



The Current Landscape of Sexuality Education in Canadian Occupational Therapy Programs: A Mixed Methods Study

By

Louis-Pierre Auger, PhD, and Alik Thomas, PhD



McGill

IHSE

Institute of Health
Sciences Education

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Keep Lab

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**Sexuality is
related to:**

- Health**
- Quality of life**
- Well being**

(WHO, 2006; Russel et al., 2020)





Individuals with disabilities can face various challenges in relation to their sexuality and can benefit from different health services
(Auger et al., 2021; Brandao et al., 2025)

Various ways to experience sexuality

Sexuality and occupational therapy

- Sexuality is among the scope of Occupational Therapy
- OTs consider sexuality an important subject but rarely address it in practice
- Different factors, including an important lack of training opportunities for students and clinicians, contribute to this gap in practice

(Sakellariou et al., 2006; Young et al., 2020)



The 14 occupational therapy programs in Canada

> 900 graduates each year



Objectives

The overarching aim of this project is to develop an evidence-based curriculum on sexuality for the 14 Canadian OT university programs. The first 2 specific objectives (S.O.) are to:

1. Identify what sexuality-related content is currently offered in the 14 programs and pedagogical methods used to deliver the content;
2. Explore the factors that currently influence the inclusion of sexuality training in each program and strategies to improve provision of such training.

Approach

Integrated Knowledge Translation (Gagliardi et al., 2015)

Phase 1 – Identify the sexuality-related education offered and influencing factors

Design: Convergent mixed methods

Sample: One faculty member from each Canadian OT program (n=14)

Data Collection (September 2024 – March 2025):

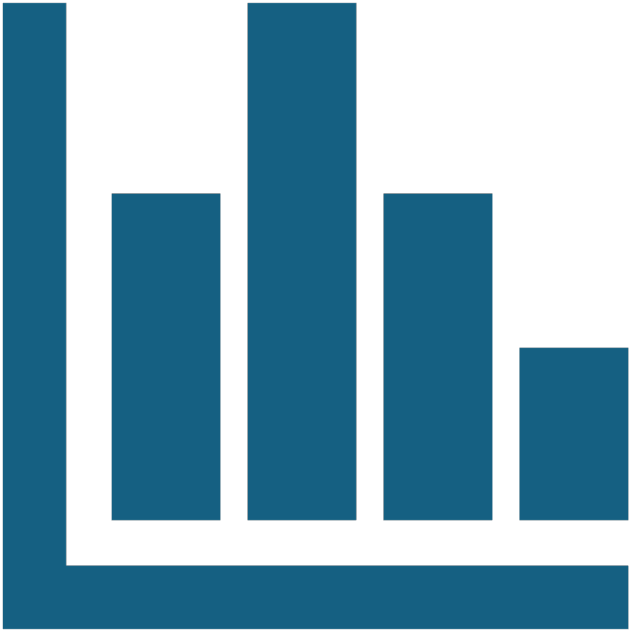
- Survey for content and teaching methods
- Semi-structured interviews with each faculty member

Data Analysis:

- Descriptive statistics
- Inductive thematic analysis

Ethical considerations

This study was approved by the Institutional Review Board of McGill on July 31st 2024. All participants provided informed consent.



**100% (14/14)
of programs
participated**

Results

Sexuality education offered



Programs:

Bachelor-Masters:

n = 4/14

Masters:

n = 10/14



Number of classes per program:

1 to 6



Number of hours per program:

