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Unravelling the power relations in high school sexuality education text: who is represented?

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UNRAVELLING THE POWER RELATIONS IN HIGH SCHOOL SEXUALITY EDUCATION TEXT: WHO IS REPRESENTED?

by

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Declaration

This research report submitted for the fulfilment of the requirements for a Master of Arts in Critical Diversity Studies in the Faculty of Humanities at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, 2021.

I declare that this research is my own unaided work. It has not been submitted before for any other degree, part of a degree or examination at this or any other university.

Jane Rossouw **29 July 2021**

List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

AIDS– Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome

CSE – Comprehensive Sexuality Education

DBE – Department of Basic Education

HIV– Human Immunodeficiency Virus

LO– Life Orientation

LS– Life Sciences

NCS– National Curriculum Statement

SA– South Africa

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Abstract

A continuous challenge in post-apartheid SA is the construction and teaching of sex and sexuality in school to be aligned with diversity, inclusion and social transformation. The objective of this research was to determine how sex and sexuality content is represented in SA high school textbooks, focusing specifically on the learning areas of Life Orientation and Life Sciences. Although not as extensively examined as Life Orientation regarding sex and sexuality education, Life Sciences was included in this study as it does contain sex education content, specifically that related to reproduction. The purpose of examining the two subjects was to determine how, collectively, these subjects represent sex and sexuality. A critical discourse analysis of the textbooks for both learning areas revealed a common theme of epistemic ignorance- a notion that the text claims diversity, inclusivity and social transformation, yet actively reproduces hegemonic narratives of heteronormativity and christonormativity, and the expectation of students to be contributing members of a heteronormative and christonormative society.

Keywords: Life Orientation; Life Sciences; Comprehensive Sexuality Education; Diversity; Inclusion; Social Transformation; Epistemic Ignorance

Introduction

Since the end of the oppressive apartheid system in 1994, SA has strived for social transformation, working to embrace diversity and inclusion, and recognize the dignity and equality of all its citizens. This would be irrespective of one's race, gender, religion/culture, socioeconomic status and physical ability. The institution of education has, of course, been no exception to this objective of social transformation- intending a complete disconnect from colonial and apartheid values and ways of thinking (DBE, 2011). Education is a fundamental component of daily life, which influences, guides and supports how individuals interact with each other in various social settings and situations (Landman, Killian, Swanepoel & Bodenstein, 1989), as well as their sense of personal identity. The same principle applies to sex and sexuality education, more recently referred to as comprehensive sexuality education (CSE). In order to understand the notion of CSE, the differences between sex education and sexuality education need to be understood. Sex education can be broadly defined as education covering the topics of "human sexual autonomy, sexual reproduction, sexual intercourse, and other aspects of human sexual behaviour" (Myeza, 2008, p. 8), while sexuality education focuses on forming healthy and positive beliefs and attitudes around the topics of relationships, intimacy, gender roles, body image and affection (Myeza, 2008). From this view, CSE can be defined as

> "a curriculum-based process of teaching and learning about the cognitive, emotional, physical and social aspects of sexuality. It aims to equip children and young people with knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that will empower them to: realize their health, well-being and dignity; develop respectful social and sexual relationships; consider how their choices affect their own well-being and that of others; and understand and ensure the protection of their rights throughout their lives" (UNESCO, 2018, p. 16).

In SA, sex education came to the forefront during the apartheid regime in an attempt to promote and maintain Christian values and strict regulations of sex and sexuality with the emphasis being on "social and moral hygiene" (Francis, 2013, p. 69). Christian teachings made it challenging for youth to be provided with comprehensive sexuality education as it was believed to be taboo (Francis, 2013). The Christian views on sex education became the pedagogic response to the country's HIV epidemic, limiting additional information on sex and sexuality-related questions or concerns (Francis, 2010; Shefer & Macleod, 2015). In

response to this, the school subject of LO was introduced as the platform for sex and sexuality subject matter, in addition to the HIV/AIDS epidemic, to be communicated. In post-apartheid SA, LO is a compulsory subject with the specific objectives of providing young individuals with the platform to understand, develop and empower themselves on a personal, psychological, physical, cultural, moral and socio-economic level, and "promote social justice, human rights, and inclusiveness, as well as a healthy environment" (Jacobs, 2011, p. 212; Nel, Abdool, Botha, & Du Preez, 2014; Ngabaza, Shefer, & Macleod, 2016). Within this context, CSE is aimed at equipping young South Africans with the knowledge and skills to make informed sexual decisions for themselves and that of others (Department of Education, 2002; Department of Education, 2003; Jacobs, 2011; Ngabaza, Shefer, & Macleod, 2016). Alongside the sexuality education of LO is the sex education in LS, although not as commonly or rigorously examined when concerning CSE. This learning area entered the education system based on the importance of knowing about the world we live in and depend on, and the reproductive behaviours of animals, humans included (DBE, 2011). It is for this reason that the research examined the sex and sexuality content for LS together with LO.

While in theory sexuality education in the SA context sounds utopian, many studies have shown that there is a discrepancy between theory and practice, specifically in the LO context (Farrelly, O'Brien, & Prain, 2007; Jacobs, 2011). The voices of the students themselves and their specific needs for sexuality knowledge tends to be minimized (Coll, O'Sullivan, & Enright, 2018), highlighting an inherent ageist power dynamic. Research has further shown that the content of sexuality education is focused on abstinence, disease and prevention, which has resulted in passionate and conflicting debates concerning the pedagogical nature of CSE content (Iyer & Aggleton, 2014; Ngabaza, Shefer, & Macleod, 2016). However, scholars in this field have argued that to make sexuality education, indeed, more comprehensive, it needs to go beyond topics of just disease and prevention but should incorporate topics of health and reproduction, gender, sexual orientation, relationships, intimacy, power and the like (Cassar, 2009; Constantine, et al., 2015). Sexuality education plays an important role in the development of healthy sexual identities and adequate understandings of sex, sexuality and sexual health (Johnson, 1996). Further research is needed to understand how sexuality education is constructed and implemented within the school context, specifically school reading/teaching materials. Therefore, this research aims

to determine not only how sexuality education is implemented, but also to further understanding of how it is taught in school textbooks (Johnson, 1996). Steyn's (2015) Critical Diversity Literacy framework will assist in answering questions such as: What content is included and excluded, and why? Who is represented in the text and how? Does the text continue to adopt a heteronormative bias, as research has shown, or has it shifted to "denounce ideologies that promote sexist, racist and classist notions of sexuality and stimulate compassion through critical thinking and tolerance towards differences through critical reflection on (cultural, religious, societal) values regarding sexuality" (UNESCO, 2018)? Answers to these questions are important as it will assist with future designs and implementations of sexuality education in SA to ensure that dominant ideologies are no longer the main focus of the text, but rather operate alongside diversity and inclusion of non-dominant groups or persons. Bearing this in mind, this analysis aimed to determine how sex/gender and sexuality diversity is represented in the SA high school curricula, with a specific focus on the subjects of LO and LS.

Analysis revealed a prominent global theme of *epistemic ignorance*: the notion that while young people are being taught about sex/gender, sexual diversity, and gendered power dynamics the way this content is included is not necessarily advancing social transformation, for example gender equality or sexual rights. The content of the text itself actively produces and reproduces ignorance. Within this global theme of epistemic ignorance other subthemes of ignorance became evident: *holy ignorance, gender ignorance,* and *the illusion of social transformation.* The content that brought light to these subthemes was structured in such a way that, at first glance, could be misconstrued for social transformation, for inclusiveness. However, upon closer examination, the text instead actively maintained dominant ideologies of heteropatriarchy, christonormativity and teaching students to be active, contributing members of an already chosen and 'functioning' society; a society that reproduces and maintains heteropatriarchal and christonormative ideologies.

Research Problem

According to the DBE the overarching aims of the SA curriculum are to "ensure that children acquire and apply knowledge and skills in ways that are meaningful to their own lives" irrespective of race, gender, socioeconomic background and physical ability (DBE,

2011, p. 4). Moreover, the curriculum strives for social transformation, taking into account human rights, inclusivity for all groups of the SA population, and environmental and social justice (DBE, 2011). Within this context, and within the context of CSE, LO is based on the principles of a holistic approach- it is an interdisciplinary subject focused on assisting learners with understanding themselves in society and in relation to others. In sum, "LO equips learners to engage on personal, psychological, neuro-cognitive, motor, physical, moral, spiritual, cultural, socio-economic and constitutional levels, to respond positively to the demands of the world" and "to know how to exercise their constitutional rights and responsibilities, to respect the rights of others, and to value diversity, health and well-being" (Department of Education, 2003, p. 9). There is an extensive body of knowledge regarding LO and its role in providing sexuality education. However, there seems to be little to no focus on the subject of LS. Although limited and through the lens of reproduction, the topics of sex and gender are incorporated into the science curriculum (Reiss, 2018), therefore making LS, in conjunction with LO, a school subject for sex and sexuality education. Sex education in the context of LS is aimed at increasing "knowledge of key biological concepts, processes, systems and theories" specifically those pertaining to the biological make up and reproductive systems of the human body, whilst taking into account diversity and inclusivity (DBE, 2011, p. 8). Part of CSE is understanding sexual organs and processes, therefore, LS has a key role to play in establishing this understanding. Based on the aims of LS and its inclusion of the biological, sexual organs and processes, it is necessary to analyze how LS contributes to sexual knowledge and the hegemonic messages it has the potential to reproduce. It is for this reason that LS should be more extensively examined for its role in sexuality education. Research has indicated that the biological discourse of sex "draws on biological justification to legitimize its perspective, appealing to factual 'scientific' understandings of bodily functioning" (Farrelly, O'Brien, & Prain, 2007, p. 65). It can be assumed that this purely scientific view is the reason for LS not being formally recognized as a platform for CSE. This is in spite of research demonstrating the success of positively changed sexual attitudes and behaviours when sexuality education is merged with LS (Iwu, Onoja, Ijioma, Ngumah , & Egeruoh, 2011). Kontula's (2010) research on 'The Evolution of Sex Education and Students' Knowledge in Finland in the 2000s' demonstrates how sexuality education in Finland has succeeded to be comprehensive as it combines both the social and

biological constructions of sex and sexuality, along with providing adequate teacher training, cooperation between teachers and health authorities, readily available counselling from school health nurses, and progress from policy-makers recognizing young people's rights to factual sexual knowledge and information. With the support of this literature, it can then be questioned in the SA context how, if at all, does the LO and LS curriculum compliment and/or contradict each other with regards to sex and sexuality education?

In accordance with the objectives of the DBE, these subjects are said to be inclusive and considerate of all groups of the population. However, scholars have noted the discrepancies between theory and practice with specific reference to CSE (Farrelly, O'Brien, & Prain, 2007; Jacobs, 2011), thereby raising question as to whether the objectives of diversity and inclusion are being met in LO and LS. This leads to the second research problem, which is concerned with representation in sexuality education. Scholars who have examined the representation of sex and sexuality in LO have shown it to be largely heteronormative. Shefer & Macleod's (2015) research has shown that LO and LS tends to uphold the heteronormative bias. This is supported by limited and exclusionary definitions of sexuality; that is, through binary notions of male and female (Bay-Cheng, 2003; Farrelly, O'Brien, & Prain, 2007). In support of this binary view of sex and sexuality education in LO, sociologists of biology have shown that biology is "structured by norms of heterosexual masculinity" (Reiss, 2018, p. 7) and consists of "simplistic characterizations of sex/gender" (Bazzul & Sykes, 2010, p. 6). Therefore, both LO and LS are heteronormative in nature. Furthermore, the curriculum often fails to address the interplay between intersectional factors such as race, gender, socioeconomic status, language, alternative sexual orientations and ablebodiedness, but rather has a tendency to reproduce "sexist, racist, and classist notions of sexuality" (Bay-Cheng, 2003, p. 64). That is, if the content does not follow the heteronormative norms of the dominant CSE discourse, it cannot be a part of the authorized content. In a culturally diverse country such as SA, it is rather challenging to determine what content would be considered sexual health or deemed culturally appropriate (Beyers, 2011). Additionally, many scholars in the field of sexuality education have highlighted the excluded voices of adolescent students and the need for their voices to become more involved and centralized in LO sexuality education in order to meet their need for sex and sexuality knowledge (Francis, 2010; Shefer & Macleod, 2015; Bonjour & van der Vlugt, 2018). Is

sexuality education representative of the social times, thereby making it relevant to young SA's? From a biological viewpoint, much of the biology of sexuality education is "focused on the use of textbooks which are consumed uncritically by teachers and students" (Reiss, 2007, p. 77). This is because all scientific knowledge of sex/gender and reproduction is considered to be factual and unquestionable, therefore excluding, or limiting, any alternatives (Reiss, 2007; Bazzul & Sykes, 2010; Kannelmäe, 2014; Reiss, 2018). On that account, is the LS sex/gender and reproduction curriculum diverse and inclusive as the DBE implies? Based on these issues, it raises concerns about the inclusiveness and comprehensiveness of sexuality education in SA's national LO and LS curriculum.

Purpose of the Study

It cannot be denied that teachers play a significant role in the delivery of CSE. However, the unfortunate reality, nationally and globally, as research has shown, is that educators do not receive adequate pre-service and in-service training that is required for the provision of sexuality education to be considered comprehensive (Walker & Milton, 2006; Carman, Mitchell, Schlichthorst, & Smith, 2011; Francis, 2012; Iyer & Aggleton, 2013). It is for this reason that many studies have been, and continue to be, conducted for the purposes of creating the necessary training strategies for CSE educators. As important as this is, it is also important to examine the content that educators are expected to relay. If the SA sexuality education curriculum is to be comprehensive, it is imperative that the content be representative of social and sex/gender diversities, as well as the evolving social times. Therefore, to serve as a steppingstone towards the development of an all-encompassing CSE curriculum, this study intends to examine: 1) the included (and excluded) topics of sexuality education in the high school national curriculum- who is represented and how? and 2) the similarities and/or differences in the LO and LS sex and sexuality education content. Analyzing this content will provide insight into the hegemonic views that are present in the curriculum and the construction of sexuality topics such as sexual orientation, gender and gender roles, sexual violence and (dis)ability. Furthermore, it will provide insight into the demographic that sex and sexuality-related issues are associated with, for example, high rates of sexually transmitted infections, gender-based violence and teenage pregnancy, and why. In conducting a critical analysis of the sex and sexuality content in LO and LS, the similarities

and/or differences will become evident and will bring attention to how sex and sexuality are represented in the text: why are certain knowledges more prevalent than others? The analysis will further determine if the sex and sexuality content meet the NCS objectives of social transformation, diversity and inclusion.

The Research Questions

How is sex and sexuality represented in SA's LO and LS high school text?

Sub-questions:

1. What are the similarities and/or differences in the sex and sexuality content in LO and LS?
2. Are the LS and LO sex and sexuality education curriculums inclusive and diverse?
3. Does the CSE-related content meet the NCS objectives of social transformation, diversity and inclusion?

Theoretical Framework

Critical Diversity Theory

Critical diversity theory is a constituent of critical theory within the field of social sciences. Critical theory is "a distinctive form of theory in that it posits a more comprehensive means to grasp social reality and diagnose social pathologies" (Thompson, 2017, p. 1). The purpose of critical theory, and thus critical diversity theory, is to wholly understand an individual and how they interact in social settings, and in relation to others through an analysis of language and communication (Thompson, 2017). From this perspective, critical diversity theory is an amalgamation of racial, sexed, gendered, classist, cultural, linguistic theories and all other components that make up social beings. This theory analyses the ways in which these factors intersect and the consequent impact it has on social processes and systems (Banks, 2016; Thompson, 2017). In sum, the aim of critical diversity theory is twofold: 1) understand and expose the hegemonic, oppressive forces and power relations operating in society, and 2) use this knowledge for transformative social, political and economic action (Banks, 2016; Thompson, 2017; Crossman, 2020). Applying critical

diversity theory to the institution of education means to investigate discourse, both written and verbal, that may work to maintain and reproduce hegemonic and oppressive ideologies that are then played out in the greater society (Gorski & Pothini, 2014; Banks, 2016). The same principle applies to understanding sexuality education and how it manifests itself in all social spheres.

Critical Diversity Literacy

Professor Melissa Steyn from the Centre of Critical Diversity Studies at the University of the Witswatersrand in Johannesburg, SA, has played a pivotal role in bettering the understanding of Critical diversity theory. She has advanced knowledge in this field through her development of the Critical Diversity Literacy (CDL) framework. As proposed by Steyn (2015):

> "'Critical diversity literacy' can be regarded as an informed analytical orientation that enables a person to 'read' prevailing social relations as one would a text, recognizing the ways in which possibilities are being opened up or closed down for those differently positioned within the unfolding dynamics of specific social contexts" (p. 381)

In order for one to fully grasp the notion of CDL, it is required that one needs to recognize that we are living in an ever-changing society; we are constantly developing new social contexts through changing social relationships between people or groups of people in different positions of power. There needs to be awareness of the multi-layered social contexts in which we live (Steyn, 2015). Not only is one required to understand the new social contexts and its ambivalence, but one is also to adopt a social literacy and critical literacy. Much like adapting to the technological or industrial revolution and the ability to speak with and engage in these revolutions, one needs to be able to adopt a literacy suitable for various social and cultural contexts in order to be socially literate (in the new social contexts). To be critically literate means that one is able to uncover and identify the power relations that separates society into different groups; that ranks them, provides some with more opportunities and advancements while restricting that of lower ranked social groups. This separation in people determines "how others see us and how we see ourselves in relation to them" (Steyn, 2015, p. 380). To be critically literate is the skill to be able to detect the silent and dominant power dynamics wandering around our social contexts, forming and/or

disrupting interactions between social groups.

The new context, social literacy and critical literacy are the foundations for Steyn's 10 criteria of the CDL framework, which will be discussed below.

1) *'An understanding of the role of power in constructing differences that make a difference'*

Difference is a socially constructed notion, and the ways we think about difference are rooted within unequal power relations. To sustain difference among people, or this "natural hierarchy" as Steyn refers to it as, requires "constant ideological work" (p. 381). This ideological work is produced and maintained through the notion of binaries. Binaries can be classified by race (black/white), gender (man/woman) or even power itself (dominant/oppressed). The purpose of binaries is essentially to place social beings into specific categories where one side of the binary is socially, economically and psychologically "valorized above the other" (p. 381). By having binaries, hegemonic orders are able to create and maintain specific social categories, ensuring scrutinized and oppressed societal entry for people who do not fall within the realm of the socially constructed binaries. This first criterion is the basis for understanding how domination and oppression operate within society, and how they have both historically and currently, established the privileged and disadvantaged social norms we know and see in modern day society.

2) *'A recognition of the unequal symbolic and material value of different social locations'*

We are all positioned differently within society due to ideological systems that have been put in place by hegemonic forces using discourses that have produced and maintained these systems. Some people or groups of people are located in more advantageous social positions than others due to the binaries that have been established. There needs to be an understanding of "how we are positioned within the relations of power that structure hierarchies" (Steyn, 2015, p. 383). There are two key points that Steyn has revealed regarding different social locations:

a. "Social spaces include great disparities and are riven with inconsistencies and contradictions" (p. 382). This means that not all people who are positioned on the valorized side of the binary will benefit from the ideological systems they have been placed in to. For example, a white, heterosexual male may not benefit equally from the ideological systems of whiteness, heteronormativity and/or maleness. "Some may be in quite weak positions within what is nevertheless a relationship of privilege when seen relative to the 'othered' groups" (p.

382).

b. Hegemonic forces and their ideological systems determine how 'othered' or non-conforming groups are positioned and meant to behave within society. These oppressed people or groups of people face great difficulties in expressing themselves in socially "permissible" ways, particularly in interactions with dominant groups or public spaces, as they directly challenge the "social expectations set for them" (Steyn, 2015, pp. 382-383). Because they do not fall within the bounds of social expectations, oppressed groups are more conscious of the ideological systems that have placed them in these positions, while those in positions of privilege have less awareness of the social standards that have created and maintained their advantageous position.

3) *'Analytical skill at unpacking how these systems of oppression intersect, interlock, co-construct and constitute each other, and how they are reproduced, resisted and reframed'*

Essential to CDL is the awareness and understanding of different identity formations and how all aspects of identity intersect- aspects such as race, gender, physical/mental ability, religion and/or culture, sexual orientation, class and nation, to name a few. All of these aspects contribute to our lived experiences and it is of utmost importance to know that these aspects do not operate independently from each other, but rather that "they are actually constructed through and mutually sustain one another" (Steyn, 2015, p. 383). It is the amalgamation of these dominant formations that impact positionalities and lived experiences. Intersectionality creates ambivalence and thus reproduce ideological systems. Simply put, society has been trained to disapprove difference or ambivalence, consequently using the hegemonic discourses that sustain this disapproval. This is how ideological systems are able to maintain its power.

4) A definition of oppressive systems as current social problems and (not only) a historical legacy

We cannot fully comprehend how social groups and standards operate if we do not have a full understanding of its historical legacy. Oppression and power cannot be analyzed by ignoring how it was historically constructed. Hegemonic forces attempt to rewrite discourses of the past "so that the oppressive dynamics formative of current inequities are lost to memory construct epistemologies of ignorance and amnesia essential to continuing the gains of the past discriminatory practices without any moral accountability" (Steyn, 2015, p. 384).

Understanding history and its impact on current social injustices will greatly influence how we redress these injustices. In sum, history cannot and should not be ignored in the analysis of current society.

5) *An understanding that social identities are learned and are an outcome of social practices*

This criterion of the framework calls for the acknowledgement that social identities are not fixed, but rather that they are a product of and can be understood in terms of how they are positioned relative to prevailing power relations in a given social context. This is how stereotypes are formed. Additionally, this applies, too, to how individuals view themselves- who they interact with or stay away from; the social locations they occupy and how (Steyn, 2015).

6) *The possession of a diversity grammar and a vocabulary that facilitates a discussion of privilege and oppression*

If prevailing power dynamics are to be redressed it is necessary to adopt the skill of identifying the discursive practices that allow issues, people and events to be viewed as oppressive or dominant. Having this skill "enhances the capacity to recognize, point out and insist on the reality of the practices, strategies and effects of the operations of power on difference" (Steyn, 2015, p. 385).

7) *The ability to 'translate' (see through) and interpret coded hegemonic practices*

One of the most indispensable insights to the CDL framework is that "power never names itself as such" (Steyn, 2015, p. 386). Hegemonic orders have created a language of "deflection, ambivalences and minimization" (p. 386) to avoid bringing its agenda(s) to the forefront. This hegemonic discourse tends to be used to legitimize and downplay the adverse effects of social injustices. To have the ability to see through and interpret coded hegemonic practices, one needs to recognize that hegemonic orders have the ability to "recast issues in ways that suit prevailing interests, they can co-opt, contain and curtail oppositional discourse" (p. 386).

