

Human Rights Education in South Africa: Ideological Shifts and Curricular Reforms

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Using a mixed quantitative and qualitative analysis of 42 South African textbooks from the postapartheid era, we seek to understand how global human rights discourses manifest in South African textbooks across different subjects and whether these discourses may have changed over time. By employing a two-dimensional framework that examines the vertical flow of human rights knowledge from global to local, as well as the horizontal pedagogical application of this knowledge in textbooks, we offer a novel way of analyzing human rights education (HRE). We find that certain subjects are more likely to contain human rights language: life orientation books exhibit the highest proportion of human rights mentions, followed by social studies books, with history having the lowest proportion of mentions. In our qualitative content analysis of our sample of 16 textbooks, we find that the books generally focus on human rights discourse within a global and national context, using various pedagogical frameworks. As one of the most progressive constitutional democracies in the world, South Africa offers important lessons for transitional countries grappling with HRE and curriculum reform in the context of historical injustices.

Scholars argue for the importance of human rights education (HRE) as a mechanism to prevent or mitigate conflict and for peace building in post-conflict contexts.¹ Studies have documented the global spread of HRE across countries as diverse as Malawi, Mexico, and Malta and the inclusion of human rights language within education policy documents, curricula, and textbooks (Ramírez et al. 2007; Meyer et al. 2010; Moon 2013). Other studies have examined how global human rights discourses are adapted within local contexts.² However, few studies have empirically investigated the degree to which postconflict countries draw on human rights discourse in their textbooks to address a violent past (for exceptions, see Russell and Tiplic 2014; Russell 2018). We explore the case of South Africa to investigate how local and global human rights discourses have influenced curricular objectives and textbooks in the postapartheid, democratic state.

¹ See, e.g., Davies (2010); Bajaj (2011); Tibbitts and Fernekcs (2011); Holland and Martin (2014).

² Bajaj (2012); Barton (2015); Russell (2015); Wahl (2016).

Received September 6, 2017; revised April 29, 2018, and August 31, 2018; accepted September 9, 2018; electronically published January 14, 2019

Comparative Education Review, vol. 63, no. 1.

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0010-4086/2019/6301-0087\$10.00

Following the end of nearly five decades of *apartheid*, a system of “separateness” or institutionalized racial discrimination, the newly elected democratic government of South Africa sought to address violations of the past by drawing on global human rights discourses. In a deliberate break from the apartheid past, the new “human rights state” intentionally incorporated human rights not only in the progressive rights-based 1996 Constitution and new policies and laws (Mutua 2002) but also in reformed education policies and curricular statements (Staeheli and Hammett 2013; Tibbitts and Keet 2017).

We present a mixed quantitative and qualitative analysis of 42 South African textbooks from the democratic era in order to answer the following questions: How do human rights discourses manifest in postapartheid South African textbooks? How do mentions of human rights in textbooks vary over time and across different subjects? We find that all textbooks include some mention of human rights that reflect both global and national contexts. These mentions draw on different pedagogical models throughout the three postapartheid curricular periods. By analyzing the human rights content across grades and subjects, this study focuses on developing an understanding of the extent to which human rights values are embedded in South Africa’s postapartheid curricula.

The Global Rise of Human Rights Education

The United Nations (UN) Decade for Human Rights Education (1995–2004) marked the global rise and institutionalization of HRE. HRE is broadly defined by the UN “Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training” (2011) as all forms of learning, education, and training directed toward developing a universal human rights culture. In addition, the UN definition encompasses three components, namely, (i) knowledge and skills; (ii) values, attitudes, and behavior; and (iii) taking action to defend and promote human rights. Furthermore, HRE is now understood as not only teaching *about* human rights (gaining knowledge about rights) but also teaching *for* human rights (how to advocate for rights) and *through* human rights (methods that respect human rights of both the teacher and learner) (Tibbitts 2002; Bajaj 2011).

Studies have documented the rise of a global human rights discourse in national laws, policies, and institutions in countries around the world.³ Global human rights discourses have also influenced national education sectors. In the past three decades, the United Nations has promoted HRE as a means to prevent human rights abuses and protect marginalized groups. The global rise and institutionalization of HRE is linked to globalization, the expansion of mass education, and the spread of the global human rights movement (Ramírez et al. 2007; Russell and Suárez 2017).

³ Tsutsui and Wotipka (2004); Elliott (2007); Koo and Ramirez (2009); Beck et al. (2012).

Several studies have demonstrated the extent to which a global HRE discourse has expanded across diverse regions and countries influencing policy, curricula, textbooks, and classroom practices. Ramírez et al. (2007) documented a rise in HRE publications and organizations after 2000. In another study, Moon (2013) demonstrated the inclusion of human rights in curricula from more than 83 countries. A 2009 Civic Education study of 38 countries found that human rights was considered a central theme in the national civic and citizenship education curricula in 25 of the countries (Schulz et al. 2010). In a cross-national study of textbooks, Meyer et al. (2010) found an increase in the discussion of human rights since 1995 in civics and social studies books. Another cross-national study using the 1999 Civic Education data found students' human rights knowledge to be predicted by both student and country-level predictors (Torney-Purta et al. 2008). Other studies have documented the use of global human rights language among students across such diverse contexts as India, Rwanda, Colombia, and Northern Ireland (Bajaj 2012; Barton 2015; Russell 2018). While these studies chart the rise of human rights language in educational materials globally, they do not focus on the specific case of South Africa.

Human Rights Education in South Africa

The South African government has explicitly drawn on a human rights discourse in the national constitution and education documents in order to address the legacy of apartheid (Thapliyal et al. 2013; Tibbitts and Keet 2017). In 1948, the Afrikaner-led National Party institutionalized a system of racialized discrimination under apartheid, categorizing the population into four different racial groups (whites, coloreds, Indians, and blacks/Africans). Under apartheid, the 1953 Bantu Education Act created separate education systems for the different racial groups. The multiple education systems followed separate curricula and were unequally resourced.

Since the transition from apartheid to democracy in 1994, the South African government has struggled to address a highly unequal education system inherited from the apartheid past. With the transition to democracy, schools were integrated; however, the former “model-C” white schools and private schools continued to offer superior education compared to the township schools serving a primarily black population (Soudien 2004; Chisholm 2008). Despite the promise of the right to education and nondiscrimination enshrined in the South African Constitution (1996), more than 20 years into democracy, racial disparities in students' academic achievement and inequality between historically black and white schools prevail (Badat and Sayed 2014).