3 to 22.5

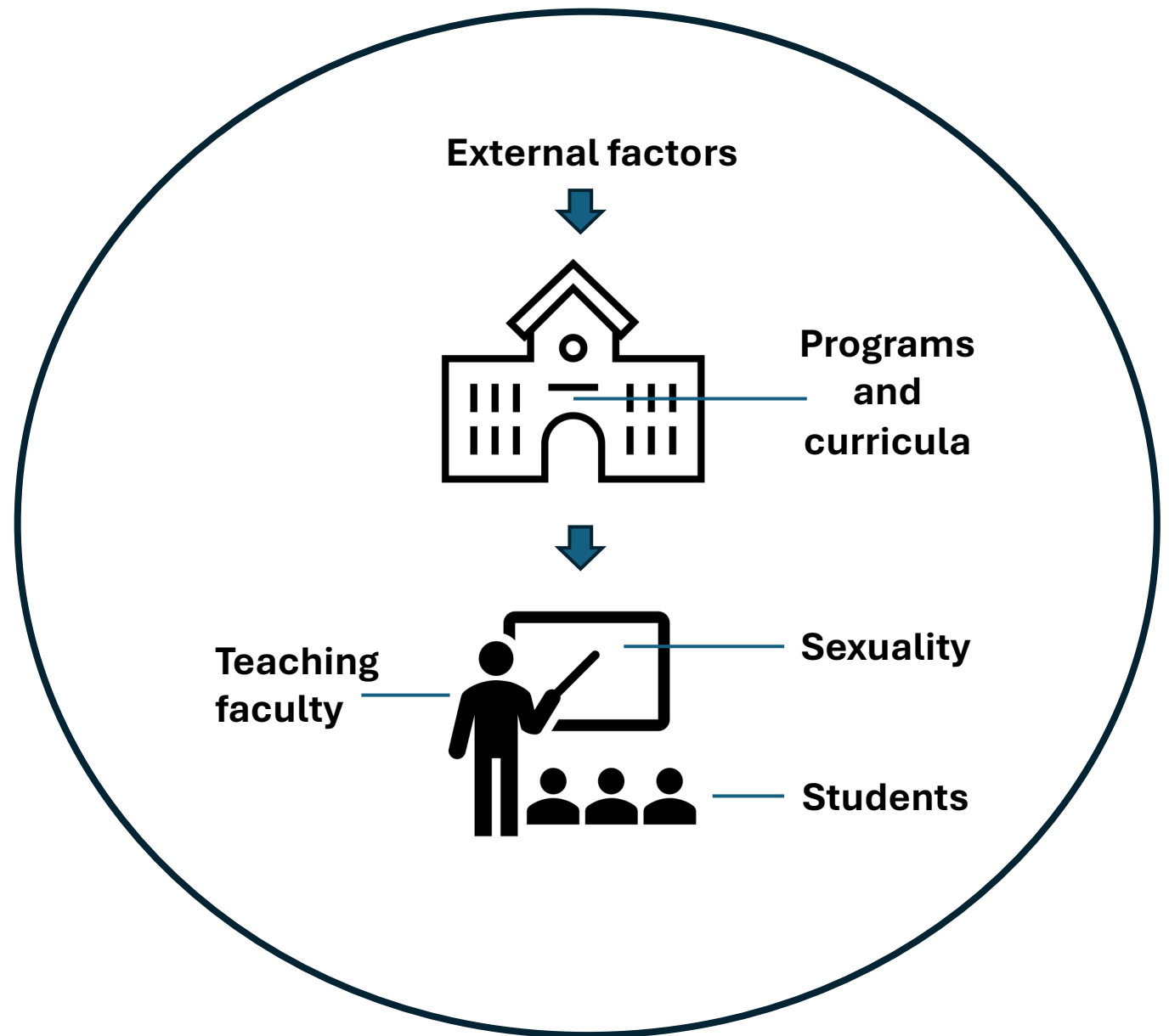
Topics most frequently addressed regarding sexuality