8) *An analysis of the ways that diversity hierarchies and institutionalized oppressions are inflected through specific social contexts and material arrangements*

Dominant formations, such as gender, race, sexual orientation etc., cannot be viewed the same in all social contexts. As Steyn (2015) states "assumptions arising from one context

simply generalized to another can be misleading and imperializing in effect" (p. 386). Rather, one should analyze how hegemonic structures differ between specific social contexts and how they may modify over time, especially when met with specific social conditions and material arrangements. One cannot separate the social world from the material one. Each of these worlds independently and simultaneously carry with it emotional and symbolic meanings, ultimately determining the establishment, preservation and/or deprivation of relationships between people. The unequal distribution of material assets creates a social division of poor versus rich, of dominant versus oppressed. This unequal distribution of resources forces oppressed groups to depend on those who oppress them, consequently allowing dominant groups to become more powerful (Steyn, 2015). Simultaneously, "spatial arrangements reveal a great deal about what is considered the proper relationships between people and reflect the normative moral order" (Steyn, 2015, p. 387).

9) *An understanding of the role of emotions, including our own emotional investment, in all of the above*

Our emotions are socially constructed. The social constructions of our emotions determine who we are drawn towards and/or who we repel, who and what is considered more valuable and worth recognition or viewed with contempt. Understanding how emotions are constructed and how they impact social interactions is crucial to understanding the notions of power and oppression. In other words, hegemonic discourses have created and sustained how we view and feel towards various groups of people. For example, sexual orientations which are not heterosexual are deviant of hegemonic ideologies, thus creating a discourse, and ultimately certain emotions, that ostracizes non-conforming sexual orientations. In an attempt to have a critical diversity literacy, there needs to be "critical reflection on how our feelings are caught up in collectives" (Steyn, 2015, p. 387).

10) *An engagement with issues of the transformation of these oppressive systems towards deepening social justice at all levels of social organization*

Acquiring a critical diversity literacy will remain personal knowledge if there is an unwillingness to turn theory into practice. This final criterion of the CDL framework requires us to take our knowledge of the complex social dynamics and ever shifting social centers and margins, and to "act into the world with a will to bring about more socially just arrangements: not only to understand them, but also to change them; to become an ally to those whose

oppression would otherwise be further entrenched through conscious and unconscious assumptions of privilege" (Steyn, 2015, p. 388).

These ten criteria of the CDL framework will be the analytical orientation for answering the research questions and bringing to the forefront potentially hidden power dynamics operating within the LO and LS CSE curriculum.

Literature Review

The Historical Context

History of the SA Education System

Before unpacking the history, approaches and issues representation of sex and sexuality education, it is crucial to lay the foundation of the history of education in general, and of LO and LS, in SA in order to better comprehend its historical and current role in sex and sexuality education. It will furthermore provide insight into inclusiveness, diversity and social transformation in SA education.

The SA institution of education has gone through numerous curriculum reforms, which can be dated back to when SA was first colonized. Education in SA was formed on the basis of religion, specifically led by the Dutch Reformed Church (Calvinists) (Marulcu & Akbiyik, 2014). From 1948 to 1994, the years of the SA Apartheid regime education was based solely on racial segregation (Marulcu & Akbiyik, 2014) accompanied by the educational policy of the Christian National Education (Ashley, 1989).

Because of SA's restrictive and discriminatory past, and the introduction of a democratic system in 1994, it was essential that the country undergo curriculum reform. Curriculum reform can be defined as the adaptation of educational content to keep up with the demands of societal, political, technological and other advances (Nobanda, 2016). As stated by Marulcu & Akbiyik (2014) "the negotiated transition from the apartheid to a democratic system made it necessary and possible for the new education system to emerge, an education system which views all citizens equally, which strives for inclusion rather than exclusion, integration rather than separation" (p. 8). Essentially, the apartheid curriculum was 'cleansed' of its offensive racist discourse and controversially outdated content (Jansen,

1999). The education system moved from being race-based to an outcome-based education system. According to the SA Ministry of Education in the early 2000's, as cited in Mazabow (2003) "outcome based education is learner centred and tries to develop critical, investigative, creative, problem solving, communicative and future oriented citizens" (Abraham, 2008, p. 8). Chisholm (2005) adds on that outcomes-based education placed great emphasis on unveiling "the local, hidden, silenced knowledge, and everyday realities of learners" (p. 194). This outcome-based approach to education formed part of the first post-apartheid National Curriculum Statement (NCS) in 1997. The overarching objective of the initial NCS was to transform the SA education system, and ultimately societal values. Language became a large focal point of the NCS. It was essential that the meanings of words be changed if this new education system was to be completely detached from SA's contentious past (Chisholm, 2005). A new vocabulary was introduced that not only changed terminology, but also introduced new notions that could be used for teachers to design and develop curricula. On paper, this new NCS seemed utopian, however, it had some inherent flaws (Hoadley, 2011). The first flaw was the assumption that all SA teachers would be able to readily understand the new terminology along with the new approaches to teaching (Jansen, 1998). The second flaw was that the infrastructure and material resources needed to ensure equal curriculum implementation across SA was not available (Nompula, 1996). These shortcomings of the new NCS and the lack of congruence between design and implementation is what made the initial NCS impractical (Nobanda, 2016). As a result, the NCS was reviewed and revised in 2002 to simplify the language use and provide teachers with clearer guidelines (Abraham, 2008). Not long after the 2002 revision of the NCS, the NCS was reviewed once again (Hoadley, 2011). The objective of the multiple reforms of the NCS was to continuously improve the content, quality of teaching and successful implementation of the transformative purposes of the post-apartheid NCS (Nobanda, 2016).

As it currently stands, the NCS for grades R-12 aims to "ensure that children acquire and apply knowledge and skills in ways that are meaningful to their own lives" whilst being cognizant of local and global contexts (DBE, 2019). The curriculum statements for grades R-12 have four main purposes: (1) provide learners with skills, knowledge and values that will allow them to attain self-satisfaction, as well as contribute to society in a meaningful manner. This is irrespective of a person's race, gender, socioeconomic status, physical or intellectual

ability; (2) ensure that learners have access to tertiary/advanced forms of education; (3) assist with the transition process from learners to working members of society and (4) provide employers with a learner's profile showcasing their capabilities (DBE, 2019). In order to achieve the intended outcomes, the NCS is based off a few fundamental principles. The first is that of *social transformation*: the national curriculum needs to ensure that the educational inequalities of SA's past are rectified and that all populations of SA are provided with equal and just educational opportunities. Followed by this is the principle of *active and critical learning*, meaning that learners should be encouraged to not merely accept given truths, but to actively and critically participate in and challenge their education. Next is the principle of *high knowledge and high skills*: "the minimum standards of knowledge and skills to be achieved at each grade are specified and set high, achievable standards in all subjects" (DBE, 2019). The NCS wants to ensure *progression*; that the content and context of each individual subject area advances from one grade to the next. If the NCS does not consider *human rights, inclusivity, environmental and social justice* as core principles, then it won't be able to redress the educational imbalances of the past. These principles are incorporated in the Constitution of the Republic of SA, with a specific emphasis on issues of diversity and inclusion. The NCS believes that it is necessary to *value indigenous knowledge systems* because of the rich history and heritage of SA, and views these as important contributing factors to promoting the values of the Constitution. Lastly, the NCS is based on the principle of *credibility, quality and efficiency*: "providing an education that is comparable in quality, breadth and depth to those of other countries" (DBE, 2019). These listed purposes and fundamental principles apply to all learning areas including LO and LS regarding sex and sexuality education.

In the current LO curriculum statement policy, from the senior phase (grades 7-9) to the further education and training phase (grades 10-12), this learning area is characterized by the self in relation to others; personal, emotional, social, intellectual, spiritual, physical growth; skills on how to sufficiently set goals and solve problem; respect for diversity; and how to be a meaningful contributor to a democratic society (Department of Education, 2011). From grades 7-9, LO covers the topics of "development of the self in society; health, social and environmental responsibility; constitutional rights and responsibilities; physical education; and world of work" (DBE, 2011, p. 8). A total of two hours per week is allocated

to LO in the senior phase, with one hour allocated on physical education and the remaining hour to be split among the remaining four topics. Overall, there are 70 hours allocated to LO in the senior phase in one full school year (a total of 40 weeks) (DBE, 2011). LO from grades 10-12 expands on the senior phase topics and discusses them in more detail. They are categorized as follows: "development of the self in society; social and environmental responsibility; democracy and human rights; careers and career choices; study skills; and physical education" (Department of Education, 2011, p. 8). Two hours per week are allocated to LO in grades 10-12, amounting to a total of 66 hours for grades 10 and 11, and 56 hours for grade 12 in one full school year (Department of Education, 2011).

The learning area of LS entered the education system due to colonial influence (Le Grange, 2008) and the importance of knowing about and understanding the natural world we live in. It is a subject that "has been influenced by political, social, economic and religious factors as well as the developments in science and technology" (Le Grange, 2008, p. 89). According to the current NCS (DBE, 2011) Natural Sciences (grades 7-9) is the foundation for LS (grades 10-12). The intention of Natural Sciences is to "prepare learners for active participation in a democratic society that values human rights and promotes responsibility towards the environment", while it can also "prepare learners for economic activity and self-expression" (DBE, 2011, p. 9). The aims of the Natural Sciences curriculum are to provide learners with the opportunities to better comprehend the ideas they may have about their natural worlds through encouraging them to ask questions which could result in further inquiries. A total of three hours is allocated to Natural Sciences, amounting to 34 weeks of one school year (DBE, 2011). According to the DBE, LS is the "scientific study of living things from molecular level to their interactions with one another and their environments" (DBE, 2011, p. 8). The purpose of LS is to advance scientific knowledge and understanding, develop skills for scientific investigation, and develop a greater understanding of the role science has to play in society (DBE, 2011). The LS curriculum comprises of four knowledge strands: 1) Life at the molecular, cellular and tissue level, 2) life processes in plants and animals, 3) environmental studies, and 4) diversity, change and continuity (DBE, 2011, pp. 9-10). From grades 10-12, four hours per week are allocated to LS. Both grades 10 and 11 are designed to complete the curriculum within 32 of the 40 weeks of a school year, while the grade 12 curriculum is designed to be complete within 27½ weeks (DBE, 2011).

The Politics of the Textbook

Understanding the history of education in SA cannot be separated from understanding the role of the textbook. This is because textbooks are the backbone of education; it is the textbooks that teach, more so than the teachers (Hickman & Porfilio, 2012). According to Sasha Polakow-Suransky (2002) "new texts have attempted to challenge the old apartheid narratives" (p. 11). Richard Chernis (1990) notes how apartheid era texts used "master symbols" to create a divide between the dominant and the oppressed; its primary function was "identity formation, legitimation [of the current social order], and national orientation" (Polakow-Suransky, 2002, p. 9). Chernis (1990) goes on to state that these "master symbols became so much a part of society's collective consciousness that they were eventually regarded as irrefutable facts" (p. 55). Hickman & Porfilio (2012) echo this argument, stating that textbooks are viewed as "holy books" by parents, teachers and students, further expecting students to memorize its content and views as "facts" and "information" (p. 3). The text is structured in such a way that depicts desired groups in a superior position and is "enhanced by the coexistence of hostile images of those deemed outside the group" (Chernis, 1990, p. 59), thus maintaining stereotypes we might see in modern society. This is supported by Michael Apple and Linda Christian-Smith (1991) who argue that

> "texts are not simply 'delivery systems' of 'facts'. They are at once the result of political, economic, and cultural activities, battles and compromises. They are conceived, designed, and authored by people with real interests. They are published within the political and economic constraints of markets, resources and power" (p. 3).

The authors go on to note that "texts are really messages to and about the future" which establish a society recognized as "legitimate and truthful" (p. 4). This "unquestioned use of textbooks contributes to the unquestioned preservation of the social, economic and political status quo" (Hickman & Porfilio, 2012, p. 3). From this perspective, texts serve as a reference point for the knowledge we know and don't know, and the subsequent cultures, beliefs and understandings of morality that are upheld. The role of textbooks in education, especially in a post-apartheid SA seeks to replace the old with the new; the oppressed with inclusive; to create a new personal and cultural identities (Apple & Christian-Smith, 1991; Polakow-Suransky, 2002; Msila, 2007; Malisa & Missedja, 2019). Using this literature of the

role of textbooks in education, it is necessary to examine the social, economic and political agendas of the current LO and LS textbooks containing CSE content.

The History of Sex and Sexuality Education

Along with understanding the construction of CSE content in the LO and LS textbooks, knowing how sex and sexuality education came to be part of social, political and economic discussions is as important, in both the national and global contexts. Sexuality education was first liberalized in Sweden in 1955, followed by Western European countries in the 1970's and 1980's, and then Eastern European countries between the 90's and 2000's (Bonjour & van der Vlugt, 2018). Sexuality education came to the forefront in response to the introduction of contraceptive pills, the legislation of abortions, the rise of HIV infections, the need for safer sex practices, and eventually in efforts to reduce sexual violence and pressures experienced by women and girls (Zimmerman, 2015; Bonjour & van der Vlugt, 2018). In the late 1990's and early 2000's, specifically in the US, its aim then became to address the concerns of the white-middle class regarding the 'moral deterioration and social decay' seen among the lower-class, immigrants and non-white communities. Its objective was to save the children of these groups from their immoral parents, by providing them with 'proper moral guidance' (Bay-Cheng, 2003, p. 63). A similar ideology could be seen during the SA apartheid regime wherein "the promotion and maintenance of the Christian values and the draconian policing of sexuality was fundamental to the apartheid project" (Francis, 2013, p. 69), including interracial relationships. In the post-apartheid era, sexuality education became synonymous with prevention and reducing the rates of HIV infection. The HIV/AIDS pandemic brought awareness to the "problematic nature of sex and sexuality" (McFadden, 1992, p. 158) and "illustrated that gender relations play a crucial role in the spread of HIV" (Shefer & Foster, 2009, p. 267). For a brief period of time, male homosexual sexual relationships were seen to be the cause for the transmission of HIV/AIDS, however, it became more evident that heterosexual sexual relationships were the primary mode of infection, highlighting clearly that young women and girls are disproportionally infected and affected by HIV/AIDS (Harrison, 2005; Shefer & Foster, 2009). According to Mikki van Zyl (2009), a scholar who paid close attention to the construction of sexual rights in various global constitutions, sexual rights and relationships during the apartheid era was something

that was clearly situated in the public/private binary. That is, if it did not fall within the dominant ideologies of the time, it would be scrutinized and punished in the public arena, therefore it was safer to keep alternatives in the private space. However, the transition to "a western-style democracy" was a convenient moment for sexual rights to be included into SA's Bill of Rights (Act 108 of 1996), meaning that sexualities could now be overtly regulated (p. 364). Using the writings of Beresford, Schneider and Sember (2008) to support her position, van Zyl (2009) states"

> "while exercising a regime of strict control over many aspects of sexuality, the apartheid state asserted the privacy of the patriarchal domestic arena, paying scant notice to gender-based violence unless the victim was white and the perpetrator black. In the 'new' SA, gender and sexualities were recast within a framework of citizenship rights upheld by the Constitution, which has enabled the judiciary to defend contentious sexual rights claims against moralistic cultural and religious detractors" (p. 365).

Although genders and sexualities are no longer restricted to the public/private dichotomy and are now situated within the constitutional notion of human rights, there remains a contradiction between what is written on paper and what is expressed and accepted in society (van Zyl, 2009). The SA constitution puts forward a document which claims to embrace inclusion, diversity and social transformation, however, it is out of synch with social realities as it continues to abide by legislations which give precedence to heteropatriarchal, christonormative and stigmatizing ideologies (van Zyl, 2009; Letseka, 2014). Kopano Ratele (2009) proposes the argument that one reason for this is that "many Africans and Whites still appear to be troubled by the repressive legacies of apartheid laws and hence continue to live out the sexual identities, desires, fears and relationships that apartheid fathers sought to cultivate on this land" (p. 290). These historical examinations bring attention to how sex and sexuality education is constructed and implemented in the school textbooks, based on the systemic ideologies that are chosen and accepted to be performed in the greater society.

Approaches to Sex and Sexuality Education

The Abstinence-Only Approach

Both historically and currently, school-based sexuality education in Western Europe, the US and the global South are largely funded to promote the abstinence-only approach (Bonjour & van der Vlugt, 2018). The abstinence-only approach is based primarily on

religious beliefs and often makes use of scare tactics to ensure abstinence from engaging in sexual activities (Bay-Cheng, 2003; Brewer, Brown, & Migdal, 2007). These scare tactics focus on the consequences or risks associated with sex and sexuality, enforcing the notion that partaking in any sexual activities guarantees negative outcomes, such as illness and/or pregnancy. Advocates of this approach are of the opinion that individuals should not engage in sexual intercourse until they are married, implying that any person who does so is immoral. It further imposes feelings of guilt for any sexual feelings such as desire or pleasure experienced during, what would be considered, normal sexual development within adolescents (Brewer, Brown, & Migdal, 2007). Gagnon and Simon (1973) note that "learning about sex in our society is learning about guilt; conversely, learning how to manage sexuality constitutes learning how to manage guilt" (p. 42). Furthermore, this approach claims that, if not actively stopped, adolescents will have sex at every given opportunity. Therefore this approach works to remove the elements of desire and pleasure associated with sex, as it is seen as promoting it amongst these vulnerable adolescents (Bay-Cheng, 2003). Those who adopt an abstinence-only approach have argued that teaching adolescents about sex and sexuality, including the pleasure and risk elements thereof, serves as a catalyst for young children and adolescents to engage in sexual activities, despite much research showing this to be a myth (Donovan, 1998; Beyers, 2013). Research has shown that providing accurate and comprehensive information to young people about the pleasures and risks of sex and sexuality has delayed their participation therein (Donovan, 1998; Walker & Milton, 2006; Gautem-Adhikary, 2011). The abstinence-only approach has been criticized for concealing knowledge about contraceptives and preventative methods against STIs, thus leaving adolescents in a vulnerable position to a range of social and sexual risks, such as unexpected pregnancies and STIs (Brewer, Brown, & Migdal, 2007). Although such programs claim to promote morality, realistically speaking, abstinence-only programs are immoral and unjust due to its refusal to share "life-saving information and services related to sexuality…" (Brewer, Brown, & Migdal, 2007, p. 14). Abstinence-only programs do not account for the social, physical, emotional and developmental needs of adolescents, but rather adds to the pressures they face during an already challenging developmental phase (Brewer, Brown, & Migdal, 2007).

Comprehensive Sexuality Education

Unlike abstinence-only programs, sexuality education includes the social, physical, emotional and developmental elements of sexuality. Many experts in this field agree that effective sexuality education should be a combination of the values taught in abstinence-only programs and the realistic and safe practices taught in CSE programs (Roleff, 1999). In other words, elements of the abstinence-only approach should be integrated within CSE, whilst simultaneously providing adolescents with correct and necessary information about sex and sexuality (Gautem-Adhikary, 2011). It should teach young individuals the biology of sex and gender, how to set limits and deal with pressures from peers and social media (Brewer, Brown, & Migdal, 2007). It is also important for CSE to include discussions about sexual orientation (Roleff, 1999), gender-based violence (Future of Sex Education Initiative, 2012), and to provide a space in which students are able to freely ask questions and have their misconceptions about sex and sexuality factually rectified (Myeza, 2008). CSE is expected to be taught in such a way so as to avoid blaming and shaming young students about their sexual feelings and find a balance between presenting sex as both risky and pleasurable to meet young students' needs (Francis, 2010). Ideally, CSE should have an all-encompassing approach.

The general layout of CSE is to provide rights-based approaches to sex and sexuality, concentrating on the physical, social and intrapersonal aspects of sexuality. The physical aspect of sexuality education focuses on relaying important biological attributes such as human reproduction, sex determination, contraceptives and disease prevention, whilst the social and intrapersonal components are based on identity, consensual relationships and intimacy (Bonjour & van der Vlugt, 2018). More specifically, CSE aims to equip young people with the necessary knowledge and skills needed to protect and enjoy their sexuality and sexual experiences to avoid associated sexual risks (Halstead & Reiss, 2003; IPPF, 2010; Gautem-Adhikary, 2011; Francis, 2012; Haberland & Rogow, 2014; Bonjour & van der Vlugt, 2018). Halstead and Reiss (2003) help us understand what sexuality education should include by suggesting examples of the characteristics of a comprehensively sexually educated individual. According to these authors, such an individual will have knowledge of how to fall pregnant, contract STI's, as well as how to steer clear of these consequences. A sexually educated person will adopt 'liberal values of autonomy, equality, fairness and personal

security' resulting in them knowing how to defend themselves in unwanted sexual encounters (p. 7). In line with this is the skill of 'responsible sexual decision-making' meaning that a sexually educated person will be considerate of the other person's sexual needs and desires, as well as their own (p. 7). Additionally, a sexually educated individual has respect for others' views of common controversial sexuality issues, which may differ from their own, such as sexual orientation, abortion, contraception and choice of abstinence. These examples of a sexually educated person showcase the physical, social and intrapersonal components necessary for this form of education. Theoretically, this approach to sexuality education seems progressive and diverse, however, much research has shown that the aims of CSE are not necessarily being met in the field; that sexuality education for children and adolescents are generally viewed in a negative light, utilizing scare tactics to regulate the exploration of and engagement in sex and sexuality (Shefer & Macleod, 2015).

Biological Approach

In the SA context, the biological approach to sex and sexuality is largely scientific and evolutionary based, with almost no consideration of the social constructions associated with gender and sexuality (Müller, 2013). This pedagogical approach to sexuality education "is reduced to anatomical (ab)normalities and physiological (dys)functioning, and sexual identities, desires, pleasures and orientations are ignored" (Müller, 2013, p. 3). It is argued by Williams (2010) that this scientific approach to sexuality education promotes and maintains the notion of heterosexuality, attributing it solely to biological factors such as differences in reproductive organs, hormones and the impact it has on neurological functioning. Moreover, this scientific knowledge of physiological makeup influences the gender ideologies of students. For example, the effects of hormones on brain development encourages educators of all subjects to "'teach the testosterone' and to resist pathologizing boys for fixed biological endowments" (Williams, 2010, p. 560). In other words, males are perceived to be the dominant gender and sex and sexuality education should therefore be structured in such a way that it maintains heterosexual masculinity. Shefer & Foster (2009) assert that there is a lack of positive discourse on female sexuality, while van Zyl (2009) goes on to state that "the rhetoric of 'women's health' has been appropriated into religious and 'traditional' discourses which perpetuate heteropatriarchal ideologies of sex, sex roles, reproduction and family

forms to assert control over gender and sexuality" (p. 386).

Director of Single-Gender Initiatives, David Chadwell suggests creating a learning environment and disseminating content for young female learners that is collective; a place wherein they are able to be emotional and connect with one another. Creating this environment and designing female-specific content, Chadwell believes, speaks to the greater levels of oxytocin in the female brain (Williams, 2010). This suggestion not only maintains the female stereotype that they are emotional beings, but also the division between males and females.

