

Writing stereotype-free textbooks

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Equal Opportunities Commission
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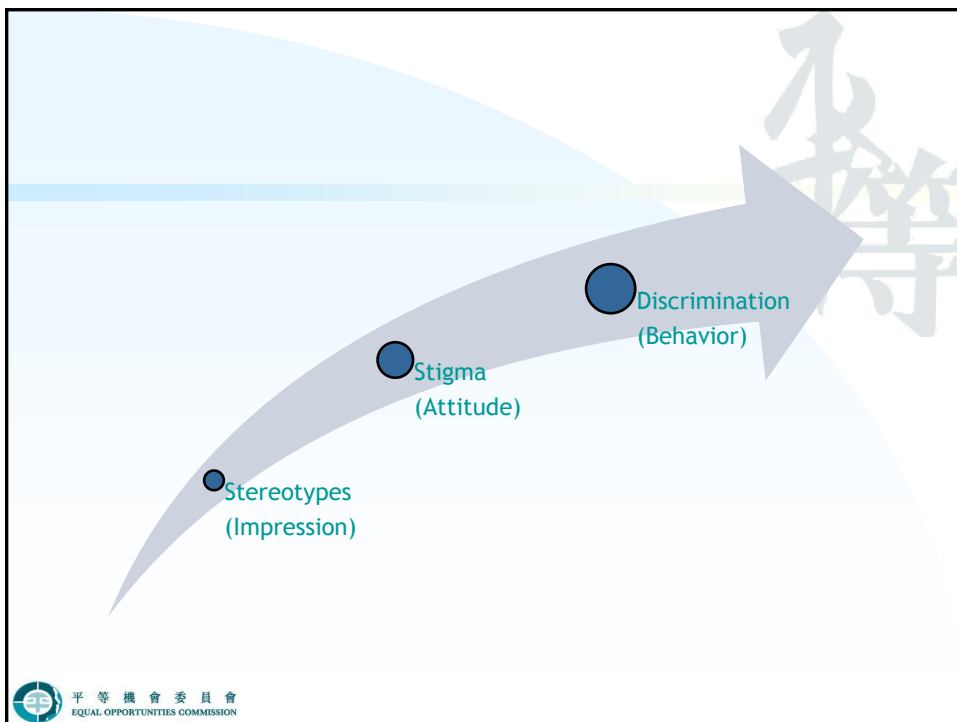
Equal Opportunities Commission

- A Statutory body set up in 1996 to implement:
 - Sex Discrimination Ordinance
 - Disability Discrimination Ordinance
 - Family Status Discrimination Ordinance
 - Race Discrimination Ordinance
- To create a **pluralistic** and **inclusive** society free of discrimination, with no barriers to **equal opportunity**

What is “stereotype”?

- Image?
- Impression?
- Observed / imagined trait?
- Popular belief?

... thought process that organizes beliefs about one group of people and assigns them to everyone in that group.



What is “Equal Opportunities”?

- EO is merit based and disregards irrelevant factors in employment / education / services etc., such as sex, race, disability, family status
- EO removes unnecessary barriers (physical or not) and glass ceilings
- EO allows people to genuinely compete on equal footing
- EO deals with prejudices, ignorance and stereotypical assumptions
- EO is not absolute equality

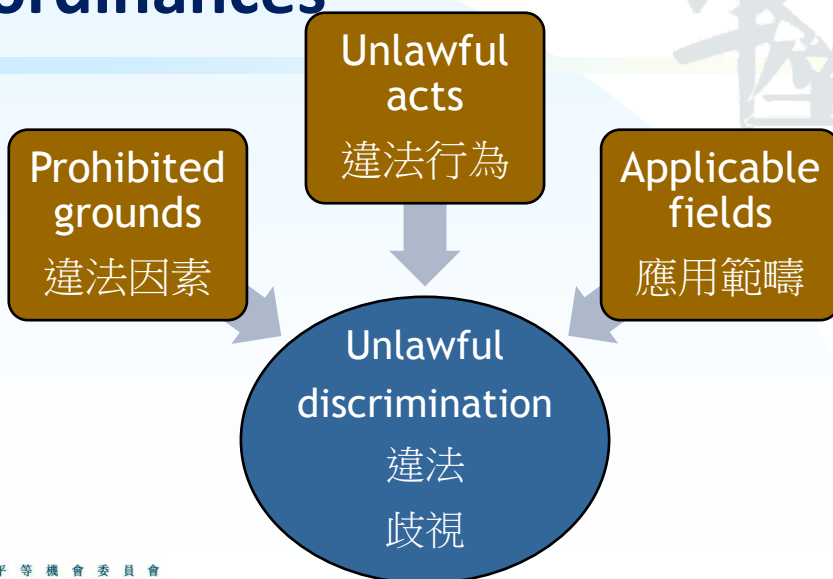
What is “Equal Opportunities”?

“Equal Opportunities” is about giving people
a fair chance to prove what they are **capable**
of and to **participate**

Anti-discrimination Ordinances

- These ordinances make discrimination and harassment **unlawful** under **specified circumstances**.

Protection from the ordinances



Rationale for “stereotype-free” textbooks

- Textbooks with stereotypical text / illustration could send negative message of certain groups
- For students to feel safe and secure in their many identities
- For students to learn to treat others with respect
- More accurate reflection of our society and its diversity
- Textbooks have potential influence to development of students’ attitudes at an impressionable age

Attributes

- Gender
- Age
- Disability
- Ethnicity / race
- Family roles

Areas to look out for in text and illustration

- Images (pictures, illustrations, photographs) and use of text
- Stereotype actively (by overt reference) or passively/subtly (by covert, or lack of relevant references)
- Frequency, order of appearance of characters and attire
- Occupational, social and domestic roles of characters
- Semantic roles / Narrative analysis
- Generic nouns / pronouns

Research on Content Analysis of Textbooks and Teaching materials in Respect of Stereotypes 2002

- Equal Opportunities Commission
- To examine the nature and extent of stereotyping in printed educational materials, including textbooks and examination papers
- **Proposed Guidelines (When Developing Educational Materials)**



Females and males:

- are presented with equal respect
- are illustrated in similar number and importance
- are shown in a variety of occupations, activities and careers beyond stereotypical representations
- are shown as making important contributions to the community
- are shown occupying mentally/physically active, creative, problem-solving roles and displaying both success and failure in those roles displaying a broad range of human emotions
- are shown as active and responsible parents

Cultural/Ethnic/Social groups

- are presented with respect for themselves and their customs, beliefs and activities
- are well represented in proportion to their numbers in the community
- are seen as active in a range of professions and occupations in the community
- are recognized for their contributions to the community

Old persons

- are presented with respect in a range of activities and occupations in the community
- are presented in a range of ages (not just young and old)
- are shown enjoying an active and productive social life in the community

Children

- are shown as having the ability to make decisions, offer advice, solve problems
- are encouraged to engage with issues concerning social stereotypes
- are involved in exploring and evaluating social and personal themes and content

Persons with disabilities

- are presented with respect in a range of activities and occupations in the community
- are celebrated in terms of their contributions to the community
- are presented in the same / similar kinds of activities as persons without disabilities

Family roles

- examples of male and female single parenthood
- adopted children in families
- ethnically/culturally mixed parentage and children
- persons acting as caregivers, decision makers, homekeepers
- a broad range of relationships among old persons, parents, siblings, and spouses

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CONTACT US

- If you have any enquiries or you need further information, please contact the Equal Opportunities Commission at our hotline 2511-8211
- or visit our website at www.eoc.org.hk