In addition to the effort to rid the old curriculum of racist and sexist elements, the government sought to reform the national curriculum both to

address the discriminatory apartheid past and to infuse a human rights perspective (Carrim and Keet 2005; Tibbitts and Keet 2017). For instance, the first education policy document in the democratic era, *1995 White Paper on Education and Training*, included an “Action Plan for Human Rights in Education” (Department of Education 1995). The National Education Policy Act of 1996 incorporated human rights as an important component in the educational curriculum, although specific hours were not allocated for teaching human rights (Parliament of the Republic of South Africa 1996).

The three different curricular programs implemented between 1996 and 2011 have incorporated human rights to varying degrees. The first post-apartheid curriculum, known as *outcome-based education* (OBE, or Curriculum 2005), was introduced in 1996 (Department of Education 1996). Under OBE, approximately 2 and a half hours were allocated for human and social sciences and 2 and a half hours for life orientation each week for lower secondary school (Department of Education 1996).⁴ History was not taught as a separate subject but was rather subsumed under a new learning area—human and social sciences (Chisholm 2005a). OBE focused on the outcomes of the curriculum rather than the content, allowing for a flexible and nonprescriptive approach; however, this approach was critiqued for the lack of a guiding framework for teachers and the lack of relevance for the classroom (Jansen 1998; Chisholm 2003).

The criticisms of OBE led to the introduction of a new curriculum in 2002 known as the Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS) (Department of Education 2002). The RNCS curriculum provided more structure and support for teachers, reintroduced history as a separate subject, and aimed to mainstream values related to social justice (Chisholm 2005b). However, very limited instructional time was dedicated to the social sciences (only 3 hours per week) and to life orientation (2 hours per week) for the lower secondary level (Department of Education 2002). During the RNCS curricular period, a Human Rights and Inclusivity Working Group sought to infuse human rights across existing subjects rather than create a separate human rights subject (Carrim and Keet 2005).

The latest manifestation of the curriculum was introduced in 2011 as the National Curriculum Statement Grades R–12 (Department of Education 2011) and is commonly referred to as the curriculum assessment and policy statements (CAPS). In CAPS, life orientation is required for 2 hours per week, while social sciences (including history) are allocated 3 hours per week. In response to criticism of the previous curricular iterations, CAPS provides more structure and focuses on literacy and numeracy. In the introduction to the CAPS curriculum, the Minister for Basic Education expressly states that “we have built our curriculum on the values that inspired our Constitution”

⁴ Lower secondary school is known as senior phase and includes grades 7–9.

(Department of Basic Education 2011). However, only 7 hours of teaching time in each academic year is allocated to discussing democracy and human rights in life orientation for grades 10 and 11. In the final year of high school (grade 12), the hours dedicated to democracy and human rights in the life orientation syllabus is reduced to 4 hours (Department of Basic Education 2011). The allocation of time to human rights in the first and second iterations of the curriculum is not as clearly spelled out.

Despite an explicit mandate to include human rights in the post-apartheid curriculum, various studies on HRE in South Africa have found mixed results regarding the success of this endeavor. For example, Carrim and Keet (2005) explain that rather than being created as its own subject in the postapartheid era, HRE was infused into existing subjects to varying extents, ranging from minimal infusion in subjects such as mathematics to maximum infusion in life orientation. Similarly, in an analysis of HRE in South Africa's postapartheid curriculum, Tibbitts and Keet (2017) concluded that HRE was included in the curriculum to some degree, although not in any comprehensive manner.

Other studies have examined how a human rights ethos is implemented in schools in South Africa. Kruss (2001) found that despite the broader human rights discourse at the national level, there was varied reception of a human rights framework in schools ranging from rejection, to passivity, to enthusiastic acceptance. Rather than embrace human rights and multiculturalism, schools continued to engender an assimilationist discourse and promote a dominant white culture, resulting in new forms of segregation and continuing inequalities (Kruss 2001). Similarly, Spreen and Vally (2006) argued that despite the enactment of laws and policies to protect human rights in education, school fees and high levels of poverty and inequality have rendered these rights inaccessible. In their study on citizenship education in South Africa, Hammet and Staeheli (2013) also found that teachers and students viewed the curriculum and notions of citizenship rights as unattainable in light of the unequal distribution of resources and poverty in their schools.

Several studies also call into question the efficacy of the life orientation subject, where human rights is generally taught. Life orientation is a subject that is "intended to equip learners with the knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes for successful living and learning" (Prinsloo 2007, 155). In a study conducted on students' experience of life orientation in South Africa, Jacobs (2011) revealed that most students were skeptical about the value and effectiveness of the curriculum. Studies conducted with teachers found that they did not feel sufficiently trained to teach the subject (Prinsloo 2007) and that there was a gap between the human rights values being promoted by the education department's policy makers and the personal values held by teachers (Ferreira and Schulze 2014).

While previous studies have analyzed human rights in the curricula and school in the South African context, we analyze human rights discourse in textbooks. In our study, we seek to contribute to the body of literature on human rights in textbooks, specifically through a comprehensive analysis of the incorporation of human rights language and ideas in textbooks across different subjects and years.

Toward a New HRE Framework for Textbook Analysis

In our analysis of human rights in textbooks, we offer a framework that comprises both a vertical and horizontal dimension. While we draw on existing human rights models, we propose a new framework that includes global and local dimensions of human rights, incorporates communal and group values, and is situated within textbooks. Our proposed framework includes a vertical dimension, which centers on the global-national nexus, to analyze how global human rights values are infused into the national curriculum. This dimension draws on the work of world culture scholars who emphasize the importance of global discourses in shaping national educational policies (Meyer et al. 1997, 2010; Ramirez 2012). At the same time, the global-national dimension poses inherent analytical limitations due to its intrinsic binary nature. The local and the global are often presented as two points on a continuum (Anderson-Levitt 2012) with the global denoting Euro-America and the local symbolizing the Global South (Comaroff and Comaroff 2012). Recognizing however that binaries are not fixed and are constantly in a state of becoming, the global-national nexus may nevertheless offer a helpful starting point for considering the infusion of HRE into the South African curriculum. The horizontal dimension of our analytical framework considers how knowledge about human rights contained in textbooks is pedagogically conveyed and draws on various models that seek to classify the pedagogical approaches to HRE.⁵

