Aug 11th, 12:00 AM

Navigating contemporary complexities in the design of sexuality education materials

Louise Moana Kolff

SAE Media Institute, Australia; University of New South Wales

Follow this and additional works at: <https://dl.designresearchsociety.org/drs-conference-papers>

Citation

Kolff, L. (2020) Navigating contemporary complexities in the design of sexuality education materials, in Boess, S., Cheung, M. and Cain, R. (eds.), *Synergy - DRS International Conference 2020*, 11-14 August, Held online. <https://doi.org/10.21606/drs.2020.365>

This Research Paper is brought to you for free and open access by the Conference Proceedings at DRS Digital Library. It has been accepted for inclusion in DRS Biennial Conference Series by an authorized administrator of DRS Digital Library. For more information, please contact DL@designresearchsociety.org.

Navigating contemporary complexities in the design of sexuality education materials

Louise Moana KOLFF

SAE Media Institute, Australia; University of New South Wales

l.kolff@sae.edu

doi: <https://doi.org/10.21606/drs.2020.365>

Abstract: More than ever quality comprehensive sexuality education is needed to help children make sense of increasingly complex and fluid notions of sexuality, gender and relationships. Designers of sexuality education are faced with the task of navigating issues such as earlier onset of puberty, changes to normative family structures, changing ways of conceiving and birthing, and the impact of technology and social media. This paper explores how some of these complexities influence the design of sexuality education by analysing the design of three books aimed at younger children, and through interviews with the Australian, Canadian and Danish creators of the books.

Keywords: sexuality education; graphic design; illustration; children

1. Introduction

Sexuality education (sex ed) is generally thought to belong to the fields of education and public health. Beyond these classifications sex ed can also be seen a graphic design problem. It belongs to the field of education because the goal is to communicate the right information in an age appropriate way. It belongs to the field of health because the goal is to assist children and young people to make healthy choices. It is a problem of graphic design because for the first two goals to be achieved the visual communication must be effective. The text and visuals must be put together in such a way that the information becomes visually appealing, easy to understand, memorable, and as much as possible, non-offensive.

This last point is partly what makes creating sex ed materials a difficult task. Not only do the materials need to communicate highly complex human interactions, relationships and biological processes to a young audience, they also need to do this in such a way that they do not offend. This can be problematic in a culture where many adults still feel uncomfortable talking about sexuality to children, and where often conservative political and religious forces still oppose the kind of sex ed that is needed in an increasingly complex society (Rhodes, 2018; Stark, 2016).

This work is licensed under a
Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License.

Sexuality, biology and human relationships have always been complex issues. However, stricter social norms in the past sought to simplify them. Up until recent times the status quo in most Western societies decreed that: A child had a mother and a father; conception happened within the institution of marriage between a man and a woman; masturbation and lust was shameful; children were without sexuality; gender was fixed, as were gender roles. Because of these conceptions sexuality education when it was first officially introduced in the first half of the 20th century was relatively simple—its main purpose being to combat promiscuity and venereal disease or explain the basic biology of reproduction (Zimmerman, 2015).

Though some cultural, political or religious groups still adhere to this traditional paradigm, major shifts in perceptions around normative family structures, reproduction, sexuality and gender in the second half of the 20th century and the first two decades of the 21st have led to a need for an entirely new way of discussing, understanding and visualising sex ed. Those creating sex ed resources in the past were expected to enforce the normative view and explain biological functions. Those creating sex ed resources today need to explain biological functions, while also making sure no one feels excluded. They navigate the fine line between showing too much, and offending those with conservative views; or showing too little, and offending those with progressive views and those with lived experiences that differ from traditional conceptions of “normal” bodies, gender, sexuality and relationships.

In this paper I will look at two contemporary sex ed books aimed at children: *The Amazing True Story of How Babies are Made* from Australia (Katauskas, 2015), and *What Makes a Baby* from Canada (Silverberg & Smyth, 2012). I will compare these to an older book: *How a Baby is Made* (*Sådan får Man et Barn*) from Denmark (Knudsen, 1971). As well as exploring the visual language of the books I will use material from interviews I conducted with the creators of the books. The reasons for choosing books from these three countries are: I live in Australia; I am from Denmark; and Canada has similarities with Australia because of its British colonial past, and similarities with Denmark because it is often seen as progressive. By comparing an older book, which was ground-breaking in its time, with two newer books that each take a different approach to explaining reproduction, it is possible to get an idea of the complexities the creators are grappling with, and the solutions they have found.

