... It shows that young men are responsible sexual adults and that they have control, which people portray as part of our rape culture. People always say ‘oh he is a boy. He cannot control himself.’ This is a complete and dangerous fallacy.” [1.4]</i></p>	<p><u>Let’s Talk About Sex!</u></p> <p>In a scene with Jacob and Jessie, while making out, he makes advances toward sexual intercourse and she voices her decision to wait. This scenario occurs twice, first when the two are just getting to know one another on a “study date”, and again once they are officially dating and are hanging out at a party together. Three participant responses highlight diverse reasons why this particular scenario depicting effective partner communication about sexual activity was most appealing. For a female viewer, this favorite scene resonated with her experience of how it feels to assert her own decision to abstain from intercourse (A), while for another female, the scene evokes what it means for a male to respect her decision (B). Yet another viewer stresses the importance of amplifying social representations of men who are responsible and respectful of their partner’s desires in order to counter “rape culture” by modeling positive behaviors (C).</p>
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(D) *"I remembered how mad I was when Jessie wouldn't tell Jacob that she had unprotected sex with someone else... instead of Jacob sacrificing all the good things going for him for her when he loved Maya."*

(E) *"Jessie lied to Jacob about the pregnancy. I was at the edge of my seat and... was talking about it at school, I was so into that episode. BRILLIANT!"*

(F) *"when Jessie went up to Cristian and told him she was pregnant and he took absolutely no responsibility for his actions." [1.4]*

(G) *"when Jessie and Jacob cut their wedding off during mass. It not only shows the willingness to come out with the truth but the dignity Jessie had to allow Jacob to be free and continue his romance with Maya." [1.4]*

(H) *"when you find out what a jerk off Christian - how he treated Jessie before and after he got what he wanted from her - is important. It shows the truth that guys can sweet talk a girl and lie straight to her face just to get her to sleep with them... Girls really need to understand this and take it to heart."*

(I) *"Ceci buying the car seat herself... she figures out that she had to do things on her own, that she couldn't count on Abe to provide for her. That showed a lot of growing up and maturing on Cesi's part. It shows a teen mom as taking charge of her life and that of her future child's." [1.5]*

(J) *"when Jacob gives up everything for Jessie and the baby...a full ride to a university that he really wants to go to. He is going to get married with a girl that he doesn't really love any more. He was just an overall great character."*

(K) *"when Ceci told Vanessa that girls need to make sure they take care of themselves and not leave it up to the guy... that only you can protect your own body."*

Things Get Complicated...

Viewers keyed into multiple points along the trajectory of Jacob-Jessie-Christian conundrum, from lies to sacrifice to coming clean with the truth. Two people (D & E) identified Jessie's untruthful communication Jacob as a favorite moment, **with both viewers recalling strong emotions reactions to the scenes:** anger and total emotional engagement leading to talking about it among friends at school! Jessie's attempt to effectively communicate with Cristian about their sexual activity (F) and did not expect his blasé response stood out, as well as when she opens up honestly to Jacob, which was one viewer saw as virtuous (G). Another viewer (H) also experienced the Jessie-Cristian before/after sex transition with a strong emotional reaction to Cristian, advising girls to watch out for this scenario in real life. Indeed, responses suggest that Cristian's character is a useful narrative element for viewers to be(come) aware of - and talk about - their own experiences of pressure for sex, from "everyone is doing it" peer-pressure to coercive, manipulative behaviors like those of Cristian.

"Shit, I'm Pregnant?!" -Ceci...

...exclaims when her pregnancy test reads positive. Ceci experiences the rollercoaster of an unplanned pregnancy, and one viewer (I), appreciating Ceci's taking responsibility for the child that is to come, lauds this positive media representation of a teenage mother-to-be. Jacob also experiences quite a rollercoaster, believing he'll become a father. A number of participants chimed in with sentiments about Jacob's integrity, including deciding to forgo higher education in order to support his child and the woman bearing that child (J).

"If they just tell us this kind of stuff, then so many of us wouldn't get pregnant." -Ceci

As discussed earlier, ELH exists as a response to the disproportionate rates of unplanned/teenage pregnancy among the U.S. Latina population. **Ceci expressed the life experience of many respondents, for whom formal and informal sex education (in school, in clinics, conversations among family and friends) has been ineffective.** The effect of Ceci telling her friend-enemy-fellow-woman, Vanessa, to protecting one's own body was profound for many viewers (K). Protection is also about safe sex, which dovetails with Major Theme 2.

Major Social Theme #2: Safe Sex and Protection

Vanessa’s realizations about protected intercourse, Maya’s learning curve, and Paulie’s hard-earned safe-sexual prowess imprinted on viewers. All of these “ELH favorite moments” relate specifically to the theme of safe sex, specifically through condoms and contraceptive use for prevention of pregnancy and HIV/STI transmission as well as consistent testing.

<p>(L) “Vanessa found out she was HIV positive and how she didn’t make the guy bag it, like she did with Christian...I didn’t expect it, it’s not something that is portrayed in the media very often. Very profound & powerful.” [2.1, 2.2]</p> <p>(M) “Maya learning about condoms.” [2.1]</p> <p>(N) “when Maya was taken to the clinic by her aunt [to test for] pregnancy and any STDs. This scene made me think that there might be a family member that might help me out if I get raped or if I get pregnant.” [2.5, m1.3]</p> <p>(O) “Paulie’s line about it’s great to pee without hurting.” [2.1, 2.2]</p>	<p>REALITIES OF and REACTIONS TO HIV Multiple viewers described their favorite scene/moment of Vanessa learning of her HIV+ status. This viewer (L) quoted the show’s dialogue - “she didn’t make the guy bag it” - and commented on this plot element’s surprise and salience, especially given her observation of scant representation in media.</p> <p>Get Tested and Get Informed! The scene in which Maya realizes her ineptitude with condom use and is coached by the medical provider about how to correctly use a condom (a banana was involved), was actually an extended content video short (3”), signalling that this viewer (M) found great value among the transmedia complementing the episodic narrative. Maya’s condom experience was a much more positive clinic visit than her first; in citing Maya’s pregnancy and STD test, a viewer recognizes that challenges faced by characters could also happen to her (N), and she sees Tia Paulina as an advocate for Maya - as a family member may be for the viewer, should similar circumstances (as those of Maya) ever arise . Mentioning a favorite line/scene and immediately describing its relevance to the viewer’s life is a common pattern observed throughout the entire set of responses: even before being prompted to relate storylines and characters to personal life experiences (in Question 2), many viewers made such a connection, often describing it in detail.</p> <p>[SAFE] “Sexaholic and proud of it!” -Paulie Paulie earned admiration of many viewers, with his witty one-liners and innovative “Ask Paulie” video “column” for the school paper (see also minor theme 1). Having boasted of his ‘sexaholicism’ to Jacob, he later explains - in Paulie humor - how a previous STI received through unprotected sex enables him to use condoms without exception (O).</p>
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Major Social Theme #3: Unplanned Pregnancy and Abortion

Jessie and Ceci both experience an unplanned pregnancy; Jessie ultimately aborts, and Ceci carries the pregnancy to term, becoming a parent. Viewers distinctly remember and appreciate the fullness both character’s explorations of abortion.

<p>(P) “Ceci went to see what her options were... keeping the baby, putting up the baby for adoption, and aborting it.” [3.1, 3.2]</p> <p>(Q) “The talk [Jessie] had</p>	<p>Options: “you mean... abortion?” -Jessie, Ceci ELH blazes a trail in normalizing abortion as an option, primarily through the experiences of Jessie and Ceci; their journeys are among viewers’ favorites. Viewers observed the number of times that the characters understood “options” about an unplanned pregnancy to include abortion, and the fullness of “options” as explored and experienced by Ceci (P).</p>
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<p><i>with her aunt was wonderful because it allowed her to let go of the stigma of having an abortion. When she said, "Good girls don't" and her aunt said, "yes, we do," - as a Catholic Latina, it was such a relief!" [3.1, 3.2]</i></p> <p><i>(R) "Paulina tells Jessie that good girls make mistakes. Not everyone is perfect, everyone makes mistakes." [3.1, 3.2]</i></p>	<p>“Good Girls Don’t” / “Yes, We Do” Jessie’s conversation with Paulina in the side room of the church, after Jacob dramatically walks out upon Jessie’s confession about the baby not being his, was a favorite moment for many respondents. Among their responses, the specific lines spoken by Paulina - when she admits her abortion - are cited, with emotional responses ranging from “relief” and stigma alleviation (Q) to affirming that indeed, “everyone makes mistakes” (R). Paulina is mentioned more in relation to her role as an advocate in the next section as well as in the second research question.</p>
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All of the minor themes were also mentioned across multiple respondents. The category of Education and goals (m3) – especially the graduation scene – was the most frequently mentioned, followed by advocacy on sexual and reproductive health issues (m1), and the issue of intimate partner violence (m2).

Minor social themes in ELH that appealed to audiences included: (1) Girls’ education and gender equity, (2) advocacy on sexual and reproductive health topics, and (3) addressing sexual and domestic violence