We draw on the UN (2011) definition of HRE that includes teaching about, through, and for human rights, emphasizing the importance of knowledge and human rights pedagogy, as well as elements of the frameworks proposed by Tibbitts, Bajaj, and Keet, which focus on fostering human rights knowledge, attitudes, and action. Our three new typologies synthesize the horizontal pedagogical dimension of HRE with the vertical global-national dimension to analyze the infusion of human rights content in textbooks and curricula. The *knowledge and awareness* typology, similar to the UN definition of HRE, as well as Tibbitts's (2002, 2017) "values and awareness-socialization model," is focused primarily on learning and recalling facts, while simultaneously drawing on global human rights discourse to make sense of local hu-

⁵ Tarrow (1992); Tibbitts (2002, 2017); Flowers (2004); Keet (2010); Bajaj (2011).

man rights challenges. However, we draw attention to how global discourses on human rights are infused into the curricula to frame national events. The *personal and communal values* typology aims to develop an awareness of one's own personal and communitarian values, which differs from existing HRE models that primarily focus on individual rights. This typology also encourages students to consider not only individual rights and the rights of communities but responsibilities and obligations toward the broader society, which is more in line with a Global South perspective of human rights (Mutua 2002). This typology offers students the opportunity to adopt an introspective dimension to human rights focusing primarily on local values and using terms such as "citizenship" and "responsibilities" to convey these values as compared to the knowledge and awareness typology.

The *action and advocacy* typology aligns with Tibbitts's activism-transformational model (2002, 2017), Bajaj's transformative action approach (Bajaj 2011), and Keet's empowerment approach (Keet 2010). In our model, we focus on how texts engage students in deliberating, debating, and forming opinions based on their positionality, while encouraging them to consider taking action. This typology draws on both local and global human rights content to inspire student advocacy. In certain cases, global discourses are used to frame national human rights advocacy, while in other instances, national examples of human rights initiatives are portrayed as shaping global discourses. The objective of the activities associated with this typology is to encourage students to take direct action against human rights violations or to devise campaigns that raise awareness about actual or potential violations of rights. Lessons and content in textbooks that encourage students to organize a discussion forum or campaign around a particular human rights issue tend to fall into the action and advocacy typology.

In our proposed HRE framework, we draw attention to both global and local framing of human rights, as well as the perspectives of communities and groups, particularly in the Global South. In addition, while other models are centered on individuals or organizations, our model is aimed at analyzing texts, including textbooks and curriculum. We view the analysis of textbooks as not only revealing influences on what is taught in school but as providing insight into the broader goals of the state and representative of state-sanctioned official knowledge (Apple and Christian-Smith 1991). We seek to understand not only the way in which HRE is intended to be taught but also the pedagogical approaches embedded in the teaching and learning materials, as well as the universalizing messages that may be reflective of the global-national dimension of rights discourse.

These new typologies comprise a framework that separates knowledge, values, and action into distinct categories, while simultaneously recognizing that textbooks sometimes combine these categories in lessons on human rights. In addition, the framework includes both individual and group values.

Further, action is applicable to a wider population than the other models—referring to all learners, rather than a certain group such as professionals or marginalized students. We propose that this framework is better suited for the analysis of textbooks across different subjects to understand how HRE is presented to students. Additionally, the typologies correspond with the understanding of HRE as described in the UN “Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training” (2011) as education about, through, and for human rights. Our proposed typology builds on existing frameworks but seeks to incorporate human rights from a pedagogical and curricular perspective and from the Global South, including personal and communal values, which are notably absent from existing HRE frameworks.

Methods and Data

To analyze the way in which these typologies are represented in textbooks, we examined a sample of 42 purposively collected South African textbooks to represent the three different subjects (social sciences, life orientation, and history), historical curricular periods (OBE, RNCS, CAPS), as well as different grades (lower and upper secondary grades 6–12) and publishers in the postapartheid era (see the appendix for full textbook samples). All of the books included in our textbook sample are in English, given that English is the primary medium of instruction in South Africa.⁶ Our study focuses on history, social science, and life orientation textbooks, as human rights content is more common in these subjects compared to other subjects (Tibbitts and Keet 2017). Due to the difficulties in locating textbooks across all subjects and time periods, we assembled a sample based on convenience. Books were obtained from local bookstores, used bookstores, university libraries, local contacts, and directly from the publishers. While this is a non-random sample and is not necessarily representative of all textbooks used in South Africa, our sample represents a range of books across different subjects, years, and publishers used in the postapartheid era and approved by the Department of Education. Nonetheless, we are not able to determine which books are most commonly used in schools or the extent that they are used in the classroom, a limitation of our study that focuses on the text rather than how the subjects are taught.

Our analysis is grounded in a mixed quantitative and qualitative study, which includes both the count of human rights mentioned to show broader trends and a closer qualitative analysis of the human rights discourse across the texts. We first analyzed the broader sample of 42 textbooks to provide a descriptive quantitative overview of mentions of the term “human rights” by subject and by curricular period. We calculated the frequency of mentions of

⁶ South Africa has 11 official languages and the Constitution guarantees students the right to learn in their mother tongue. However, in practice, most schools teach in English or Afrikaans.

human rights in the textbooks and the number of pages that mention human rights by subject and period as a proportion of the total number of textbook pages for the subject and period. The initial quantitative analysis aimed to ascertain any differences in human rights discourses over the curricular periods, subjects, and grades.

We then conducted an in-depth content analysis of 16 purposively selected textbooks. We intentionally selected four to six books from each of the three curricular time periods, representing a cross-section of subjects, grades, and years (see table 1). We conducted an iterative content analysis (Krippendorff 2012) of our 16 textbooks using NVivo software. We coded for themes related to human rights, such as human rights documents, human rights bodies, and our human rights typologies. In addition, we coded for themes that emerged from the data such as apartheid, reconciliation, and resistance.

Findings

Quantitative Trends

Drawing on our larger sample of 42 textbooks, we show mentions of the term “human rights.” In tables 2–6, we present findings on both the mentions of “human rights,” and the number of pages mentioning human rights, as a proportion of the total number of pages and books for the subject and curricular period.