2. Sexuality Education as a Design Problem

The research that exists within the field of sexuality education tends to focus on the experience of those receiving the education (i.e. children and teens), the experience of those providing it (i.e. teachers and parents), and the effectiveness of different approaches (e.g. Mitchell, Patrick, Heywood, Blackman, & Pitts, 2014; Brugman, Caron, & Rademakers, 2010; Weaver, Smith, & Kippax, 2005; Walker, 2001).

To my knowledge no academic studies have looked at the visual culture of sex ed materials. Nonetheless, exploring sex ed as a graphic design problem could be greatly beneficial to those creating future resources. Resources communicating the same information can be

dismissed as irrelevant or boring to its audience if designed badly, or useful and interesting if designed well. The effectiveness of the resource, thus, may depend on how well it has been designed.

My current interest in the design of sex ed materials is an extension of my PhD research, which looked at the notion of taboo in relation to HIV prevention campaigns aimed at men who have sex with men in Australia (Kolff, 2015). This is also an area that is mainly researched within the field of public health, though some research has examined the design of HIV prevention materials (e.g Chan & Donovan, 2006; Chan & Donovan, 2007; Mackie, 2008).

Generally within the field of graphic design target audiences, historic context, cultural trends, or designs themselves are analysed. The methodology of qualitative interviewing, common within social sciences, is less often used. I found in my PhD research that by interviewing the creators of HIV prevention campaigns it was possible to get a useful insight into the dilemmas and thought-processes that shaped the final design. I was able to explore how certain visual strategies became prevalent and how others were omitted entirely. By researching the design-process it was possible to better understand how the notion of taboo plays out in the creation of campaigns, and as a result, how the visual culture of HIV prevention is shaped.

Similarly, by interviewing the creators of sex ed materials useful information about the dilemmas they face and the solutions they find emerge. The findings in this paper are part of a broader research project, which explores how the creators of sex ed materials aimed at children and teens navigate notions of taboo.

3. Visualising How Babies are Made

The three books discussed in this paper all share a similar size and format. They were all created because the creators could not find books that told the story of conception and birth in a way they found suitable and useful. As a result, each book is ground-breaking in its own way.

Per Holm Knudsen's book was seminal in starting a no-nonsense approach to sex ed. A young left-wing graphic artist living in Denmark at a time in the late 1960s and early 1970s when sexual liberation was at its peak, Knudsen decided it was time to create a book that was straightforward in its visual language, as well as in the words it used to describe body parts and intercourse. His book, though somewhat controversial, became a success, and has been reprinted many times and translated into many languages. This is the book my mother read to me in 1980, when I was 22 months old and about to become a big sister. The English version of the book briefly became an online sensation when Facebook users followed by media outlets, delighted in the kitsch value of the 1970s explicitness and style of drawing (Morrissey, 2009; News.com.au, 2015). As a graphic artist his illustration style is dictated to a large degree by the technology of production available at the time, which involved cutting out each shape in foil using a light board (P. Knudsen, personal correspondence, 18 May 2015).

This method resulted in simple aesthetics that could communicate clearly to very young children.

Fiona Katauskas, an Australian cartoonist and illustrator, decided to create a contemporary sex ed book after having difficulties finding a good up-to-date book to teach her children about sexuality. She worked on the book in conjunction with expert advice and research to find relevant information. Her goal was to make a book relevant for 21st century families, which as a result includes explanations of in vitro fertilization (IVF) and sperm donation. To her surprise the book became internationally known online and in the news media after someone who was outraged that the book was for sale in Kmart posted a picture of the conception scene on Facebook (Katauskas, 2018). The book uses a simple illustration style, and often has humorous speech bubbles and funny details, which make the book's tone light and casual.

Cory Silverberg is a Canadian sex educator. He is himself a gay man, and has a diverse friendship circle, which includes transgender people who have had children. His book project started when he wanted to create a book that could be read to these children about their story of conception and birth. Rather than making a book specifically aimed at children of transgender people, he decided to make a book that could be read by any child or family. In other words, it had to be completely inclusive (C. Silverberg, personal correspondence, 29 November 2017). The illustrator, Fiona Smyth, created bold and colourful, yet simple, drawings that are fun and friendly.