<p><i>(S) “I always loved the quote [by Paulina] ‘You don't have to be a straight A student to have big dreams.’ I am not the smartest person, but I dream big.” [m2.1, 2.2]</i></p> <p><i>(T)“Paulina gives the commencement address during the high school ceremony. It was inspiring to see a Latina that came up from a troublesome neighborhood and has made her dream come true.” [m2.1]</i></p> <p><i>(U) “Maya overcoming her struggles... Society today likes to sugar coat these types of things; which does not help us one bit with these issues.”</i></p> <p><i>(V) “Jacob’s dad gave Maya the opportunity to work... he saw something in her and helped her. He believed she could change and become someone great in life.”</i></p>	<p>“Make Choices That Honor Your Dreams.” -Paulina Paulina’s interactions with her nieces at multiple points during the ELH S1 narrative arc were favorite moments of respondents, many of whom saw themselves as recipients of her affirming comments, many of which related to educational and career goals (S). During the graduation address, Paulina spoke from her own experience growing up in East Los Angeles; Paulina’s ability to overcome challenges in her environment to accomplish her dreams were “inspiring” for a number of viewers (T).</p> <p>Overcomers: Jessie, Maya & Ceci Indeed, characters overcoming challenges over time made quite an impression upon many viewers. Arcs of three very different characters illustrate a wide array of dreams being realized, especially with the support of mentors: Maya’s transformation from survival to thriving (U, V); Ceci’s becoming a self-sufficient adult and mother who enters a respectful, nurturing romantic relationship (W); and Jessie - a studious “good girl” whose foray into romantic and sexual relationships leads to a pregnancy and relationship complications she never imagined - “learning from mistakes” to move forward with her own educational goals (X). Jessie’s voiceover in final scene (“my advice to girls?”) incorporates Major Themes 1-3 as well: her decision to abort, what that means for her educational pursuits, importance of communication in relationships and always using</p>
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<p>(W) "Ceci was so independent, and she took care her baby by herself. She got a job, [studied], and got herself a new man who respects her."</p> <p>(X) "Jessie's speech at the end. It showed she learned from her mistakes and was moving on the best way possible."</p> <p>(Y) "when Maya first arrived at the Martinez home and you could hear the distress and exhaustion in the tone of her voice."</p> <p>(Z) "The episode when Maya and her mom almost got killed - at the same time Jacob and Jessie were about to get married! It was really good and it played with my emotions so much!"</p> <p>(AA) "The Ask Paulie's!"</p> <p>(BB) "I believe that every scene with Paulina was memorable - she was the mentor that a lot of young men and women do not have in life."</p> <p>(CC) Soli is definitely a wise Latina as is Paulina.</p> <p>(DD) "If sex is the only reason the guys is with you then you shouldn't be with the guy" - Soli</p> <p>(EE) "I'm better than a date... I won't make you put out" -Soli</p>	<p>a condom.</p> <p>These viewer comments suggest effectiveness of ELH's adaptation of Sabido methodology: ELH does not include any purely negative main characters who reflect the target audience; in facing complex challenges (sexual violence, unintended pregnancy, unprotected sex) - indeed, all of which are behaviors to be changed, ELH characters who make "bad decisions" are live with the consequences and find ways to overcome the challenges. All ELH major characters are shaped with dignity, because unplanned pregnancy, STI transmission represent experiences of the target audience. It is through this dignity, the complexity of characters, the ability to overcome (as different from vilifying and/or ostracizing a "negative character"), that ELH as E-E may achieve the goals of preventing unplanned/unwanted pregnancies, normalize abortion as an option, encourage teens to create and pursue goals and dreams for the future.</p> <p>Violence - viewer Emotional Engagement Viewers who cited scenes with overt violence did so with specific explanation of their emotional engagement as an audience member: from identifying Maya's intense emotions in one of the opening scenes (Y) to the climactic violent struggle when Ramon attempts to kill Maya and her mother (Z). The emotion depicted in these scenes and elicited in the viewers point towards the intense drama of ELH as entertainment.</p> <p>Advocacy: Peer-to-Peer The theme of advocacy present in "favorite scenes/lines" takes the form of characters talking with one another: about sexual and reproductive health issues and why they are important; about their own knowledge of organizations; and about being an advocate themselves. Paulie's humor leads to a resoundingly successful and memorable video series in the ELH school newspaper (comprising six video shorts of transmedia content) (AA). Paulina and Soli stand out as advocates for their loved ones; indeed, their heartfelt disclosures and mentoring (BB, CC) as well as clever lines which express friendship as well as deep confidence in sexual health and decision-making (DD, EE) are memorable for many.</p>
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The Appeal of Great Characters

Likability of characters was apparent in the many responses cited above. Here are examples of viewers explaining why certain character arcs are memorable, most notably their transformations through the circumstances they faced and decisions they made.

On Second Chances: "I liked Maya a lot, I think she represents teens really well in some cases. Sometimes life throws you a full count of curveballs, and you want to do what you can to get out of trouble and make ends meet. It's also important to be given

second chances and discover talents that never had a chance to develop.”

On Jacob-Maya: “They give everyone hope”: *“I really liked all the scenes between Jacob and Maya because you could really feel the passion between the two and they made the show seem very real. My favorite line was when Jacob told Maya that she wasn't going to have to take care of herself because h was going to take care of her, and then in return Maya responded "How about if we take care of each other." The story line between them was amazing, relatable, and real.”*

“The most memorable moment is when Maya and Jacob kissed for the first time. I thought that it was caring, loving, romantics, cute, and adorable. I remember it because someday I want to be in a relationship with a cute guy the cares for me and respects me.”

On Ceci - “her personal evolution was so endearing”: *“My absolute favorite thing... was the progression of Ceci's character. I know that's not a specific line or scene. But, I totally grew to love her!!! I didn't expect her to become my favorite character. So, I like how that part of the show surprised me.”*

On Soli & On Paulie: *“Paulie I love. He is hilarious y no tiene pelos en la lengua^{iv}. Paulie is definitely my favorite character. He knows how to add humor to the show, which is needed with the serious issues that are addressed.”*

“I like how confident Soli always is: ‘I'm not fat, I just have big boobs.’”

Cultural Elements and overall show significance

From Spanish/Spanglish character lines like “This naca's your cousin?!” and “la gorda y la flaca....y la puta” to hip hop dance featured throughout the season, a number of respondents commented specifically about cultural elements that resonated beyond the end of Season 1. One middle age woman exclaimed “*Loved the whole season! Waiting for the next one to come out! Just had me wanting more and more! Loved it soooo much that I decided to watch it over with my teenage daughter.*”

Cultural elements and overall show significance are artfully expressed by this participant’s thoughtful response:

“I have many memorable scenes from the characters in the show...

(1) when Sparky gives Maya his Saint Jude necklace because I grew up knowing about that saint. My mother introduced the saint to me as San Judas Tadeo and said he was one special saint because he creates miracles when life is at its roughest... Plus, she raised me catholic so knowing about saints was something I grew up with, and so makes me feel connected to her cultural/religious beliefs. That scene hit home very well.

(2) The second... is when Lupe told Maya that the one thing she could leave her daughter with in this life is knowing she taught her how to choose right from wrong. This scene hit home because I know my parents would have said the same thing. [In] mainstream shows, the concept of love is often equated to how much one can buy their children/or how many material goods one has. The idea

is that love can be bought. But in this case as shown in East Los High, many families (especially poor families) will give their children unconditional love and teach them to reciprocate that amongst their family members. Attached to that idea of love is also knowing to respect oneself by being sincere to oneself and others; a genuine human being who does not dehumanize others.

(3) Finally... when Tia Paulina gave her speech to the graduating class. Her words brought me to tears because I could relate to her on so many levels: her educational background, going off to college, not being married at 26 years old and wanting to enjoy her independence. I admired Paulina's role as a role model and mentor to her nieces throughout the show. Providing her nieces with emotional support reminds me of how important that is in the lives of many young teens who are trying to figure out who they are and what they want out of life."

Weaving the show's relevance to her own life, this eloquent comment leads us directly into the second research question.

ELH and Personal Life Experiences

RQ2 asked: *How would ELH audience relate the dramatic storylines and main characters in the show to their personal life experiences?*

"I was also put up for adoption at birth. So, Maya & the search for her father was incredibly relatable. ... When I found my biological mother at age 19, she was kind of shocked that I didn't have a baby of my own. She thought that because she had become pregnant as a teenager, I would, too. On top of that, I've spent the last 8 (or so) years of my life working on a character that has to do with sexual/reproductive health education & awareness... I do my best to share informative links on Twitter or Facebook. So... this survey (kind of) reflects my experience. I give you credit because it's very clever. Not only are you engaging viewers and getting feedback on the show... You're also giving something to the fans that is far greater than any material possession: knowledge. And that knowledge will empower them to make better/informed decisions when it comes to their bodies & lives, their future."

As with RQ1, responses to Research Question 2 correlated strongly with the major and minor themes, which are explored below.

<p><i>(FF) "Ceci's story was most relatable to my life being that I was a teenage mother. It taught me to be more open with my children about sex the good and the bad."</i></p> <p><i>(GG) "I was also a teen mother. I had my daughter when I was 17 yrs old, senior in high school. Also they are all Latino and I like how I can relate to the whole show. Thank you...want to see more!!"</i></p> <p><i>(HH) "I have gotten pregnant before. I never</i></p>	<p>Experience with teen pregnancy: A majority of responses regarding relevance of ELH to personal life centered around teen pregnancy. Helpful perspective is the prevalence of respondent proximity to teen pregnancy; see the statistics at right.</p> <p>Experience of teen pregnancy: Me A number of people lived similar experiences to Jessie and Ceci, having become pregnant as teenagers (FF-HH). Outcomes differed,</p>
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<p><i>planned on it but when I did I was scared. I knew I was going to end up the way Ceci ended but before I could get to tell my mom and talk to her I ended up losing the baby.”</i></p> <p><i>(II) “I have sisters and a niece who went through the same situation of getting pregnant as a teenager.”</i></p> <p><i>(JJ) “I was not pregnant in high school but most of my friends got pregnant.”</i></p> <p><i>(KK) “I just wish a lot of my friends seen this show before so they wouldn't [have] ended up pregnant at 17.”</i></p>	<p>from becoming a parent to losing the child in a miscarriage. Some responses, including HH, described emotions associated with these life events.</p> <p>Experience of teen pregnancy: Family, Friends & Others Respondents indicate that many viewers knew multiple family members and/or peers who had early pregnancies (II-KK).</p>
<p><i>(LL) “Jessie’s first time was horrible and with someone she didn't love which was similar to my experience. It taught me that sex without love is pointless because you get a hell of a lot more satisfaction having sex with someone that you love.”</i></p> <p><i>(MM) “Some of the content on the show reflected some of the struggles I, myself had to face in high school. Especially since now a day one gets crucified for being in their 20's and still a virgin.”</i></p> <p><i>(NN) “I got pregnant when I was 16 and I had an abortion. After that, I was on the pill for about 10years before I had my son. It was nice to see these topics addressed at this show. I wish I would have seen this show when I was a teenager because everything I learned about sex was through friends and boyfriends.”</i></p> <p><i>(OO) “I got pregnant as well and like Jesse decided to abort. I wasn't ready to be a mom.”</i></p>	<p>Safe Sex, Loving Sex Character experiences of pressure to have sex in high school, the social stigma of “being a virgin” beyond one’s teen years, gaps in sex education content and access resonated deeply with viewer’s lives (LL-NN).</p> <p>“I had an Abortion: Jessie’s experience of conscientiously aborting the pregnancy was parallel to many audience members’ own lives, including Jessie and Paulina’s lines – at various points during the narrative – about not being ready to become a parent (NN-OO).</p>

How the minor themes reflect my life:

The complexity of character lives, as individuals and in relationship, and including some of the melodramatic elements of the narrative were also avenues for connection among viewers, a number of whom shared experiences of pain and loss. Advocacy also resonated, along with social stigma of being a pregnant teen”, the severe unmet need in the Latino/a and broader teenage community for sex education, and how individual viewers are advocates for others.