We find that certain subjects are more likely to contain human rights language: life orientation books exhibit the highest proportion of human rights mentions (0.1172), followed closely by social studies books (0.1162), with history having the lowest proportion of mentions (0.0608) (table 2). This is in line with other studies that find that human rights content is more prominent in social sciences and civics textbooks compared to history books (Meyer et al. 2010). We also find that lower grades (0.1366) contain more mentions of human rights than upper grades (0.0804), as shown in table 3. Although we might expect to see more human rights mentioned in the most recent curricular period, as HRE is on the rise globally (Suárez 2006; Ramírez et al. 2007), in table 4 we show mentions across the three periods, with the

TABLE 1
TEXTBOOK SAMPLE FOR QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS (N = 16)

	History	Social Sciences	Life Orientation	Total
OBE (1996–2001)	1	0	3	4
RNCS (2002–2010)	2	2	2	6
CAPS (2011–present)	2	2	2	6

NOTE.—Social Sciences, which was developed for grades 4 to 9, was introduced in the RCNS curriculum for the first time. Social Sciences is essentially a combination of history and geography. CAPS = Curriculum Assessment and Policy Statement; OBE = outcome-based education; RNCS = Revised National Curriculum Statement.

TABLE 2
SOUTH AFRICAN EDUCATION TEXTBOOKS BY SUBJECT: HUMAN RIGHTS MENTIONS

	History	Life Orientation	Social Sciences
Total number of pages	4,933	4,965	1,575
Proportion of human rights mentions	.0608	.1172	.1162
Proportion of pages that mention human rights	.0330	.0395	.0406
Total number of textbooks	16	23	7

highest proportion during the OBE period (0.1458), followed by the RNCS period (0.0917), and CAPS (0.0874). However, this may also be an artifact of our non-random and small sample.

We find that the knowledge and awareness typology is more common in life orientation (0.0235) and social sciences books (0.0184) compared to history books (0.0116); personal and communal values is most used in life orientation (0.0140) followed by social studies (0.0070) and history (0.0032). Along the same lines, there is more inclusion of the action and advocacy typology in life orientation books (0.0073) compared to history (0.0008) and social sciences books (0.0000), which scarcely mention rights in this context (see table 5).

We also find that human rights are often framed in a local context. In table 6, we show that the proportion of mentions of national human rights is higher than global mentions in history and life orientation books, whereas there are more mentions of global human rights in social studies books.⁷

Qualitative Findings

In our qualitative content analysis of our sample of 16 textbooks, we find that the books generally focus on human rights discourse within both a global and national context, using the three pedagogical frameworks. Three major themes emerged: human rights instruments, human rights movements, and transitional justice mechanisms.

Human Rights Instruments: Global and National

Global

The majority of textbooks refer to international human rights instruments, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). The UDHR is the most commonly mentioned international document across the books.

A few of the books also refer to regional instruments, such as the African Charter on Human and People's Rights. Discussions of human rights instru-

⁷ The proportion of global and national human rights does not add up to the total mentions of human rights since some mentions were on the same page and some were neither global nor local.

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TABLE 3
SOUTH AFRICAN EDUCATION TEXTBOOKS BY GRADE LEVEL: HUMAN RIGHTS MENTIONS

	Lower (Grades 6–9)	Upper (Grades 10–12)
Total number of pages	2,541	8,932
Proportion of human rights mentions	.1366	.0804
Proportion of pages that mention human rights	.0386	.0364
Total number of textbooks	13	33

ments appear in history, life orientation, and social sciences books across the three time periods.

The discussion of international human rights instruments draws on both a knowledge and awareness and a personal and communal values approach. A knowledge and awareness approach is focused on knowledge about current human rights issues and how these instruments serve as mechanisms to secure rights. Much of the content related to human rights is factual, emphasizing the importance of everyone’s human rights. A 2013 social sciences textbook for instance, provides an overview of the UDHR and asks students to write about three of the rights contained in the Declaration (see fig. 1).

In this example, students are asked about rights in a purely factual manner. In contrast, we also noted examples of textbooks employing a personal and communal values approach, which focuses on the rights of students as individuals, as well as the rights of groups. Students are asked to consider their individual positions on the rights mentioned in the human rights instruments. For example, a social sciences textbook from grade 9 from RNCS asks students to reflect on their own values in relation to the UDHR, as in figure 2.

In this example, the meaning of freedom in the UDHR is related to a personal understanding of the concept. A third typology, *action and advocacy*, engages the learner in taking action. In contrast to the first two typologies, which focus on both local and global examples, the action and advocacy typology focuses almost exclusively on taking action at the local level—mainly in South Africa, with the occasional reference to other countries in Africa. Only one example—which is also the sole example found in a social studies textbook—uses a global frame of reference. In this example, shown in figure 3, students are presented with the UN logo and then directed to create a logo for

TABLE 4
SOUTH AFRICAN EDUCATION TEXTBOOKS BY CURRICULAR PERIOD: HUMAN RIGHTS MENTIONS

	OBE	RNCS	CAPS
Total number of pages	727	4,702	6,044
Proportion of human rights mentions	.1458	.0917	.0874
Proportion of pages that mention human rights	.0385	.0357	.0376
Total number of textbooks	4	20	22

NOTE.—CAPS = Curriculum Assessment and Policy Statement; OBE = outcome-based education; RNCS = Revised National Curriculum Statement.

TABLE 5
SOUTH AFRICAN EDUCATION TEXTBOOKS BY TYPOLOGIES: HUMAN RIGHTS MENTIONS

	History	Life Orientation	Social Sciences
Total number of pages	4,933	4,965	1,575
Proportion of knowledge and awareness mentions	.0116	.0235	.0184
Proportion of personal and communal values mentions	.0032	.0140	.0070
Proportion of action and advocacy mentions	.0008	.0073	.0000
Total number of textbooks	16	23	7

their own group; however, ultimately, the global is brought back to a local context (Barnard et al. 2007).

National

In all three subjects, the books mention national human rights documents and draw on the three pedagogical approaches. The national constitution, which uses explicit human rights language, is cited in the majority of the textbooks. In a CAPS *History* grade 11 book, the constitution is linked specifically to human rights: “As you read the Preamble and some of the Founding Provisions of our Constitution, consider how the Constitution protects human rights and human dignity” (Cloete et al. 2013, 119). In *Life Orientation* grade 11 book from RNCS, a similar approach is adopted: “As you learned in grade 10, South African laws laid down in the Constitution are in agreement with international human rights principles” (Bredenkamp 2006, 20).