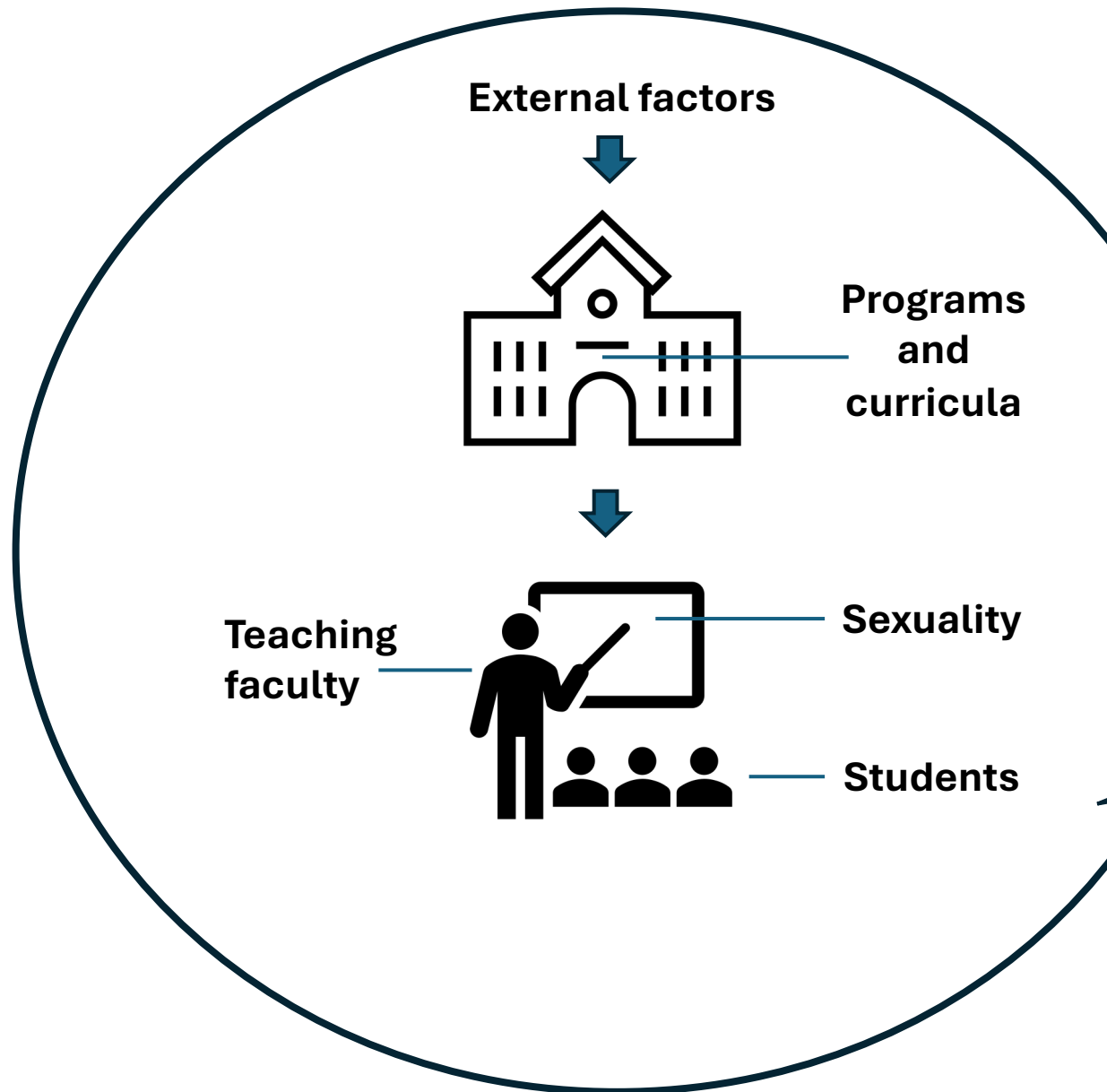
1. Foundational Knowledge	Sexual health, sexual response, definitions, lifespan approach
2. OT Practice & Interventions	Assessment, adaptations, intervention models, clinical application
3. Disability-Specific Considerations	Condition-specific impacts and responses
4. Communication & Professionalism	Comfort levels, interviewing, self-awareness, ethical practice
5. Social Justice & Identity	Marginalization, diversity, inclusivity, advocacy, gender identity, cultural safety
6. Curriculum and Systemic Issues	Faculty training, curricular gaps, educational tools and strategies

Pedagogical methods used among the 43 classes listed

Pedagogical Method	Frequency (%)
Lecture	22/43 (51%)
Case Study	19/43 (44%)
Guest Speaker	8/43 (19%)
Laboratory	6/43 (14%)

