Are Children Gaining a Sense of Place from Canadian Historical Picture Books?

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Abstract

How do Canadian children come to understand and appreciate the uniqueness of Canada and of their Canadian-ness in the books they read? Young people must see themselves reflected in what they read and view so as to develop a sense of identity. Familiar emotions, activities, families, and surroundings are sensed through the depiction of the characters and story settings. To evolve a national identity, youngsters need to develop a sense of place, a feeling of 'This is where I belong'. It is crucial, therefore, that they see their communities, regions and country reflected accurately and authentically in literature. This study observes that many recent Canadian children's books lacked specific geographic content and place names. It suggests that only by increasing the number of cultural markers that Canadian children will be able to better identify their national landscapes and develop a sense of belonging to that landscape.

Full Text:

HTML

The Looking Glass: new perspectives on children's literature

ISBN 1551-5680

The children are also gaining skills in technology, research, communication and cultural understanding. "Each group is becoming an expert on their subject, which they will present to the class," he explains. The board game is the culmination of the project, which will run alongside normal classroom teaching. Despite this, Finland is shaking up the way it is doing things - a move that it says is vital in a digital age where children are no longer reliant on books and the classroom to gain knowledge. In August 2016 it became compulsory for every Finnish school to teach in a more collaborative way; to allow students to choose a topic relevant to them and base subjects around it.