I advocate, because of my own experiences: *“I am a teenage mother, and I volunteer in helping women who face unplanned pregnancies. Knowing their stories, fears, and worries are essential so I can help them out and comfort them. I also hope that people who saw ELH may have lot whatever common misconceptions of our lifestyle, like how we "sleep around" or "just get pregnant for the welfare checks.”*

Sexual violence among young adults is real: *“It reflected a lot of my high years were when I got pregnant, and how one of my friends was raped.”*

“I want to beat the odds” – Education is key: *“I have seen the girls who get pregnant during high school and have trouble graduating from high school... Being a Latina I want to defeat the odds of teen pregnancies and dropping out of high school or college. ELH is inspiring me to continue my education and go after my dreams.”* Among those who do experience pregnancy as an adolescent: *“...getting pregnant young and still in school, it was a difficult decision for me to want to keep the baby or abort, because I wanted to finish high school. I also wasn't being with the father of my daughter. I decided to continue my pregnancy I graduated on time, even though I'm a single mom I work hard for me and my dad.”*

On being like Soli: *“I was able to relate to Soli and how determined she was to attend college and make her dreams of becoming a journalist come true. I become sexually active when I was in high school but I always took precaution in preventing a pregnancy or STDs. Like Soli, I witnessed my best friend getting pregnant during our junior year. Unlike Jessie, my friend didn't terminate the pregnancy and last minute decided she couldn't give up the baby for adoption. She wasn't able to graduate with her graduating class but she did get a GED. Our lives are so different that it is hard for us to hang out and make time for each other. When I do see her, it breaks my heart that her dreams have been put on hold and must work a dead end job to support herself and her daughter. ...There aren't many Latino/a role models that Latino youth can look up to.”*

On “finding one’s inner Jessie/Soli”: *“Seeing this show at 22, I wish the series was available when I was younger. It would have definitely inspired me and reassured me whenever I was having doubts of my dreams. I am proud of being the first in my family to graduate from college and obtained my B.A. I am proud that I can be a positive role model to my younger brothers and my cousins. Nonetheless I am happy that this series is available now and that my siblings and younger cousins can grow with the series and find their inner Jessie and Soli within themselves.”*

Me being Latina: Latina Culture & East Los High “familia”:

Many respondents embedded “as a Latina”/ “me being Latina” into their statements, voicing that they relate not only with the life experience of the characters but also with the Latino/a identity of the characters.

“East Los High depicted my life very well. I am a chicana and have had to deal with a lot of hardships in my life. I love that this show finally showed a Latinos side of the story and didn't sugarcoat anything. It was very informative... I am a 21 year old chicana born and raised in California. Life hasn't been easy but I am proud to say I have graduated high school, obtained my AA and received a full scholarship...”

“[ELH] reflect[s] experiences of youth with whom I've worked - challenges negotiating sexual intimacy and sexuality; the "oh shit" moment of discovering one is pregnant; the social pressure for pregnancy for Mexican-American and

Mexican and other Latina women in order to fulfill the expected role of motherhood.”

“I am very uncomfortable when it comes to discussing sex with my parents. I can NOT do it at all. Watching East Los High made me feel like I was part of the East Los High familia.”

Me being Latino: (male response): *“I really fell hard for this show. I never watch stuff like this I'm more of a sports kinda guy; my girlfriend is the type to watch this type of stuff. When I found this show... I was automatically hooked. I stayed home watching every single episode, and this show really hit me hard especially for being Latino... if you guys made me love this and I'm not even into this type of shows, you guys could reach me, teens, or anyone....”*

Appreciating Latino/a Culture: *“I just liked learning about cultural differences because I grew up in a very "white" suburb. I have a Latino boyfriend and enjoy learning about his culture.”*

“[ELH is] Nothing like my life at all and it has made me have more respect for the Latino community.”

Character Identification

“I could relate to so much of it that is why I couldn't stop watching. I was Jessie in so many ways. The other topics were also eye opening and informative. It's a great show because it wasn't preachy, just informative. In the end it's your choice.”

“The story in the beginning with Sparky, affected me very much because my boyfriend past away in the same way. He was shot to death and I was there to see and held his hand as I waited for the ambulance to come. Though he didn't make it to the hospital, it hard cause I can sympathize with Maya's character because she saw him on that table and walking in the hospital with the hopes he would make it. It changed me because I can't run away from it but I rather have to face it.”

Missing Identities:

“I would have loved to see an LGBT character in the show and how they related with all of this. That's something of my personal life that I felt was missing.”

“I would have preferred that if you're truly going to have a show that has all sides, keep at least one character a virgin. Not the experience of most teens, but I do have friends who were virgin at marriage.”

Personal and Social Impact of ELH

RQ3 asked: *What changes, personally and socially, did ELH initiate, among its audience?*

“I love how the stories in East Los High remind me of watching telenovelas with my mom. The stories... were beautiful and creatively written. I could relate to this show culturally on so many levels that I could not stop watching it. I love the Spanglish ... it was hilarious when the characters talk in English and then curse in Spanish with pendejo, or pinche.

[I] appreciate a show that does not follow the dominant narrative of Latino/as in Hollywood (which is that we are maids/gardeners/cholo/as, etc.)... where there is a Doctor Sanchez and well educated Latino/as, hardworking Latino/a parents that value their children's education. I enjoyed and appreciate how the show spoke about sex, it was very informative.”

Did ELH initiate changes in the lives of its viewers? YES, exclaim survey respondents. The type of impact differed: some wrote about new knowledge, changed attitudes, and deep reflection because of ELH. Others reported that, having viewed ELH, they made a decision or resolved to take a (future) action. Still others took actions because of their experience as an ELH audience member: these respondents described actual behavior change. These responses - which are by both men and women, both target audience and others (as identified within the quotations below) - are points in along a continuum or cycle of behavior change.

Some viewers are already “acting their way” into different attitudes and thinking precisely because of ELH! As with the previous Research Questions, responses spanned all Major and minor social objectives; changes in the areas of pregnancy prevention and safe sex were among the most prominent. More than one person actually broke up with their boyfriend because of parallels between lives of characters and their own relationship experiences. And a comment by many, with exclamation points: “I will finish high school w/ no kids!”

Others have resolved to do something different than before watching ELH: although abstinence wasn’t an explicit social objective, people resolved to not have sex. People who are having sex resolved to using condoms! One viewer will break the silence about violence: “I can speak up about being sexually abused.” A number of adults – well beyond their teens and twenties – talked with their children about safe sex because of the show, while high school and college-age viewers gained resources to better help their friends: they became more empowered advocates.

Some are thinking and reflecting: “abortion information wasn’t in sex ed classes; I needed this”; “I found out my cousin had an abortion. The show made me understand her more... she did it to start a brighter future... College this fall.” The show also helped a viewer to understand her mother’s experience as a teen mother.

Table 3 follows, a matrix of the three “levels” of life change – in viewer’s own

words - for Major Themes one and two, and minor themes one and three.

Table 3: Life Changes as a Result of ELH, among audience members

	action	decision made / planned action	reflection / thinking / attitude / realization
M 1	<p>"It was exactly how it used to be with my ex-boyfriend all he wanted sex and I never let him. I broke up with him after I watched the show because I realized what he wanted."</p> <p>"A guy who I had dated and was sexually active with: The story with Ceci helped me realize that if anything would happen he would not take responsibility, it gave me the courage to end it."</p> <p>"[I will] finish high school! No kids in high school!"</p>	<p>"It made decide to wait before having sex."</p> <p>"I'm a teen who had sex at a young age. Before I didn't know about all the birth control options I had, watching east Los high helped me out a lot!"</p> <p>"I am never having sex again till I am married, and if I do I [will be] using birth control and my husband will be using a condom."</p> <p>"It has changed my life to never even try to have sex without a condom with any girl at all because I might not be with the same girl or married with the same girl at all."</p> <p>"It made me more aware of the options I have and gave me the confidence to say NO to being sexually active."</p>	<p>"It taught me to know the risks and how one mistake can change your life. I learned that there are options and help available."</p> <p>"It did open my eyes... to really looking into using some type of contraception."</p> <p>"The show was definitely informative for one who is as unexperienced as myself. Ceci's story showed me an aspect of what my mother went through [as] a teenage mother."</p> <p>"Jessie told Jacob that she was not ready for sex reminded me that I once said that to one of my boyfriends. I didn't love him, and I feel that I wanna have sex with someone I love... if my boyfriend can't respect that then I know I need to find someone who will."</p> <p>"Now I know its sooo safe to talk to your sexual partner about sex before doing it..."</p>
M 2	<p>"with Christian and Jessie: I had a guy who played me. Now I regret ever paying attention to him, but I've learned to value myself more and be more patient when it comes to love."</p>	<p>"To have protected sex because there are many risks."</p> <p>"I haven't had any of those experiences [of the characters], but I'll be sure to have safe sex."</p>	<p>"made me realize there should be open discussion because there are so many options to being safe"</p> <p>"It made me think more about my sex life... [and] question whether I was being careful enough. It also made me think what would happen if I was in Ceci or Jessie's position. What would happen if I was in Vanessa's position? It put things in perspective for me."</p> <p>"the show made me think more carefully about who I trust and the line between trust and protecting yourself"</p>
M 3	<p>"Although I am not of Latino/Latina descent or background I have many friends who are and it just opened my eyes to the struggles and difficult circumstances... It has made me want to learn more about the Hispanic culture and community</p>	<p>"I think that it's a real raw portrayal of teens ...makes me not want to have kids at such a young age and just to finish school and always have safe sex"</p>	<p>"it has allowed me to value my decisions more and it has allowed me to see the consequences that might come"</p>

	<p>and extend my own personal goals to become a family and marriage counselor to not only girls of my own race, but to those of the Hispanic community as well.”</p>		
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Two clusters or groupings emerge among the impact of ELH on decisions, behaviors, attitudes and knowledge: (1) **“the show specifically impacted ME/my personal life”** and (2) **“the show has enabled me to have a positive impact on others around me”**. Viewer narration of “ELH impact on me” tended to relate primarily to the Major social objectives – from breaking up with my boyfriend to accessing contraception (actual completed behaviors), from better understanding a loved one’s experience with teen pregnancy (thinking, empathy) to having a sense of precaution with behaviors in the future in order to avoid ending up like certain characters (behavioral intention, attitude).

Responses revealing how ELH “has enabled me to have a positive impact on others around me correlate predominantly with the minor social objectives, especially advocacy for sexual/reproductive health and education/goals: ‘I can help my friends better now’.

Discussion

To summarize **key points** of the participant responses:

- Viewer experiences with ELH relate directly to all Major and minor social objectives, for each of the three research questions: most appealing narrative elements, relevance of dramatic storylines and main characters to audience members’ personal life experiences, and the life changes initiated by viewers as a result of ELH.
- Specific mentions of characters were often described in terms of a character’s narrative arc over the course of Season 1 and/or his or her interpersonal relationships and decision-making.
- Latino/a culture framing the narrative and specific elements embedded into scenes – from English/Spanish/Spanglish dialogue to family dynamics, the setting of East Los Angeles to everyday situations faced by the main characters – factored heavily into favorite scenes/moments as well as the overall significance of the show as relevant to viewer’s personal lives. This holds true for target audience as well as viewers who were older than mid-twenties.
- Viewers’ statements overwhelmingly indicate character identification and transportation, in their own words.