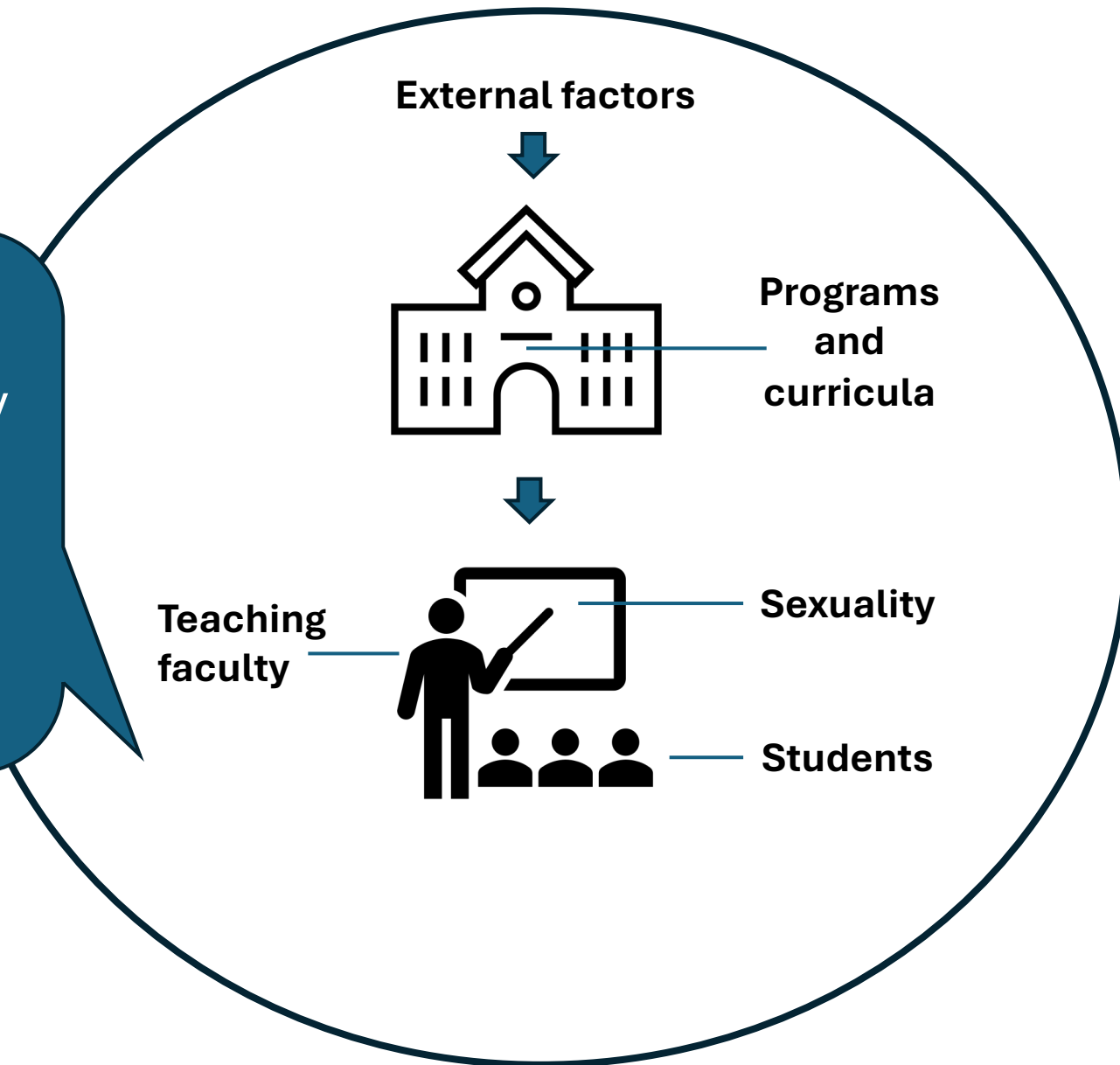
Factors influencing integration of sexuality in OT curricula