In her personal account as a tertiary level biology educator, Scholer (2002) notes that the biological approach to sexuality education is to reduce topics of sex and sexuality to 'anatomy and hormone cycles' because it is the 'safer' option (p. 75). However, this shielded outlook on sex and sexuality prevents students from receiving factual and necessary information, which will for the majority of them, be useful as they further develop into sexual beings. Scholer's personal account highlights two premises: 1) the heteronormativity and limits that lie within the biological approach to sexuality education, but also that 2) sexuality education from a biological approach is largely dependent on the educator themselves to make this approach inclusive and informative. Scholer provides numerous examples in which she takes it upon herself to have an open conversation with her students about the diversities of sex and gender. During her discussions of mitosis and meiosis, Scholer notes how "meiosis has traditionally led to discussions of Down's syndrome, but it can also be easily related to the discussion of XO females (Turner's syndrome) and the XXY male (usually) of Kleinfelter's syndrome" (p. 77). Discussions of these syndromes generally lead into conversations of causes of indefinite gender in humans (intersex). This discussion then leads into the genetic causes of such differences, and ultimately the reproductive organ composition. Scholer indicates how a discussion of the endocrine system and its connection to breast cancer in men has caused much confusion for her students about biological concepts and systems. This emphasis on the male/female dichotomy makes it challenging for students to grasp concepts outside of this dichotomy and understand extended biological makeup, even when met with biological information that proves this dichotomy to be a social construct. The final example that Scholer uses to demonstrate heteronormative knowledge is that of the sperm-egg illustration (Martin, 1990). In this illustration, the sperm is portrayed as

active, while the egg is passive, supported by 'sex-stereotyped terminology' (p. 79). Discussing reproductive processes through this imagery depicts men as active and women as passive (Martin, 1990). These examples prove how science rhetoric has been used by hegemonic forces to standardize sex and gender differences. Through this, these forces have been able to maintain and reproduce male and female roles and expectations, using the education of sex and sexuality as one of its platforms.

Issues of Representation

Scholars who have advocated for CSE, both nationally and internationally, have all come to one, overarching conclusion: in order for sexuality education to be comprehensive and impactful, it is essential that the content is inclusive and representative of diversity. However, even in the progressive social times, there continues to be a lack of inclusivity and diversity in sexuality education. Much research has been done regarding CSE in the context of LO, with little to no focus on CSE within the context of LS. Therefore, there is a more extensive body of literature pertaining to issues of representation in LO sexuality education. For example, numerous academics have highlighted how sexuality education continues to lack information about relationships, gender, sexual orientation, intimacy, and power relations, and the diversities that lie within these topics (Measor, Tiffin & Miller, 2000; Mayock & Byrne, 2004; Cassar, 2009; Constantine, et al., 2015; Ngabaza, Shefer, & Macleod, 2016).

Nevertheless, sociologists of science have brought forward key issues in scientific education that would assume a lack of representation within LS sex education as well. Firstly, sex education is only a small portion of the school science curriculum and is restricted to reproduction (Reiss, 2018), hormones and physiology (Bazzul & Sykes, 2010). Secondly, the content on reproduction, hormones and physiology is dominated by heterosexual discourse, with a specific focus on heterosexual masculinity (Letts, 2001; Bazzul & Sykes, 2010; Reiss, 2018). In addition to that, scientific education as a whole is viewed to consist of unquestionable truths; it is "disinterested and impersonal" and is "concerned with how things are rather than with how they should be" (Reiss, 2007, p. 72; Reiss, 2018). Reiss (2018) goes on to argue that "science serves as a culturally validating force- because it is so in science lends credence and credibility to phenomena, making them seem *right*" (p. 4). From this

literature, it can be hypothesized that, in the sphere of scientific education, representation regarding sex and gender is restricted to the male/female binary.

Debates around inclusion and diversity are centred in religious, cultural, political, ethical and moral ethics (Measor, Tiffin & Miller, 2000; Cassar, 2009). The dominant orders influence the content that is included and how it is structured, whether it be in the LO or LS learning areas. Sexuality has a historical background of being strongly entwined with numerous biopsychosocial factors, such as economic circumstances, including poverty and employment opportunities, access to education and healthcare, gender, age, race, religion and/or culture (Bay-Cheng, 2003; IPPF, 2010; Bonjour & van der Vlugt, 2018; Shahbaz, 2018). These factors influence the sexual risks or opportunities that young people are faced with during a crucial developmental stage (Aggleton et al, 2000 in Francis 2010). Much of the communication and truthfulness of this education is dependent on the educator and their personal views and beliefs, however, there is an issue of representation in the prescribed CSE text with regards to race, gender, class, age, socioeconomic status, language, sexual orientation and so forth.

The Debate of Age Appropriateness

"Sexuality education ideally starts at a very young age and continues through adolescence into adulthood" (Bonjour & van der Vlugt, 2018, p. 9); it is a life-long process (Lindberg, Santelli, & Singh, 2006; Walker & Milton, 2006). There have been many heated debates regarding the age appropriateness of sex and sexuality education: at what age should it begin and what content should be covered? It is believed that educating from a young age (a relative concept in the field of CSE) could have a 'corrupting influence 'and disrupt a young person's 'sexual innocence '(Annetts, 2007, p. 9). However, this is a common misconception. Research has shown that providing CSE at an early stage in one's life is not solely, if at all, about the physical aspects of sex, but rather teaching young individuals body familiarity, confidence, assertiveness- traits that will remain with them as they develop and progress into (a)sexual beings. The focus should be on the values of sex education such as teaching them to respect their bodies, healthy eating habits and an overall sense of feeling good about themselves. They should be taught about sexual inpropriety along with what to do and who to tell if this happens (Roleff 1999; Johnson, Sendall, & McCuaig, 2014). Roleff

(1999) further goes on to say that children should be taught basic values of life regarding good decision-making and dealing with conflict in healthy and non-violent ways, which ultimately leads to a good sense of self. This is supported by Anspaugh, Ezell and Goodman (1987) who are of the opinion that it is important for appreciation of the self to be developed at an early age and reinforced as they get older if they are to feel comfortable with their sexuality and make healthy sexual decisions during their adolescent and adult years.

While the debate of age-appropriateness and content is still ongoing, research has suggested that focusing on social norms related to sex and sexuality (bearing in mind the changing social times) is more appropriate for children under 12-years-old rather than focusing primarily on the biological aspects of sex and gender (Rogow & Haberland, 2005; Johnson, Sendall, & McCuaig, 2014). However, much focus has been placed on the importance of sex and sexuality education during adolescence, as it is viewed as a crucial developmental and identity stage in one's life (Beyers, 2011). Adolescence is believed to be a "time of sexual scouting and experimentation, distinguishing between fantasies and realties" (Beyers, 2011, p. 200) and it is for this reason that factual and reliable CSE is crucial during this phase.

Socioeconomic Background

Research has shown that educators teach sexuality education from the viewpoint of their own class affiliations (Beyers, 2011) which in turn impacts the way in which sexuality is interpreted by adolescents (Bay-Cheng, 2003). A study conducted by Tolman (1994) highlights the differences in sexual experiences between urban and suburban teenage girls. It was found that the urban participants were more aware and cautious of sexual misconduct and the need to self-protect, whereas the suburban participants did not share these fears but rather associated sex with pleasure and desire. This study indicates how socioeconomic status influences the way in which adolescents perceive sex and sexuality. It has been suggested that CSE is best suited for lower-class adolescents as they are seen to be 'moral failures' and are at a 'greater risk of engaging in partnered sexual activity', while the middle- to upper-class adolescents should receive more of an abstinence approach as they are seen to have 'something *worth* 'saving'' (Bay-Cheng, 2003, p. 70). It can be assumed that 'more privileged adolescents are perhaps being deprived of a higher quality sexuality education'

(Bay-Cheng, 2003, p. 71) because they are perceived as being more moral and therefore do not need sexuality education as much as their underprivileged counterparts. This relationship between sexuality education and socioeconomic status highlights how the historical reasoning for sexuality education continues to be rife.

Religion and Culture

In their article 'The origins of human sexuality: Procreation or recreation', authors Benagiano & Mori (2009) highlight the historically influential role of Christianity, specifically the denomination of Catholicism, on human sexuality. The authors state that

> "Human sexuality, since time immemorial, has been loaded with multiple meanings, such as love, lust, pleasure, reproduction, the need for protection and support, a desire to maintain and fortify the bond between man and woman. For this reason, when asking the question 'what is at the origin of human sexuality: procreation or recreation?', the classic response can only be 'both and much more'" (pp. 50-51).

The authors posit that the original structure of human sexual activity was based on the fundamental purpose of reproduction- a view deeply anchored within the Catholic church during the first half of the twentieth century. According to their historical religious tracings there were two main reproductive strategies for males: 1) "ensure continuity of an individual male through the passage of his genes to the largest feasible number of females" and 2) "select those females who would provide the highest possible quality oocytes" (p. 52). In order to be successful in these two strategies, it was required that men select young females with the most fruitful physical characteristics, but also that they themselves were to "have the means to attract the best females" such as "wealth, health, maturity, ambition and industriousness" (Benagiano & Mori, 2009, p. 52). Conversely, the female strategies were centered on the need for protection and support; a man who would be able to provide her and her children with the best means for survival. In order to be successful in her strategies "she must be coy and choosy, limiting her attentions to men who are worthy of her and emphasizing her chastity so as not to threaten the paternity confidence of her mate" (Benagiano & Mori, 2009, p. 52). The catholic church further believed that any sexual acts that were not for the purpose of reproduction were immoral and illicit. In the latter half of the twentieth century, there was a shift in the discussions regarding religion and production. The

church had come to accept that there was a need for sexual and reproductive health education, however, maintained a strong hold on laws and policies pertaining to contraception, facilitated procreation, abortion and the permissibility of pre-marital sex (Benagiano & Mori, 2009). The Christian view on contraceptives was that it was an interference on the natural process of human life; it opposed the way God intended it to be. When Pope Pius the XIth and Pope Pius the XIIth headed the Catholic church, they viewed the act of sex to be something positive and an expression of love independent from procreation, only if it was done within the institution of marriage: "husband and wife may use their matrimonial right even during the days of natural sterility and in this case 'no objection can be made'" (Benagiano & Mori, 2009, p. 56). From these authors' writings, it is evident that there are intersections between religion, science, politics and the social spheres regarding sex and sexuality, and provides insight into the current constructions of sex and sexuality and how education thereof is implemented.

Scholars Bonjour & van der Vlugt (2018) and Beyers (2011) posit that "in many societies, expression of sexual feelings or sexual activities are not allowed or even forbidden before marriage, due to religious and cultural reasons" (Bonjour & van der Vlugt, 2018, p. 4). As a result, many of these religious and cultural values are carried out in sexuality education, or the lack thereof, following the belief that abstinence is key. Research has shown that religion, and more specifically Christianity, is embedded in laws, policies and schools granting "privilege and advantages on those who embrace Christianity" (Ferber, 2012, p. 70). Ferber goes on to state that "in schools, for example, the curriculum, dress codes and even the calendar reinforce Christian values and practices as universal norms" (p. 71). Aston (2017) notes that when religion is incorporated into sex and sexuality education, it reproduces discourses on heterosexuality and further reinforces its conceptions on abstinence (Bay-Cheng, 2003; Brewer, Brown, & Migdal, 2007) and/or views on family values and the 'natural family'- a heterosexual man and woman joining together in holy matrimony for the purposes of procreation (McEwen, 2018).

A study carried out by Orgocka (2004) on young Muslim girls revealed the role of sexuality education and religion from a non-Christian perspective. Contrary to the traditional, religious "abstinence is key" mentality, the participants felt that learning about sex and sexuality was necessary for them as it was "part of their duty of being Muslim women" (p.

264). However, they noted that because they had no intention of engaging in premarital sex, sexuality education that focused only on the risks of premarital sex was irrelevant and displeasing. Additionally, the participants felt that "these classes marginalized their experiences and decisions to abstain from premarital sexual relationships" (p. 266). This study reveals the importance of having a multifaceted CSE framework, which would be considerate of, and applicable to, religious and cultural values. Beyers (2011) notes that it is crucial not to compare cultures with regards to sexuality education. Within prescribed text amongst educators, it is important to note that there should not be one standard framework for sexuality education; that the content should be relevant to the cultural context or diversity of any given school, as well as avoid reproducing only one or dominant religious, sexist, classist, or racist notion of sex and sexuality.

The Role of Language

Language plays an undeniable role in the understanding of sex and sexuality, the development of sexual identities, as well as how individuals relate to each other in this context. It is through language that we can begin to understand how sex and sexuality is constructed and regulated (Johnson, 1996), as well as the power relations at play that place certain groups in certain positions relative to sex and sexuality.

Despite advocating for learners to have fair access to education, majority of the national curriculum textbooks remain in English and Afrikaans, creating language barriers (Beyers, 2011). Not only can this barrier result in misinformation for students with different languages and cultures (if they do receive sexuality education), but there is also the notion that "adults use a 'language' that children cannot understand because they feel sex is for adults only" (Beyers, 2011, p. 202). This example highlights the power relations between teacher-student/adult-child. Within the text itself, Beyers (2011) points out the significance of the language used and the way in which it contributes to reproducing heteropatriarchal biases. For example, the seemingly simple reference to doctors as "he" can reinforce the notion that scientific or medical careers are male dominated. This example highlights the power of patriarchy and its infiltration into the institution of education as a means to maintain and reproduce itself.

In-depth examinations of both LO and scientific school-based sexuality education

have shown it to be largely heteronormative, whether it be through prescribed textbooks or the influence of the educators. This heteronormative bias is supported through limited and exclusionary definitions of sexuality (Bay-Cheng, 2003; Reiss, 2018). It is largely heteronormative as it explains sex and gender primarily through the notions of femininity and masculinity (Farrelly, O'Brien, & Prain, 2007). "The social environment in which boys and girls grow up (i.e., peers, parents, media, school) conveys cultural beliefs about what is 'appropriate' male or female behaviours. Adolescents internalize these gender role expectations in their *gender ideology*" (van der Vleuten, Jaspers, Maas, & van der Lippe, 2016, p. 182). Men are seen to be sexual beings and initiators, while women are supposed to be sexual recipients meant for reproduction and the sexual pleasure of men. Simply put, men have sexual agency whereas women do not (Bay-Cheng, 2003; Beyers, 2011; Shefer & Macleod, 2015). If women are seen to express sexual agency they are labelled as deviant (Bay-Cheng, 2003; Steyn, 2015). These ideologies are applicable not only to the act of sex itself, but also to the social and emotional components of sex and sexuality; men are the stronger sex, women are the weaker sex. Scholars in the field have put forward how "both natural, biological differences between men and women, as well as gender-based cultural differences, are invoked to rationalize gender inequality" (Cole, Avery, Dodson, & Goodman, 2012; Ferber, 2012, p. 68). From this perspective, any inequalities between men and women are then as a result of biological differences (Ferber, 2012).

Scholars have noted how the discourse of sex and sexuality education, particularly that directed to adolescent girls, reproduces the discourse of victimization: at some point during their lives, they will succumb to sexual misconduct and are incapable of having genuine sexual autonomy (Ngabaza, Shefer, & Macleod, 2016; Singleton, et al., 2019). This marginalization of women with regards to sex and sexuality is, furthermore, embedded within religion. Numerous studies have revealed that it is necessary for sexuality education to be taught in gender-separate classes, as this would allow students to ask questions more freely and avoid feelings of embarrassment (Orgocka, 2004; Walker & Milton, 2006). Additionally, girls and boys have differing needs with regards to sexuality education and are influenced by social and cultural conventions (Francis, 2010).

Sexual Orientation and Gender

In her research, Kannelmäe (2014) has highlighted the dominant heteronormative view that there are only two sexes/ genders: male and female. The biological argument points to this notion being incorrect, using intersex persons as the primary example for contesting this. She goes on to say that

> "while there are people with exclusively male and exclusively female biological features and chromosomes, intersex people are born with characteristics which are intermediate between those of the typical male and typical female. Yet the conviction that only two sexes exist is so strong that instead of creating legal means to recognize intersex, surgeons 'correct' the ambigious genitalia of intersex infants and children to better fit the category of a concrete biological sex" (pp. 12-13).

The rise in social discussions, movements and pride month speaks to the progression and inclusiveness of the LGBTQIA+ demographic in society- an opportunity that was previously met with adverse reactions. Despite this rise, there is still the question of their formal recognition and inclusiveness in laws, policies and the sexuality education curriculum. Kannelmäe (2014) has noted that if and/or when LGBTQIA+ are included in the sex and sexuality curriculum, it is included through a heteronormative lens. Although still considered to be deviations from the heterosexual norm, alternative sexual attractions and orientations may only develop if it is within the confines of the male/female binary. The acceptance of gender and sexual diversity is context specific (Bragg, Renold, Ringrose, & Jackson, 2018) and influenced by religious/cultural values (Weissman, 2017). The findings of Baams, Dubas, & van Aken's (2017) international study of LGBTQIA+ name-calling revealed, however, that sexual orientation continues to be largely excluded from the sexuality education curriculum. This is supported by SA scholars Msibi (2012), Francis & Reygan (2016) and Ngabaza, Shefer, & Macleod (2016). This lack of education on sexual diversities tends to create an unsafe environment for LGBTQIA+ youth, resulting in repercussions such as name-calling, stigma and discrimination. Müller (2013) goes on to state that the heteronormative narrative in mainstream sexuality education conceals the lived experiences of the LGBTQIA+ and often maintains and reproduces the stereotypes associated with this demographic.

There is an ongoing nature versus nurture debate regarding gender and sexual attractions and orientation: is it an inherit trait that one is born with or is it a trait that one is taught as a result of socialization? In his writings about 'Queering the science classroom

when teaching about sex and sexuality', Michael Reiss (2018) notes that rejecting biological notions of sexual orientation could negatively impact how it has been used politically to campaign for sexual rights, but also more commonly how it "may well turn out that there are biological bases to at least some people's sexuality" (p. 6). From a critical diversity perspective, Steyn (2015) asserts that the dominant society holds a fear of difference towards subjects that do not fall within the bounds of the normalized binaries. Therefore, this uncertainty about alternative sexual attractions and orientations can be assumed as a reason for its minimal to non-existent inclusion in mainstream sexuality education. Müller (2013) posits that it is more the internalized societal homophobia that prevents its inclusion in both scientific and social sexuality education. This internalized distaste towards the LGBTQIA+ is constructed within religious, cultural, political and moral agendas (Cassar, 2009). Sexual identities and gender construction should be analyzed within these agendas, as well as that of racial and class divisions (Johnson, 1996).

Physical and Intellectual (Dis)ability

In and of itself, sex and sexuality education has shown to be a complex and controversial topic. However, coupling sexuality education with the notion of ableism, both physical and intellectual/mental, has proven to be even more contentious (Boehning, 2006) (Hanass-Hancock, 2014). Scholars have shown that there is often little to no consideration of mental and/or physical disabilities in the discussion of sex and sexuality; that their sexual rights have not been fully recognized (Boehning, 2006; Hanass-Hancock, 2014; Giami, 2016; Treacy, Taylor, & Abernathy, 2017). Comprehensive sexuality education can support young persons with disabilities in their sexual development and well-being, however, many times such persons do not receive sexuality education that is tailored to their needs and development nor creates a positive image about sexuality that can sexually empower them (Hanass-Hancock, 2014; Holland-Hall & Quint, 2017). In their research, Michielsen & Brockschmidt (2021) brought to light several barriers that exist for young disabled persons receiving proper sex and sexuality education. Firstly, there are "desexualizing attitudes" (p. 10) as it is believed that young persons with physical or intellectual disabilities (Tutar Güven & Işler, 2015) do not have sexual needs or desires. Tutar Güven & Işler (2015) support the notion of desexualizing attitudes as a barrier to sexuality education, stating that young

persons with intellectual disabilities "have been regarded as inhuman, asexual or childish, or that they were over fond of sex and that they could not control their sexuality" (p. 144). Secondly, there was a "focus solely on protection rather than (also) emphasizing the promotion of pleasurable sexual experiences" (Michielsen & Brockschmidt, 2021, p. 10). This is because the composition of a disabled person's mind and/or body may place them at higher risk for infection or mistreatment (Boehning, 2006; Treacy, Taylor, & Abernathy, 2017). The third barrier was the lack of training and support for educators coupled with "embarrassment to talk about sexuality and a normative approach" (Michielsen & Brockschmidt, 2021, p. 11). Another barrier to sexuality education for disabled persons is the diversity of disabilities: the approaches to sexuality education for persons with physical or intellectual disabilities needs to be tailored to their specific needs, however, the wide spectrum of disabilities makes it challenging to do so (Tutar Güven & Işler, 2015; Michielsen & Brockschmidt, 2021). Lastly, the authors found that competing priorities was another barrier. They noted that "since educators of children and young people with disabilities are confronted with many other important issues related to their health and wellbeing, sexuality education is often simply de-prioritised" (Michielsen & Brockschmidt, 2021, p. 11).

Methodology

Working from a critical diversity theoretical framework the research focused on inclusion and representation of diverse sex and sexuality content in both LO and LS curricula at a high school level. Using this framework, the research aimed to answer what an analysis of the LO and LS sexuality education documents could reveal about sex and sexuality representation and the associated power relations: which groups are included and excluded from the text? How are these included groups represented within the text? Is the curriculum inclusive and diverse as set out by the DBE's objectives? Does the text reproduce a heteronormative bias? From this in-depth analysis of the prescribed text, for both LO and LS, the research further intended to determine the relationship, similarities and/or difference between CSE content in the two subjects in each grade.

Data Sources

This research project only utilized documentary sources. These sources consisted of the prescribed national curriculum textbooks for both LO and LS. The CSE text of the textbooks for both subjects were analyzed from grades eight to twelve. The prescribed national textbooks were identified as the most suited data source as it could be thoroughly examined and both subjects contained CSE content.

The LO scripted lesson plans/learner textbooks for grades eight to twelve were downloaded from the DBE's website. These chosen LO textbooks are part of the DBE's implementation plan to strengthen CSE in SA. These textbooks were developed in 2015 and are currently being piloted in five provinces. These books were chosen specifically on the basis that they are being piloted with the intention of it being used in schools nationwide. Because of this, it is necessary to analyse the CSE text that will be given to SA youth in the years to come. The LS learner textbooks for grades eight to twelve were obtained from a local high school as the textbooks could not be found online or be acquired via the university libraries. It is important to note that in grades eight and nine, LS is referred to as Natural Sciences, however, for the purposes of this study, it will be referred to as LS. The names of the textbooks for each subject can be seen in the table below.

