What is this research about?
This study investigates the representations of race, multiculturalism, and anti-racism in one secondary social sciences textbook used in Ontario schools. In particular, the researchers were interested in examining how Ontario Ministry of Education curriculum policy documents for social sciences were translated into supporting textbooks by publishers.

What did the researchers do?
The researchers examined the textbook *Transition in Society: The Challenge of Change*, published by Oxford University Press in 2002. This text is the approved Ontario Ministry of Education text for a grade 12 social sciences course and is used across Ontario.

While the entire content of the book was examined, specific attention was paid to the way race, racism, culture, and multiculturalism were depicted in the textbook. In particular, Chapter 9 entitled “Prejudice and Discrimination” was examined in greater detail.

What you need to know:
This study examined representations of race, multiculturalism, and anti-racism in *Transition in Society: The Challenge of Change*, a grade 12 social sciences textbook used in Ontario schools. Analysis of the text revealed that although the text was inclusive of race, minorities, and gender, a number of shortcomings were identified by the researchers including inaccurate and simplistic definitions of prejudice and discrimination.

The researchers also examined the provincial curriculum policy document for the course to determine how the textbook aligned with the policy document.
What did the researchers find?
The researchers found that although the text was inclusive of race, minorities, and gender; a number of shortcomings could be identified:

- The text tends to use violent past examples of racism and discrimination, portraying these issues as simply the product of the irrational fear of individuals in the past. For instance, the Holocaust and Apartheid are dealt with in great depth compared with the minimal coverage of present day institutional discrimination in Canada;

- The text includes overly simplified descriptions of the work of prominent race scholars, as well as the omission of several black scholars who were included in the policy document;

- The text tends to give simplistic analyses of racial and cultural issues. For instance, there is no critical analysis of the differences between the way various sociologist, psychologist, and anthropologists have conceived of social differences.

- The text provides inaccurate and simplistic definitions of prejudice and discrimination. For instance, in one instance the text states that a white boy cannot be a victim of racism because he is part of the dominant group;

- The text ignores any discussion of power relations and how power relations contribute to inequity.

The researchers conclude that, despite the contributions of scholars in creating the course policy document, the corresponding textbook failed to adequately address the complex nature of race relations and social differences.

How can you use this research?
Teachers and administrators may wish to:

- Use this research as a starting point for discussions about how race, culture, discrimination and power relations are portrayed in textbooks or other texts used in schools;

- Consider the consequences of inadequate or inaccurate
representations of race, culture, and power relations in school texts;

- Supplement school texts with resources that challenge conventional conceptions of race, culture, power relations, and discrimination.

Original article:
To learn more about this research study, we invite you to read the original article:


http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/01596300802410243

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About this summary
The Ontario Education Research Exchange (OERE) is a project of the Knowledge Network for Applied Education Research, an Ontario network promoting the use of research in education. The OERE’s clear language summaries of academic research aim to support this mandate.

This summary has been adapted from the ResearchSnapshot series developed by York University and ResearchImpact and has been developed according to writing and design principles unique to OERE. For more information about this summary or the OERE network please contact oere.knaer.oise@utoronto.ca.

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