History textbooks, as would be expected, mainly focus on human rights violations of the past. Yet they include current mechanisms that are being used to address these violations. For example, in a 2007 grade 12 history textbook, students are told to “write a report for the Human Rights Commission, outlining the problems that have existed in determining how Steve Biko died and who was responsible for his death” (Friedman et al. 2007, 154).⁸ This exercise combines knowledge of human rights abuses of the past with action around a human rights mechanism in the present. This is also an example of a knowledge and awareness typology, where the focus is on teaching students about protecting human rights by reflecting on and analyzing violations that occurred in recent history.

While history textbooks address the processes that led to the development of the constitution, life orientation books focus on how to implement the human rights protections contained in the constitution, in line with the action and advocacy typology. This may be related to the focus of life ori-

⁸ Steve Biko was an anti-apartheid activist who developed the philosophy of “black consciousness.” He was tortured by the apartheid government and found dead in a prison cell in Pretoria on September 12, 1977.

TABLE 6
SOUTH AFRICAN EDUCATION TEXTBOOKS BY SUBJECT: GLOBAL AND NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS MENTIONS

	History	Life Orientation	Social Sciences
Total number of pages	4,933	4,965	1,575
Proportion of national human rights mentions	.0166	.0268	.0146
Proportion of global human rights mentions	.0158	.0175	.0305
Total number of textbooks	16	23	7

entation on more contemporary issues. For instance, a grade 10 *Life Orientation* textbook explains that “the South African Constitution forbids discrimination of any kind. Discrimination can be reported to the Human Rights Commission (Tel: 0860 120 120) and to the police” (Fraser 2008, 43). Institutions that support human rights are usually referenced as case study

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on 10 December 1948, in Paris, France by a vote of 48 in favour, 0 against, with eight abstentions.

The Declaration has 30 Articles. They describe “a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations”. Here are abbreviations of twelve of the articles in the Declaration of the Human Rights:

Article 1	Right to equality
Article 2	Freedom from discrimination
Article 3	Right to life, liberty, personal security
Article 4	Freedom from slavery
Article 5	Freedom from torture and degrading treatment
Article 11	Right to be considered Innocent until Proven Guilty
Article 17	Right to own property
Article 18	Freedom of belief and religion
Article 19	Freedom of opinion and information
Article 26	Right to education

Activity 2 Declaration of Human Rights

Choose three articles in the table above. For each, write answers to the following questions:

1. How has this right been ignored in the past?
2. Give an example of how it was ignored.
3. Why it is important that this right is protected?

FIG. 1.—Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). SOURCE.—Earle et al. (2013, 157).

Activity 2 Examine the meaning of 'freedom' in the UN Declaration of Human Rights (LO1 AS3)

- 1 Read the different definitions of freedom in Source A. Which one do you like the best? Explain why.
 - 2 What does freedom mean to you? Write down at least one idea.
 - 3 On a large sheet of paper, or a blackboard in the classroom, get the whole class to add their ideas. Decide which three definitions you think are the best.
-

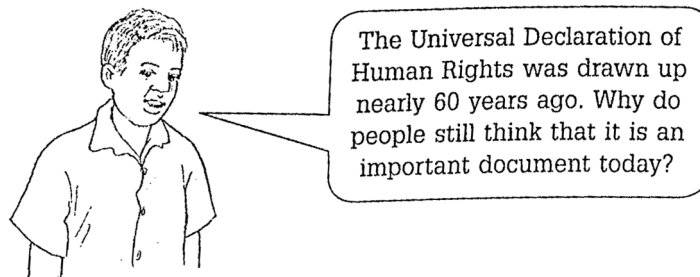


FIG. 2.—Activity. SOURCE.—Bottaro et al. (2006, 107).

examples or suggested as possible contacts if rights have been violated. In this example, international human rights instruments are often mentioned in tandem with national human rights documents, such as the South African Constitution and Bill of Rights.


A grade 11 *Life Orientation* textbook compares the South African Constitution and Bill of Rights to both regional and international instruments: “Many different organizations throughout the world have drawn up human rights instruments to help to address human rights abuses. The Bill of Rights in our Constitution is one example of such as human rights instrument. The United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of Children are two instruments that most countries have agreed to” (Bredenkamp 2006, 100). The relevance of international and regional human rights instruments is highlighted through a knowledge and awareness approach by linking them directly to the national South African context.

Human Rights Movements: Global and National

Global

About one third of the books refer to international rights-based movements; however, those mentioned are only present in the history and social

Activity 1: Logos are important
 Do you think that the UNO logo reflects the aims of the UNO? Now design and draw a logo for your group. The logo must reflect your aims, interests and personalities. Draw the logo on a big piece of paper or on the board and explain it to the class.



This UNO logo has two olive branches symbolizing peace forming a shield round the Earth.

Unit 6 The Universal

FIG. 3.—UN logo. SOURCE.—Barnard et al. (2007, 27).

sciences books, not in the life orientation texts. Explicit comparisons are drawn between the Civil Rights and the Black Power movements in the United States and the anti-apartheid and Black Consciousness movements in South Africa. One history book for grade 12 asks the learner to “determine the extent to which the Black Power movement in the United States influenced the thinking of Black Consciousness” (Friedman et al. 2007, 115). Another history book draws a direct comparison between the two movements, depicting Martin Luther King calling for equal rights in South Africa and Robert Kennedy delivering a speech in Cape Town where he compared the US and South African struggles (Seleti et al. 2006, 216).

Some of the life orientation textbooks also reference international campaigns and organizations. In a grade 12 CAPS *Life Orientation* textbook, Amnesty International’s work in securing human rights in Africa through the Demand Dignity Campaign is described: “Amnesty International’s 6-year Demand Dignity campaign focuses on areas of human rights violations in which poor people are ignored, excluded from decisions, and are kept poor and powerless” (Rooth et al. 2013, 118). This example illustrates a knowledge and awareness typology, which focuses on knowledge about current human rights issues and mechanisms to secure rights.