Life Orientation[1]	Life Sciences
Sexuality education in Life Orientation Scripted Lesson Plans: Grade 8 Learner Book	Exam Fever Natural Sciences: Grade 8 Study Guide and Workbook
Sexuality education in Life Orientation Scripted Lesson Plans: Grade 9 Learner Book	Exam Fever Natural Sciences: Grade 9 Study Guide and Workbook
Sexuality education in Life Orientation Scripted Lesson Plans: Grade 10 Learner Book	Via Afrika Life Sciences: Grade 10 Learner's Book
Sexuality education in Life Orientation Scripted Lesson Plans: Grade 11 Learner Book	Solutions for all Life Sciences: Grade 11 Learner's Book
Sexuality education in Life Orientation Scripted Lesson Plans: Grade 12 Learner Book	Via Afrika Life Sciences: Grade 12 Learner's Book

Table 1 Data sources

Limitations

There are two key limitations of this study: 1) the LO textbooks obtained from the DBE's website are part of the government's implementation plan, developed in 2015, to strengthen the CSE curriculum in SA. According to the DBE, these materials are being tested in five provinces (Free State, Gauteng, Kwa-Zulu Natal, Mpumalanga and Western Cape), and if successful, will be implemented in all nine provinces across the country. Therefore, because these books are still part of the pilot phase, it is not clear where in SA this text is being utilized; 2) the LS books were obtained from a local high school, which does not represent the LS text on a national level. Additionally, the LS textbooks that were analyzed are outdated, dating as far back to the year 2013. However, the most recent of the textbooks were grades eight and nine, published in 2020, although these books contained little to no CSE content.

Data Analysis

This research project will use a combination of Thematic Analysis and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to interpret the data.

[1] The LO Scripted lesson plans were downloaded from https://www.education.gov.za/Home/ComprehensiveSexualityEducation.aspx

Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis is a qualitative analysis method intended to produce relevant and organized research results using structured techniques (Attride-Stirling, 2001). Thematic analysis, alongside CDA aims to define and explore "the connections between the explicit statements and the implicit meanings in people's discourse" (Attride-Stirling, 2001, p. 387; Braun & Clarke, 2006; Joffe, 2012; Cain, Donaghue, & Ditchburn, 2017; Guest, MacQueen, & Namey, 2019). That is, what the CSE prescribed text is directly stating versus the ideological messages it may subtly be implying. The goal of thematic analysis is to recognize frequent and relevant patterns in the data set, which, in this case, would be the prescribed CSE text. These patterns are then coded into various levels of themes. These varying levels of themes assist the researcher with understanding, for instance, how certain topics or problems may affect the views and positionality of their research subjects (Creswell, 2009). To establish an organized format of themes, thematic analysis utilizes thematic networks "to explore the understanding of an issue or the signification of an idea" (Attride-Stirling, p. 387). The thematic networks assist with structuring and illustrating the salient themes in the text. Creating thematic networks requires continuous re-visiting of the text to ensure that the final themes epitomize the dominant ideologies hiding in the CSE text.

Thematic analysis is especially useful for exploring public perceptions around various social constructs (Willig, 2013). In combination with the CDA models, thematic analysis will provide insight into the possible influences for as to why the prescribed text is structured in a particular way and consequently the impact this discourse has on sexual attitudes and behaviours. In sum, dominant ideologies regarding sex and sexuality will become evident. When used in conjunction with CDA, thematic analysis allows the data that will arise from analyzing the text to be arranged in an organized and manageable format providing understanding pertaining to the reasons and contributions towards social issues adolescents face regarding sexual attitudes and behaviours. This format will make it easier for the results to be discussed in a way that is effortless for the reader. Additionally, thematic analysis will allow the data to be collated in such a way that the relationship (similarities and differences) between and progression of LO and LS CSE content will become clear.

Using Attride-Stirling's (2001) bottom-up six steps for thematic analysis, the researcher began by coding the textbooks. The coding allowed the researcher to identify

common words, phrases or topics that spoke to the representation of sex and sexuality: the similarities and/or differences between the subjects of LO and LS and the inclusivity and diversity as per the NCS objectives. These codes formed the basic themes of the thematic analysis (Attride-Stirling, 2001). The list of codes was extensive and needed to be further refined into organizing themes. These organizing themes arranged the basic themes into "clusters of similar issues" (Attride-Stirling, 2001, p. 389). Once the organizing themes were identified, it became evident what the overall tone of the analysed text was: epistemic ignorance. Epistemic ignorance, according to Attride-Stirling's (2001) six steps, would be defined as the global theme- the theme that is "both a summary of the main themes and a revealing interpretation of the texts" (p. 389). The table below shows the grouping of coded basic themes into organizing themes into the global theme.

Basic themes	**Organizing themes**	**Global themes**
1. Normalizing male and female binaries 2. Reproduction is for purpose, not pleasure 3. Science is used as a tool to justify social injustices	Gender Ignorance	Epistemic Ignorance
4. Normalizing Christian rhetoric 5. Emphasising abstinence and using scare tactics 6. Adhering to Christian values, such as love and monogamy 7. Religion and gender intersect	Holy Ignorance	
8. Marginalized diversity in sex and sexuality 9. Reinforcing binary gender messages 10. Marginalized experiences of disabled persons 11. Weak sex positive messages 12. Expectations to contribute to an established and chosen society	Illusion of Social Transformation	

Table 2 Basic, organizing and global themes

At face value, much of the CSE text would read as inclusive, diverse and progressive, as intended by the NCS objectives. However, when the researcher closely examined the structure of the text- the words and phrases used and organized in a particular manner- it became clearer that to a large extent, the text, in fact, was reproducing dominant messages about gender and sexuality. The text would mention 'alternatives' but would not discuss their

experiences and needed sexuality education as much as it would for heterosexuals. The text stressed the importance of female responsibility, sexually, biologically and socially, thereby highlighting and reinforcing differences in power between males and females. Additionally, the overemphasis on abstinence, scare tactics, and only participating in a loving, monogamous relationship, spoke to a religious theme in the text, in particular Christianity. A critical analysis of the text lead to the conclusion of christonormativity due to mentions of other religions being solely in terms of diet, accompanied by the historical understanding of the influence of Christianity on CSE and the school setting in general. This in-depth analysis of the text revealed that the text was written in such a manner that it would imply social transformation (diversity, inclusion, access to factual knowledge on sexual and reproductive health and rights), however, the text was instead actively maintaining dominant ideologies, such as heteronormativity and christonormativity. In addition, sections that would encourage students to be contributing members of society was such that the society that they were asked to contribute to would be one that sustains these dominant ideologies. It was this that lead to the global theme of epistemic ignorance, where some knowledge was stressed more than others, while other knowledge was not included at all.

Critical Discourse Analysis

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) was used as the lens with which to intensely examine the LO and LS CSE text and unearth power relations within it. Cervera, Postigo, & Herrero (2006) highlights how CDA is an applicable research tool to utilize in education and curriculum studies. This is because it brings to light ‘where representation and transmission of knowledge or value transfer have met forms of power abuse and manipulation’ (p. 29). The authors further reference that it is a “socially committed scientific paradigm” which has had great influence on education curricula (Cervera, Postigo, & Herrero, 2006, pp. 10-11). Using CDA in the context of education assists with making “sense of the ways in which people make meaning in educational contexts” (Rogers, Malancharuvil-Berkes, Mosley, Hui, & O’Garro Joseph, 2005, p. 366).

Four criteria of Melissa Steyn’s CDL 10 criteria framework was selected to examine the CSE text. These four criteria were the main focus of analysis using the remaining criteria as support. The four chosen criteria were:

An understanding of the role of power in constructing differences that make a difference: This criterion was selected on the basis that it would provide insight into the way's social divisions, or differences are constructed regarding sex and sexuality, and the unequal power relations that lie within these differences (Payne, 2000; Steyn, 2015).

The possession of a diversity grammar and a vocabulary that facilitates a discussion of privilege and oppression: In order to recognize and understand the power dynamics present in the sex and sexuality text, it is necessary to understand the language that has been used to construct groups and knowledge in a particular manner. Using this criteria to analyse the CSE text "enhanced the capacity to recognize, point out and insist on the reality of the practices, strategies and effects of the operations of power on difference" (Steyn, 2015, p. 385).

The ability to 'translate' (see through) and interpret coded hegemonic practices: Applying this criterion to the analysis of the CSE text brought forth how hegemonic orders have been able to "recast issues in ways that suit prevailing interests, they can co-opt, contain and curtail oppositional discourse" (Steyn, 2015, p. 386).

An engagement with issues of the transformation of these oppressive systems towards deepening social justice at all levels of social organization: One of the main objectives of the NCS is to strive towards social transformation- to sustain a disconnect from historically oppressive systems and practices. Using the above criteria to unveil the power dynamics in the CSE text will indicate if the NCS is meeting its objective of social transformation, as well as provide recommendations as to how to better improve on meeting this objective.

Results and Discussion

The aim of this research was to unravel the power relations hidden in the sex and sexuality content for LO and LS; to determine who is represented and how, as well as who is not represented and why. Using the CDL framework as a guide to determine if there were any strategies of hegemonic orders to maintain their dominant position, what became undeniably evident was the calculated construction of the text, revealing a global theme of epistemic ignorance. The text was constructed in a manner that implied social transformation-diversity and inclusivity, gender equality, access to factual knowledge on sexual and reproductive health and rights. However, upon closer examination, it became visible that the text was instead actively maintaining dominant ideologies of heteropatriarchy, christonormativity as well as encouraging students to be active, contributing members of an already chosen and 'functioning' society; a society that reproduces and maintains heteropatriarchal and christonormative ideologies. From this perspective, three subthemes emerged under the global theme of epistemic ignorance: gender ignorance, holy ignorance and the illusion of social transformation.

In the discussions to follow, it will be revealed how the LO and LS sex and sexuality content reveals hidden hegemonic patterns of knowing and unknowing; how it disguises itself as inserting others as having valuable knowledge yet fails to explore their lived experiences and rights to inclusivity and just education. It will be discussed how the text reproduces heteropatriarchal discourses through the lens of female responsibility for sexual protection, thus keeping intact gendered messages for both males and females. Furthermore, it will be discussed how science is used to justify these gendered messages, and how females are biologically oppressed and at risk for a myriad of biological dysfunctions, thereby reinforcing through science that males are the stronger sex. It will also be revealed how biologically, there is restricted space in discussions for alternative genders/sexualities as they do not conform to the realm of heterosexuality and can therefore not procreate. The religious slant to sex and sexuality education will be unpacked emphasizing that the heteropatriarchal narratives consistent in the text are supported by dominant Christian values.

Epistemic Ignorance

Understanding (Epistemic) Ignorance

According to Michael Smithson, one of the leading sociologists in investigating the phenomena of ignorance, at its core, ignorance can be understood as an "absence or neglect of information, a failure to understand information" (Smithson, 2015, p. 385). It is important to note that the terms 'information' and 'knowledge' are used interchangeably in the examinations of ignorance. Smithson further goes on to highlight just how extensive ignorance is; that it is not simply a lack of information or knowledge, but that it is "a mental state, a moral condition, a public problem, an economic commodity, a manufactured product, or an aspect of a culture" (Smithson, 2015, p. 385). Steyn (2012) supports Smithson's notion that ignorance is not merely an act of neglect, but it is way of knowing, or *choosing* not to know, that is embedded in historical and structural practices. Ignorance has a lot to do with a person's or group's positionality, or situatedness, in relation to the dominant or oppressive historical and structural practices that have socially ranked said persons or groups (Mora, nd; Steyn, 2012). It can therefore be stated that "ignorance is actually constructed in social interaction for social purposes" (Steyn, 2012, p. 21) and is not only an inherent human limitation, but also a choice, which influences actions, emotions, interpersonal relations, and identity formation. Ignorance is a fundamental communicative practice of systemic, social and personal processes (Steyn, 2012) often resulting in "belief-forming practices that are biased, mal-informed or in other ways dysfunctional" (El Kassar, 2018, p. 11).

The epistemology of ignorance is therefore "the study of not knowing or unknowing and the study of the generation of subjects that are ignorant. It is also the study of the refusal to be ignorant and the active reconstruction of one's knowing… It is an overtly political project in the academy, one that seeks to disrupt the structures of unknowing, reveal patterns of active ignorance and insert Others as knowers" (McHugh, nd, p. 1). This explanation of epistemic ignorance highlights three main points. Firstly, it highlights the conscious choice to be ignorant; that hegemonic groups are *choosing* to be ignorant by refusing the existence of Others, keeping them in a position of oppression. Ignorance can therefore be considered a "technique of control" (Steyn, 2012, p. 10). This can be seen in the text's 'inclusion' and recognition of alternative genders and sexualities, yet they are not included in discussions of reproduction, consent and power, or gender messages. They are briefly discussed only in the sections on stigma and discrimination, emphasizing that they are at higher risk of these social

consequences. Secondly, it points to the dominant/oppressed dichotomy, emphasizing that certain groups of power are responsible for our knowledge, and exclude non-conforming or oppressed groups from being able to have and share valuable and worthy knowledge. For example, dominant groups have for centuries naturalized the narrative that only a man and woman may have a romantic and/or sexual relationship; that heterosexuality is compulsory. However, this narrative of heterosexuality purposefully fails to recognize and include alternative genders/sexualities (albeit they are aware of their existence) into the social worlds, simply because alternatives do not adhere to the values, opinions and policies of the dominant groups and systems. Additionally, in the text this dominant/oppressed dichotomy is evident in the narrative of female sexual responsibility and victim-blaming, as will be further discussed in the sections to follow. Lastly, it foregrounds that the epistemology of ignorance is a project aimed at social transformation. It does not aim to merely expose the patterns of ignorance, but to change them; to work towards "deepening social justice at all levels of social organization" and provide 'the Others' with a platform to openly and freely have a safe and just space in all social institutions (Steyn, 2015, p. 387). The analysis of the text revealed an illusion of social transformation claiming that the content is inclusive and has moved away from oppressive discourses, while actively and implicitly reproducing hegemonic narratives as will be further illustrated in the sections to follow.

Because heteropatriarchy and christonormativity have shown to be common themes in the analysed content, with little to no mention of alternatives to these hegemonic discourses or reference to genuine gender equality, it becomes rather evident that there is epistemic ignorance in the construction of school LO and LS textbooks. This will be further unpacked in the sections on gender ignorance and holy ignorance. Particular narratives have been favoured to rule how young students are meant to interpret sex and sexuality knowledge. It is through this that the favoured sex and sexuality discourses, even if incorrect and exclusive, remain in place. The implication here is that ignorance dominates the institution of education.

Ignorance in Education: Maintaining a Preferred Narrative

Nancy Tuana (2006) asserts that "ignorance in the fields of knowledge production is far more complex an issue than something we simply do not yet know" (p. 3). Ignorance is systemic; a choice and a social construct used to control knowledge production, create and uphold biases and maintain domination and oppression (Steyn, 2012). Through a range of

social, cultural/religious, and moral practices, society has utilized political and academic institutions as a means to legitimize ignorance (Outlaw, 2007). Ignorance is created and sustained through education, or rather as Mora (nd) puts it, education is the "underlying problem" to ignorance (p. 7). If the education system continues to miseducate, or selectively educate, the cycle of epistemic ignorance will continue and be passed on through generations (Mora, nd). In the case of this research, heteropatriarchal and christonormative ideologies will be sustained.

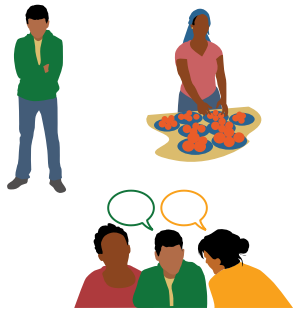
Since epistemic ignorance tends to serve the interests of hegemonic powers, one has to ask, on a national and global level, whose interests are being served with regards to sexuality education in SA? Who is helping to serve and preserve these interests? Finding answers to whose interests are being served is the key to unlocking the answers to questions such as: Why is the text structured the way it is? Why has specific content been included while others omitted? Why is there an overemphasis on the issue of HIV guiding all sex and sexuality content across LO and LS? Which ideologies are given prominence? Having an understanding of whose interests are being served "sheds light not only on how values impact what we know, but also how they impact what we do not know and why" (Tuana, 2006, p. 6).

Charles Mills has been a renowned scholar in the epistemologies of ignorance, with his specific focus being on 'The Racial Contract' (1997) and 'White Ignorance' (2007). His principles regarding racial, and specifically White ignorance, can be used as a guide for constructing an answer as to whose interests are being served with regards to sexuality education in SA, as well as why there is an overemphasis on HIV in the text. Mill's investigations point back to a historical tracing of standardized textbooks, revealing that textbooks have predominantly been "written and designed by whites, who take their racial privilege so much for granted that they do not even see it as *political,* as a form of domination" (Mills, 1997, pp. 1-2). Tracing it back to SA's colonialist and apartheid periods, education was entrenched in racial, religious, heteronormative and patriarchal biases (Abraham, 2008; Hoadley, 2011; Marulcu & Akbiyik, 2014). Mills (1997) further indicates that despite SA's formal decolonialization, and the formal 'end' of the apartheid era, former colonial nations (such as SA) continue to be dominated by their former colonial powers with the support of "their international financial institutions, lending agencies, and corporations" (p. 36). This literature could provide insight as to why SA's sexuality education is structured in a specific format, especially where financial resources are concerned, as SA is considered to be a developing country reliant on developed countries for its prosperity.

In the analyzed text, HIV was a notable lens through which the majority of the LO and LS sex and sexuality content was discussed. For example, sections on goal setting, healthy lifestyle choices, gender messages and communication styles, reproduction, power relationships including gender/sexual violence, stigma and discrimination, consent, risk factors and protective measures were all discussed through the lens of how to avoid infection, how to behave towards people who are infected, how one may become infected due to gender power dynamics, as well as the groups of people who are greatly infected and affected by HIV, particularly girls and young women. This raises the question: why is SA's sex and sexuality education extensively constructed through the lens of HIV? Does this maintain the stigmatizing narrative that SA is the epicentre for HIV? In the analysed grade 10 LO text, and similarly echoed in other grades, it is said that *"HIV and AIDS is a local and global issue. It is everyone's issue"*. Additionally, *"by accepting that we are all affected by HIV and AIDS in some way, we have a responsibility to understand each other's needs, support each other, and stand up against stigma, which is a social injustice"*. The epistemic ignorance here is that the tone of the content is one of 'togetherness', however, the text to follow is constructed in a targeted manner. Sections on stigma and discrimination reinforce stigma and discrimination towards infected persons, in particular, females. In the illustration below, the text is reinforcing the notion that the racial demographic with the highest rates of infection is Black, and more specifically Black women (see Shisana, et al., 2014; Mabaso, et al., 2019). Although no specific race is mentioned, the skin colour of the people in the illustration implies that they are Black. The illustration attempts to normalize that males can also be infected, while simultaneously reinforcing the unhealthy gender and ageist message that young males are rebellious. It further upholds the stigma of a Black female being infected as well as the narrative of the Black population in general being more commonly infected. In addition, it upholds the oppressive socioeconomic status of Black SA's.

A teenager speaks about the sadness she feels for her cousin and her aunt who are both living with HIV and AIDS.

My aunt was infected with HIV in 1999. She did not know this, and in 2001 she had a little boy who was born with HIV. In those days, they didn't get the proper treatment because there were no nearby clinics. They were ill all the time and used to live with us so that we could look after them. I am a year older than my cousin. Ever since I can remember, they have come to live with us during these times.



Anger

My cousin is 14 years old and he has so many questions. He feels it is unfair because his older siblings are not infected. He gets angry a lot and will then refuse to take his pills because he says it wasn't his fault that he was infected. He also gets angry because he sometimes finds it difficult to concentrate at school when he feels tired. The people in his class then tell him he is stupid but I know he isn't. I get worried when he gives up and doesn't try his best.

My cousin and my aunt do not have a lot of money. My aunt sells chips and sweets next to the road to make money.

Figure 1 Gr 10 LO- Affected by HIV and AIDS

Through this illustration it becomes evident how the text preserves epistemic ignorance by means of referring to a specific demographic without explicitly mentioning who the demographic is. It comes to be taken for granted, unquestioned knowledge of who HIV affects mostly. It is an attempt to normalize, while overtly maintaining global and national narratives that SA as a country has significantly high rates of infection (Gottlieb, et al., 2014; Snow, Laski, & Mutumba, 2015; Sani, Abraham, Denford, & Mathews, 2018), but also that in SA there is a specific demographic of those more commonly infected and affected by HIV. Scholars have shown that not only does HIV have a history of being linked to heterosexuality but also to Africanness in particular. HIV is linked to the hypersexuality of Black males and females, with a specific view that women are often "passive recipients of sex and sexuality" and therefore disproportionality infected and affected by HIV (Bhana, Morrell, Hearn, & Moletsane, 2007, p. 134). This is further reiterated by Morris & Kahlor's (2018) research on "the implications of individual responsibility messages in HIV public service announcements aimed at Black women". These scholars emphasise that reducing HIV infection is often viewed as a personal responsibility rather than to address and redress a systemic problem. This notion was present in the analysed text, placing a great deal of attention on female responsibility, as will be further discussed in the sections to follow.

Mills' quote "the "white" in "white ignorance" does not mean that it has to be confined *to* white people" (2007, p. 22) brings to light an important principle that can be applied to all binaries and hegemonic systemic practices, such as religion and heteropatriarchy. This meaning that we cannot simply analyse epistemic ignorance through a binary lens. This is as a result of a concept that scholars in the field of ignorance have labelled 'internalized ignorance' (Mills, 1997; Mills, 2007; Steyn, 2012, p. 18). Internalized ignorance is the act of, who would be members of marginalized groups, "simply accepting their lot" (Steyn, 2012, p. 18). For example, it could be thoughtlessly accepted that HIV is associated with Black persons. Such members of society may have the tendency to simply accept and internalize hegemonic discourses, believing their social, political and economic positionality is their fate. This tendency to internalize ignorance has become a tool for hegemonic orders to maintain their agenda, as such individuals who have internalized ignorance actively participate in reproducing problematic and oppressive discourses. Internalized ignorance, however, should not be mistaken for "surviving ignorance"- a form of ignorance that was "developed and circulated from positions of diminished choice and necessitated by the overarching power structures" (Steyn, 2012, p. 21). In other words, members of society, specifically those considered to form part of oppressed groups, are aware of the injustices they experience. However, they feel that they do not have the power nor the resources to oppose hegemonic discourses, as they have become so naturalized. In order to live a 'problem-free' life, such persons choose to be ignorant. These concepts are important to consider when asking 'who's interests are being served, and who is helping to serve these interests regarding sexuality education in the SA context?', as it provides insight into the values and worldviews of those involved in the design and writing process of SA sexuality education. For example, are members of oppressed groups, based on race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, involved in the design and writing process of the sex and sexuality content? If so, are they afraid of contesting or questioning the content in fear of losing their jobs? In their silence, are they maintaining dominant narratives?