4. Bodies

4.1 Bodies of the mother and father

When teaching children about sexuality the first step is usually to discuss bodies. How boys and girls are different, how men and women are different, and sometimes how bodies change from child to adult. In Knudsen's book this is very briefly explained by a single illustration of the parents standing naked (Figure 1). Their body parts are named, in the Danish version with colloquial words. The focus is specifically on the process of making a baby. Knudsen's book is aimed at very young children, so he chose to use straightforward visual language that simply shows the mother and father naked. They are the same in body shape, height, facial expression and posture, but have different hair, chest and genitalia.

Figure 1 Illustration from "How a Baby is Made" (Knudsen, 1971)

4.2 Looking at female anatomy

Katauskas (2018) decided on the name of her book based on Knudsen's English title *How Babies Are Made*. However, she wanted to tell a more complex story, and the words "the amazing true story" were added to the title of her book so it reads *The Amazing True Story of How Babies are Made*. Rather than beginning with the story of conception, Katauskas first shows how boys and girls look different. She explains things like circumcision and how boys can get erections. The latter is accompanied by an illustration of a boy on a swing shouting "My willy is starting to wonka!" In this way Katauskas brings in many moments of humour in her text and illustration. In a scene where she is explaining the changes that happen in puberty one man with clown hair also has clown pubes (Figure 2). These little funny interludes help diffuse what many readers might otherwise see as awkward topics.

Figure 2 Illustration from *"The Amazing True Story of How Babies are Made"* (Katauskas, 2015)

One of the more controversial images in the book shows a girl bending over with a mirror looking at her vulva. Katauskas purposefully included this view of the female anatomy because she felt it was usually absent from childrens' sex ed books (Figure 3):

"Every book I could find, had the same kind of diagram for the boys: A cross section of the boy's penis and testicles inside. And they have the girl's one as a cross section from the top of the thighs to the waist, just the uterus, the fallopian tubes and the vagina, but none of them had a diagram of girls' genitalia. I thought, is this a taboo? I thought this is crazy, why is it seen that girls can't know the names of their different parts. And it's not something girls usually see unless they make an effort. Boys see their penis all the time there out in front. But girls have to make a special effort to see it." (F. Katauskas, personal communication, 5 September 2018)

Figure 3 Illustration from *"The Amazing True Story of How Babies are Made"* (Katauskas, 2015)

When comparing Katauskas' book with Knudsen's it becomes clear that just showing a naked body from the front is no longer seen as sufficient. It is commonplace for books to show that

girls and boys are different, and that children and adults are different. However, the fact that the female genitalia is hidden away, and rarely seen by the girl or woman herself makes it even more important to visualise and name the female anatomy as seen from below. This follows a trend that has seen adult books published in recent years focussing specifically on myths about female anatomy and biology (e.g. Christensen & Laub, 2016; Brochmann, Dahl, & Moffatt, 2018; Enright, 2019). By girls knowing and naming their body parts correctly they can take ownership, and feel more confident and assertive about their bodies and pleasure as they grow.

4.3 Some bodies have eggs, some have sperm

Silverberg's book, being specifically designed so as not to exclude any child or family, regardless of the way the child was conceived, birthed, or the gender and sexual orientation of the parents, does not show any genitalia at all. Bodies are discussed more generally, and gender is never mentioned. We are told that: "Not all bodies have eggs in them. Some do, and some do not" (Figure 4). Another page explains the same about sperm. Rather than focusing on the anatomy of the body parts that hold the egg and the sperm, Silverberg focuses in on the egg and sperm themselves, and the many "stories" they contain about the bodies they come from (Figure 5). That is to say, the genetic codes that the egg and sperm hold become the centre point of the narrative. These genetic stories exist in every conception regardless of the type of body or type of relationship they come from.

Figure 4 Illustration from "What Makes a Baby" (Silverberg, 2012)

Figure 5 Illustration from *“What Makes a Baby”* (Silverberg, 2012)

Silverberg describes how the illustration style intentionally helps keep interpretation open:

“I feel like the illustrations that we made are intentionally a little rough around the edges, because I don’t actually want them to look like a medical illustration. Because I feel like when you see a picture its authority somehow is conveyed to you, and those medical illustrations, people are standing straight like this. I have a very clear memory of looking at pictures like that and thinking, “My body is never going to be like that.” Which is funny because my body is the kind of body that people who are called boys have. I have all the parts that those people have, and yet I never saw myself in male bodies. And I kind of imagined and fantasised myself into female bodies, but I also knew those weren’t my bodies either. So having something rough is to me how you get more kids to relate. That’s how you don’t just indoctrinate. It’s how you leave open possibility. It’s how you make stuff that actually bites. Because none of us know what any specific kid thinks. Our kids don’t know who they are and we don’t know who they are. It’s a process of them finding out.” (C. Silverberg, personal communication, 29 November 2017)

