Patterns in Contemporary Canadian Picture Books: Radical Change in Action

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Abstract

This comprehensive qualitative examination of two groups of Canadian picture books, 57 titles published in 2005 and 120 titles published in 2015, offers comparative data that demonstrate patterns related to authors, illustrators, characterization, genres, audiences, and particular elements of Radical Change. Following book collection, content analysis was conducted with a consideration of Dresang’s notion that books for children are evolving with respect to forms and formats, perspectives, and boundaries. Our process for analysis was developed from Berg’s framework of systematic content analysis based on predetermined as well as emerging categories. There is much recent research exploring particular content in children’s literature, supporting the central importance of literature in the classroom and community. Comparative Canadian studies across decades, however, are rare, and are increasingly important as a way to track and describe the changes that are taking place with respect to books for young people. It is interesting that in both 2005 and 2015, picture books tended to feature children as protagonists, with the highest number of books from the 2005 set utilizing the fantasy genre (at 34%) or realistic fiction (at 28%) and the highest number of books from the 2015 set occurring in non-fiction (at 34%, up from 16% in 2005) or fantasy (at 31%). Historical fiction in both years presented comparatively low, at 12% and 3%, respectively.

Findings of this study support and extend the notion of Radical Change. The research team noted marked innovations within the 2015 group related to forms and formats, boundaries, and perspectives. Of particular note are the increasing numbers of books that present Indigenous content and perspectives. While many of the changes appearing in Canadian picture books between 2005 and 2015 might be predicted through the standard categories of Radical Change (Dresang, 1999), other findings also emerged that suggest new Radical Change considerations. Continuing to examine children’s literature as artifacts of a culture can illuminate particular aspects of that culture and offer opportunities to engage authors, illustrators, and publishers in filling gaps where particular perspectives or topics are missing. Advocacy is important as children’s literature
Radical Change Theory and the Future

Radical Change Theory will continue to be useful in predicting the changes in books for youth. Contemporary Issues in Technology and Teacher Education. It is hundreds of pages longer than an ordinary picture book. whether the content of the book will gradually morph into residence on a handheld digital media device. its inclusion in technology-related teacher education courses and in readingrelated preservice courses. and more time was spent reading for enjoyment. nor the existence of printed books. Contemporary Issues in Technology and Teacher Education. Academic journal article Canadian Journal of Education. Characters with Exceptionalities Portrayed in Contemporary Canadian Children's Books. By Emmerson, Jean; Brenna, Beverley. Read preview. Academic journal article Canadian Journal of Education. Characters with Exceptionalities Portrayed in Contemporary Canadian Children's Books. By Emmerson, Jean; Brenna, Beverley. Read preview. Dresang (1999) established the concept of Radical Change as a lens on the many radical changes that occur in books for youth over time due to interactivity, connectivity, and access to the digital world, and the current study has adopted Radical Change as its theoretical framework. Change as in, “Everything is better, feels better, life is flowing, relationships are healing, money is coming in, joy has come back into the very core of my being…” That, to me, is Radical Change. Why do we need Radical Change? When I look around, most people are simply NOT feeling this way on a daily basis, or with any consistency. It seems like we, as a society, have lowered the bar in a significant way. It's like an awful game of "Limbo"! The issue is, there's nobody out there in the mainstream media, in our communities, or in our families, looking at us and telling us, "You CAN feel good ... He needs radical change in his life, due to stress and depression and I don't know how to help him. Any advice....anyone?? Reply.

Keywords

K-12 education; qualitative research; children's literature; picture-books; Radical Change

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