National

In addition to references to global movements and campaigns, the books mention national human rights movements. The term “apartheid” is mentioned across the majority of the textbooks and in all three subjects. The apartheid government is often portrayed as anti-human rights and juxtaposed with the anti-apartheid movement and the postapartheid government, which are portrayed as pro-human rights. For example, *Focus on History* for grade 12 draws connections between the apartheid government and human rights violations in statements such as “in order to address the gross human

rights violations of the Apartheid era” (Fernandez et al. 2013, 267). This link between apartheid and human rights violations is then contrasted with statements in the same textbook that draw parallels between democratic South Africa and the support for human rights: “in a democracy, where there is respect for human rights” (Fernandez et al. 2013, 294).

The life orientation textbooks also focus more on anti-apartheid activists such as Nelson Mandela, Desmond Tutu, and Sophie de Bruyn, while the social science textbooks appear to contextualize apartheid as oppositional to a global human rights culture enunciated by the UDHR. For instance, a social sciences book from grade 9 states that “the NP [National Party of the apartheid government] ignored the Universal Declaration of Human Rights when they made a series of racist, discriminatory laws” (Allwood and Hambley 2013, 153). Similarly, another grade 9 social sciences book explains that “in 1966 the UN declared the persecution of black people under apartheid a crime against humanity” (Barnard et al. 2007, 95).

In addition to learning about local human rights activists, students are encouraged to engage in action, in line with the action and advocacy typology. For instance, a grade 12 *Life Orientation* textbook from CAPS includes an activity on organizing a campaign or event around human rights issues that are important to the students (see fig. 4).

Activity 2: Participate in human rights promotion

Work in a small group.

1. Read the examples of discussions, projects, campaigns and events on pages 117–119. Discuss in your group and decide which of these are most needed in South Africa. Choose two that you feel are very important right now. Give reasons for your choice. (5)
2. Organise a discussion forum, project, campaign or event that is aimed at addressing discrimination and human rights violations and participate in the exercise. You may use the examples or arrange something similar at your school.
 - 2.1 Write a short essay of 10–15 lines on:
 - What the activity was about (5)
 - What you did (5)
 - How you acted as a responsible citizen. (5)

FIG. 4.—Activity. SOURCE.—Rooth et al. (2013, 119).

Transitional Justice Mechanisms: Global and National*Global*

International transitional justice mechanisms are discussed in a third of the books, but only in history and social sciences books. This includes mentions of international tribunals and trials such as Nuremberg, Bosnia, and Rwanda. In general, these examples fall under the knowledge and awareness typology, informing students of these bodies in a factual manner rather than asking them to relate them to their own experience or to act. For instance, a social science book offers an explanation of “International trials about human rights from wars and genocides in Bosnia and Rwanda” (Bottaro et al. 2006, 109). The textbook goes on to provide that “the UN established special courts to prosecute people accused of abusing human rights in these places” (109).

In addition, several of the books connect the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) to international tribunals like Nuremberg. For instance, a grade 12 history book explains that “in order to address the gross human rights violations of the Apartheid era and to help bring about national reconciliation, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) was set up in 1995. This option was preferred to that of Nuremberg-style trials for people suspected of gross human rights violations” (Fernandez et al. 2013, 267).

Questions are posed to students directly comparing the TRC to Nuremberg such as: “Should people suspected of human rights abuses have been put on trial rather than given the option of applying for amnesty? Were the reparations that were eventually paid to victims of human rights violations enough? Was reconciliation effectively achieved?” (Fernandez et al. 2013, 267). In this example, the TRC is contrasted to the international tribunal, highlighted as more appropriate for the South African context.

National

While there is mention of international tribunals, the majority of the books focus on the TRC. There is extensive coverage of the TRC and human rights violations of the apartheid government in history textbooks that also include a critical and self-reflective tone. For example, in a grade 12 history book, the authors question whether the TRC was too heavily focused on human rights violations that took place in the 1980s, ignoring institutional violence and the human rights abuses of the apartheid system. At the same time, there is an extensive engagement with the TRC findings, including “the TRC, however, found that the [African National Congress] ANC was guilty of a number of gross human rights violations both within the country and beyond its borders—in its training camps in Angola, Zambia, and Mozambique. It also found that the ANC’s ally, the [United Democratic Front] UDF, had been guilty of gross human rights violations within South Africa, for example, through ‘necklace’ killings. . . . The ANC took the TRC to court to try to

prevent the publication of the findings against it, but the Cape High Court rejected its case” (Fernandez et al. 2013, 310). Consequently, despite equating the apartheid regime with human rights violations, there is also an acknowledgement that the ANC violated human rights during the liberation struggle. This complicates the binary narrative that often emerges in post-conflict countries and points to a deliberate attempt to offer a more realistic understanding of rights discourse. The violator of human rights can also become the defender of human rights.

In sum, our findings demonstrate that the vertical framework—of global and national human rights references—are often described together across all three subjects. Additionally, regarding our horizontal framework, two of the typologies—knowledge and awareness, personal and communal values—are found across all three subjects. Action and advocacy is mainly found in life orientation textbooks.

Conclusion

South Africa’s attempt to infuse human rights into its curriculum following the end of apartheid offers an important case study for first, examining the influence of global human rights discourses in national contexts, and second, understanding how these discourses are pedagogically articulated. By employing a two-dimensional framework that examines the vertical flow of human rights knowledge from global to local, as well as the horizontal pedagogical application of this knowledge in textbooks, we offer a novel way of analyzing human rights education. Our findings highlight the importance of both local and global notions of human rights. Our findings also offer insight into how human rights are codified within official state-sanctioned documents.

The analysis of textbooks revealed that a human rights discourse was prevalent throughout the three periods of the postapartheid era and across subjects, incorporating both a global and national perspective. We found that while human rights were framed in both global and local discourses, the local or national were more dominant in history and life orientation books. Discussions of global issues were often juxtaposed with discussions of national issues from the South African context particularly in relation to human rights instruments, human rights movements, and transitional justice mechanisms. The apartheid government was often portrayed as anti-human rights and juxtaposed with the anti-apartheid movement and postapartheid government, which were portrayed as pro-human rights. However, the books also provided a critique of how the ruling party, the African National Congress, violated human rights during the anti-apartheid struggle.