Whereas Knudsen’s book was radical at its time because of its straightforward depiction of bodies (including an image of the man being shown with an erect penis), Silverberg’s book is radical today because of its complete eradication of what contemporary sex ed books generally do: show the anatomy of girls and boys, men and women in a comprehensive way. Silverberg takes a decisive step away from diagrams of genitalia, in contrast to Katauskas’ approach, because his starting point is different. Whereas Katauskas wants to make it possible for both boys and girls to know their body parts and the transformation their bodies will go through, Silverberg wants every child to be able to identify with the figures that are neither male, nor female—nor of any particular race or cultural background.

5. Conception

5.1 From biological function to pleasure.

In earlier times sex ed almost solely focused on explaining the biology of conception and pregnancy. Sex was a transfer of sperm to egg. For instance, in his 1946 book *How Life is Handed on*—which was at the time seen as highly progressive—Cyril Bibby (1946, pp. 32-33) writes about rabbits:

“The penis becomes rigid, and this makes it easier for it to be placed inside the vagina. After a while the semen leaves the penis and enters the vagina... In humans, also, the penis is placed in the vagina; and the sperms swim up through the vagina and womb into the egg tube.”

This is the only account of sexual intercourse in the book—it is purely biological and does not mention pleasure. Bibby does go on to describe that humans are different to animals in that sexual intercourse takes place between a man and a woman who love each other, and are usually married. There are no depictions of intercourse, only of the genitals of humans and rabbits (Figure 6).

Figure 6 Spread from "How Life is Handed on" (Bibby, 1946)

In the second half of the 20th century, notably after the sexual revolution of the late 1960s, sex ed books start including pleasure as part of the description surrounding intercourse

and conception. This meant that an extra layer of complexity was added. Particularly in Scandinavian countries, sex began to be recognised within sex ed as not only a physical function, but also as something that brings joy and pleasure (Zimmerman, 2015, p. 90).

In Knudsen's book the parents are described as loving each other, and wanting the penis to enter the vagina because it feels good. As one of the first and for a long time only books it also shows the actual intercourse using a cross section of the couple having sex (Figure 7). This image is particularly what has made Knudsen's book unique right up until current times, where most sex ed books still hide the actual sexual act behind blankets.

Figure 7 Illustration from *"How a Baby is Made"* (Knudsen, 1971)

Katauskas continues on in the same vein as Knudsen. She describes how for adults sex can feel "special and exciting", and that the vagina becomes wet and the man's penis hard till they fit together like a puzzle. She then tells how the interaction gives them both a "tingly, excited, and very loving feeling", which intensifies until the sperm shoots into the vagina. In

this way the pleasure of sex is emphasised. Her illustration of the interaction is also similar to Knudsen's (Figure 8). She describes her desire to make the scene look loving:

"I did think specifically about the sex scene. That I wanted them to have no blanket. I thought a lot about that I didn't want it to look super lusty. I wanted them to be looking into each other's eyes and smiling. Looking loving, but also liking each other. Not hot and steamy. I want there to be a bit of a joy about it. It's nice. It's a special thing. It's a connection."

(F. Katauskas, personal communication, 5 September 2018)

Figure 8 Spread from *"The Amazing True Story of How Babies are Made"* (Katauskas, 2015)

5.2 Alternative conceptions

At the time Knudsen's book was written IVF was not an option. The availability of IVF, as well as the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex (LGBTI) rights movement of the late 20th and early 21st century, has added complexity to the biological narrative of conception, as well as the interpersonal one. While the relatively simple story of conception put forward by Knudsen is easier for young children to grasp, today's creators of sex ed materials need to find ways of describing and visualising the diverse and sometimes complicated family structures and biological and medical processes through which babies can be conceived.

Katauskas goes on from her description of heterosexual conception by intercourse, to firstly describe multiple births, and secondly describe alternative conceptions such as IVF and sperm donation. In Australia 1 in 25 births are IVF, and worldwide more than 8 million children have been conceived through IVF (Aubusson, 2018; Science Daily, 2018). By including these narratives Katauskas broadens the scope of children and families who are able to identify their own story of conception (Figure 9).