Epistemic ignorance in school textbooks allows preferred dominant discourses about sex and sexuality to be reproduced and maintained; to exclude and/or minimize the narratives that do not suit the needs, values and desires of hegemonic groups. Hegemonic orders have been successful in their vocation by way of subjectivity. In other words, the way the text is constructed relies heavily on the guidance of educators and the opinions of students. In this way, the text is able to posit that the content is not restrictive nor that the textbooks are all-knowing and allows its users to in some way develop their own content. However, by relying

on the subjective knowledge of students and educators, the text is able to uphold their hegemonic narratives. This is because what students, and educators, have learned about sex and sexuality comes from family members, religious/cultural beliefs, and the media, all of which are messengers of hegemonic narratives (Bhana, Morrell, Hearn, & Moletsane, 2007; Francis, 2013; Chaka, 2017; Bonjour & van der Vlugt, 2018). Because ignorance is both inherent and a choice, hegemonic groups have used this phenomenon to their advantage, infiltrating it into the institution of education and disguising, what in the 21st century is considered problematic discourses of sex and sexuality as factual, unquestionable knowledge.

Gender Ignorance

Sex/Gender Binaries

Numerous scholars have shown that textbooks tend to produce and reproduce heteronormative biases, specifically when related to sexuality education (Bay-Cheng, 2003; Bazzul & Sykes, 2010; Shefer & Macleod, 2015). The findings of this analysis have revealed that the current LO and LS sexuality education does, indeed, reproduce heteronormative ideologies and places extensive emphasis on the male/female binary. The terms *"male or female", "girls and boys", "men and women", "masculinity and femininity"* were prominent throughout grades eight to twelve for both subjects. In all the lesson plans concerning goal setting, messages about gender, safe sex practices, risk factors, sexual violence, consent, and sexual reproduction, there was a consistent division between male and female. What's more is the design of the curriculum, which was in such a way that majority of the examples, questions, points for discussion and group/individual activities were separated by gender. An interesting finding to note, is the use of the terms "*man and woman*" in the context of discussions aimed at teenagers. For example, "*both men and women have a responsibility to prevent teenage pregnancy*". The social construction of these terms is that man and woman are generally used to refer to those who are sexually matured. Additionally, it assumes that only male and female identifying individuals are reproductive, while persons who do not identify within the confines of this binary are not. Nevertheless, this still contributed to creating and maintaining the socially dominant and preferred sex/gender binary.

The emphasis placed on the male/female binary set the scene for systemic practices that valorizes one side of the binary over the other (Steyn, 2015). Such system being patriarchy: one that ascribes more dominance and power to males than females. The heteronormative

bias, that was so prominent in the analyses, highlighted the role of external factors in establishing this binary. The text mentioned '*gender socialization*' and the role of media, friends, family and religious/cultural views in constructing narratives around sex/gender. The students are taught that gender socialization is '*how we learn what society expects of us as males and females*'. In the text it is stated that '*YOU get to decide how you want to act as a man or* women'. It may seem that a statement such as this is encouraging students to challenge normalized gender expectations, however it can only be within the confines of socially accepted sex/gender binary. Questions such as *'what non-traditional roles are women playing?'* implies that females are not performing "within the parameters set for a 'good woman'" but are stepping outside these boundaries (Steyn, 2015, p. 382).

It is evident that in many sections of the text, such as the role of the media on healthy or unhealthy relationships, students are asked to participate in discussions and activities about what they have learned about gender expectations rather than receiving 'factual, reliable information' as stated in the beginning of each textbook and in the NCS: '*identify how and when we have been influenced in the way we see our role as boys and girls, and then young men and women'*. From the CDL perspective of interpreting and translating hegemonic practices, structuring sections in this manner is a tool of hegemonic orders, such as heteropatriarchy, to maintain its agenda. This is because it is asking young, impressionable students to repeat what they have been taught about gender from prominent external sources. External sources such as the media, religion/culture, and thus family and friends, are deeply entrenched with heteropatriarchal discourses which are being passed on to younger generations.

The sections to follow will unravel how the sex/gender, male/female binary is reproduced in discussions of reproduction, as well as how the sexuality education content continuously communicates messages about the (harmful) societal expectations and narratives about males and females at any age.

Purpose, Not Pleasure

Michael Reiss (2007) asserted that school biology generally examines sex through a reproductive lens, often presuming heterosexuality. In both the LO and LS textbooks, more specifically LS, reproduction manifested as a key theme for maintaining the heteronormative bias. This was achieved through illustrations of the male and female reproductive systems, as

well as discussions of contraceptives solely within the confines of the heteronormative gender/sex binary. As this section heading indicates, reproduction and contraception were largely discussed in terms of its functions and purposes. Although terms such as 'pleasure' and 'sexual arousal' appeared in the text, albeit minimal, *purpose* was the common theme of sexual reproduction.

Repronormativity

Repronormativity can be understood as the normative sexual reproductive practices between a male and female (Weissman, 2017), with the overly simplistic objective of procreation. Before entering into detailed discussions of reproduction and the reproductive systems, the text in grade eight LO stresses again that "our sex tells us if we are male or female. It is determined by our biology". Throughout the text it becomes evident that gender (a social construct) and sex (a biological determinant) are conflated; they are constructed to be synonymous with each other. Jing Chong (2005) and Juliette Williams (2010) notes that the reproductive hormones of males and females influences "cognition including perceptions, thoughts, moods and characteristics", thus reaffirming heteronormative stereotypes (2005, p. 269). From this perspective, and as can be seen in the text, biology is used to define gender roles for males and females. Paradoxically, there is no mention of any sexuality education content in the grade eight LS curriculum.

In both LO and LS, the reproductive systems are divided into the male reproductive system and the female reproductive system. One of the key revelations in the analysis of these reproductive systems is the incessant engineering of the 'active-passive' narrative. Many scholars have critically deconstructed how the construction of reproductive content in the field of science places male biological traits as active performers in the act of reproduction, while female biological traits are constructed as passive, only being able to perform if awakened by the active performers (Martin, 1990; Scholer, 2002; Williams, 2010; Reiss, 2018). This narrative is especially prevalent in the discussions of the sperm and the egg as "sperm are viewed as active and streamlined, whereas the egg is large and passive and just drifts along or sits there waiting" (Reiss, 2018, p. 5). The female reproductive system has been likened to the fairy tale of *sleeping beauty* "in which a dormant, virginal bride awaits a man's magic kiss" (Reiss, 2018, p. 5). The table below verifies how this active-passive and heterosexual narrative was evident in the text.

Grade	Subject	Statement
10	LO	"if it is fertilized by a man's sperm…" "sperm, which fertilizes a female egg…"
9	LS	"the function of the male reproductive system is to ensure that the sperm cells are successfully transferred into the female body" "…before they are transferred into the female" "penis: used to transfer sperm into the vagina" "vagina: receives sperm from the male" "the male places his erect penis inside the vagina. Semen is then released into the vagina" "the sperm cells swim up the vagina" "contraception…prevents a sperm cell from fertilizing an egg cell"
12	LS	"fertilization of egg cells (ova) by sperm cells (spermatozoa)" "inseminated: after semen has been deposited" "the male sex organ (penis) introduces sperm into the genital tract of the female (vagina)" "spermatozoa travels…" "the seminal vesicles produce seminal fluid to transport the sperm cells" "ova are ready for fertilization" "fertilization of the ovum by a sperm cell occurs in the fallopian tube" "the vagina is a fibrous, muscular cylinder that receives the penis and male semen" "helps the sperm to penetrate the ovum"

Table 3 Sperm-egg excerpts

The statements mentioned in the table above highlight again the male/female dichotomy. It further brings attention to the use of specific vocabulary such as 'travel', 'transport', 'swim up', 'transferred', 'released', and 'penetrate' in reference to the penis and sperm cells which reinforces the notion that the male reproductive organ plays an active and crucial role in the process of fertilization. Conversely, 'by a man's sperm', 'receive', and 'ready for' places the female reproductive organs in a dormant position. The discussions of the functions and activities required from the male reproductive organs are more extensive thereby strengthening the precedence of the sperm, and ultimately the male form. The female reproductive system is constructed as being less autonomous (Reiss, 2018). The analysis further revealed that any mention of pleasure regarding sexual intercourse was only targeted at men: '*when the male becomes sexually excited it gets stiff. This is called an erection*'; '*ejaculation: the action of releasing or ejecting sperm and semen from the man's penis during orgasm*'; '*erection: an enlarged and rigid state of the penis, typically in sexual excitement*'. The grade 12 LS and grade 10 LO illustrations of the female reproductive system had labelled the clitoris, however there was no discussion of it with regards to pleasure, meaning that it could be argued that knowledge about female pleasure is not seen as

valuable, as Tuana (2006) similarly found in her analysis of 'The Women's Health Movement and Epistemologies of Ignorance'. The structure of the discussions of the male reproductive system is solely in terms of its authoritative role in fertilisation, while the female reproductive system is structured as docile, and any further discussions of it is based on pregnancy and menstruation. What's more is the construction of sex-linked alleles[2] in the examinations of sex chromosomes. The male alleles are referred to as 'dominant', while the female alleles are referred to as 'recessive', thus reinforcing the active-passive narrative. Scholars who have brought to light this representation of the reproductive systems believe that scientific narratives such as these have the ability to justify social dominance and oppression; to sustain epistemic ignorance (Pinto, 2019).

Using Science as a Tool to Justify Social Injustices

Within the social sciences, positivist science holds a privileged stance (Pascale, 2010), thus allowing scientific knowledge to be considered unquestionable, and for differences between males and females to be "presented as clear-cut and inevitable" (Reiss, 2018, p. 5). In the case of this critical analysis, it can be argued that the scientific construction of male processes as active and female processes as passive, is an extension of systemic patriarchal beliefs and practices. This argument is supported by sociologists of science who have "argued convincingly that scientific knowledge is the product of social processes that lead scientists to certain beliefs, identified as knowledge by the scientific community" (Bloor, 1976; Latour & Woolgar, 1979; Shapin & Shaffer, 1985; Pinto, 2019, p. 199). Much like any hegemonic order, the social system of patriarchy is widespread and inevitably infiltrated into the field of science, selecting the knowledge we know, and the knowledge we don't, as well as the questions we ask and don't ask. For years, scientists have deliberately chosen to study reproductive systems from a heteronormative and cisnormative perspective, as well as to frame the results of these heterosexual studies in an active and passive manner. This is a form of *selective ignorance* governed by choices that "systematically benefit those who are in positions of economic privilege and power, undermining those who are not" (Pinto, 2019, p. 204). This selective ignorance was evident in other parts in the biological discourse of sexuality education, such as discussions of contraceptives, pregnancy and puberty, where it

[2] As defined by OxfordLanguages 'alleles' are two or more of alternative forms of a gene that arise by mutation and are found at the same place on a chromosome

could be argued that the structure of the content was in an oppressive way, specifically targeted at females. However, there were elements of the text, whether used as examples or activity questions, that assisted with reproducing patriarchal discourse and its associated gender roles.

The content on puberty emphasized that females go through puberty before males. The general association with the onset of puberty, and specifically menstruation, is that it means one has now entered adulthood/womanhood (Canelón & Boland, 2020). From this perspective, it can then be argued that the scientific knowledge of puberty has the potential to place additional social pressures, specifically those related to normalized and expected gender roles. For females, puberty is associated with menstruation, discussing it to a great degree in terms of a female's candidacy to fall pregnant, and that the process of menstruation means she has failed to achieve pregnancy (Reiss, 2018). There is extensive discussion on the female bodily processes, stressing that the female biological body goes through more processes than the male, potentially contributing to the social pressures and stigmas that women face regarding their bodies. Additionally, puberty is discussed solely in terms of male and female. The structure of the characteristics of male and female pubescent characteristics is such that it is finite. In other words, young male or female persons should expect to experience the defined biological traits of puberty. Such characterizations of puberty do not only add to the pressures of expected heterosexual gender roles, but also does not account for persons who, biologically or socially, may not fit this mould, such as intersex and gender non-conforming persons. The heterosexual discussions of puberty are further supported by the associated sex hormones, which tacitly enforces the sex/gender binary "by attaching two definitions of sex to specific hormone levels" (Bazzul & Sykes, 2010, p. 15).

In her research, Scholer (2002) has asserted that content relating to mieosis[3] has the potential to lead to discussions of genetic differences, such as intersex, and ultimately the examinations of the composition of alternative reproductive organs. Additionally, she suggests that the content of the endocrine system can bring about discussions regarding breast cancer in males. Although these topics are evident in the textbooks, the discussions thereof remain rigid, binary and associated with the socially (and scientifically) 'correct' gender. The following statements from the text shows this heteronormative and rigid slant:

[3] As defined by the Biology Dictionary 'meiosis' is defined as a process that takes in sexually-reproducing animals that reduces the number of chromosomes in a cell before reproduction. It is a necessary process to ensure that there are same number of chromosomes in the offspring as in the parents. https://biologydictionary.net/meiosis/

"there are 22 autosomes and 1 pair of sex chromosomes that can be xx (female) or xy (male)"

"A typical human cell has 46 chromosomes"

"Meiosis is important in sexual reproduction because it involves combining the genetic information of one parent with that of the other parent to produce a genetically unique individual"

An additional key finding was the discussions of cancer, vaccinations, antibiotics and Basal Metabolic Rate (BMR). Firstly, with regards to discussions on cancer and vaccinations, there was no mention of cancers or vaccinations related to sex, such as cervical cancer or vaccines against STIs. Secondly, when discussing vaccinations and antibiotics, there was a great focus on it being discovered by males. In placing this emphasis on males as the leaders in significant scientific discoveries, it has the potential to subconsciously reproduce the educational and career choices of males and females. This was echoed by Maaike van der Vleuten and colleagues (2016) in their study on gender ideologies and its influence on educational choices, stating that men are more likely to to choose subjects and enter into fields dominanted by maths and science, whereas women are more likely to choose subjects and careers that are caring and artistic in nature. When looking at the various factors that influence BMR, it was emphasized that gender is one of those influencing factors, stating that "*because men have a greater muscle mass and lower body fat percentage, they tend to have a higher BMR than women*". Such construction of the content has the potential to reinforce notions that place men in a physically superior position to women, ultimately maintaining patriarchal discourses regarding masculinity and dominance.

Contraceptives: A Female Responsibility

The analysis revealed that information about contraceptives is discussed simultaneously through the lens of prevention against HIV, STIs and unintended pregnancy, as well as the male/female binary. Despite contraception being defined as 'the use of artificial methods or other techniques to prevent pregnancy', and the mention of 'dual contraception' (the use of a condom and hormonal contraception), there was a clear distinction between

condoms being male-oriented and hormonal contraceptives being for females. In the LS text, contraception referred to 'different methods of preventing a sperm cell from fertilizing an egg cell', highlighting again the active-passive narrative. Hormonal contraception was a key topic throughout the text for both subjects, with some grades dedicating entire sections to the discussion of female hormonal contraception- what they are; the various types; and its purposes and benefits.

The following excerpts are analysed in terms of the hegemonic (patriarchal) ideologies it reproduces. Hormonal contraception was discussed as follows:

> *"hormonal contraception is a highly effective form of birth control that can only be used by women" (gr. 9 LO)*

> *"Contraception is the primary right of a female and a conjugal (marriage) right of the male partner"*

These statements place immediate emphasis on female responsibility and point towards the social pressures they may face therefrom.

> *"the lesson ends with a discussion of how unhealthy gender norms have traditionally labelled contraception as a 'women's responsibility', and how men can play an active role in a sexually active couple's choice and use of hormonal contraception"*

This excerpt confirms that society has placed pressure on females to take responsibility to protect themselves from unintended pregnancies, as hormonal contraceptives cannot protect from infections. Additionally, the excerpt alludes to the necessity of men in making decisions regarding best suited hormonal contraception for his female partner, thus implying male dominance over female bodily choices. This, again, is only targeted at heterosexual relationships.

In grades 9 and 10 for the subject of LO, there was a brief discussion and 9-step guide on how to use and dispose of a female condom. The following excerpt was included in the discussion on female condoms:

"the female condom also has some advantages over male condoms, such as being female-initiated; not requiring the male partner's erection to keep the condom in place; not reducing the male partner's sexual stimulation"

This excerpt suggests female bodily autonomy, and the act of having autonomy during sexual intercourse and decisions for safe sex practices, while simultaneously emphasising that the advantage of female condoms is that it will not negatively impact the male's sexual pleasure. It further suggests the potential for a man to not use a condom, but to rather make sexual protection the female's responsibility.

"Emergency contraception: also called 'the morning-after pill', this is a birth control method that can be used to prevent pregnancy in the first few days after unprotected vaginal sexual intercourse. It is intended for emergency use following unprotected intercourse, contraceptive failure or misuse (such as forgotten pills or torn condoms), rape or coerced sex"

"Emergency contraception is used to prevent pregnancy after rape or unprotected intercourse"

These definitions of emergency contraception intensify the female responsibility of preventing pregnancy, even if the act of unprotected sex was as a result of (typically male-initiated) sexual violence, thereby highlighting the power dynamics between males and females. It is important to note that in this analysis, condoms were stated to be the best suited method of protection against infections and pregnancy. Hormonal contraceptives are more easily accessible to females than female condoms. Therefore, when critically analyzing the excerpts like the ones above, it can be immediately assumed that *'unprotected sex'* refers to a male not using a condom. This is despite male condoms being more accessible than female condoms thereby assuming male dominance. Although not mentioned in the text, the social reality of SA is that male condoms are free and can be accessed in almost every public space, while female contraceptives (hormonal and condoms) come at a price. Therefore, when analyzing the content, it is clear that women face the social and economic pressures and expectations of prevention and protecting themselves, while men are able to access condoms and still have the ability to choose not to access or use it. This social layout contributes to the construction of contraceptives and its associated power dynamics.

Upon analyzing the text, one may wonder why there is such focus on female hormonal contraceptives. What about male contraceptives, other than just condoms? Dating back to the 1960s, research has shown that since then, hormonal contraceptives and the increase in the range of options for women, allowed for male contraceptives to remain limited to either condoms or vasectomies. Not only did leading pharmaceutical companies believe male hormonal contraceptives to be non-profitable, but there were also concerns of the potential side-effects for men that prohibited further investigations into male hormonal contraceptives (Arditti, 1977; Tuana, 2006). The greatest concern was the loss of libido for men if they were to be on hormonal contraceptives, while the same loss of libido factor was not considered for females, immediately assuming the bias "that women do not have anything to lose since the 'active' force in sexual intercourse stems from the male" (Arditti, 1977, p. 123; Tuana, 2006). Additionally, side effects such as depression, weight gain, fatigue, were considered to be more compatible with female gender roles and unnaceptable for men (Tuana, 2006). Decades later, it can be argued that similar narratives are present in the modern day sex and sexuality education text, seen in the extensive information on female hormonal contraceptives and undeviating information on male condoms, with the occasional mention of vasectomies. This is an indication of the reproduction and maintanence of hegemonic, patriarchial discourse. From the perspective of epistemic ignorance, its not that hormone-based contraceptives for males weren't a possibility, but rather it was a choice to not further engage with this matter as it did not serve the interests of those funding the research, otherwise referred to as those in position of power and privilege (Tuana, 2006; Steyn, 2012; Steyn, 2015).

Male Condoms

Throughout the text there was a common thread of condoms not only being a male responsibility, but also a choice. Because male condoms are more accessible and are free of charge, the text emphasizes the importance of using a male condom, including an '*11-step learner guide to using male condoms correctly*'. That being said, the analysis revealed that discussions of male condoms are such by placing the social and sexual pressures back onto females through stating that "*women have a choice to be protected even if their male partner does not want to wear a condom*". This statement highlights the choice aspect of males to use condoms, and the female responsibility. Even though used as examples in discussion activities, statements such as "*a man who uses a condom is weak*", "*having sex proves that a*

boy has become a man" and "*messages that condom use is 'unmanly' for men, and 'unladylike' or 'slutty' for women*" speaks to the gender socialization of males and females, potentially reinforcing the notion that men need to assert sexual dominance, and the social contradictions of female socialization. It became evident through the discussions of male and female contraceptives that there is a dual stigma on females regarding contraceptives: (1) If you're a young female on hormonal contraceptives or using condoms, the social constructions of patriarchy may lead to judgement as it's thought that you're having sex, creating the 'slut' narrative. This contradicts with information emphasizing the importance of female contraceptives; (2) Because of the naturalized discourse that places the male form in a position of dominance, they do not always have to wear a condom, thus, expecting women to protect themselves. If a woman is to become infected or pregnant, regardless of the protective measures she may have taken, she will still be blamed for the consequences of infection or pregnancy. This speaks to the victim-blaming rhetoric, as well as the power dynamics between male and female.

From these findings, it can therefore be argued that contraceptives are still largely viewed as a female's responsibility, that the use of protection from men, such as condoms, is an option, and that not only does this content maintain the male/female binary, but places females in an oppressive position.

(Diseased) Pregnancy

The analysis revealed that discussions on pregnancy were another way that science was used as a tool to justify social injustices, pressures and stigmas of females. Firstly, regarding HIV, it was greatly stressed throughout the grades and both subjects that "*girls and young women are getting infected at higher rates*". This information has laid the foundation for discrimination and stigma towards females. There was great emphasis on how the transmission of HIV could be as a result of females due to pregnancy. Students are taught that HIV can be "*acquired by a baby when their mother is living with HIV and not on ARVs*". This has the potential to increase the chances of stigma towards females as they will be seen to be at fault for increasing the rates of infection in this country. Alternatively, it is said that "*delivery through C-section can reduce the baby's risk of infection*", however, this raises the question of the impact this may have on the stigmas and social pressures females face regarding appearances, and the already present stigma HIV positive women experience.

Additionally, the content states that '*someone with HIV is more likely to get TB*'. However, with the knowledge that females are already at a higher risk of being HIV positive, and are more infected than the male demographic, it can be assumed that this statement is targeted at females; it is a warning sign, if anything, that females who are HIV positive will most likely contract TB as well. This scientific discourse increases the social pressures and stigmas that females are likely to face.

In the discussions of leaving STIs untreated and the implications thereof, there is a focus on untreated STIs effecting females more than males. In these discussions it is stated that untreated STIs can lead to '*infertility in both men and women'*; '*complications of pregnancy: babies born early, too small or blind'*; '*pregnancy outside of the womb (the mother can die from this)*'; '*HPV can advance to cancer of the cervix'*. Analysing these excerpts more critically reveals that scientific discourse places a greater emphasis on negative outcomes for the female body. Not only socially are females met with a range of social pressures and expectations, but scientifically they are told to expect to face biological challenges. The social and the scientific operate separately and simultaneously to place the female body in an inferior position, serving the interests of heteropatriarchy.

The analysis further revealed a theme of blame towards females. For example, Foetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS) is explained as follows: "*if a pregnant girl or woman drinks alcohol on a daily basis, or gets drunk while she is pregnant, the foetus can develop FAS*". Additionally, with regards to substances such as drugs or alcohol, it is said that "*girls using alcohol or drugs lose their ability to make responsible decisions*" thus reinforcing the victim-blaming narrative.