Our quantitative analysis revealed that life orientation textbooks contained the most mentions of the term “human rights.” Furthermore, there was a difference in the manner in which human rights were discussed in life orientation as compared to history and social science textbooks. There was a factual dimension to the treatment of a new national identity in history textbooks, which primarily focused on human rights violations of the past. Yet they included current mechanisms being used to address these violations. While history and social science textbooks focused mainly on education about human rights and sharing knowledge, life orientation textbooks tended to focus on how to advocate for human rights, with activities directing students to practice this advocacy in their own schools and communities. Although the infusion of HRE into textbooks may therefore signal an important policy commitment on the part of the government to human rights, the implementation and realization of this commitment requires further consideration and additional research.

Additionally, our three pedagogical typologies were evident throughout the time periods and subjects as a way to teach HRE. The knowledge and awareness typology was the most dominant throughout all grades and subjects—social sciences, history, and life orientation—and all three historical periods of the curriculum. The second most common typology was personal and communal values. This typology was mainly found in life orientation and social science textbooks, and primarily in the OBE (1996–2001) period, although there were examples of this typology across all versions of the curriculum. Overall, there was much less action and advocacy present throughout the textbooks although, we found that most life orientation textbooks included multiple examples of this typology. This finding could be an artifact of the different pedagogical orientations across subjects, wherein history is less concerned with developing skills and more focused on conveying historical facts (Bentrovato 2017).

Nonetheless, we had expected there to be more action and advocacy, considering that action and advocacy in the form of a massive social movement ended apartheid, with members of the new government playing a central role in that movement. This suggests that although human rights discourse is prevalent in South African textbooks, in general it is limited to conveying knowledge about human rights rather than instigating students to act on behalf of protecting their rights. The majority of active HRE examples were found in life orientation, which is deprioritized and undervalued as a subject more generally (Prinsloo 2007; Jacobs 2011). While subjects such as life orientation with its flexible structure therefore offer the greatest opportunity for encouraging students to advocate for human rights, teachers do not often receive sufficient training to teach students about rights and how to protect and defend them, beyond conveying basic knowledge. Moreover, the

fact that the majority of textbooks rely on a knowledge and awareness approach rather than an action and advocacy approach suggests that despite the inclusion of human rights, the focus is more on a “banking method” of imparting knowledge about human rights rather than critical analysis (Freire 1970).

While world culture scholars find evidence of the influence of global norms on national actors and policies globally (Meyer et al. 1997; Ramirez 2012), we find that the South African textbooks incorporated both global and national symbols in discussing human rights. The textbooks in our sample deployed global examples such as the UDHR, Martin Luther King, and Nuremberg, which was usually in relation to the South African Constitution and Bill of Rights. They also incorporated local examples about the TRC, South African Constitution, and Nelson Mandela. In addition, the TRC was often juxtaposed in relation to other international tribunals as a global symbol of justice. Thus, not only do they draw on the global, but they position the local as globally relevant in an inversion where the local is positioned as shaping the global (Comaroff and Comaroff 2012). Future research could investigate how local conceptions of human rights influence global discourses.

The results of this study suggest that while global human rights discourses are deeply infused in South African history, life orientation, and social sciences textbooks across all three iterations of the curriculum, there is also a strong national dimension reflected in the textbooks. This national dimension, which draws on uniquely South African experiences such as the TRC, and the Constitution’s protection of socioeconomic rights, may play an important role in influencing global discourses on human rights by providing relevant content for the Global South. While our research shows that the rise of human rights globally has influenced the content of textbooks in post-apartheid South Africa, future research could investigate the extent to which textbooks are actually used in the classroom and how teachers and students “vernacularize” (Merry 2006) the substantive human rights content in the local context and the disconnect between human rights discourse and the absence of the fulfillment of human rights on the ground.

Appendix

TABLE A1
COMPLETE LIST OF SOUTH AFRICAN TEXTBOOKS USED IN THE ANALYSIS LISTED IN ORDER OF THE YEAR OF PUBLICATION

Title	Year	Grade	Authors	Publisher	Subject	Curricula
<i>Platinum Social Sciences</i> learner's book (grade 9)	2011	9	Ranby, Johannesson, Versfeld, and Slamang	Cape Town: Pearson	Social sciences	CAPS
<i>Making History</i> (grade 7)	1997	7	Dugmore, Mulholland, Nussey, and Siebinger	Johannesburg: Heinemann	History	OBE
<i>Life Orientation for the New Nation</i> learner's book (grade 7)	1999	7	Craig et al.	Washington, DC: AFRO Publishers	Life orientation	OBE
<i>Dynamic Life Orientation</i> learner's book (grade 9)	2001	9	le Cordeur and Coetzee	Johannesburg: Kagiso Education	Life orientation	OBE
<i>Life Orientation</i> learner's book (grade 10)	2001	10	Potenza, Mashini, and Slater	Cape Town: Nasou via Afrika	Life orientation	OBE
<i>Oxford Successful Social Sciences</i> (grade 9)	2006	9	Bottaro, Visser, Dilley, Cohen, and Versfeld	Oxford: Oxford	Social sciences	RNGS
<i>Extreme Life! Life Orientation</i> learner's book (grade 11)	2006	11	Brink, Coetsee, Htozkamp, Olivier, van Zyl, Fourie, Huysamer, and van Deveneter	Pretoria: Protea	Life orientation	RNGS
<i>Focus on Life Orientation</i> learner's book (grade 11)	2006	11	Rooth, Sielau, Plantagie, and Maponyane	Pearson: Maskew Miller Longman	Life orientation	RNGS
<i>Looking into the Past</i> learner's book (grade 11)	2006	11	Selefi, Saunders, Gordon, Barnes, and Jacobs	Pearson: Maskew Miller Longman	History	RNGS
<i>Moments in History</i> learner's book (grade 11)	2006	11	Graves, Grové, Mulholland, and Sutton	Cape Town: Juta Gariep	History	RNGS
<i>Oxford Successful Life Orientation</i> learner's book (grade 11)	2006	11	Dilley, Clitheror, Visser, Bottaro, Engelbrecht, Falken, Lundall, and Perez	Oxford: Oxford	Life orientation	RNGS
<i>Oxford Successful Life Orientation</i> learner's book (grade 12)	2006	12	Dilley et al.	Oxford: Oxford	Life orientation	RNGS
<i>Social Sciences for the New Nation</i> learner's book (grade 9)	2007	9	Barnard et al.	Cape Town: Nasou Via Afrika	Social sciences	RNGS
<i>Moments in History</i> learner's book (grade 12)	2007	11	Graves et al.	Cape Town: Juta Gariep	History	RNGS