Figure 9 Spread from *"The Amazing True Story of How Babies are Made"* (Katauskas, 2015)

Katauskas also ensures that throughout the book the people depicted are of different racial and cultural backgrounds. Though gay and lesbian couples are shown in the illustrations of park scenes at the beginning and end of the book (Figure 10), she does not, however, specifically discuss same-sex couples. In her interview she describes the thoughts behind this decision:

"One thing that I thought about, I wanted my book to be so that people who had any sort of conception story could pick it up. But I don't explicitly talk about same-sex couples. I have scenes in the beginning and end of the book, where there are two women, or two dads with kids. I've known both straight and gay couples who have had sperm and egg donation. I did probably err on the side of caution instead of having a specific thing about same-sex couples. Partly because I wasn't sure how to fit that in the story. I did also think, is this something that publishers or stockists will go, 'This is too out there.'" (F. Katauskas, personal communication, 5 September 2018)

Here Katauskas describes a situation where the complexity is becoming too great. Not only are there many ways of conceiving, but there are many different family structures, including same-sex ones. Not only could an attempt to include all family structures in the narrative make it too complex; it could also create difficulties with distribution in an Australian society that is still on many fronts conservative, especially when it comes to teaching children about LGBTQI relationships (Law, 2017). As a result, Katauskas opts for a simpler story, while making sure same-sex families are visually represented, so that they can still identify with the book.

Figure 10 Spread from *"The Amazing True Story of How Babies are Made"* (Katauskas, 2015)

5.3 Stories of the egg and the sperm

Rather than adding complexity, Silverberg opts for simplicity in the quest for inclusion. By not describing sexual intercourse or how the sperm finds the egg at all (whether in the fallopian tube or a petri dish), he manages to tell a simple narrative of a sperm with many stories that meets an egg with many stories to create a new life with a combination of stories. Instead of focusing on how a baby is made, Silverberg focuses on what makes a baby:

"I just had all these friends who were having kids, and there were no books about what makes a baby, because all the books that were out there, all of them said 'When you were a baby, this is how you were made. Your father had a sperm, your mother had an egg.' And then they do this ridiculous... I mean the imagery is so horrifying. It's always like the egg is wearing a tutu and she is on her back, and the sperm goes barging into her. So I was thinking about the story. I was focused on the information." (C. Silverberg, personal communication, 29 November 2017)

As a result the scene of conception, rather than showing a man on top of a woman, shows two non-gender-specific humans who want to have a baby (Figure 11). They are depicted on one spread with sperm and eggs around them, but they are on separate pages. We are told what three ingredients are needed for a baby to grow: sperm from one body, an egg from another body, and a place for the baby to grow. This wording and visual strategy means that any variation of conception is covered. Whether it is through heterosexual vaginal conception, IVF, sperm donation, a surrogate mother, adoption, a transgender man conceiving, or any other combination of possibilities, every family and child can identify their own conception story.

Figure 11 Spread from "What Makes a Baby" (Silverberg, 2012)

Silverberg goes on to explain that for a baby to grow a uterus is needed, but that not everyone has a uterus. He shows how the egg and the sperm find each other and swirl together in a special kind of dance, telling each other their stories of origin (Figure 12). In a speech bubble the two people from whom the egg and sperm came are shown. Again, the non-specificity of these people means that they can be either the parents the child knows, or they can be anonymous donors.

Figure 12 Spread from "What Makes a Baby" (Silverberg, 2012)

6. Birth

In Knudsen's book the birth of the child happens in hospital with a male doctor standing next to the bed. When it was first published Knudsen was criticised by feminists because the doctor was an authoritarian male (P.H. Knudsen, personal communication, 18 May 2015). This scene was found to be entertaining in the recent social media and online commentary about the book (Morrissey, 2009; News.com.au, 2015). Online commentators particularly found it amusing that the baby comes out smiling with its arms outstretched (Figure 13). Knudsen had seen a children's drawing where the child was shown coming into the world with outstretched arms. He thought this was a nice way to show the joy of birth. However, in later reprints Knudsen has removed the arms after some criticism that children might become frightened when seeing a real birth, which does not look like this (P.H. Knudsen, personal communication, 18 May 2015). The birth scene in Knudsen's book is passive. The two males are non-participative, and the birthing mother is passive on her back, while her face is hidden. In this way Knudsen unintentionally portrays the mother as a non-personalised birthing body.