In the discussions of thrush, it is made clear that "*vaginal thrush infections are common in women who are pregnant or using oral contraceptives*". The overemphasis in the text on hormonal contraceptives and pregnancy implies that it is inevitable that a female will contract thrush. Furthermore, "*males do not get infected as often as females*" and "*the tip of the penis may become red and swollen usually from having sexual intercourse with an infected person*" implies heterosexuality, in that a man will only contract thrush if having sexual intercourse with a female who has thrush, but also increases the social stigmas females face regarding their health. It can therefore be argued that scientific discourse contributes to the social stigmas and pressures of females.

An added layer of pressure on females was revealed through the discussions of different diets, and the importance of the role of the mother in ensuring a healthy diet for infants and toddlers: "*a pregnant or breastfeeding woman needs additional nutrients for the growth of*

her baby. She should eat more proteins and more foods containing vitamin D, calcium and iron, such as milk and leafy green vegetables"; "*the best and most balanced diet for new-born babies is breastmilk*". These excerpts further imply the female gender expectation that women are responsible for the health and well-being of their child(ren). If a female fails to comply with this, she is shamed for being incapable of caring for her child(ren)- a social expectation of females.

A baby born with Down's Syndrome is constructed to be the fault of the mother, stating that a child can be born with Down's syndrome if an error occurs during the '*first maternal meiotic division*' and that '*the risk of down's syndrome increases with maternal age*'.

Genetically, it is discussed that females are at a high risk of developing Rhesus disease as a result of pregnancy, and the negative impact that blood type may have on them and their children.

Gender Power dynamics: Equality and Violence

The analysis showed a range of topics that showcased the power dynamics between males and females. Such topics being condom negotiation, transactional relationships, the topic of power itself, and HIV, STIs and unintended pregnancies. In these sections, it became evident that there was a tendency to strengthen unhealthy gender messages- the same unhealthy gender messages that other sections of the text claimed an attempt to eliminate. It is important to reiterate that all content was structured in the male/female binary. The analysis to follow will extensively unpack how power dynamics were constructed in the text, and how it has the potential to reproduce hegemonic discourses.

First and foremost, it is an important finding that in the text there is acknowledgement of a systemic problem: patriarchy. In the text, patriarchy is defined as:

> *"a social and political system that goes back to ancient times, which is based on the idea that boys and men should hold more power than girls and women in all aspects of life. This includes being seen as more important in society; having preferential rights in relation to property; financial transactions and being afforded more rights and responsibilities than women in religion and culture"*

Although this definition is mentioned only in grade 10, it gives insight into the structure of the content for previous grades and the grades to follow, specifically those related to power dynamics. In the discussions of gender equality, it was clearly stated that:

> *"gender equality is not a fundamental human right, but a necessary foundation for a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable world. Providing women and girls with equal access to education, health care, decent work, and representation in political and economic decision-making processes will fuel sustainable economies and benefit societies and humanity at large"*

This definition of gender equality speaks to the unequal power relations between males and females, as there is a specific focus on women and girls being able to obtain access to benefits greatly associated with men. Nowhere in this definition are males mentioned, placing extra emphasis on the advocacy for gender equality being a practice for females by females.

In grade eight LO, gender-based violence was introduced as:

> "*any acts of violence that result in, or are likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm, coercion or suffering of girls or women, occurring in public or private life"*

This definition highlights that females are victims of violence. Analysing the acknowledgement of a patriarchal society and the definitions of gender equality and gender-based violence, it can be argued that gender-based violence is perpetrated by males. Although the text attempts to bring attention to and normalize gender-based violence towards males, it is said in grade 12 LO that:

> *"gender-based harm is an abuse of power that is sometimes ignored because of unequal power and rights. In our patriarchal society, men and boys have been taught- and often believe- that they have the right to power over girls and women, or that their needs and satisfaction are more important than the needs and rights of girls and women"*

This definition emphasises, again, that gender-based violence is largely an act of power by males, thus reinforcing patriarchal narratives. With regards to power dynamics, it is further stated that:

> *"when one person in the relationship has more power, the other person often believes their needs are less important, and their job is to please the other. This is particularly true because of gender inequality… boys and men, as well as girls and women experience this"*

It is evident that in these definitions there is a need to normalize dominance being directed towards males as well, whether it be by females or other males. That being so, the main message continues to be that power is male-oriented and is something that females tend to have little of. This is reinforced in the section heading *'understanding power. Getting to share it'*. This section heading implies that there is a standing power imbalance between males and females. The findings revealed the systemic gender ignorances hidden in the text. It was stated that:

> *"Until recently the burden has fallen mostly on women to protect themselves from being raped. Men too are raped. But it is also important that men play a role in preventing rape, and more men are starting to take action"*
>
> and
>
> *"Men are not to blame for history, but they have the responsibility to understand the current culture of violence and take personal action to stop it. This requires critical thinking about manhood, power and sex, and drawing clear lines that must not be crossed"*

These excerpts reinforce the naturalized notion that rape is an act of power by males, and that females needed to take responsibility to protect themselves. However, throughout sections of sexual violence, rape and consent, there is a continuous focus on what needs to be done if one has been raped and the type of support that is available. This content being targeted largely at females. Therefore, the text contradicts itself by stating *'until recently'* as it continues to cement the idea that females need to protect themselves rather than for the text to address a systemic issue. Moreover, '*the burden has fallen mostly on women to protect themselves from being raped'* perpetuates the victim-blaming narrative towards females. The

statement '*men are not to blame for history'* has a tone that men are not to be blamed for the patriarchal society we live in, while simultaneously expecting them to understand the role they have come to play, and continue to play, in the establishment of unequal gender power relations in order to take '*personal action'*. However, the use of this phrase still does not imply addressing a systemic issue, but rather that 'personal action' is a choice.

Barriers to Condom Use

In the section '*barriers to condom use'* it is stated that students will learn about the barriers and challenges to condom use. Having said that, the section is structured mostly with activities and questions, which have the potential to strengthen dominant narratives, such as victim-blaming. For example, '*how can alcohol or drug use affect one's ability to use a condom?*' and '*list 4-6 barriers or obstacles to using condoms that SA youth typically experience'*. The activities require the students to look to each other for answers regarding barriers to condom use, providing hegemonic, heterosexual and oppressive narratives with the platform to maintain itself. This is because it is asking young students what they have learned from society, to teach each other what they have learned, thereby not providing them with factual information regarding barriers to condom use. Additionally, the text itself creates a power imbalance between student and teacher, as many of these activities state that *'your educator will guide you'*. Depending on the educator, the students may not be guided to correct, factual information.

Contradictions of Consent

The analysis shows that sections in the text on consent, rape and sexual violence reproduced a victim-blaming narrative, mostly towards females, as well as revealed numerous contradictions, specifically regarding the practice of consent.

Beginning with the contradictions, the elements that characterized consent differed between grades, as well as within sections itself. For example, in grade nine LO, it was stated that *'body language alone is not a clear indication of sexual consent, even though the person might want to indicate consent with their body language'* while concurrently stating '*remember that in a sexual situation, if your words and body language do not match up, the other person may not understand where the boundaries are or may decide that you are giving 'mixed messages' and use that as permission to move ahead with sex'*. These statements may cause confusion with regards to the role of body language and consent. Some of the content

indicates that both verbal consent and consensual body language need to be present in order for consensual sexual practices to proceed, while other parts of the text state that '*consent is only consent if it is clear and explicit, i.e., if it is spoken out aloud'*. That being so, it contradicts with content such as *'we must not use emotional, financial or any other kind of manipulation to make someone do something they clearly indicate- either through body language or spoken work- that they do not want to do'*. Here, it can be assumed that sexual practices may proceed if only one or the other is present. These mentioned excerpts contradict each other and maintain the already present blurred lines of consent.

A key finding regarding the discussions of consent is what the SA law says about age and consent (figure 2), which highlights the power dynamics between ages. It further raises questions regarding age-appropriateness of sexuality education. In the SA context, there have been many arguments that sexuality education should not begin until high school, however, the law discusses age and consent from the age 12 and onwards. The contradiction being that typically, one can only begin high school in the year one turns 14. The law is not encouraging sexual acts, but rather is considerate of the realities of sexual acts taking place between young persons and attempts to protect young persons who are not ready to engage in sexual acts but have been forced to. The ages that the law mentions and the arguments regarding age-appropriateness of sexuality education is itself a contradiction.



What the law says about age and consent[20]

In South Africa, there are laws protecting young people under the Children's Act (2005) and a later amendment (2007). These laws specifically aim to protect young people from sexual relationships with older people.

Under these laws:

- A young person under the age of 16 can consent to sex, but it is considered 'statutory rape' if the person they have sex with is over 18 (statutory rape refers to sex with someone who is a minor or under age).
- It is considered statutory rape if a person who is 16 or 17 has consensual sex (sex with consent) with a younger person under the age of 16, when there is more than two years' difference between their ages.
- It is not statutory rape if both young people are between 12 and 15 and consent.
- A child under 12 cannot consent to sex, even if they say they want to.

Figure 2 Gr 10 LO- What the law says about age and consent

Victim-blaming

In relation to the contradictions of consent was the reproduction of the victim-blaming narrative. The content was structured in a manner that it could be relevant to any gender. However, in connection with the abovementioned content and discussions of power

dynamics, it could be argued that the victim-blaming was aimed systematically at persons with lesser power, and in a patriarchal society, such persons would generally be a female. For example:

> *"common impairments, constraints or factors that MAY preclude the ability to give consent include alcohol consumption; drug use; low mental capacity; physical power held over someone"*

> *"give examples of a time when a person cannot make a good decision or communicate consent. For example, situations where someone may have had a lot to drink or taken drugs"*

> *"Don't get drunk or high at parties or clubs, especially with people you don't know or trust"*

These above excerpts highlight the naturalization of victim-blaming, the role of substances in reproducing the victim-blaming narrative; that a person has an inability to make informed and responsible decisions if they are under the influence of substances, thus implying that another person would be able to access an intoxicated person's body. If this is the dominant narrative, it could easily be misinterpreted as consensual if a person is under the influence of substances. Scholars Gabriela, Opre & Dobrin (2018) support this argument in their research that factors such as dress code, substance abuse, victim respectability, physical attractiveness and overall social norms perpetuate victim-blaming narratives, often perceiving the victim to be at fault rather than the perpetrator. They further note that if men and women believe the world is a just place, their view is often that a person who was sexually violated deserved it based on the abovementioned factors.

In the text it states, *'the law says it is rape when someone forces their penis, fingers or object into someone's vagina, anus, mouth or any other part of their body against their will'*, accompanied by an image (figure 3) of a man raping a woman, with the statement *'rape is never your fault'*, as can be seen in the image below. Here, again, the contradictions in the text are evident, as well as fortifying the notion that females are the victims and males the perpetrators. Nevertheless, when the text poses the question *'what can I do to avoid being raped?'* it reinforces the victim-blaming narrative and places the responsibility on females to avoid sexual violence being done unto them, rather than to address a systemic problem.



Figure 3 Gr 10 LO- This is what rape is

> *"What both men and women need to understand: It doesn't matter how much money you spend on a date, you're not owed anything; Don't think someone wants to have sex because of their behaviour or the way they are dressed; If your friends are talking about women as objects, sexual conquests, or ways to pressure or force someone to have sex, challenge them"*

The excerpt above is targeted only at males and females, but upon closer inspection of what men and women need to understand, it can be argued that these points are more about what men need to understand '*about manhood, power and sex'*. An activity is for students to *'Find one example taken from the media of how victims are often blamed for rape'*. Literature has shown that common examples are about the way a female has dressed or been under the influence of substances (Culda, Opre, & Dobrin , 2018). Linking this to the excerpt, it could be argued that it is an attempt to break the notion that males are owed sexual acts. At the same time, this excerpt maintains the victim-blaming narrative, even though structured in a manner that claims to contest it. This is a doing of hegemonic orders and a constituent of epistemic ignorance.

The victim-blaming narrative, however subtle, is perpetuated through statements about *'disempowered life circumstances (such as poverty, no education or a lack of employable skills), past abuse or trauma, unhealthy gender norms or other influences*'. Referring back to the in-text definitions of patriarchy and gender equality, it is apparent that females do not have the same rights to economic opportunities, education and therefore employment as their male counterparts. From this perspective it can be asserted that content about risk factors and the associated power dynamics places the female form in a more oppressive position. This was especially evident in the content about transactional

relationships, and the re-emphasis on females being at a greater risk of contracting HIV '*because of the unequal gender power dynamics making it very difficult to negotiate with their partners to use condoms and have safer sex'*. It was stated that:

> *"there is a particular focus on relationships with a big age difference between partners and the power dynamics that occur when gifts and other benefits are expected (transactional relationship) in exchange for sex"*

Although various terms, alongside 'transactional relationship' were used to refer to the age differences in sexual relationships, such as 'intergenerational' or 'blessers/blessees', the focus remained on these types of relationships being between an older male and younger female, specifically a female who is in a lower economic position. The term 'sugar daddies' was mentioned multiple times in relation to these relationships with age gaps, immediately assuming a young female and older male. The images (figures 4 and 5) below support this assumption.

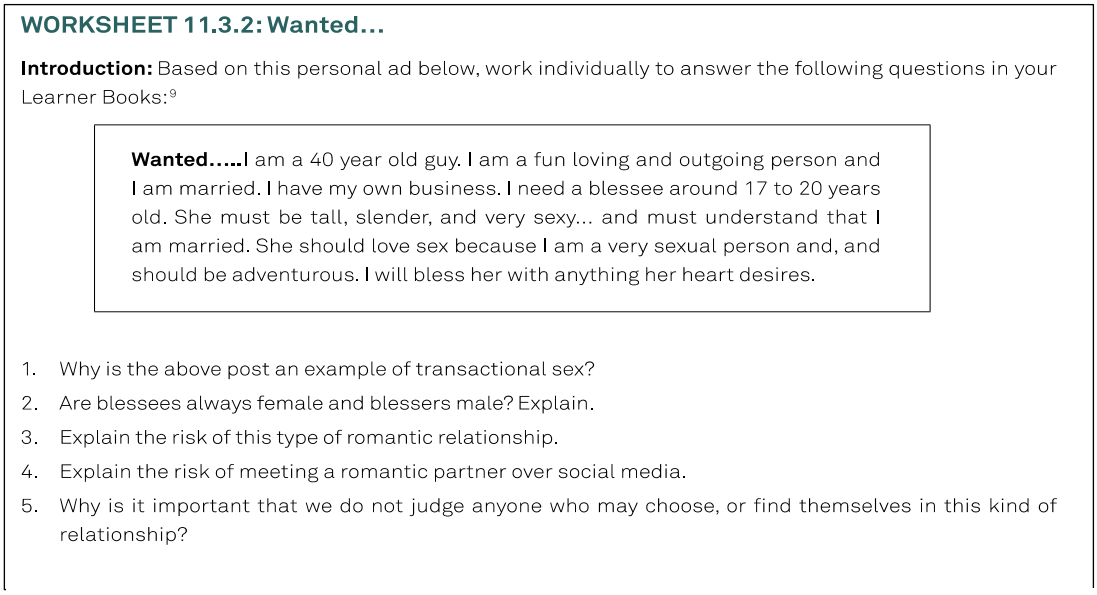


Figure 5 Gr 11 LO- Relationships and risk



Figure 4 Gr 11 LO- Relationships and risk

In combination with these images is a worksheet activity (figure 6) that reproduces the objectification of females. The advertisement in the activity alongside questions such as *'are blessees always female and blessers always male?'* does not only reproduce the sex/gender binary, but also increases the risk of stigma and discrimination towards females. Researchers Kay & Jackson (2008) and Santelli (2008) have shown that sex and sexuality education implicitly produces and reproduces harmful messages about young women.



WORKSHEET 11.3.2: Wanted…

Introduction: Based on this personal ad below, work individually to answer the following questions in your Learner Books:[9]

> **Wanted…..**I am a 40 year old guy. I am a fun loving and outgoing person and I am married. I have my own business. I need a blessee around 17 to 20 years old. She must be tall, slender, and very sexy… and must understand that I am married. She should love sex because I am a very sexual person and, and should be adventurous. I will bless her with anything her heart desires.

1. Why is the above post an example of transactional sex?
2. Are blessees always female and blessers male? Explain.
3. Explain the risk of this type of romantic relationship.
4. Explain the risk of meeting a romantic partner over social media.
5. Why is it important that we do not judge anyone who may choose, or find themselves in this kind of relationship?

Figure 6 Gr 11 LO Social media and risks

The stigma and discrimination towards females regarding intergenerational relationships operates in conjunction with the perpetual stigma of females being at greater risk for HIV as shown by Bhana, Morrell, Hearn, & Moletsane (2007). In the sections on risk factors, types of relationships and power, it is consistently reiterated that transactional relationships are *'directly linked to SA's current HIV epidemic, and the factors that place young people, and particularly young women at risk'.* That *'age difference is a major factor in SA- specifically between older men and young women/girls'* as well as that *'young women 14-25 are getting infected with HIV at much higher rates than boys.'* The use of the term 'young women' implies sexual maturity, thus contributing to the argument that females participate in these risky relationships, while the use of the term 'boy' implies sexual innocence, and therefore they do not engage in intergenerational/transactional/blesser-blessee relationships as much as young women. This implication is further supported by the statistics of HIV (figure 7) present in multiple sections of the LO text.

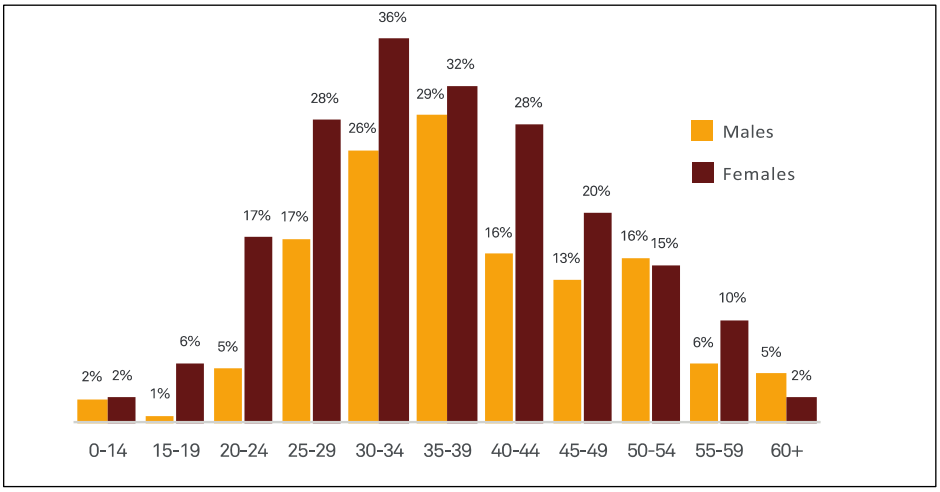


Figure 7 Gr 10, 11, 12 LO- HIV infection rate by age and gender

The below illustration (figure 8) supports age differences being a risk factor, while simultaneously perpetuating stigma and discrimination towards females. Through the lens of HIV infections, it further highlights the notion that males are in power as *'age differences between partners can create a power imbalance'*.

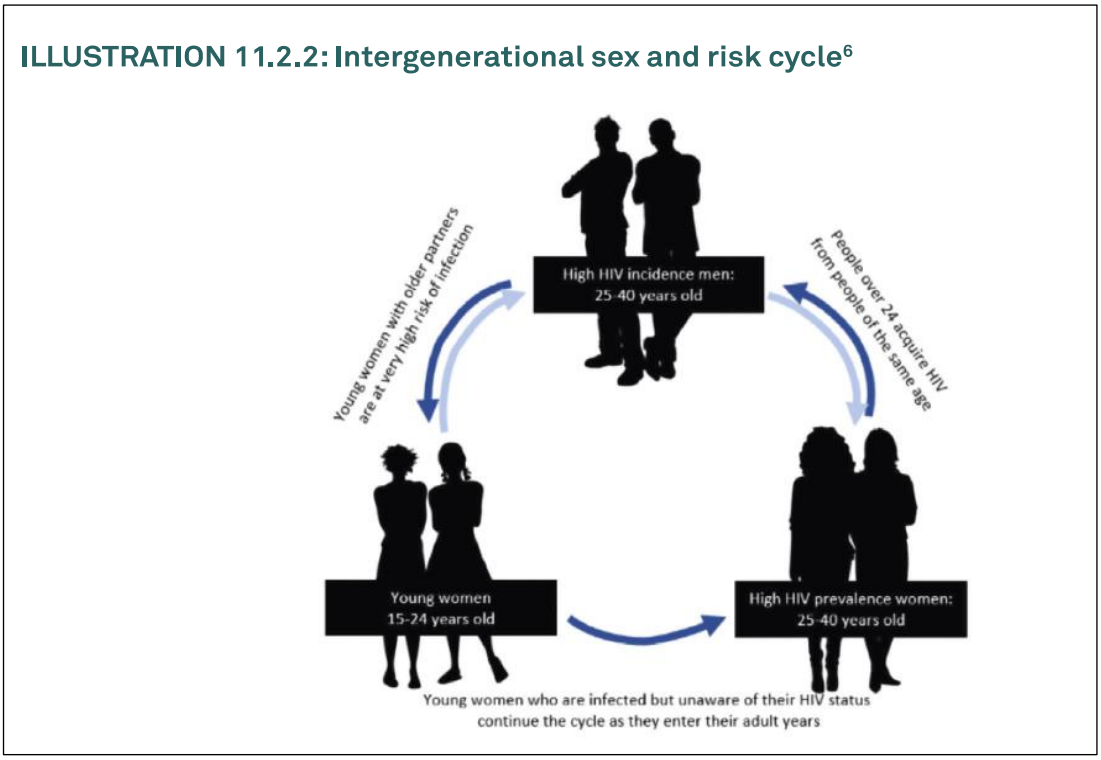


Figure 8 Gr 11 LO Intergenerational sex and risk cycle

The power imbalance that comes with age differences and the risk of HIV infections by females can also be analyzed through the lens of condom negotiation. The female students are encouraged to access and utilize contraceptives, while also being made aware of the risks

of infection and pregnancy they face as a result of power imbalances between males and females and the power males hold over the use of condoms during sexual intercourse. The female students are taught how to negotiate condom use with their male partners, thus perpetuating female responsibility. The contradiction in the text is that there is constant statement that *'I will use a condom every time'*, while at the same time having a tone of acceptance that a male may still choose to not use a condom. The text naturalizes that *'at some point in your lives you may meet someone to whom you are attracted and who will pressure you to have sex, or pressure you to NOT use condoms. Remember: You have the RIGHT to say NO to sex in ANY situation'*. The text further emphasizes the importance of assertive communication which *'can protect you as an individual in different ways. It can help to protect you from aggressive people and sexual abuse, and it can help you to avoid STIs and unintended pregnancies*.' It can be argued that these statements, although structured as generalized, are aimed at female students. They are taught that *'understanding the power dynamics in a romantic relationship is critical in order to take actions to protect ourselves'*, while concurrently naturalizing that *'alcohol abuse is a big contributor to increased levels of both GBV and HIV infections.'* The systemic ignorance of patriarchy is sustained through providing cures to the problem, such as support centers, rather than to eliminate the problem.