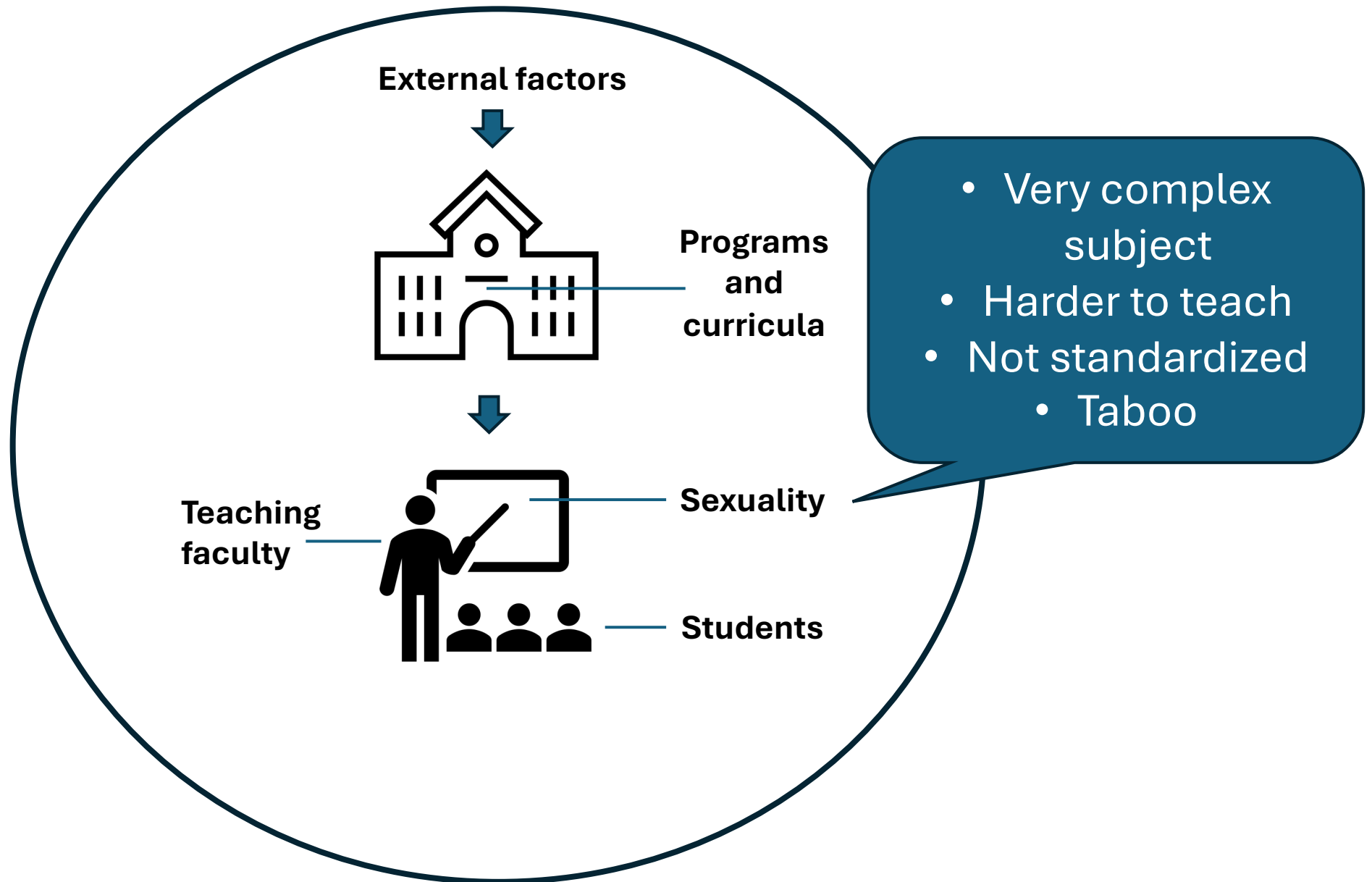


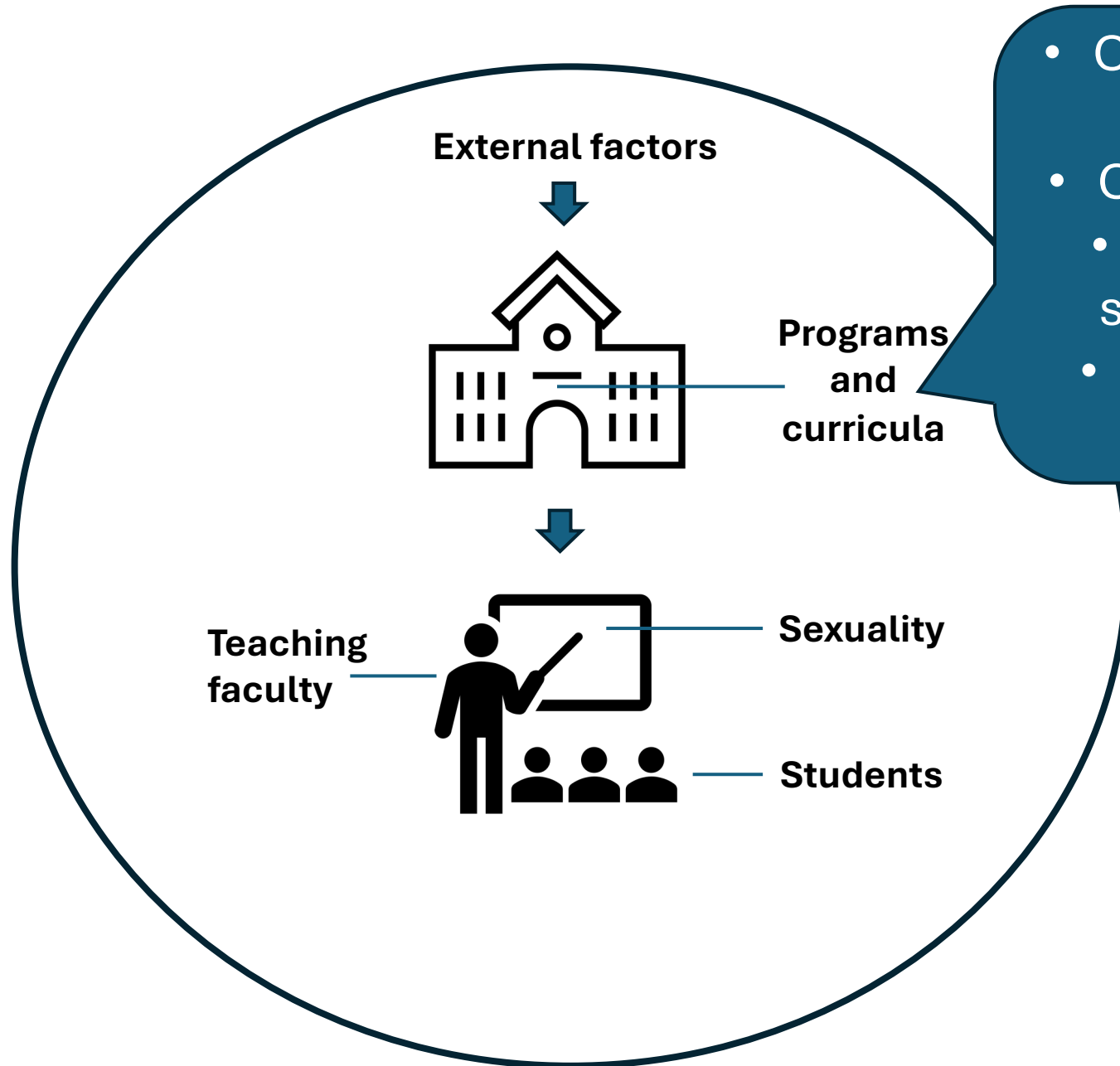


- Generally strong interest in sexuality
- Are susceptible to overload
- Vary in terms of personal factors (e.g., age, gender, orientation, culture)

- Have autonomy in topic selection
- Level of self-efficacy regarding sexuality
 - Influenced by workload
- Appreciate reliable resources