Implications of Findings

First, responses indicate ELH is right on the mark with relevant, likeable, relatable and entertaining storylines that resonate with its target audience in meaningful, specific ways that dovetail with the show’s major and minor social objectives. Latino/a viewers (more than 3 in 4 of all respondents) are saying: ‘YES! ¡Sí! Finally! This looks

like me! I like it and I want more!' Respondents who are not within this audience (Latino/a young adult) also indicate direct relatability with the show, through their children, other family members, and the wider community in which they live; some commented that the show allowed learning and appreciation of a culture different from theirs. Many people called for Season 2, which was delivered Summer 2014; Season 3 is scheduled to stream on Hulu in Summer 2015.

Second, audience members responding in their own words adds richness to viewer experience data including scales on transportation and Likert-scale responses on character likability as well as knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors, in addition to offering some clues about character identification, transportation, and social modeling. Precisely because we asked viewers these open-ended questions as part of the full survey, we KNOW that the show had specific impacts on the individual viewer's life (for those who self-selected to respond). Indeed, the viewer assumed the position of expert, informing his/her audience – researchers, show creators, etc. – about the WHYS and HOWs of relevance and impact, including actual outcomes in thought and behavior.

This method adds layers of research complexity in a sensible way and gives voice to the respondent along the full range of experiences they choose to share: from disclosures of sexual violence and new confidence to disclose to others, to communication/sexual decision-making within their intimate relationship(s); from parent-child and aunt-niece-cousin communication, to the self-esteem boost of seeing themselves as Latino/as represented in the show and the importance of second chances. The plethora of comments about 'how character(s) are like me' shows self-awareness of the social modeling/social learning (Bandura) theoretical foundations of EE, upon and out of which ELH was created.

Third, the ways in which "the show specifically impacted ME/my personal life" (primarily Major Themes) and "the show has enabled me to have a positive impact on others around me" (primarily minor themes) are highly significant, given the relational and communicative aspects sexual decision-making (Diaz 2010, Sachdev 2014): ELH major social objectives are primarily individual and intimate-couple behavioral; indeed, advocacy and goals directly impact the behaviors of sexual and reproductive health and decision-making, over the short-term and long-term. And the viewer respondents are aware of this: nearly 1 in 4 responses regarding characters were related to character relationships, keying into the relational aspects of decision-making.

This is very relevant to the ways we both intervene and explore effectiveness of health promotion via EE: characters leave a lasting impact when they not only impart "factual" information and model individual deliberation, but when their interactions model interactive decision-making of sexual and reproductive health options and outcomes.

Fourth, zooming out a bit, observing that the survey launched a full six weeks after the final episode aired sequentially on Hulu, participant responses suggest significant staying power of the narrative and the social objectives. Weeks after first viewing ELH episodes – and/or while repeat-viewing episodes – survey respondents continue to recall character emotions, specific lines of dialogue, personal emotions and relatability to characters and scenes spanning the entirety of the Season 1 Episodic narrative as well as transmedia elements. According to viewers responding to the

survey, ELH is undoubtedly a successful Entertainment-Education platform.

In their own words, on EE:

"I enjoyed it and wish I had seen it when I was a kid. Because the reality is that students don't learn about these things in school. Even if they sit through a class like I did in health, we were all too embarrassed to pay attention! This is a great way to communicate information!"

"I was instantly hooked and signed up for Hulu Plus to watch all episodes. It served as an "escape" - during a very difficult time in my life. More than anything, I appreciate the heart behind the show. There's so much power in media and it's wonderful if that can be used as a positive influence."

Limitations and Future Research

First and foremost, this is just one data set of highly committed viewers of ELH, so the generalizations that we can make are limited to that group (and those among them who responded by self-selecting to do so). How can open-ended questions – a sort of “dialogue” with viewers – be embedded into evaluations of forthcoming ELH Seasons – S2, S3 and beyond? What are additional ways that a more representative group of the entire viewing population can raise their voices about relevance and impact of ELH?

Second, the entire evaluation of ELH Season 1 has proven difficult to effectively listen to high school viewers; in this survey, one in four respondents reported ages 12-17. It is promising that, although the majority of respondents were not high school students, one of the most common responses for RQ3 was, “I’m going to finish high school, with no kids!” And a repeated comment among all RQ’s was, ‘I wish I would have seen this in high school...things may have turned out differently for me.’ What are other high school students saying about ELH likability, relevance to and impact on personal life? How can promotion and evaluation of ELH ensure that the show is reaching more high school students, as this respondent eloquently observed?

"I think it did a good job of showing how relationships are uncertain... A lot of teens like that they will be together forever and may not know how to break up when things are not going well [like Jessie and Jacob]. I can say that it resonated with me as a teen, and I wish I would have had a show like East Los High when I was younger. I can't say that it changed me much now, but had I seen it at another time I'm sure it would have made a big impact."

Third, the researchers observed a noticeable void of responses: there was not a single mention of intention to get tested for STDs in the open-ended questions. Willingness to get tested was a quantitative item on the survey; to reinforce the social objective and gather richer data, including an open-ended question specifically about testing may yield such information on a future survey; this may be an important consideration for future research, given the show’s prioritizing getting tested as a means

to increasing safe sex and reducing STI transmission.

Surprising was the repeated comments among non-target viewers who are talking about sex with nieces, cousins, and children: now or when the time comes. This suggests that ELH effectiveness on major social objectives of preventing unplanned pregnancy and reducing STI transmission may be partially mediated by older viewers, because of their decision to advocate. Indeed, mentoring is found to be an important communicative microbehavior in preventing teen pregnancy (Diaz, 2010).

Conclusions

The viewer survey including open-ended responses, as part of the three-prong evaluation of ELH Season 1, is an excellent beginning: for taking a pulse of Season 1 efficacy among a group of dedicated viewer respondents; for giving voice to the ELH audience about their own life experiences of sexual and reproductive health and relationships; for informing future ELH Seasons; for guiding future evaluations of ELH in Season 2 and beyond.

In addition, we can consider the viewer exit survey data as a great beginning of conversations for ELH as a springboard for further interventions – and research as intervention itself. With the ELH initiative's transmedia sensibilities, relational decision-making modeled by characters, and the power of listening to viewers in their own words, ELH has the potential to positively impact to an even greater degree: HIV/STI testing and treatment; reporting abuse and healing from it; learning about and accessing abortion services; making the daily, weekly, monthly, yearly decisions for sexual and reproductive health – as an individual and as sex partner.

ELH alone will not change the tide of Latino teen pregnancy prevalence, yet in the voices of viewers themselves, ELH is well on the way to doing so:

“East los high is giving people the hope, motivating and faith that wonderful things can happen no matter where one comes from... It gives us Latinos a voice. Well done!”

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Endnotes

ⁱ All labels, including Latina, Chicana, Mexican, Mexican-American, and Hispanic carry their own baggage, history, and spatial-cultural significance. We use the label Latina/Latino with the knowledge and humility that it is a broad term signifying the sharing of one common attribute: origin – by birth and/or family identification – in a Latin American country.

ⁱⁱ This research project was supported by a grant from the Population Media Center.

ⁱⁱⁱ Many response statements began with “my most memorable scene was...”. Responses have been truncated here in the interest of highlighting the most meaningful components.

^{iv} “he just says it like it is.”

**PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION
AND
INDEPTH INTERVIEWS**

by

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**Effects of *East Los High*, an Entertainment-Education Web Series,
On Sexual Decision-Making of Young Latino/a Couples**

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the *International Communication Gazette*

Abstract

In the U.S., Latino/a youth are at the highest sexual risks for early-unintended pregnancy, single parenthood and sexually transmitted infections (STIs). To address this challenge, the present study investigated the process of sexual decision-making among Latino/a couples who watched an entertainment-education (EE) intervention, *East Los High (ELH)*, designed to promote teenage sexual responsibility, safe sex practices, and prevent STIs. Fifteen Latino/a unmarried couples between ages 18 to 24 participated in this study. Sexual encounters portrayed in *ELH* were analyzed from the viewpoint of female decision-making and male responsibility. Female agency, women's negotiation skills, and their mental resilience seemed to affect female sexual decision-making. Male responsibility manifested in the use of condoms, providing care and support for the female partner, and maintaining healthy interpersonal communication before, during, and after the sexual encounter. Viewing *ELH* heightened both a sense of perceived vulnerability and self-efficacy among couples. The couples collectively generated creative ways to be sexually responsible by being playful in bed or using tricky turn offs.

Keywords: East Los High, sexual decision-making, Latino/a, entertainment-education, qualitative research, female agency, male responsibility, teenage pregnancy

Consider this snatch of conversation from a scene in *East Los High* when Jacob and Jessie get intimate over a study session. As they kissed, Jacob made a bolder move.

Jessie: Wait, wait, wait.... I can't do this. I like you and everything....but I've never....

Jacob: Jessie, you are a virgin?

[Jessie nods]

Jacob: Jessie, it is totally cool.

Jessie: I totally understand if you think I am lame.... and if you don't want to hang out anymore.

Jacob: I don't think you are lame.... It's my fault.... I kinda lost control!

Jessie: It's ok!

Jacob: If I had known, I wouldn't have taken it any further.

Jessie: You wouldn't?

Jacob: I mean I want to but.... but if you don't want to take it that far....

Jessie: I just need more time....

Jacob: I respect that....

If the intense encounter continued without Jessie's "time out," sexual intercourse would have naturally followed. However, Jessie interrupted the rising intensity and Jacob respected her actions and showed support. How likely is this to occur in real life between a non-fictional Jessie and Jacob? Do most girls have the courage to express their desire to "wait", and do men so easily curb their desires, letting go, and show support?

The youth in the U.S., especially those who are Latino/a, often find themselves in situations of unplanned pregnancy. Latina women have the highest teenage pregnancy rate in the country with 107 pregnancies per 1000 females (15-19 years) (Kost & Henshaw, 2012) and the highest birthrate of any ethnic groups (Martin et al., 2012). The highest teenage pregnancy rates are found in the south and southwest regions of the country. Specifically, the state of Texas reports 65 pregnant teens for every 1000 teens and the city of El Paso reports 80 pregnancies per 1000 females (Department of Health, El Paso, TX, 2012). Additionally, sexually-transmitted infection (STI) rates for Latino adolescents are approximately two times higher than white non-Latino Americans (8.93 and 4.3 per 1000, respectively). Further, the highest risk of STIs is noted for Latina female adolescents, ages 15-19, as compared to Latino male adolescents of the same age group (8.93 and 1.92 per 1,000, respectively) (CDC, 2011).