Figure 13 Illustration from "How a Baby is Made" (Knudsen, 1971)

Worldwide births by caesarean section have been rising rapidly, to a point where in some countries half of babies are born in this way (Davis & Long, 2018). In Australia about 29% of first time mothers give birth by caesarean (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2019). To reflect this reality Katauskas included an image of a caesarean birth (Figure 14), as well as one of a premature baby in an incubator. Again complexity is added since the 1970s, not only in the way babies are conceived, but also in the way they are born. In the vaginal birth scene all parties are active, in contrast to Knudsen's birth scene. The father is holding the mother's hand and encouraging her, the mother is actively birthing, and the midwife is about to receive the baby. The joy and struggle of birth is visualised.

With each contraction, the baby is squeezed further towards the opening of the vagina.

When the mother feels a strong urge to push, the baby is almost born. You can even see the top of her head! By now, the mother is usually very, very tired, but she gives one last big push ...

And out comes a brand new little baby!

Sometimes a mother can't give birth through her vagina, so she has a special operation instead. The doctor gives her some medicine so it doesn't hurt then makes a cut in her tummy and through the uterus to take the baby out that way. This is called a caesarian birth.

Figure 14 Page from *"The Amazing True Story of How Babies are Made"* (Katauskas, 2015)

For Silverberg the complexity comes not only through the addition of caesarean sections, but through the complexities of gender fluidity and non-heterosexual relationships. Having a friendship circle that includes a transgender male, who has born a child, Silverberg was aware that by showing a woman giving birth he was excluding the experience of such men. The creation of the birthing scene was therefore done very carefully in conjunction with the illustrator, Fiona Smyth. They were careful only to show the birthing person from above (Figure 15), as Silverberg describes:

“So where gender didn’t need to be is the birth scene. The important thing is what is happening. There is a baby coming out. So the question is, how do you do it? Because what I didn’t want is to ever show a head-to-toe pregnant person. So then what do you do? Do you take off the breasts if it was a trans-man and he had top surgery? Of course there are women who have had mastectomy for other reasons, but I just didn’t want to do it. So Fiona just did this illustration that has the belly. I don’t know if I would say men giving birth is taboo, but certainly men giving birth isn’t something most people think about. The nice thing is I think most people would just think, ‘Oh, this is a woman giving birth.’ But if you are a man who has given birth you could see yourself in this, possibly.” (C. Silverberg, personal communication, 29 November 2017)

Figure 15 Spread from “What Makes a Baby” (Silverberg, 2012)

Silverberg’s birth scene focuses on a baby coming out of a body. That this body could be male or female allows for inclusion. The scene is not focused on relationships between the father and mother, but rather on the action of birthing. One of the birthing scenes is depicted as a home setting, thereby further including the experience of those who have birthed at home.

7. Conclusion

At every step in the narrative of sexuality education the stories that need to be told have increased in complexity. From traditional sex ed, which focused purely on the biology of reproduction and the heterosexual institution of marriage; to the 1970s where the sexual revolution meant a more open approach to sexuality and pleasure; to today’s society, which has seen new advances in reproductive technology, growing rates of caesarean births, and social norms that are striving to become ever more inclusive of different family structures and gender fluidity.

These changes have meant that those creating sex ed materials have to find new ways of visualising the story of how babies are made. Knudsen revolutionised the way in which reproduction was taught to young children in the 1970s by introducing straightforward language, and simple graphics that showed exactly what happens during sexual intercourse, and by introducing the notion of sexual pleasure. Katauskas built on this approach, but expanded upon it to tell a broader story of female genitalia, puberty, and the alternative ways in which children can be conceived and born. Silverberg tackled the complexities of an ever more inclusive society, not by making the visual story more complex, but by simplifying it to such an extent that anyone can see themselves in his book.

At every step of the way the creators have had to carefully consider the words and images they used to ensure that a topic many adults find difficult to discuss, could be easily accessed and understood by young children. They have done this by taking a complex design problem and creating a simple visual narrative.