READING 11.9.1: Knowing the facts about sexual violence in South Africa



Unless we take action together...[22]

This does not have to continue!

Through collective action, we can put an end to the epidemic of violence in South Africa.

The South African Medical Research Council and the Centre for Public Mental Health conducted research on intimate partner violence (IPV). The research tells us[23]:

1. IPV is the most common form of violence experienced by South African women.
2. More women are killed by their current or former intimate male partner in South Africa than in any other country in the world.
3. Victims remain hesitant to disclose their experience of IPV because of stigma. Those who do report incidents say public servants fail to detect their problem or deny that it exists.
4. Among pregnant women, 36-40% experience physical IPV and 15-19% experience sexual IPV. The violence puts the baby at risk.

Figure 9 Gr 11 LO Knowing the facts about sexual violence in SA

This illustration above (figure 9) again reinforces the heterosexual narrative of gender-based violence, excluding the idea of alternative genders experiencing gender-based violence, as well as strengthens the notion that women will be victims and males the perpetrators.

Discussions of the power dynamics between males and females continue to be present and maintained through various activity scenarios, activity questions and illustrations (figures 10 and 11). It is critical to remember the structure of the textbook sections. Students are promised 'factual, reliable information', yet multiple sections comprise mainly of activities and illustrations, which allow hegemonic orders to preserve patriarchal narratives.

WORKSHEET 11.8.1: Beliefs about rape[18]

A. Say whether you agree or not to the following statements	Agree	Disagree
1. A woman who wears sexy clothing is partly to blame if she is raped		
2. Alcohol and drug abuse can cause rape		
3. If a man is aroused, it is very difficult for him to not have sex.		
4. It is okay in a relationship if a woman does not want to have sex.		
5. If a woman has been drinking with a man, he can expect to have sex with her.		
6. If a man does a woman a favour, he is entitled to have sex with her.		
7. A woman cannot be raped by her intimate partner or husband.		
8. Only women can be raped or sexually abused.		
9. Walking alone at night is asking for it.		
10. If I see a friend pressuring someone to have sex, I should tell him to stop		
11. The only one to blame for rape is the rapist		

Figure 11 Gr 11 LO Beliefs about rape

Situation	Problem
You go for a job interview and the person who is hiring hints that this job could be yours if you provide a special favour to the boss.	
During your shift at work, your manager often leans over a little too close and makes you feel uncomfortable.	
A man in your community has frequently asked you to have sex with him, and he does not seem to be taking "No!" for an answer. You start to wonder whether it would be easier to just do what he asks.	
Your mother's boyfriend has been bothering you whenever she is out of the house. You try to avoid him but notice that he is starting to pay attention to your little sister. You conclude that you should give him what he wants, to protect your little sister.	
A man and woman have been living together for years. Lately she has not felt like having sex. He feels entitled to it and forces her to have sex.	
A friend shares that her uncle has been coming into her bed at night and making her do things she does not want to do.	

Figure 10 Gr 11 LO Abuse of power and gender-based harm

An additional key finding was the forms of male power. Further examples of the types of power are depicted below all of which assume male dominance.



Figure 12 Gr 9 LO Uses of power

Depicted below is an illustration (figure 13) of a female student being harassed by male students. The text describes it as follows: *'boys are whistling and harassing a girl on the playground. It looks as though it might be playful and harmless, but the girl is feeling furious and humiliated, and it is not funny- it is abusive'*. Here, male dominance is being asserted over a female. This image depicts catcalling- the act of shouting, harassing and often sexually suggestive, threatening or taunting comments by males towards females. Furthermore, because the image is in a school setting, it can be argued that such male dominance begins and is naturalized from a young age.

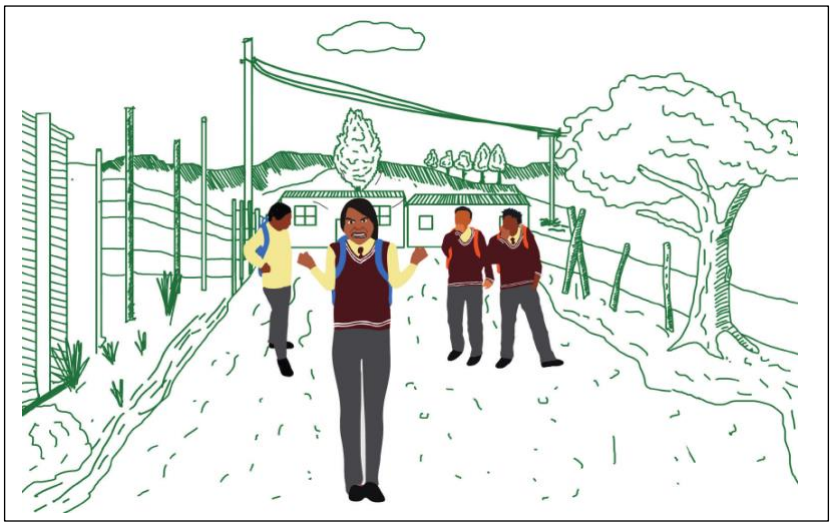
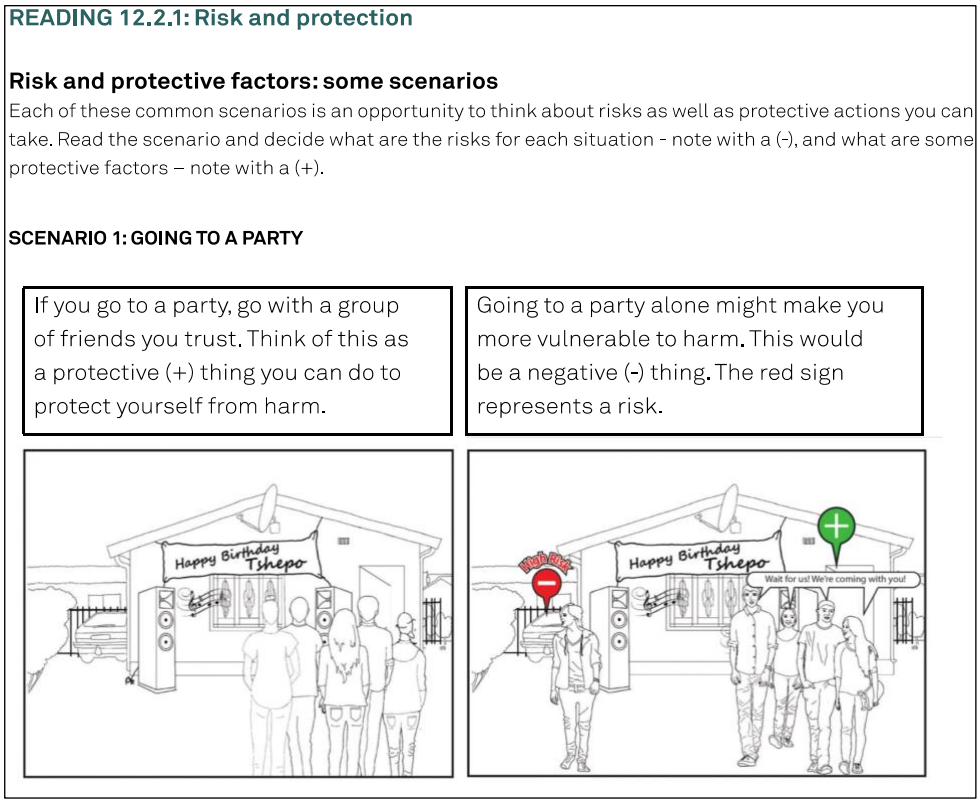


Figure 13 Gr 11 LO Power, sex and abuse

Paradoxically, figure 14 depicts ways in which females can protect themselves. In this scenario, females are seen with male friends in order to protect themselves at a party. The assumption here is that females need male protection in order to prevent harassment from risky situations. This implies that females are 'weaker' and cannot protect themselves, it centres male dependency, and highlights another form of males asserting dominance. The irony in these two figures is that females need to fear males, while simultaneously depend on males for their own protection.



READING 12.2.1: Risk and protection

Risk and protective factors: some scenarios

Each of these common scenarios is an opportunity to think about risks as well as protective actions you can take. Read the scenario and decide what are the risks for each situation - note with a (-), and what are some protective factors – note with a (+).

SCENARIO 1: GOING TO A PARTY

If you go to a party, go with a group of friends you trust. Think of this as a protective (+) thing you can do to protect yourself from harm.

Going to a party alone might make you more vulnerable to harm. This would be a negative (-) thing. The red sign represents a risk.

Figure 14 Gr 12 LO Risk and protection

Holy Ignorance

Christonormativity

Research has shown that "while court decisions have ruled that teaching religion in [national] schools is not permissible" (Burke & Segall, 2011, p. 2) it would be ignorant to believe that religion and education are completely separated. Literature shows that Christian values and moral codes have an ongoing tendency to imbed itself into laws, policies and the design and implementation of the school curricula (Ferber, 2012). During the process of critical analysis of the sexuality education text, it became rather evident that Christian values was an undertone in the content. The analysis revealed elements of christonormativity- "the normalization and privileging of Christianity as the dominant religious and spiritual culture" (Ferber, 2012, p. 70)- in relation to sex/gender, relationships and reproduction. Before continuing, it is essential to keep in mind that there are various denominations of Christianity, each with its own interpretations and worldviews. The argument for Christian undertones in the curricula is supported not only by the school calendar, which consists largely of the recognition of Christian holidays (Burke & Segall, 2011), but also by the only other mention of alternative religions being in relation to different religious diets of *'Halaal'* and *'Kosher'*. This reductionist approach to religion strengthens the argument for christonormativity. The CDL framework supports this argument because it is through translating and interpreting hegemonic practices (Steyn, 2015) that the exclusion of various religions becomes evident. Many times, in the text was religion/culture and spirituality referred to as factors for reaching altruism; for becoming a whole, unique, contributing individual. This was supported through statements such as '*go to a spiritual group or place of worship'* and '*praying/meditating'*. Although these statements are general and can refer to any religion or culture, the assumption remains christonormative.

Contemporary theologians have recognized the concept of 'sex negativity': "a dominant Christian sexual ethic that upholds the procreative nature of sex and hierarchical gender roles within heterosexual marriage" (Moles, 2016, p. 3). This sex negativity became evident in the analysed text.

Abstinence and Scare Tactics

The analysis showed that within religious epistemic ignorance was the foregrounding of abstinence and the use of scare tactics, which emphasize negative outcomes associated with sexual activities, such as sexually transmitted infections and/or pregnancy (Bay-Cheng, 2003; Brewer, Brown, & Migdal, 2007). Below are some of the extracts from the text regarding abstinence, and the scare tactics used to support it. It is important to note that many of these statements were part of the introduction of many sections of the text, whether relevant to that section or not, more specifically the LO text.

Abstinence	Scare tactics
Abstinence is a conscious decision to avoid sexual activity or sexual behaviours	How can you prevent an unintended pregnancy that may stand in the way of you achieving your full potential and your life goals and dreams?
The safest choice is not to have sex	All unprotected sex is risky until you are in a mutually monogamous and committed relationship
The best way to avoid pregnancy and STIs, including HIV is NOT to have sex. The safest choice is abstinence	This lesson deals with how your choice of behaviours- especially around sex- can either help you achieve your goals or get in the way of those goals
What is the safest way to avoid pregnancy and STIs?	HIV can have serious health consequences and even cause death
Choosing not to have sex is the safest way to avoid exposure to STI and HIV acquisition	Anyone who is sexually active is at risk of acquiring STIs and/or HIV
Abstinence is the only 100% effective method for preventing pregnancy	People who have STIs-including HIV- often show no signs of being infected
	Having sex with more than one partner within the same general period of time greatly increases your chances of acquiring HIV and other STIs
	Parenting is a big responsibility. You have to take action to prevent a pregnancy until you and your partner are ready to become parents
	HIV is everyone's problem: everyone is affected or at risk in some way

Table 4: Abstinence and scare tactics excerpts

Christian scholars have posited that if one does not adhere to the ways of the Lord, one is likely to wander down a path of darkness (Moss, nd; MacMillan, 2008). In other words, engaging in sexual activities at a young age, or before marriage, can set one back in life, lead into substance abuse, unemployment as a result of a lack of education and an overall unsuccessful life (MacMillan, 2008). Although the scare tactics mentioned are structured as factual, they serve the purpose of ensuring the ultimate goal of abstinence. It can therefore be

argued that the abovementioned statements on abstinence and its complementary scare tactics are to keep students in line with Christian values.

Monogamy, Love and Emotional Manipulation

In conjunction with the abstinence argument is the recognition and acceptance that students may engage in some form of sexual activity. Therefore, if students do choose to engage, they are encouraged to adhere to the Christian values. Such values being *'two people'; 'monogamous relationship'; 'stay faithful'; 'build a life with'; 'family'; 'love'; 'affection'; 'one partner at a time'* and '*man and woman'*. According to Christian values "marriage is the official ritual by which heterosexual relationships are consolidated, and the basis for hegemonic family forms. One's identity is shaped by it, and one's inclusion as a valued member of society judged by it" (van Zyl, 2009, p. 368). The text supports this viewpoint by stating that *'having a healthy relationship with a partner, getting married and starting a family are all goals, like any other goals.'*

"Learning to love" (Department of Catholic Education & Formation, 2017)- to give and to receive love- is at the centre of Christian values and views on romantic, heterosexual relationships. The concept of love was introduced early on in the text in grade eight LO, with what could be considered a subjective view on what 'true love' is.

What is "true love"?

a) Loving someone is caring deeply for that person and being committed to their well-being and happiness. Loving and being loved can be the source of deep joy and meaning in life.
b) Love is one of the most powerful emotions that people experience. It has inspired great works of art, literature and music.
c) There are many different ways to love somebody.
d) People may feel love for members of their immediate or extended family, for close friends and for their partners or spouse of the same or a different sex.
e) The terms "true love" or "real love" often refer to an intimate partner bond that has moved beyond the "falling in love" or infatuation stage.
f) Sorting out feelings of affection, romantic love, sexual desire and "true love" is often difficult and confusing.
g) Everyone receives messages from their culture about what love is, whom they should (or should not) love and how they should express (or not express) their love.

Figure 15 Gr 8 LO What is "true love"?

Love can be expressed and acquired through actions and "the highest and most noble of which is sexual intercourse" (Department of Catholic Education & Formation, 2017, p.

11). According to Pievskaya (2010) "manipulation as a persuasive technique is a widely representative model of religious institutional discourse" (p. 42); it consists of direct or indirect intimidation or threats (Pievskaya, 2010; Ghani, 2011) and targets basic human needs such as love, attention and affection, safety and understanding, to receive a desired (sexual) outcome (Pievskaya, 2010; Murray & Lombrozo, 2017). From this perspective, it is argued that the analysed text uses the Christian principles of love, affection and emotions as means to justify sexual coercion and manipulate consent; to exert dominance and control (Ghani, 2011). Kay & Jackson (2008) have shown a dominant narrative that "women have a greater need to offset sexual intimacy with affirmation and a sense that 'this is love'" (p. 22). With this in mind, males in particular tend to use 'love' as a tool to manipulate women with the knowledge that women tend to 'give in' in search of affirmations, love and the need to please. Tactics of emotional manipulation can be seen in the illustrations below (figures 19 and 20).

Jordan: But don't you care about me? Didn't you say the other day that you thought you were in love with me? People who are in love have sex.
Jana: *(Ask Jordan to stop pressuring you and tell him how the pressuring makes you feel)*

Jordan: I don't get it. If you loved me, you'd have sex with me.
Jana: *(Make space; offer an alternative)*

Figure 16 Gr 8 & 9 LO Unscripted role play (Jana and Jordan)



Figure 17 Gr 9 LO Uses of power (control)

In these above illustrations, it is clear how males are placed in a dominant position, while females are on the receiving end of emotional manipulation and sexual coercion. Research has shown that Christian values regarding sex are "moralistic and controlling"

thereby justifying male superiority over women (Bhana, Morrell, Hearn, & Moletsane, 2007, p. 132).

Not only does the text showcase emotional manipulation as a religious discourse, but also uses manipulation to scare students into abstaining from sex. For example, students are encouraged to not engage in any sexual activities as consequences such as pregnancy or infections will 'ruin' one's life, especially at a young age and if not married. The text manipulates students into waiting until they are emotionally ready, or preferably married, before engaging in sex. This further implies that marriage is exempt from any negative outcomes such as infection or forms of sexual violence, but that pregnancy is an achievement.

Further examples of the ways the text attempts to manipulate students to abstain are as follows:

> *"Research has shown that a large percentage of young people your age are NOT having sex. Isn't this encouraging?"*

> *"remind yourself: 'I am strong, smart and in charge of my future! I make decisions that are best for my health'"*

On the basis of these above excerpts, if students are to engage in sexual activities, and face negative sexual outcomes such as infections or pregnancy, it could lead to self-doubt, thus implying that they were not strong, smart, in charge of their future or making decisions that are best for their health. It is stated in the text that:

> *"your reproductive goals should be considered among your life goals- deciding if and when you want to have children, how many children, and under what personal circumstances. For example, would you want to have children in a marriage/committed relationship, when you are economically secure, etc.?"*

> *"if you are in a relationship and are sexually active, then using a contraceptive as well as condoms should be a priority while you pursue your life goals"*

The contradiction here is the construction of life goals. From a religious standpoint, the students are encouraged to procreate only when in a heterosexual marriage, while at the same time it is being implied that reproducing is a setback to achieving lifegoals.

The Intersections of Religion and Gender

The holy ignorances found within the data cannot be separated from the gender ignorances that were revealed. Literature has shown that Christian values are centred around family values and the 'natural family' (McEwen, 2018). These values are heteronormative and repronormative in nature: only a male and female can join together in holy matrimony for the purpose of procreation (McEwen, 2018). Scholars such as Waldman (2003), Masci & Lipka (2015) and Weissman (2017) have highlighted how religion is a predictor of sex/gender diversity tolerance: the tolerance is low, and the opposition is high. This includes various denominations of Christianity, Judaism and Islam. These religions hold similar family values and are therefore strongly opposed to non-conforming genders, sexual orientations and relationships.

The analysis of the content regarding the reproductive systems meets the heteronormative criteria of the Christian values. The structure of the discussions of the reproductive systems is solely within the male/female binary and is focused on the processes of producing offspring. According to Aston (2017) when religion, however subtle, is incorporated into education, it is directed towards the conduct and heteronormative scientific discourses of females. The analysed text supports Aston's hypothesis, as the text revealed a great deal of focus on the female body- the reproductive system and motherhood. As stated by Moss (nd) "only a woman could help in sexual reproduction, which fulfilled the plan of God", thereby providing insight into the great detail of content on the female body, its functions and purposes.

Theology places females in a secondary position, because as the Bible explains, Eve was created from the rib of Adam; that females came from males, and are therefore less superior than their male counterparts (Moles, 2016). Many Christians have this belief, and it is even stated in the bible that "the man is not from the woman, but the woman from the man. Neither was the man created for the woman, but the woman for the man (I Corinthians 11, 8-9)" (Moss, nd). Throughout the text, females were placed in a marginalized position, whether it be scientifically (the sperm-egg narrative) or socially (how to take sexual responsibility to protect themselves and others). This can be linked back to the systemic ignorances of patriarchy and its associated gender inequality where *'one person in the relationship has more power, the other person believes their needs are less important, and that their job is to please the other'*, thus supporting the Christian belief of male dominance. From the Christian viewpoint, the female is subjected to the male on the basis of three truths: (1) the woman was created for and by the man, (2) it was the woman who was deceived by the devil, and (3) to a certain degree, her sin was comprised of the desire to dominate the man (Moss, nd).

Conversely, the male form is not to go unnoticed for his female counterpart's sin. The thought is such that Adam was weak of will and lacked true love for Eve, and for this reason was unable to save her from sin. His punishment for being unable to love fully, is to work and support his wife and family for the rest of his life (Moss, nd). A critical analysis of these Christian view's points to the gender socialisation of males and females; the hegemonic discourses and expectations of males and females.

An interesting finding was the following statement in the LS text: '*It is suggested that all surviving humans are descendants from one woman who lived around 200 000 years ago. This woman is known as the 'African/mitochondrial Eve''*. Here, the contradictions between religion and science are evident, specifically in the discussions of evolution as De Smedt and De Cruz's (2020) research on "the challenge of evolution to religion" has shown. Scholars such as Dobzhansky (1973) and Lamoureux (2008) have argued that it is possible for religious and scientific views of evolution to coincide as "God creates, using the process of religion" (De Smedt & De Cruz, 2020, p. 5). However, despite the possibility for science and religion to operate simultaneously and the use of the biblical name 'Eve', it is suggested here that males have come from females and not the other way as dominant Christian discourse imposes, ultimately opposing dominant Christian beliefs.

The Illusion of Social Transformation

One of the main objectives of the NCS is social transformation. The national curriculum needs to ensure that educational inequalities of SA's past are rectified and that all populations of SA's are provided with equal and just educational opportunities (DBE, 2019). The inequalities refer not only to race, but also those pertaining to gender and sexual orientation. With this in mind, the critical analysis of the text questioned if social transformation is indeed part of the LO and LS curriculums. The answer to this question became noticeably more complex than a simple 'yes' or 'no', but rather revealed what can be defined as 'the illusion of social transformation'.

Sex and Sexuality Diversity

The text alludes to topics such as alternative sex or genders but does not discuss them further than just a mere definition. As can be seen in figure 18, LGBTQIA are assigned definitions.