Sexual decisions and actions represent highly complex processes, involving multiple causes and effects dispersed over time and between partners. While the literature on teenage sexuality is vast, sexual decision-making studies are instrumentally gendered i.e. males and females have been studied separately. Given a sexual relationship involves two people, it is imperative that sexual decision-making is studied at the level of couples.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the process of sexual decision-making as influenced by an entertainment-education (EE) media intervention (specifically, *East Los High*) among Latino/a couples. This research paper first discusses the process and

phenomenon of sexual decision-making, highlighting factors that affect sexual decision-making among Latino/a females and males. The EE intervention being investigated, *East Los High* is described and research questions posed, followed by methods and data-collection procedures. The final section of the paper details the answers to the research questions, raising implications for practitioners and scholars interested in EE and its role in addressing teenage sexuality.

The Complexity of Sexual Decision-Making Processes

Research on sexual decision-making started in the 1960s and has been pursued on various fronts as partner negotiation, female agency, and mutual responsibility. Juhasz (1975) first, outlined the complexity of sexual decision-making, highlighting the dynamic chain of decision points, with different consequences or outcomes. There are several decision-making clusters, at least from the perspective of situations portrayed in *East Los High*.

First, should there be intercourse or not? Should one remove all clothes, and allow for foreplay, leading to penetrative intercourse? Second, if penetrative intercourse occurs between a couple, will there be ejaculation or not? Should the man ejaculate inside the woman; is there an expectation for conceiving children? Third, are birth control methods such as condoms, pills, rings and the like used or not? Are couples protected against the transmission of STIs? Fourth, if the woman conceives, should she keep the baby or abort? Fifth, if the woman decides to give birth to the child, should she keep it with herself or give up for adoption to other parents? Sixth, should the man and woman get married or remain single? But, the foundational decision-making point centers on “whether or not to have sexual intercourse?”

The process of sexual decision-making is guided by multiple factors that are marked by individual differences in motivation, psychological and physical reactions, value system and self-concept. Sexual decision-making is hence interplay of personal identity, normative socialization, and adolescent development (Campen & Romero, 2012; Michels, Kropp, Eyre, & Halpern-Felsher, 2005; Shornack, 1986).

Factors affecting sexual decision-making

Researchers have utilized various research methodologies to shed light on sexual-decision-making processes, as the following section notes. Research has found affect and emotion as a major contributor in young peoples' risky sexual encounters (Von Sadvoszky, Vahey, McKinney, & Keller, 2006). Michels, Kropp, Eyre, and Halpern-Felsher (2005) reported six dominant categories that affected sexual decision-making: (1) contextual factors (relationship and personal characteristics), (2) consideration of risks and benefits, (3) boundary setting, (4) boundary communication, (5) the sexual experience, and (6) evaluation. Also, partner's physical characteristics such as looks, size of breasts, thighs, buttocks, muscularity, tight clothing, etc. strongly influenced their decisions to engage in sexual activity. Lately, Fantasia (2008) presented a comprehensive concept analysis on adolescent sexual decision-making, reporting six attributes of sexual decision-making among adolescents: First, desire for intimacy,

sexual attraction and a need to be loved or cared about is central to the decisions of sexual engagement (Garwick et al., 2004; Van Sadvosky et al., 2006). Second, a desire for perceived relationship safety, a misconception, as adolescents usually miscalculate the risks associated with sexual activity and contraception use (Lenoir et al., 2006; Lescano et al., 2006; Manning et al., 2006). Third, lower levels of problem solving skills mark early initiation of sexual activity (Felton & Bartoces, 2002; Talashek et al., 2006). Fourth, family and peer influence, norms, peer communication relate to relationship and personal characteristics of their partner (Michels, Kropp, Eyre, & Halpern-Felsher, 2005; Zwane et al., 2004). Fifth, concern for pregnancy or sexually transmitted disease, the perceived severity of anything happening to them is very low and generally attributed to the "others" (Chapin, 2001; Johnson et al., 2002; Kershaw et al., 2003). Sixth, lower level of cognitive ability mark early and risky initiation of sexual activity (Garwick et al., 2004; Talashek et al., 2006). Belief in one's ability to exert control over one's sexual behavior or perceived self-efficacy is a major predictor of sexual risk taking among adolescents (Bandura, 1997, 2006).

Male Responsibility and Female Decision Making

Sexual decisions, by their very nature are communicative, involving at least two people. Even though individuals are guided by personal choices and circumstances, active sexual decision-making seldom takes place alone. The outcomes for these decisions usually involve at least the couple, and also have a ripple effect on others around the couple.

Interventions to engage young men in contraceptive decision-making are rare. The burden of decision-making and actions is usually largely conferred upon women in the relationship even though the male partner's intentions greatly affect the timing of pregnancy and women's desire for becoming pregnant. Once pregnant, male partner also influences how a woman feels about her pregnancy and changes in women's evaluation of pregnancy during pregnancy (Raine et al., 2010). Male participation significantly strengthens and reduces conflict in relationships and enhances and reinforces a man's responsibility for the children he fathers (Heavey et al., 2008).

As 'couples' and in dyadic decision-making, females play a disproportionate role in taking on consequences of sexual decisions. Female decision-making has not just a direct bearing on contraceptive behavior but also on child bearing, abortion, and education, to name a few. Theoretically, young women have the agency to negotiate, affirm and attach sexual meanings to their relationships (Wood, Koch, & Masfield, 2006). Men, in their own right, do the same. However, the social construction of female responsiveness to the wants of their male partners and the attached responsibility of maintenance of their sexual relationships makes women more vulnerable. They tend to lack of agency and empowerment to say 'no' (Risman & Schwartz, 2002).

Added to the assumed responsibility is the expected compliance by the female. Women are muted for men's needs and desires, and young women's expressions of desire are about their own experiences but represent their internalization (e.g., "the male in the head") of male needs, bodies, and desires (Allen, Husser, Stone, & Jordal, 2008). This incomplete gender revolution puts women, more than men, at risk for

vulnerability in sexual encounters. Also, women's margin for error in sexual decision-making is much narrower than their male counterparts such as the risk to get pregnant.

In sum, partner communication between men and women are at the heart of sexual decision-making processes, actions, and consequences. Just like any behavior is guided by the culture, environment, and our social upbringing, sexual decisions are also shaped by such factors. In reference to this study, the complexity of sexual decision-making is particularly of importance in the Latina/o population. It is not just the rapid growth in the Latina/o population demographics, but the problem of unintended, teen pregnancies looms large among this group. In the next section, the Latina/o sexuality and gender roles are discussed.

Latina/o Sexual Decision-Making and Gender Roles

In the multiethnic society of the U.S., the Latina/o population is the most rapid growing, comprising of approximately 17% of the total U.S. population (US Census Bureau, 2012). In the Latina/o families, not unlike other groups, traditional gender roles are observed (Deardorff et al., 2010). Generally-speaking, men are viewed as providers and hence work outside of homes and women manage the household, raising children. Latina/o men are governed by *machismo* (maleness or male pride) that portrays them as strong, wielding power and ones who take care of others. This trait may lead Latino/a men to engage in risky sexual behaviors, have multiple sex partners, and engage in unprotected sex. On the other hand, women's traditional role is termed as *simpatía*, emphasizing smooth interpersonal relationships, and "sexual silence". Women do not initiate discussions on sexual issues and do not negotiate sexual safety with male partners (Amaro & Raj, 2000; Marin, 2003; Russell, Alexander, & Corbo, 2000).

In a relationship, men exercise power in sexual and reproductive matters. In couples, even though the sexual activity is consensual, men initiate the desire to have sex. Among Latinos, traditional cultural norms maintain that it is inappropriate for men and women to communicate about sex, even within a sexual relationship. Thus, discomfort with sexual communication among young Latinos may lead to inconsistent contraceptive use (Marín, 2003). These traditional domains of relationship power as decision-making dominance and relationship control influence the sexual behaviors of a couple (Zukoski, Harvey, Oakley & Branch, 2011). It thus becomes critical to understand how young Latino/a men and women respond to each other's negotiation attempts and what these responses yield with respect to sexual decisions.

In recent years, mass media campaigns for sexual responsibility have employed storytelling to engage audiences and evoke interpersonal dialogue (Wang, Singhal & Rogers, 2013). The advantage of entertainment-based genres is that they can portray sexual dilemmas without having 'to tell' the audience what is right and what is wrong. Entertainment programs provide a platform, for audience members to discuss sexual matters vicariously by talking about the predicaments faced by certain characters, and may spur information seeking behavior (Moyer- Gusé, 2011). The next section discusses the purposive use of entertainment for educational purposes.

Media-Sparked Campaigns and Entertainment Education

A variety of interventions have been implemented to address the problems related to youth sexuality in the U.S. The interventions have ranged from school based sex education programs focusing on abstinence, to more community-based skill building programs that help form negotiation skills (Kohler, Manhart & Lafferty, 2008). Several interventions employ the use of mass media. Due to their large audience reach, cost effectiveness, and ability to target messages, media programs represent an important tool in the strategy toolkit.

The use of entertainment (storytelling) and education (information) in melodramatic shows is a widespread media strategy for change. These interventions have proved to be successful around the world in preventing risky sexual and health behaviors (Singhal & Rogers, 1999; Slater & Rouner, 2002). Entertainment-education is defined as “a theory-based communication strategy for purposefully embedding educational and social issues in the creation, production, processing, and dissemination process of an entertainment program, in order to achieve desired individual, community, institutional, and societal changes among the intended media user populations” (Wang & Singhal, 2009, 272-273). Complex social problems such as safe sex, family planning, and violence against women are portrayed in an engaging form to arouse emotions, engage the audience into the narrative and evoke interpersonal dialogue. There are two levels of change that can occur by EE: at the individual level, where the knowledge, attitudes and behaviors may be changed; and at the systemic level, where conditions are enabled for change to occur (Singhal & Rogers, 1999, 2004).

EE frames messages within a narrative rather than overtly and directly promoting the behavior, which can create counter reactance and resistance (Brown, Steele, & Walsh-Childers, 2002). The engaging format of entertainment narratives makes them less subject to counter-arguing and reactance, unlike the more direct persuasion messaging techniques such as public service announcement, advertising campaigns (Moyer-Gusé & Nabi, 2010; Slater & Rouner, 2002). Narratives are designed to absorb audience’s attention (Dal Cin, Zanna & Fong, 2004; Moyer-Gusé, 2008). They are capable of motivating the audience to care about fictional plots and characters and their dilemmas. The most commonly applied theory to understand the audience effects of entertainment-education is Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1986, 2004; Singhal & Rogers, 1999; Sood et al., 2004). SCT suggests that in addition to direct, experiential learning, people learn vicariously by observing media role models (Bandura, 2002). Television models can transmit “knowledge, values, cognitive skills, and new styles of behavior” to viewers (Bandura, 2004, p. 78) and audience may emulate and imitate such behaviors. However, not all observed behaviors are imitated.