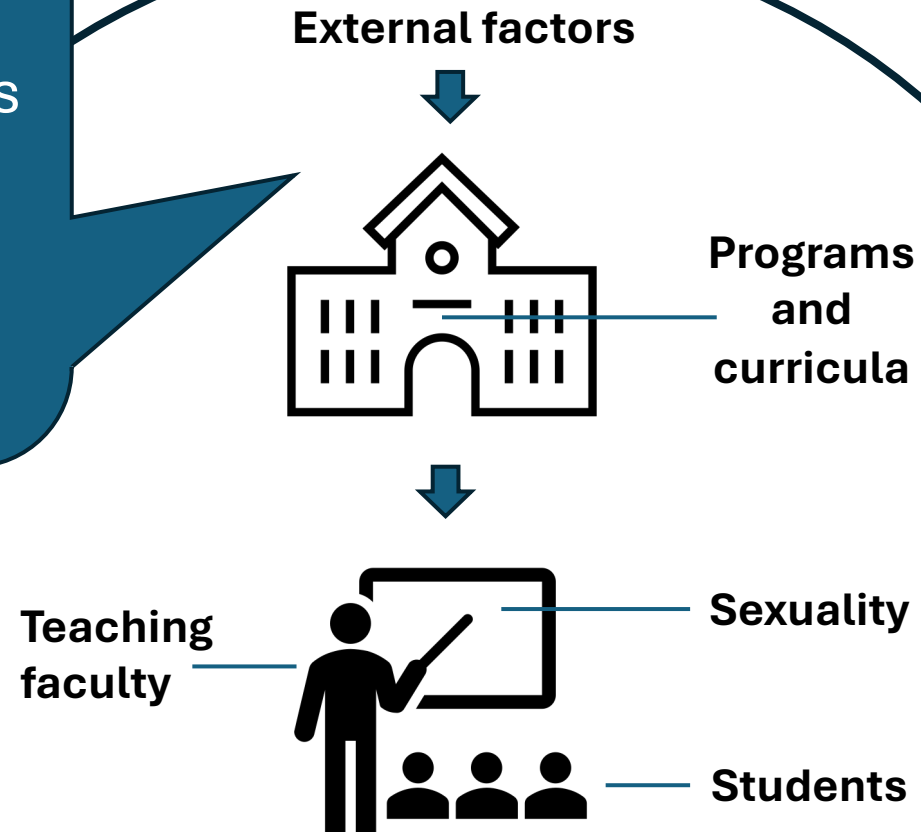






- Curricula are already overloaded
- Competing priorities
 - Different ways of structuring curricula
 - Champions in the team

- Societal norms influences what is “appropriate”
- The national competencies in OT
 - Accreditation and professional regulations
- Governmental influences



Strategies

Relevant evidence (9)

identifying gaps, legitimizing content, guiding reform, and enabling teaching.

Training (10)

boosting faculty confidence, enabling integration, ensuring consistency, aligning with standards, and promoting sustainable, reflective practices.

Sexuality-specific curriculum (11)

fosters progressive learning, integration, collaboration, and realism.

Toolbox (11)

Supports OT sexuality education with evidence-based, adaptable resources, fostering consistency, confidence, inclusivity, and structured, competency-based teaching.

Discussion – influencing factors

Multiple levels

Numerous and varied

Intertwined

Discussion – sexuality education provided



DO WE COVER ALL THAT
NEEDS TO BE, AND IN ALL
PROGRAMS?



DO WE USE APPROPRIATE
PEDAGOGICAL
METHODS?



WHAT IS MISSING?



SHOULD WE FOCUS ONLY
ON OT?

References

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**Prepare your
cellphones to
scan! =)**

Advances regarding sexuality in OT

Relevant evidence – Printed poster #23


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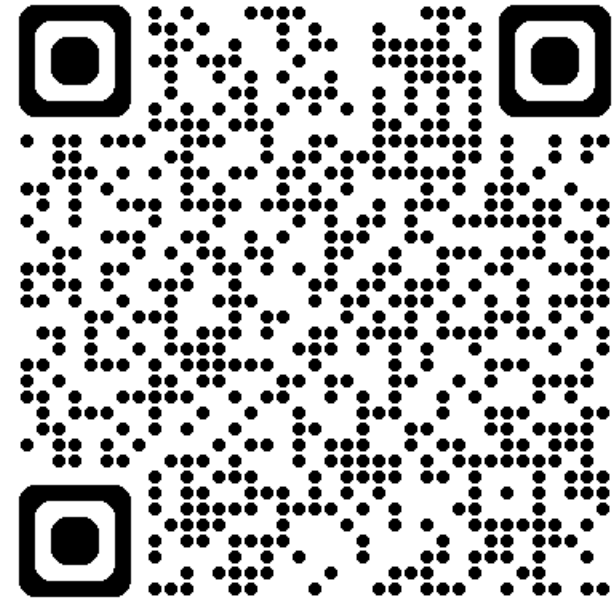
REVIEW ARTICLE

Australian Occupational
Therapy Journal  WILEY

Sexuality in the field of occupational therapy: A scoping review

Louis-Pierre Auger^{1,2,3}  | Billy Vinette^{1,2,3} | Laury Potvin⁴ |
Sandrine Nelson-Drolet⁴ | Alik Thomas^{1,2,3}

Auger et al., 2026 –
open access article here



Sexuality-specific curriculum - incoming

Interested?

Ongoing codesign in Canada with people with disabilities and OT [students, clinicians, educators and researchers]

Multiple competencies related to

- OT expertise
- Collaboration and communication
- Culture, equity and justice
- Professional responsibility

Will be ready by the end of 2026

Questions and discussion

Thank you!

louis-pierre.auger@mcgill.ca



Survey - interest in Auger et al.'s
sexuality and OT curriculum