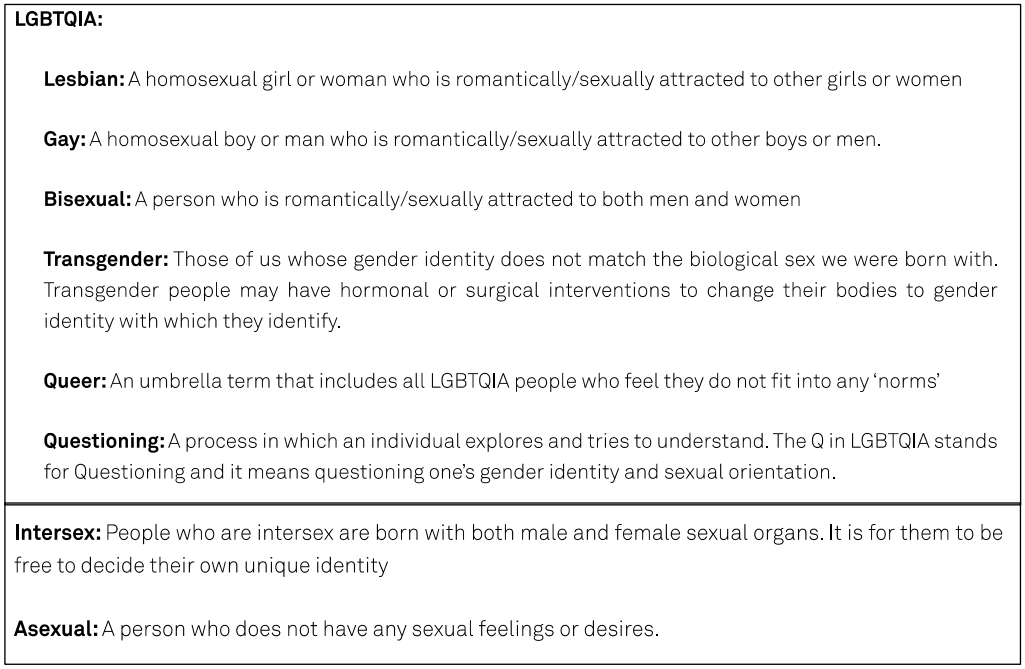


Figure 18 Gr 10 LO LGBTQIA Definitions

Throughout the text where HIV, risk and safety/protection, stigma and discrimination and sexual violence were discussed, there was little to no mention of the experiences or risk and safety factors of members of the LGBTQIA community. With regards to sexual violence, it was stated that '*there is also a culture of targeting people in the LGBTQIA community, because of their sexual orientation'*. There was no further discussion of their experiences following this statement. Instead, what was present were statements that had the potential to reproduce stigma and discrimination towards alternative genders and sexualities and maintained the male/female binary (see Kay & Jackson, 2008). For example:

> *"a person or a group of people experience stigma when they feel disapproved of, judged, excluded or treated differently because of who they are or their situation. There are many examples of people who experience stigma. People living with HIV, teenagers who get pregnant while still at school, or people living with different gender or sexual identities are a few examples…"*

> *"identify groups of people, and/or the types of problems for which people often experience stigma"*

> *"we are born with our genetic makeup and it cannot be easily changed"*

"Some factors affecting our well-being we cannot control, for example the body and genetic makeup that we are born with"

"I will treat other people, men and women, with respect"

From these extracts it can be seen that stigma and discrimination are reproduced towards individuals of difference through activity questions and statements about the types of people who are likely to experience stigma. The last excerpt specifically sends the message that "discrimination against LGBTIA individuals is acceptable, thus implicitly (and explicitly) undermining state and local anti-discrimination laws" (Kay & Jackson, 2008, p. 12). In addition, scientific discourse is used to assist with maintaining the male/female binary and the fear of difference: '*genetic makeup and it cannot be easily changed'.* In the scientific discussion of sex hormones, those who have different hormonal balances are openly excluded as well as those "that refuse to be categorized biologically female or male based simply on specific proportions of androgens and oestrogens" (Bazzul & Sykes, 2010, p. 15). Furthermore, by stating that only men and women will be treated with respect excludes persons who do not identify within this binary, thereby contributing towards their stigmatization. Müller (2013) highlights how "heteronormativity invisibilises LGBT people, whose lived realities are not reflected in mainstream narratives" (p. 2). In the text it is said that *'stigma and discrimination are born out of fear and ignorance'*. According to Steyn's (2015) CDL framework, this fear of difference is "socially constructed within unequal power relations" (p. 381). If it does not fall within the boundaries of dominant hegemonic discourse, such as the male/female binary, it is naturally oppressed (Steyn, 2015). The illusion/epistemic ignorance here is that the text acknowledges the existence of alternative genders and sexualities yet continues to oppress them by way of excluding their lived experiences and not comprehensively, and fairly, including them into the sexuality education curricula. It can be argued that the way the text is constructed has the potential to 'name and shame' that which is different. The text is making it known to the greater society that non-conforming persons do exist, but by minimizing the experiences and access to comprehensive sex and sexuality education for LGBTQIA students, it opens the door for shame, guilt, bullying and for them to remain oppressed, as scholars Baams, Dubas, & van Aken (2017) and Francis (2017) have shown.

The most commonly mentioned 'alternative' was '*intersex*' (LO)/ '*hermaphrodite*' (LS). It was clearly stated that an intersex person is someone with both male and female reproductive organs, however, there was no further discussion of their reproductive organs in the sections on sexual reproductive systems or their (in)ability to procreate. In the section on role models, Caster Semenya, a SA intersex athlete, was used as an example of a positive role model.

Caster Semenya is a South African middle-distance runner and 2017 Olympic gold medallist. She won the women's 800 metres at the 2009 World Championships with a time of 1:55.45 and at the 2017 World Championships in her new personal best, 1:55.16. She also won silver medals at the 2011 World Championships and the 2012 Summer Olympics, both in the 800 metres. She was the winner of the gold medal in the 800 metre event at the2016 Summer Olympics. She challenged gender bias because she was born as an intersex person and has had to challenge her right to run as a woman athlete.[14]

Figure 19 Gr 11 LO Positive Role Models (Caster Semenya)

This extract is interesting due to the fact that majority of the extract is based on her sporting accomplishments with only one brief sentence on why she is a positive role model. The illusion of social transformation here is that a well-known intersex person was used as a reference for intersex experiences, but her experiences as an intersex person and advocate were not actually discussed.

Alongside the mention of intersex, the analysis uncovered how alternative sexual orientations were mentioned largely in terms of the male/female binary (Kannelmäe, 2014). The most commonly referenced sexual orientation was '*gay*'. As seen in the extract above regarding LGBTQIA definitions, lesbian and bisexual were defined, however, throughout the text, there were images mostly of gay couples, and one of a lesbian couple, as can be seen in figure 20.



Sexual orientation: Who we are attracted to romantically and sexually. For example, if you are attracted to the opposite sex only, you are heterosexual. If you are only attracted to people of the same sex as you, then your sexual orientation is gay (men) and lesbian (women). Bisexual is when you are attracted to both sexes

Figure 20 Gr 10 LO Sexual Orientations

Scholars such as Adrienne Rich (1980) and Cori Wong (2011) have argued that lesbians tend to be overlooked due to the fact that "heterosexuality is enforced for girls and women through various political, economic, and social practices that naturalize its compulsory character thereby making lesbian existence seem like, at best, a deviation from a woman's natural attraction to men" (Wong, 2011, p. 9). This is further supported by Steyn's (2015) CDL framework that a person who does not adhere to their hegemonically assigned roles will be overlooked and remain oppressed.

The images in figure 21 were included in the sections of social and environmental justice and well-being, with a specific focus on HIV. In these images, male homosexual couples can be seen. However, it poses the question: where HIV is mentioned, why is a gay couple included? With the already standing stigmas regarding male homosexual couples and HIV, it can be argued that placing this image in a discussion of HIV has the potential to reproduce and maintain the stigmas of male homosexual couples. Research has shown that approaches to sex and sexuality education that have an abstinence slant tends to "conflate being gay with being HIV-positive, diseased, or disease-prone" (Kay & Jackson, 2008, p. 12). Furthermore, there was no mention of male-to-male condoms as a protective factor, or any protective factors for homosexual couples to be sexually protected.

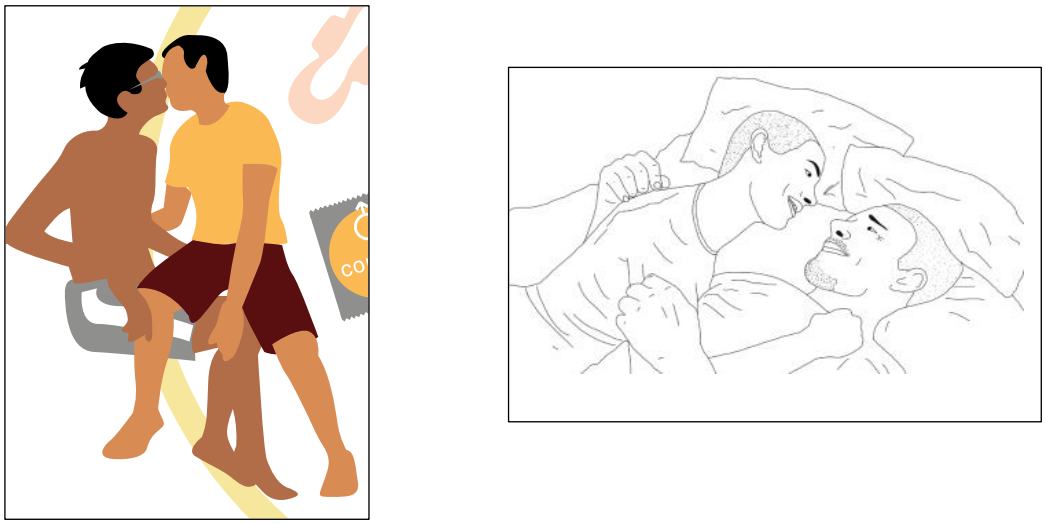
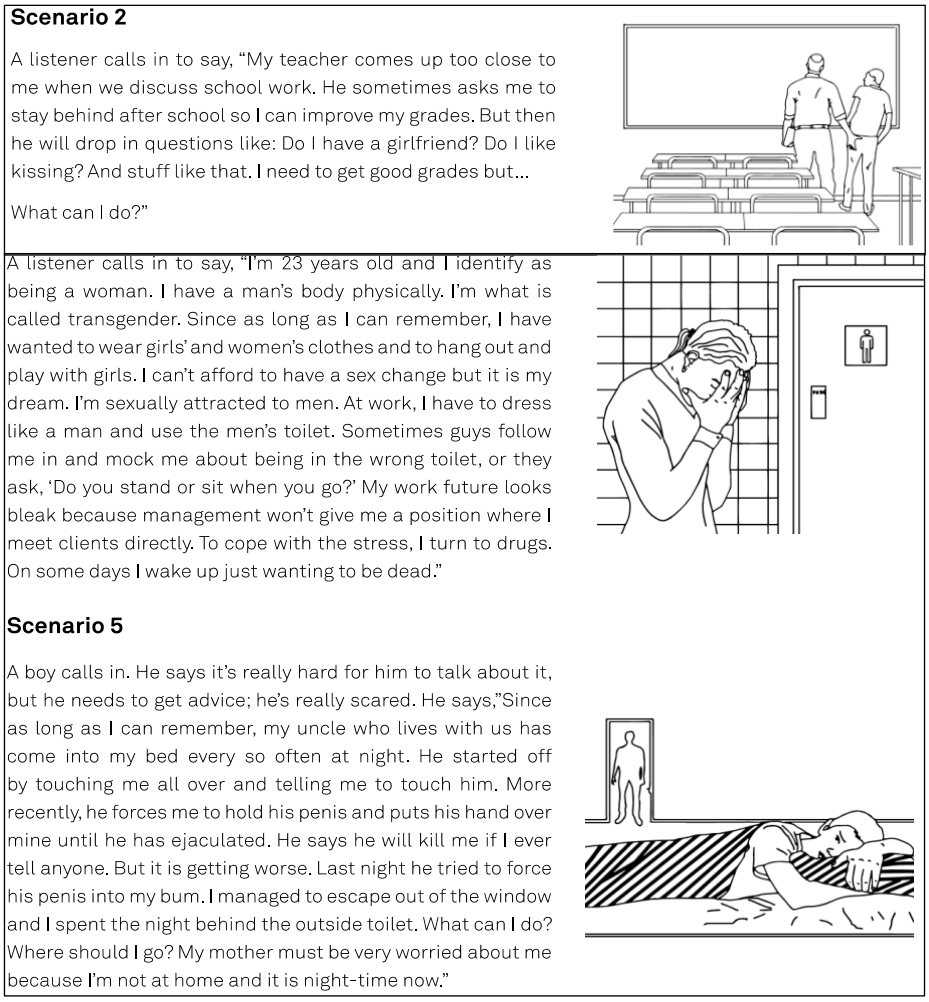


Figure 21 Gr 10 & 12 LO Illustration of same-sex couples

Supporting the argument that this inclusion of LGBTQIA and the accompanying images are merely an illusion of social transformation, Nancy Tuana (2006) notes that this form of systemic ignorance is wilful. It is wilful because we know that we do not know about LGBTQIA lived or sexual experiences, yet we either do not care to know, do not have the means to know nor do hegemonic orders want us to know (Tuana, 2006).

(Re)doing Gender Messages

Some parts of the text have attempted to undo unhealthy gender messages towards males, while simultaneously structuring other parts of the text in such a way that it, to a great extent, reproduces patriarchal, 'manly' discourses. For example, '*Boys and men especially need to feel free to express their emotions, so they don't bottle them up*'; '*Society often stresses that men need to be brave and not show emotions. That is not true. There is often pressure for peers to have sex in order to be a man*' and statements that aim to normalize sexual violence towards males, such as "*While it is true that rape and sexual violence is most often perpetrated against girls and women, it can, and does, happen to boys and men"*. These statements aim to reframe and naturalize events that resist patriarchal narratives. In the extracts below, it can be seen that these scenarios for a group activity showcase that sexual misconduct can happen to males by males- males asserting male dominance towards other, younger males- as well as the alternative sexual experiences of men, such as transgender.



Scenario 2

A listener calls in to say, "My teacher comes up too close to me when we discuss school work. He sometimes asks me to stay behind after school so I can improve my grades. But then he will drop in questions like: Do I have a girlfriend? Do I like kissing? And stuff like that. I need to get good grades but...

What can I do?"

A listener calls in to say, "I'm 23 years old and I identify as being a woman. I have a man's body physically. I'm what is called transgender. Since as long as I can remember, I have wanted to wear girls' and women's clothes and to hang out and play with girls. I can't afford to have a sex change but it is my dream. I'm sexually attracted to men. At work, I have to dress like a man and use the men's toilet. Sometimes guys follow me in and mock me about being in the wrong toilet, or they ask, 'Do you stand or sit when you go?' My work future looks bleak because management won't give me a position where I meet clients directly. To cope with the stress, I turn to drugs. On some days I wake up just wanting to be dead."

Scenario 5

A boy calls in. He says it's really hard for him to talk about it, but he needs to get advice; he's really scared. He says,"Since as long as I can remember, my uncle who lives with us has come into my bed every so often at night. He started off by touching me all over and telling me to touch him. More recently, he forces me to hold his penis and puts his hand over mine until he has ejaculated. He says he will kill me if I ever tell anyone. But it is getting worse. Last night he tried to force his penis into my bum. I managed to escape out of the window and I spent the night behind the outside toilet. What can I do? Where should I go? My mother must be very worried about me because I'm not at home and it is night-time now."

Figure 22 Gr 11 LO Scenarios of abuse of power

The argument that this is an illusion of social transformation does not discredit the truths that inappropriate sexual behaviours happen to males, nor that males face social difficulties regarding sexual orientations. Instead, the argument is that despite the inclusion of these experiences in the text, to a large degree, the sexuality education text is structured in hegemonic patriarchal narratives. For example, activity questions such as *"what do male students think men and boys should be doing to prevent violence in their community? What do female students think men and boys should be doing to prevent violence in their community?"* and the construction of the content on transactional relationships, power dynamics in relationships, condom negotiations, along with the mentions of patriarchy and gender inequality, all maintain the male dominance narrative. From this perspective, it can then be argued that by bringing in content that attempts to naturalize the expression of emotions by males and sexual violence being an act done unto them as well, the current sexuality education content can claim social transformation, albeit minimal.

Physical (Dis)ability

Another way that the text dilutes substantive social transformation is through four images of disabled persons, as can be seen below.



Figure 23 Gr 10 & 11 LO Illustrations of disabled persons

These images were randomly placed throughout the text, except for one, which was placed in the section of sexual myths, stating that '*it is a myth that people with disabilities do not have sexual interest or enjoy intimacy'*. This was the only mention of physical disability regrading sex and sexuality.



Figure 24 Gr 10 LO sexual myths about disability

Much like the sexual experiences of LGBTQIA persons, the experiences of disabled persons remain marginalized. In support of the argument for wilful ignorance and the illusion of social transformation, it is not that they "do not exist, it's that they are not recognized" (Mora, nd). This is largely because sex education for persons with disability is more controversial than sex education itself. Therefore, students with disabilities are often excluded from discussions and receive little to no sex education (Boehning, 2006) and are ultimately at greater risk for negative sexual outcomes such as infection or sexual exploitation (Treacy, Taylor, & Abernathy, 2017).

Pretending Pleasure

The notion of pleasure showed to be one of the ways the text alluded to social transformation. In a westernized world, pleasure has become a popular topic regarding sexual experiences for all genders and sexualities, advocating for pleasure and desire to be sufficiently incorporated into sexuality education. It cannot be contested that 'pleasure', 'sexual arousal, and 'masturbation' were mentioned in the analyzed sexuality education curriculum, even '*facts about the human sexual response'* (Gr 11 LO), however, it was discussed solely (1) within the male/female binary, and (2) in terms of male pleasure and sexual arousal, and why it is necessary for procreation for a man to be sexually aroused and pleased. It did not discuss pleasure in terms of the female, or alternative genders/sexualities, thereby maintaining the oppressive discourses of religion and patriarchy.

A Contributing Member of a Chosen Society

The final illusion of social transformation pertains to becoming a contributing, successful member of society as indicated in the NCS (DBE, 2019). Here, it is argued that the

text does indeed place great importance on developing productive, active members of society, except that the society they are expected to contribute to is an already established and chosen, hegemonic society- a society that aims to maintain the dominant religious and patriarchal narratives, with the preservation of oppression towards non-abiding groups. It can be argued that if genuine social transformation was taking place, it would not be said that '*civil society in SA is mobilising against the killing of women, intimate partners (called femicide), sexual harassment and rape'*- a statement which not only alludes to female responsibility, but also upholds a systemic problem of gender inequality. This proposition is further supported by the following extracts:

> *"the class will continue to explore how to stop rape, as well as the care, support, and treatment needed after a rape has taken place"*

> *"to motivate and inspire active and responsible citizenship, you will evaluate an advocacy campaign that was taken all the way to the Constitutional Court, where all pregnant women living with HIV, won the right, under the Bill of Rights, to receive antiretroviral treatment to prevent mother-to-child transmission (PMTCT) of HIV"*

Metaphorically, the text is treating the symptoms rather than the cause. From a CDL perspective, the students are encouraged to "engage with issues of the transformation of these oppressive systems" (Steyn, 2015, p. 387), such as issues pertaining to gender rights and sexual health, while simultaneously being taught content that maintains the oppression. The heteronormative narrative of societal contributors remains intact. Furthermore, if authentic social transformation was taking place, there would be factual, reliable content regarding the sexual experiences of other genders/sexualities and physical disability. However, the ignorance of social transformation remains upheld due to the text not accounting for comprehensive inclusion for all people, irrespective of race, gender, sexual orientation, religious/cultural beliefs and physical ability.

Conclusion

This research project aimed to determine how sex and sexuality is represented in South African high school Life Orientation and Life Sciences textbooks. Using Steyn's (2015) framework of Critical Diversity Literacy to unpack how grammar and vocabulary

facilitates privilege and oppression, as well as how to translate coded hegemonic practices, a critical analysis of the textbooks revealed the overarching theme of epistemic ignorance. Epistemic ignorance is the notion that despite the National Curriculum Statement objectives of social transformation, diversity and inclusion, the text is used as a platform to uphold dominant systemic beliefs and practices of heteropatriarchy and christonormativity. Ignorance that serves the interests of dominant groups is rooted in the assumption "that what has been, must continue" (Korowicz, 2012, p. 1). Our epistemologies of sex and sexuality is to a great extent dependent on the systems of power that, historically and currently, dominate the social, political, religious and economic worlds. As can be seen in the results on reproduction, contraceptives, consent, sexual misconduct and power, these topics are all discussed in the textbooks through a heterosexual and patriarchal lens, favouring not only heterosexuality and the male/female binary as the 'correct 'sexual orientation and gender, but further places males in a socially, sexually and biologically superior position to females. These heteropatriarchal teachings are further strengthened by christonormative values on sex, gender, sexuality and morality. Through a handful of illustrations and definitions on non-binary sexes/genders, sexual orientations and disability the text is able to claim that it is diverse and inclusive. However, the textbooks maintain narratives that are oppressive towards non-conforming persons, thereby not being as diverse and inclusive as the NCS intends, nor does the text indicate sincere social transformation in terms of, for example, gender equality and sexual rights at a social level. The textbooks served as a significant site of research and analysis as they provide insight into current social orders and society's collective conscience (Polakow-Suransky, 2002) regarding heteropatriarchy and christonormativity. The implication of the text being structured through a heteropatriarchal and christonormative lens is that it has the potential to develop students with mindsets that sustain this 'correct' social order, thereby continuing to place interpersonal and political challenges for non-conforming persons such as LGBTQIA as well as challenges for gender equality and sexual health rights. The textbooks serve as a platform for gendered and sexed power inequalities to be upheld.

Hegemonic groups hold a certain type of prejudice, and societal ranking, that determines the information that one chooses to know or ignore (Steyn, 2012; Fricker & Jenkins, 2017). If the information does not suit the favoured religious, heteronormative or patriarchal narratives, it is purposefully ignored, regardless of the credibility or worthiness of that information. This is evident in the (un)discussions of LGBTQIA and disabled persons, and the sexual health and safety knowledge that they need in order to be educated and equal sexual beings. Even in their seeming inclusion, an aversion towards that which is different is

maintained, thereby sustaining oppressive discourses and unequal power dynamics (Steyn, 2015). Thus, the texts perpetuate sexed and gendered forms of epistemic ignorance in that they name that which is oppressed under the disguise of inclusion and diversity, yet construct the content, or exclude the content on their sex and sexuality experiences in ways that reproduce unequal power relations relating to gender and sexuality. Alongside the objectives of social transformation, diversity and inclusion, the goal of the NCS, and the transformational imperatives of education more broadly, is to establish individuals that will be contributing members to a democratic society. The topic of how to become contributing members of society was widely covered in the analyzed text, except that the society students are encouraged to contribute to is one which upholds dominant discourses that favour heteronormative, patriarchal and christonormative values, and retains the subordinate status of oppressed groups. Based on research showing that textbooks are viewed as "holy books" to both teachers and students (Hickman & Porfilio, 2012), as well as that textbooks uphold social orders, the immediate assumption is that the heteropatriarchal and christonormative construction of the text will inevitably infiltrate into and remain a part of the greater society.

Following Steyn's (2015) criterion of turning theory into practice, it is recommended that further research be conducted into the relationship between LO and LS sex and sexuality content to determine the way forward in ensuring impactful social transformation, diversity and inclusion within the textbooks and consequently the greater society. The national current, up-to-date textbooks need to be similarly analyzed in order to determine if the results of this study are evident on a national level, as well as an examination of additional, independent data resources that educators may make use of. It is further recommended that additional data collection techniques be used to gain deeper insight into who wrote these texts and with what purpose.

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