Narrative involvement

A narrative can be defined as a story with “an identifiable beginning, middle, and end that provides information about scene, characters, and conflict; raises unanswered questions or unresolved conflict; and provides resolution” (Hinyard & Kreuter, 2007, p. 778). The narrative simulation offers involvement by constructing ‘real life’ like events. The interest with which a viewer follows the story is an indicator of their involvement.

Narrative involvement has been synonymously used with absorption, transportation, engagement and engrossment (Bandura, 2004; Green & Brock, 2000; Slater & Rouner, 2002). When such happens, the audience members are engaged in the story and experience vicarious cognitive and emotional responses to the unfolding narrative.

As the audience experiences EE program, mental shortcuts that influence how people assess the program and make decisions, emotional responses are unintentional. When viewers experience positive emotions, they are more likely to judge risks as low and the benefits as high. Conversely, when emotions are negative, viewers are more likely to judge risks as high and benefits as low (Finucane et. al., 2000). Therefore, affect or emotion influences the decision-making process and factors into problem solving by risk and benefits perception. A strong emotional response to a stimulus can significantly alter judgments of a viewer who is engaged in the narrative (Finucane, Alhakami, Slovic, & Johnson, 2000; Slovic et al., 2003).

However, cognitive processing of information is not a linear process. An audience member goes through many cognitive and affective processes simultaneously while watching an EE narrative. Cognitive and affective processes that engage the audience in an EE program are identification and similarity with characters, transportation into the narrative or vicariously interacting with the characters. Specific processes, such as, identification and transportation, wishful identification, similarity, and parasocial interaction provide features of narrative involvement and effects of EE.

East Los High: Sex, Love, and Revenge

East Los High utilizes a transmedia storytelling strategy—one that assumes that the gradual dispersal of media through multiple formats can be an effective way of sustaining widespread audience conversations, while inspiring others in seeking and sharing new information (Jenkins, Ford, & Green, 2013). *East Los High* was produced by Population Media Center for Latino adolescent and young adults in the United States.

East Los High is a teen drama, which was aired on *Hulu*, a website supporting commercial and popular video streaming, broadcast in the summer of 2013. *East Los High* is the first *Hulu* series with an all Latino/a cast and targeted for American-Latino/a audience (Population Media Center, 2013). The show depicts the lives of Latino/a high school adolescents living in East Los Angeles. The plots open in layers in the 24 episode series where relationships, family, aspirations and struggles mark decisions and consequences that these adolescents face. In addition, *East Los High* includes nine transmedia elements and numerous additional resources that audience can use to seek information and services.

The show centers on a roller coaster plot between cousins Jessie and Maya. The drama feeds on the love triangle between the cousins and Jacob, the hottest boy in the high school (See Table 1). The drama unfolds with characters that feed on and off the triangle and peer influences.

Table 1: Character and Character Description of *East Los High*

Character	Actor/Actress	Character Description
Jacob Aguilar, Central male character	Gabriel Chavarria	The central male character. Jacob is the only son to his father. He is good-looking and very popular senior in school. He gets in relationship with Jessie, the main female character. He has protected sexual encounters with multiple partners. Later, he falls in love with Maya (Jessie's cousin).
Jessie Martinez, Central female character	Janine Larina	Junior in high school, Jessie is the only daughter to her single mother. She is in a relationship with Jacob. She is seduced by Christian Camacho, the dance coach and loses her virginity. She becomes pregnant and finally decides to abort.
Maya Martinez, Jessie's cousin	Alicia Marie Sixtos	Jessie's cousin and a rape victim. Maya arrives newly in Los Angeles and returns to high school. She works at Jacob's father's restaurant business. She and Jacob fall in love toward the end of the series.
Vanessa De La Cruz	Tracy Perez	She is a strong female, senior in high school and leads the dance group, Bomb Squad. She cheats on Jacob and conspires with Christian to have sex with Jessie. She has sexual intercourse with Freddie Garcia, the host of dance show, Dance 5 to get the group in for competition. She later discovers that she is HIV positive.
Freddie Garcia		Freddie hosts dance competition show Dance 5 and has unprotected sexual intercourse with Vanessa in his studio. Later, he refuses to have tested and being HIV positive.
Ceci Camayo	Danielle Vega	Ceci is a senior in high school and Vanessa's best friend. Ceci gets pregnant with her older boyfriend, Abraham and finally decides to keep and deliver the baby.
Abraham (Abe)	Unknown	Abe is Ceci's boyfriend. He is older and impregnates Ceci and deserts after impregnating her.
Cristian Camacho	Hector David Jr.	Christian is Vanessa's sex partner and plans a revenge on Jessie for his dance career. He seduces Jessie and then deserts her after she is pregnant.
Paulie Hernandez	Jorge Diaz	Paulie is a senior in high school and Jacob's best friend. He is a joyful boy and a sex addict. He talks about safe sex with humor. He later gets into a relationship with Soli.
Soli Gomez	Noemí González	Soli is a junior in high school and Jessie's best friend. She is a journalist for school newsletter and a virgin. She doesn't agree till later to have sex with Paulie and only after her conditions of using condom and being on the pill have been met.

Sex, drugs, relationships, struggle are some of the characteristics of the show. The key events in the series revolve around the major objectives of the show, concerning sexual and reproductive health, pregnancy and abortion. The story highlights the journey of teenage girls, one who becomes pregnant (Ceci) and decides to keep the baby, one who gets pregnant but decides to abort (Jessie), and one who acquires HIV as a result of having multiple sex partners (Vanessa). On the other side, the male characters are portrayed as responsible and irresponsible. Among the various male characters, one uses a condom all the time, ensuring protection (Jacob). The other indulges in unprotected sex with multiple partners, putting all his partners at risk of pregnancy and infections (Christian). This interesting mix of female sexual decision-making and male sexual responsibility provides Latino/a audience with fodder for dialogue and alternatives.

Few studies have investigated the role of couples and the interactions among them in sexual decision-making processes. Moreover, neither the research literature nor prevention programs provide young women with guidance about the effectiveness of nonaggressive, non-consent strategies. Research is needed on how well different sexual intervention strategies achieve different outcomes in situations where there is more at stake than just sexual pleasure.

Research Questions

Research question #1: What is effect of the East Los High narrative on the perceptions of sexual decision making in couples (18-24 years)?

Research question #2: What generative solutions do couples come up with for men, women, and partners in the sexual decision-making process, weighing the consequences of decisions made?

Method

This research was conducted at a medium-sized university in the Southwest region of United States of America. The research site was selected because in 2013, about 81.1% of the population of the city was accounted as Latino (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014) and the university's student population is majorly Latino/a (78%). Apart from the majority being Latino/a, 85% of the student population at the university is between 18-24 years of age.

Participants

Fifteen Latino/a, unmarried, heterosexual couples participated in this qualitative study. To qualify for recruitment, they had to be of Latino/a background, between the ages 18 to 24, be involved in a heterosexual romantic relationship, and at least one of partners had to be enrolled at the university. Further, both partners must understand and speak English (since *East Los High* narrative is in English). For this study, couples who had not watched *East Los High* series were recruited. Past research has shown that if audience members are already familiar with the narrative or the type of characters portrayed in the narrative, then the likelihood of the narrative being assessed more

critically rises, especially viewer assessments related to perceived similarity (Cohen, 2001). The sample was collected purposefully. Personal snowballing networks were used to enroll couples in the study at the university.

Data Collection

Participant observations and in-depth interviews of couples were used as data collection methods. The couple viewed a 110-minute feature narrative of *East Los High* in a comfortable, private setting. The couple was then interviewed about their experience of watching the *ELH* narrative and asked questions regarding their perceptions and influences of the show on their sexual decision-making.

East Los High Narrative

East Los High is a 24 episode Hulu (www.hulu.com) web series with an all Latino/a cast. Each episode was, on average 22 minutes long. For the purposes of this study, a 110-minute edited feature-length narrative film of *ELH* was used. This 110-minute long video was edited to include all the major social and teenage sexuality objectives of the show. This video was edited at the University for another parallel experimental evaluation of *ELH*. The video is not available to the audience and was used for research purposes only. However, the full series is available on Hulu website for Hulu plus subscribers or on www.eastloshigh.com.

Participant Observation and Couple In-Depth Interviews

Participant observations were conducted while the couple viewed the *ELH* narrative, noting real time emotions of the couples to specific situations, allowing for follow-up probing. Participant observation was combined with in-depth interviews of the couples to gain a fuller, richer understanding of stories, accounts, knowledge, perspectives and experience. When interviewed together as a couple, the participants demonstrated more control over the construction and interpretation of a common story, and problems of anonymity and consent among interviewees were reduced. In addition, a couple or joint interview revealed patterns of communication between the partners (Bjørnholt & Farstad, 2012).

Interview Guide Design

The interview guide was designed and divided into several parts to investigate, first, couple's narrative involvement, second, perceptions of sexual behaviors and decision-making portrayed in the narrative, and third, generating alternate solutions/improv role-playing. Improv role-playing is a process in which participants sketch out and rehearse complex problems and discover innovative solutions through acting them out.

Data Analysis

Once the text was interrogated with sensitivity and reflexivity, personal meanings were attached to the verbal exchange. 'Rich points', speech acts such as jargon, slangs or ironies were noted as they especially depict respondents' cultural knowledge.

Second, attention was paid to ‘turning points’, that is, conversations about critical decisions, as they unfolded between the couple. Case oriented and variable oriented (mixed strategies) were used in analyzing the couple’s responses, identifying themes that cut across cases. After careful inductive coding (descriptive and interpretive), themes that provide a larger picture of the couples’ worldview were configured, and consistent patterns across cases were mapped. Such allowed for discovering the discrepancies within and between cases. A cross case comparison helped in further highlighting the nuances in the findings (Miles, Huberman & Saldaña, 2013).

Effects of *East Los High* on Sexual Decision-Making

Research Question #1 asked: *What is effect of the East Los High narrative on the perceptions of sexual decision-making in couples (18-24 years)?*

Karla, a 21-year-old female, shouted and jumped up the couch when asked, how could the show help her think differently about sexual decisions?

“We were right... we were right... we were right in what we do....in being careful.”

A major research question in hand with the design of the study was to investigate if *ELH* narrative has an effect on the sexual decision-making of young Latino/a couples.

After watching the feature length, the couples seem to articulate its effect on them in terms of gaining knowledge about sexual decision-making. Second, the narrative involvement and the emotions highlighted their responses and anxieties to certain plots and decisions. Third, planning behavior change through actions, and relating the benefits of change to both the partners.