8. References

- Aubusson, K. (2018, September 9). Australia's IVF rates revealed: one in every 25 births an IVF baby. *Sydney Morning Herald*. Retrieved from <https://tinyurl.com/y3vt58qj>
- Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. (2019). *National Core Maternity Indicators*. Retrieved from <https://tinyurl.com/y7z5mwrh>
- Bibby, C. (1946). *How Life is Handed on*. London: Thomas Nelson.
- Brochmann, N., Dahl, E. S., & Moffatt, L. (2018). *The Wonder Down Under*. London: Hodder & Stoughton.
- Brugman, M., Caron, S. L., & Rademakers, J. (2010). Emerging Adolescent Sexuality: A Comparison of American and Dutch College Women's Experiences. *International Journal of Sexual Health*, 22, 32-46.
- Chan, L. K., & Donovan, R. (2006, 23-25 August 2006). *Graphic Design and HIV/AIDS: Cultural production of epidemic knowledge in Australia*. Proceedings from The International Committee of Design History and Studies (ICDHS) 5th Conference, Helsinki.
- Chan, L. K., & Donovan, R. (2007, November 12-15). *Iconography and Stigma: Graphic Strategies of HIV/AIDS Campaigns Which Target Men Who Have Sex With Men (MSM) in Hong Kong*. Proceedings from International Association of Societies of Design Research Conference.
- Christensen, M. N., & Laub, S. C. (2016). *Gennemblødt: en bog om menstruation*. Copenhagen: People's press.
- Davis, N., & Long, C. (2018, October 12). Use of caesarean sections growing at 'alarming' rate. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from <https://tinyurl.com/y9no82af>
- Enright, L. (2019). *Vagina: A Re-education*. Sydney: Allen & Unwin.
- Katauskas, F. (2015). *The Amazing True Story of How Babies are Made*. Sydney: Harper Collins.
- Katauskas, F. (2018, July). The amazing true story of a sex ed outrage. *The Monthly*. Retrieved from <https://tinyurl.com/y8ckeco6>
- Kolff, L. M. (2005). *Taboo as a Discursive Formation in Graphic Designs for Australian HIV/AIDS Campaign Aimed at Men Who Have Sex With Men 2002-2012* (PhD Thesis). Sydney, NSW: University of New South Wales.
- Knudsen, P. H. (1971). *Såden får Man et Barn*. Copenhagen: Borgens Forlag.

- Law, B. (2017). Moral Panic 101: Equality, Acceptance and the Safe Schools Scandal. *Quarterly Essay*, 67.
- Mackie, B. (2008). *Selling Safe Smut...* (Masters Thesis). Sydney, NSW: University of New South Wales.
- Mitchell, A., Patrick, K., Heywood, W., Blackman, P., & Pitts, M. (2014). *National Survey of Australian Secondary Students and Sexual Health 2013*. Retrieved from <https://tinyurl.com/y7upjmcd>
- Morrissey, T. (2009, 22 June). '70s European Children's Book Depicts Penetration, Crowning. *Jezebel*. Retrieved from <https://tinyurl.com/yd5tcgnu>
- News.com.au. (2015, 15 June). Vintage 'How a Baby Is Made' book is freaking everyone out. *News.com.au*. <https://tinyurl.com/y9vdzq6p>
- Rhodes, D. (2018, August 7). Australian sex education isn't diverse enough. Here's why we should follow England's lead. *The Conversation*. Retrived from <https://tinyurl.com/ya2e6h5a>
- Science Daily. (2018, 3 July). More than 8 million babies born from IVF since the world's first in 1978. *Science Daily*. Retrieved from <https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2018/07/180703084127.htm>
- Silverberg, C., & Smyth, F. (2012). *What Makes a Baby*. New York: Seven Stories Press.
- Stark, J. (2016, 23 April). Axing of sex education program YEAH part of 'ideological agenda', experts claim. *Sydney Morning Herald*. Retrieved from <https://tinyurl.com/y83oar3l>
- Walker, J. L. (2001). A qualitative study of parents' experiences of providing sex education for their children: The implications for health education. *Health Education Journal*, 60(2), 132-146.
- Weaver, H., Smith, G., & Kippax, S. (2005). School-based sex education policies and indicators of sexual health among young people: a comparison of the Netherlands, France, Australia and the United States. *Sex Education*, 5(2), 171-188.
- Zimmerman, J. (2015). *Too Hot to Handle: A Global History of Sex Education*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

About the Author:

Louise Moana Kolff holds a PhD from the University of New South Wales. Her research interests focus on the notion of taboo in graphic design, and on controversial visual representations more broadly.