TABLE A1 (Continued)

Title	Year	Grade	Authors	Publisher	Subject	Curricula
<i>Focus on History</i> learner's book (grade 12)	2007	12	Friedman, Mlambo, Saunders, Kros, Seleti, and Jacobs	Pearson: Maskew Miller Longman	History	RNCS
<i>Focus on Life Orientation</i> learner's book (grade 12)	2007	12	Rooth, Stielau, and Maponyane	Pearson: Maskew Miller Longman	Life orientation	RNCS
<i>Life Orientation</i> learner's book (grade 12)	2007	12	Potenza, Mashimini, and Slater	Cape Town: Nasou Via Afrika	Life orientation	RNCS
<i>Life Orientation for All</i> learner's book (grade 12)	2007	12	Marais, Cornfield, Kgoroadira, and Chapman	New York: Macmillian	Life orientation	RNCS
<i>New Generation History</i> (grade 12), chapters 3 and 5	2007	12	Frank, Hlongwane, Pillay, Sikhakhane, Stephenson, and Subramony	Cape Town: Juta Gariep	History	RNCS
<i>Focus on History</i> learner's book (grade 10)	2008	10	Seleti, Delius, Dyer, Nisbet, Saunders	Pearson: Maskew Miller Longman	History	RNCS
<i>Focus on Life Orientation</i> learner's book (grade 10)	2008	10	Rooth, Stielau, Maponyane	Pearson: Maskew Miller Longman	Life orientation	RNCS
<i>History</i> learner's book (grade 10)	2008	10	Dlamini, Ellis, Haw, Macallister, Middlebrook, Nkosi, Olivier, Rogers, and Sithole	Cape Town: Shuter and Shooter	History	RNCS
<i>Oxford In Search of History</i> (grade 12)	2008	12	Bottaro et al.	Oxford: Oxford	History	RNCS
<i>Headstart Life Orientation</i> learner's book (grade 7)	2009	7	Bredenkamp et al.	Oxford: Oxford	Life orientation	RNCS
<i>Oxford In Search of History</i> (grade 11)	2009	11	Bottaro et al.	Oxford: Oxford	History	RNCS
<i>Focus History</i> learner's book (grade 10)	2011	10	Johanneson, Fernandez, Roberts, Jacobs, and Seleti	Pearson: Maskew Miller Longman	History	CAPS
<i>Focus Life Orientation</i> learner's book (grade 10)	2011	10	Rooth, Sesoka, Steenkamp, and Mahuluthulu	Pearson: Maskew Miller Longman	Life orientation	CAPS
<i>Viva Life Orientation</i> learner's book (grade 10)	2011	10	Pearson	Cape Town: Vivlia	Life orientation	CAPS
<i>Social Sciences</i> learner's book (grade 9)	2012	9	Friedman, Ranby, and Varga	New York: Macmillan	Social sciences	CAPS
<i>Focus History</i> learner's book (Grade 11)	2012	11	Fernandez, Friedman, Jacobs, Johannesson, and Wesson	Pearson: Maskew Miller Longman	History	CAPS

<i>Focus Life Orientation</i> learner's Book (grade 11)	2012	11	Rooth, Steenkamp, Mathebula, Mahuluhulu, Ramzan, and Seshoka	Pearson: Maskew Miller Longman	Life orientation	CAPS
<i>Spot on Life Orientation</i> learner's book (grade 11)	2012	11	Carstens, Pretorius, Vercueil, and Walls	Cape Town: Pearson	Life orientation	CAPS
<i>Yebo Life Orientation</i> learner's book (grade 11)	2012	11	Carstens, Pretorius, Vercueil, and Walls	London: Heinemann	Life orientation	CAPS
<i>Platinum Social Sciences</i> learner's book (grade 6)	2013	6	Mahuluhulu, Ramzan, Seshoka, and E. Eysell	Pearson: Maskew Miller Longman	Social sciences	CAPS
<i>Life Orientation Today</i> learner's book (grade 8)	2013	8	Euvriard et al.	Pearson: Maskew Miller Longman	Life orientation	CAPS
<i>Oxford Successful Life Orientation</i> learner's book (grade 8)	2013	8	Clitheroe et al.	Oxford: Oxford	Life orientation	CAPS
<i>Social Sciences Today</i> learner's book (grade 9)	2013	9	Earle, Keats, Edwards, Sauerman, Roberts, and Gordon	Pearson: Maskew Miller Longman	Social sciences	CAPS
<i>Spot on Social Sciences</i> learner's book	2013	9	Allwood and Hambly	Cape Town: Pearson	Social sciences	CAPS
<i>New Generation History</i> learner's book (grade 11)	2013	11	Frank, Sikhakhane, Subramony, Stephenson, Mbansini, and Pillay	Durban: New Generation Publishers	History	CAPS
<i>Spot on History</i> learner's book (grade 11)	2013	11	Cloete, Dugmore, Minter, and Nicol	Cape Town: Pearson	History	CAPS
<i>Focus History</i> learner's book (grade 12)	2013	12	Fernandez, Wills, McMahon, Pienaar, Seleti, and Jacobs	Pearson: Maskew Miller Longman	History	CAPS
<i>Focus Life Orientation</i> learner's book (grade 12)	2013	12	Bird, Martinuzzi, and Dickinson	Pearson: Maskew Miller Longman	Life orientation	CAPS
<i>Shutters Top Class Life Orientation</i> learner's book (grade 12)	2013	12	Dugmore, Friedman, Minter, and Nicol	Cape Town: Shuter and Shooter	Life orientation	CAPS
<i>Spot on History</i> learner's book (grade 12)	2013	12	Bomfield, Carstens, Pretorius, Vercueil, and Walls	Cape Town: Pearson	History	CAPS
<i>Spot on Life Orientation</i> learner's book (grade 12)	2013	12	Bromfield, Carstens, Pretorius, Vercueil, and Walls	Cape Town: Pearson	Life orientation	CAPS
<i>Yebo Life Orientation</i> (grade 12)	2013	12	Bromfield, Carstens, Pretorius, Vercueil, and Walls	Cape Town: Pearson	Life orientation	CAPS

CAPS = curriculum assessment and policy statement; OBE = outcome-based education; RNCGS = Revised National Curriculum Statement.

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