The couples said the show reminded them to be safe. The females exclaimed that one might think this only happens in movies or shows, but this is how real life was. Stories of their high school, friends and family supported their claim of not being safe. The couples then explained how they planned to be ‘safe’. Joint decisions such as the males planning to wear a condom during every sexual encounter, not investing in an unprotected sexual intercourse even when the girl is on birth control, were important effects of the narrative. In retrospect, some couples, especially females who had become pregnant and/or had the babies and the men who had impregnated females, reflected back and said that if they had watched the show earlier, they could have made better decisions for themselves and their partner. Interestingly, both the partners watched Ceci’s delivery and empathized with her pain. This plot created a sense of anxiety about what happens when one gets pregnant.

In general, most couples realized that their current strategies are not safe enough to keep them away from pregnancies and STDs. The couples prioritized to change the “pull out” method to effective use of condoms. Seven couples made plans to get tested for STDs together. Some women told their partners, that they are going to get themselves checked in the next week to make sure they are both clear.

It seems that there was a lot of trust in the relationships, or at least perceived trust, that held the couples back from talking to each other before, during or after sex. After watching the show, the couples decided to talk more often to each other and be more open about their choices. Some couples expressed that they will use condoms,

even though they maintain and plan to continue maintaining monogamy. Maria anxiously said

“I guess it is for everything.... till u don’t realize something in your head, it is unreal. And being irresponsible with sex.... that’s how it was.... I never thought that I was at risk.... I never thought about it.... I was out of my mind and I don’t know how did I get so confident that nothing would happen to me.”

Many couples said that the show helped them realize it is best to wait until both the partners are ready, first to have sex and then to have a baby. In relation to the characters and their decisions, the couples noted the most responsible and desirable decisions and asserting their stand as ‘not being ready’, “we need to know more”, “we don’t want that to happen to us.”

Thus, the effects of *ELH* on perception of sexual decision-making were multifold, comprising of the ability to generate healthy dialogue among couples about issues that would generally not be spoken of.

Specific responses to the first research question allowed the examination of narrative involvement on part of the couples, including how their perception of the narrative influenced their sexual decision-making. Answers to RQ #1 are presented foremost from the couple’s perception of the *ELH* narrative and their own sexual health risk perception. Further, sexual decision-making in *ELH* is analyzed from the viewpoint of (1) female decision-making and (2) male responsibility. Attention is also focused on the importance of abortion as a shared decision. Figure 1 illustrates the flowchart and conceptual map of how the response to RQ#1 is organized.

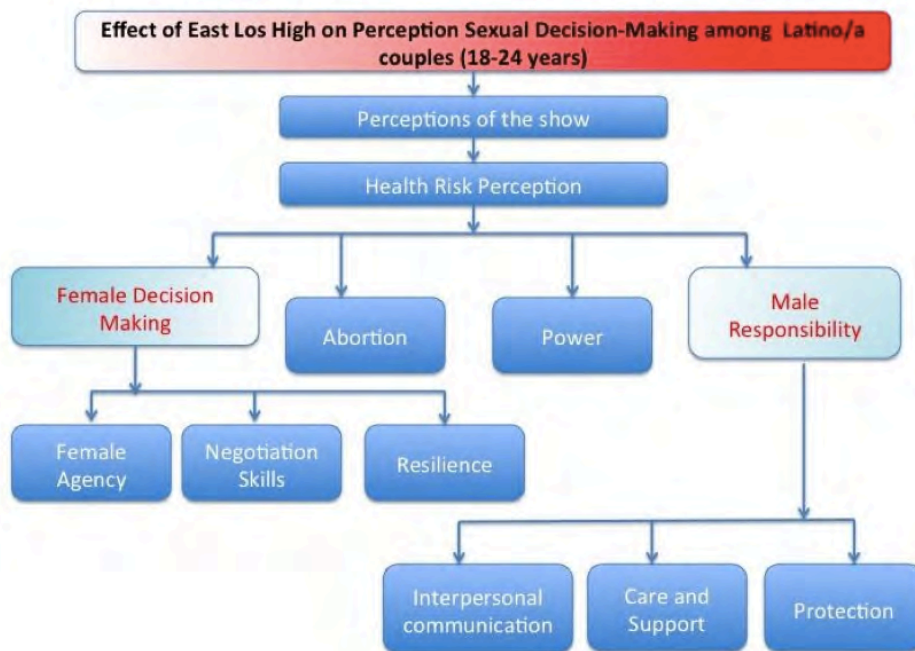


Figure 1: Flowchart and conceptual map of how response to RQ#1 is organized

Perceptions of the Show

Foremost, the couples were excited to talk immediately after the feature ended. This excitement emphasized their engagement with the show. The couples expressed their opinion of the show as being realistic-- true to what they see around them. In general, the show was highlighted as being “modern,” “interesting,” and “non- preachy.” Laura, for instance, rolled her eyes and said: “It actually happens.... Everyone sleeps with everyone.... and it is nasty....”

For some couples, it was not the first time they had watched a show that talked about teenage pregnancy and STD. The couples talked of shows like *Degrassi*, *16 and pregnant* often.

It seems that the narrative format engaged and intrigued most participants to watch the show carefully, helping build parasocial relationships with certain characters. For many couples, the show seemed to reinforce existing knowledge about teenage pregnancy and STIs. Several participants noted that they especially enjoyed watching *ELH* without feeling that they were being told to do something. The couples quickly referred to some major episodes/plots in the narrative that stood out for them such as Jessie’s cheating on her boyfriend Jacob, Maya’s journey from being raped to graduating high school, Ceci’s pregnancy and delivery, and Vanessa’s sexual escapades and her confirmation of her HIV+ status. The recall of specific storylines suggested a high degree of narrative involvement with most characters.

Health Risk Perception

Health risk perception of the respondents provided a basis to analyze some of the key high-risk sexual behaviors, including the apparent inconsistencies that may (or may not) be influenced by the viewing of *ELH* narrative. Conversation with couples revealed that a lot of them widely use the “pull out” method (coitus interruptus) with tacit consent, having no conversations about sex or contraception, before, during or after sex.

Couples manifested the concept of invincibility after having unsafe sexual intercourse repeatedly. As Amanda said, “I can never get pregnant”, and Raphael said “I thought we were both sterile before she got pregnant”, and Lina noted: “We just wait for my next period.” Joseph confessed “I am lucky as far as safe sex is concerned.... [i.e.] intercourse without protection and thinking I could finish inside of her whenever I wanted to.... and I did it for years and she never got pregnant.... she took forever to get pregnant.”

The couples did not evaluate consequences of having unprotected sex and hence did not perceive themselves at risk to face consequences. Interestingly, ‘others’ were always seen to be at risk. Although several female respondents evaluated their behaviors in conjunction with their feelings and consequences, moving forward they did not need to use any more protection. They partly attributed their behaviors to “trust”, “comfort” and “he is going to be a good father” and “fun.”

Among the thirteen sexually active couples (out of 15) that were interviewed, inconsistencies and contradictions abounded. Most couples claimed to be “protected”, however, on probing, they did not exhibit safe sex practices. Efficacy among females to

take decisions and males to take responsibility for their actions was perceived to be high, however, responses suggest of little substantive evidence to support these claims.

Female Decision-Making

Sexual decision-making is a shared dynamic process between partners. In this process, the female counterpart can play a key role. They can guide sexual decision-making through initiation and willingness to engage in sex and/or responsiveness to sexual invitations. Females can begin conversations about safe sex or assert choices in line with their desires and self-respect, guiding the decision-making process. Out of the thirteen sexually active females (out of the 15 interviewed) and one woman who did not indulge in penetrative intercourse, eight felt comfortable initiating the conversation for having sex and almost all of the females never practiced saying “no” to their partner. Even though they mentioned that communication about not having sex was as easy as saying “I am tired” or “let’s not do it today”, the partner could very easily persuade them by being insistent.

In this light, the decisions that female makes about having or not having sex hold grave consequences for them and their partners. *ELH* narrative affected their (1) female agency, the feeling of being capable, (2) negotiation skills, reaching agreement without argument and (3) resilience. Table 2 highlights the behaviors that were adopted from *ELH* for female decision-making.

Table 2: Effect of *ELH* on Female Decision Making

Female Decision-Making Behaviors Adopted from the Show	
Female Agency	
<i>Safe guarding self</i>	No sexual intercourse without using condom Self care management Reminding the male partner about protection Self respect Character most wished to be like- SOLI
<i>Definite NO</i>	Stop talking to him Don't care about his frustrations Character most wished to be like- SOLI
Negotiation Skills	Interpersonal communication about the nature of sexual activity Keeping each other informed Communicating with love Making sure he wears a condoms every time Getting both the partners checked for STDs (even when maintaining monogamy) Character most wished to be like- SOLI Character de-identified with- VANESSA
Resilience	Continuing school even after child birth Retaining self respect Responsibility of the baby and work Assertive behavior with partners Practicing safe sex to avoid more pregnancies Character most identified with- CECI and JESSIE

Male Responsibility

Most couples actively co-engaged in the conversation and such was evident through overlapping responses, restating and sometimes countering their partners’ response. Even when the questions that were directed for females, some men took the initiative in answering and supporting female’s trust in them. Three types of behaviors were perceived as being responsible, and seemed to be influenced by their viewing of the *ELH* narrative: enhanced interpersonal communication between partners, care and support for the female partner, and protection of both the partners from pregnancy and STDs. Table 3 depicts the male responsible behaviors that were adopted from the show.

Table 3: Effect of *ELH* on Male Responsibility

Male Responsible Behaviors adopted from the show	
Interpersonal Communication	Frequently talking about pregnancy and options Not having sex when there is no condom Reminding partner about birth control pills Not pressuring partner for sex Maintaining menstrual calendar Character identified with- JACOB AND PAULIE
Care and Support	Maintaining monogamy Financial and emotional support during pregnancy Character most wished to be like- JACOB Characters found to be most responsible- PAULINA AND MAYA
Protection	Always carrying condoms Protecting both the partners from pregnancy and STDs Characters that enable behaviors related to protection- PAULIE AND JACOB

Abortion, a Shared Decision

All the couples stated that they had already discussed the possibility of pregnancy (even if they felt invulnerable) and they knew what they were going to do in case it happened (planned or unplanned). Eleven out of 15 couples expressed themselves as being anti-abortion. The couples disliked the notion of abortion in *ELH* and in their own decision-making. The attribution, in most cases was related to their religious leanings, being Catholic or Christian.

Perceived self-efficacy among the couples to be able to take responsibility of the child was another major reason for not having abortion but the same was not felt for the characters. While watching the feature, Lauren said she wanted the characters to get an abortion but not for herself as she thought she was capable of taking care of the kid, if she was to be pregnant herself. Lauren had not thought of abortion in the two teen pregnancies she had at age 16 and 17.

On the other hand, four out of the fifteen couples seemed to be in favor of abortion. Abortion is perceived to be a taboo act, however a decision that couples favor taking together. *ELH* did not seem to alter couple’s judgment of abortion, and it was still perceived as a decision that ‘others’ should take. Future research may consider researching age as well as culture specific motivations for abortions.

Power in Sexual Decision-Making

There are many ways power can be manifested in a relationship by either of the partners. In this study, some forms of power seem to be exercised by men. The 'machoness' displayed itself sometimes during the interviews. Latino men are governed by the cultural trait of being strong and in-charge, which seemed to display itself in certain sexual decisions such as when and how to have sex (e.g. a "quickie") and the degree of intensity characterizing the sexual encounter. Men seem to take initiative in starting the conversation about sex and ultimately deciding if contraception is involved, and which method of protection is used, if any. Five out of the 15 males said that birth control pills is their way of getting off from using condoms, so they insisted that their girlfriends get on pills. A couple of males reported getting rough on the female or not taking her no for a no even when she did not want to have sex. In other cases aspects of dominance in the way males used language indicated power imbalances in interpersonal communication. Chris said "Sometime I ask her, Babe can I just do you.... I want to ravage you." Post this comment, he stressed that it is her (girlfriend's) responsibility to control him, otherwise he is going to be all over the place.

Also, experiencing male 'porno fetish' and asking their girlfriend for the exact number of times she had an orgasm while having sexual intercourse seemed to be ways for men to feel in-charge and in control of the sexual encounters. Three young mothers, who were a part of this study, had an IUD and males decided such after childbirth. In two of these cases, males said that they wanted to continue having sex without condoms even after multiple pregnancies.

To ward off such dominant male tendencies, improv prototyping among the partners yielded some interesting solutions.

Generative Solutions for Responsible Sexual Decision-Making

Research Question asked #2: *What generative solutions do couples come up with for men, women and partners in the sexual decision making process, weighing the consequences of the decisions made?*

In investigating this research question, the couples participated in an improv role-playing anchored around the Jessie and Christian sexual encounter. Improv role-playing helps in creating the experience of a real life situation but in a playful way. The participants become actors that playfully experiment, invent, and discover better ways to address the challenge by acting out the situation and possible solutions.

In this particular encounter, Christian creates a 'point of no return' by taking Jessie to his place, and in his bedroom. He creates an atmosphere of romance by dimming the lights and showing Jessie a video in which they are dancing very close on a 'hot' song. Jessie was tempted into the Christian's plan of arousal and bracketed herself so she couldn't say no. However, Jessie tries to interrupt by mentioning that she is not on birth control pills. She also asks Christian, if he has a condom. But, Christian has an answer for everything. He tells her that he will take care of her and Jessie finally gives in when he says 'I love you, Jessie'. Jessie couldn't stop affirming and going forward.

This above situation is a problem with a lot of couples whether in their initial phase of relationship or 'comfortable' with each other to a point where sex becomes 'natural' and 'understandable'. For this research question, the participating couples were asked to act out the Jessie and Christian situation. The girl was asked to think of ways of saying a "no" in a friendly way by using creative ideas yet not upsetting their partner.

The couples were given a minute or two to think and then act as if they were in that situation. Interestingly, the participants did not just assess the scene with Jessie and Christian in its own right but with the background that Jessie had a boyfriend. This part of the conversation took place towards the end of the interview, once the whole context of the conversation was established. Four themes emerged; they are highlighted in this section, providing generative solutions that couples may be able to adopt.

"Tell Hero it's not happening today"- Playful in bed

During the act, the male tried everything like touching her on her erotic zones, trying to arouse the female, but the female looked at the male's genitals and said "Hi Hero! Hero, it is not happening today."

The male hugged her.

Another female used the same strategy in a similar way where she named the male's genital as "friend" and sex to be "funny". She told her boyfriend "we can snuggle but tell your friend not to do anything funny."

In both these cases, the male stopped pushing the girl for sexual intercourse. In asking further, the male said that he liked how she talked to his genitals, and that it was a loving turn on for him. The second male reported that if she is talking to 'him' (genitals) then she is serious! And laughed.

Both the circumstances highlight the importance of being playful in bed, especially when female initiates it. The playfulness ensured that the boyfriend did not get upset and yet the female is able to 'have fun' with him, her way.

In probing more with the partner, the male partner described that being playful with the girlfriend is more important than just having sex. The female described that this conversation between the "talking genitals" makes the couple invisible in the scene.

"I have Diarrhea" – Tricky Turn offs

The females found a way to turn off their partners when they thought sex wasn't the best idea that day. In an intense act, where the male aroused the female by playing with her, she shouted, I had beans today, but he continued. She thought for a moment and put one of her hands on his cheek and said: "Baby, I have Diarrhea..."

The male immediately stopped and said "oh, that's fine.... some other day!" Really? Would you stop at that? I exclaimed!

The male remarked that, "I would stop, it would smell terribly. We can wait."

Another effective strategy used by all the females was "I am on my period" and the male stopped after being persistent for a little while. This was a rather common strategy that the females used to stop boys in those heated moments. In cases where the females couldn't think of what they could say then the boyfriends reminded them "oh! You can say you are on your period....you know I don't like it then."

Knowing that her boyfriend liked playing with her skin, a female told her boyfriend “I am not shaven” and other said, “I have nausea.”

Both these statements turned their partners off. This strategy was effective because the female wasn't saying no for sex completely but she managed to play around with her partner's preferences of looks, smell and other attributes of pleasure in their relationship. The awareness of these inclinations can greatly enhance a female's agency and self-efficacy.

“Save it for another time”- Delaying

For some females, it took a long time before they could figure out what can they tell their partner to stop. If a female couldn't think anything more creative, she always gave male the option of another time while still having fun “today”. Being playful in bed came with the fact that there is “other stuff” they can do and “have fun.” Karla went close to the male's lips and whispered

“Why waste time.... let's have fun!”

In waiting it out for another time, the females framed their responses to their partners as, “this is not the right time.”

This act of delaying sex allowed men to feel that they had something to really look forward to the next time, and worked for the women for she got out of a tricky situation without upsetting the male or compromising her choice. If females can persuade boyfriends to wait, they may be able to find ways to practice safer sex, as well.

He is great at convincing me! - NOTHING

As pointed out in the review of literature, females do not have the agency to say no or at least think that they don't have it. In this process, it was observed that even in an improv situation, females couldn't figure what they could potentially say to their partners to most effectively say no. This raises concerns for situations where females don't say anything.

After 15 minutes of trying to think of a reason, a female said: “He is so good at convincing me.... I can never say no.” Females responded that “I have never have to say a no to him, I am so comfortable with him.”

If the couple cannot communicate, then the stakes of pleasure increase multifold. This is also because, in their own relationship, they have never practiced saying no to their partner. This insight gives rise to critical questions. So how do they say a no?

Conclusions and Discussion

The present study examined the effect of an EE intervention, *East Los High* on the sexual decision-making of young Latino/a couples. Fifteen couples watched the *ELH* narrative and provided their impressions and opinions about the sexual encounters portrayed in the show. Our study suggests that the dynamic, in-the-moment nature of sexual decision-making leads to consequences that have a long-term impact on young Latino/a couples, especially women.

The findings suggest important implications for EE intervention design and evaluation. Sexual decision-making is a highly complex process and may be affected through de-personalized communication to raise dialogue. The process of creating a system where audience is not going through the process themselves but learning vicariously can create a system of empathy, break the cycle of invulnerability through identification and mass-mediated transportation. Narrative involvement with the characters evokes a hope or wishes to become like certain positive characters can give rise to aspiration. Identification with certain desirable behaviors of certain characters can motivate audience to take up their sexually responsible behaviors too. For example, Jacob's responsible behavior at work and his vocalized aspiration to go to college was a highly identified behavior among the male respondents. Not surprisingly, his condom-using sexually responsible behaviors were most referred to as being necessary and appropriate.

ELH created a dialogue among the couples and parasocial interaction with the characters. *Parasocial interaction* is a seemingly face-to-face relationship that develops between the audience and the character, leading to one-way audience interaction with the character (Horton & Wohl, 1956). The findings suggest that couples rarely engage in interpersonal communication before, during or even after sexual activities. Therefore, they never talk about consequences that may accrue. However, couples did engage in "cognitively - oriented" parasocial interaction. That is, after exposure to *ELH*, they paid careful attention to the characters and their stories and talked about the educational messages of each sexual encounter. For instance, Jessie's character was well followed by the couples, through display of real-time emotions such as disgust, anger and frustration. Her decision of having sex with Christian and then Jacob disturbed most couples. The couples became critical of her decisions and she was perceived as an irresponsible and negative character, at least in those encounters. Research has suggested that this kind of reiteration on the educational subjects may facilitate audience recognition and they may be able to change behaviors that put them at risk (Papa & Singhal, 2009; Papa et al., 2000; Sood & Rogers, 2000).

This dialogue can also drive change by creating self-efficacy, clarifying perceptions so that the audience can set actions and plan to undertake to change present behaviors. Findings suggest that self- efficacy is compromised in cases where communication fails to happen with respect to use of condoms, contraception and even refusing or asserting no to one's partner. Collective efficacy of both partners in understanding safer sex practices (such as use of condoms, contraceptive pills) and regular screening for STDs through maintaining interpersonal communication at all times is critical in shaping behavior change.

Thus, behavior change in sexual decisions is collective and communicative among partners. The couples in this study frequently talked about their present sexual decisions finding similarity with the character's lives. Some couples dialogued about their own decision-making through these characters, thus making their own communication easy through indirect and with a third person reference (character).

In the second research question, the generation of new practices helped facilitate the process of breaking sexual silence among couples, especially with respect to saying

“no”, STI testing, cheating, among others. The *ELH* narrative, with its cast of fictional characters, opened up spaces for the couples to discuss power dynamics in sex, desire for intimacy, and the lack of communication before, during, and after sexual encounters. In this sense, the generation of new practices through improvisation methods can provide new culturally specific solutions to problems that seem to be stuck, involve more than one actor, and where causes and effects are interdependent.

In summary, the effects of this *ELH* feature can be described at three levels. First, the pre sexual encounter, the couples decided to talk more about their sexual behaviors, initiation and continuation using protective measures such as condoms and birth control pills. Second, during sex, this is also the time when couples can mostly oversee the importance of a condom and may engage in unsafe sexual activity. The couples developed a sense of vulnerability after watching *ELH* feature and hence planned to use a condom every time they engaged in sexual intercourse. This claim was especially strongly put forward by the females, showing more impact of *ELH* on them than males. They also decided to get an emergency contraceptive if at any time intercourse happened without a condom, and not wait until the next menstrual cycle or take pregnancy as it comes. Third, the after sex phase, conversations among partners are crucial, especially if pregnancy results.

Sexual decision-making is a highly complex phenomenon. The qualitative attributes of how such decision-making occurs before, during, and after a highly charged sexual encounter will determine the life trajectory of young people. This study suggests that entertainment-education narratives can alter some of these trajectories for the good.

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