

Children's Literature in Canadian Commercial Reading Programs

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In this study we analyzed the use of children's literature in three widely used commercially published and literature-based reading programs for grades 1 to 6. On average, 37% of the literature selections had been previously published, with a range by publisher of 4% to 55%. These percentages are noticeably lower than those reported for American programs published about the same time. The publishers changed the selections from their original trade book publication in two key areas: text content and illustrations. The changes frequently altered the intent, content, and meaning of the selections, and in some cases rendered the stories incomprehensible.

Keywords: children's literature, commercial reading programs, trade books, illustrations

L'article porte sur l'analyse de l'usage fait de la littérature de jeunesse, généralement utilisée et publiée sur une base commerciale, dans trois programmes de lecture fondés sur la littérature, pour les enfants de la 1^{ère} à la 6^e année. En moyenne, 37 % de la littérature sélectionnée avait été publiée antérieurement, au taux de 4 à 55 % par éditeur. Ces pourcentages sont beaucoup plus bas que ceux rapportés pour les programmes américains publiés dans la même période. Les éditeurs ont changé les sélections de la publication de nature commerciale initiale dans deux domaines à deux niveaux : le contenu textuel et les illustrations. Les changements apportés modifient fréquemment la finalité, le contenu et le sens des sélections, et rendent dans certains cas l'histoire incompréhensible.

Mots-clés : littérature de jeunesse, programmes de sensibilisation critique à la lecture de contenus publicitaires, publication commerciale, illustrations

Commercial reading programs, though not complete determinants of what occurs in classrooms, are nevertheless pervasive and influential. Publishers of reading and language arts programs stress they have abandoned their much-maligned, skill-based, controlled-vocabulary textbooks, and have adopted literature-based anthologies (Morrow & Gambrell, 2000). State

and district policies in the United States and teachers' requests for a variety of good children's literature, as well as an organized, balanced, and sequential plan for the teaching of reading have pushed publishers in the direction of literature (Freppon & Dahl, 1998). In Canada, the materials, methods of instruction, and performance expectations that teachers adopt are derived largely from authorized commercial programs, district school boards, and ministries of education. In short, the official guides and authorized programs of reading play a significant role in what happens in Canadian classrooms.

The premise of this article is that children deserve to experience the very best literature. When commercial reading programs present literature as an anthology, we have certain expectations. We expect an anthology to be a collection of authentic, unabridged stories and illustrations and to embody literary and artistic excellence. Moreover, children's literature is an integral component of all national literature and thus influences the enculturation of children and the construction of childhood (CCL, 2003). The context for our research is Canada, a culturally and linguistically diverse country with children's literature that includes Aboriginal legends and tales, French and English selections, and literature about immigrant children and families written by new Canadian authors. Hence, when reading programs are literature-based, it is reasonable to expect that the children's literature selections provide original and authentic stories and illustrations to reflect this diversity. These stories and illustrations are often indelibly identified with characters, represent adventures, and deepen perceptiveness of and appreciation for the diversity of people, habits, customs, and values. Do Canadian children experience authentic children's literature in their commercially produced reading programs?

There are at least five overlapping reasons to use authentic literature in primary and elementary classrooms: aesthetic, cultural, educational, pleasurable, and cognitive purposes. One of the aesthetics of literature is the author's art of organizing words to give pleasure through the expression of feelings or emotions from which children articulate, clarify, and come to understand their own and others' feelings. When authors combine the words with delightful, elegant, and high-quality illustrations, multiple layers of pleasure unfold to encourage a love of reading and enrich children's oral and written language development for personal, cognitive, and educational growth (Fisher, Flood & Lapp, 1999; Johnson & Giorgis, 2003; Rosenblatt, 1978). Consequently, this literature broadens and deepens children's knowledge of topics, engenders cultural meanings, increases fluency with language, and heightens their desire to read for meaning. The combined effects of an author's words coupled with illustrations excite a

series of images and ideas in readers' minds. The people, places, and events of Canadian children's literature represent the human experience of a vast country of diverse ethnicities with extensive variety and an enduring constancy of unique scenes, seasons, topics, people, games, and languages.

Although the content of American basals, now commonly called anthologies, has received considerable research scrutiny, no parallel body of research in Canada exists. Yet, given the prominent role of commercial programs in Canadian classrooms, educators need to know the extent to which these programs are literature-based and whether publishers have maintained the integrity of the original children's literature.

Our study raises the general question as to whether the literature in Canadian primary and elementary anthologies is a collection of authentic literature, or whether it is little more than commercial language arts packages. In this article, we present a content analysis of the anthologies in the three most widely used, commercially published, and literature-based reading programs for grades 1 through 6 in Canada. In particular, we examined at each grade level the relative number of anthology selections that have been previously published as children's trade books. We then compared these selections to the corresponding originals found in the published trade books. Our specific research questions were (a) what percentage of the selections in the reading programs were previously published original literary works, and (b) what is the nature and extent of changes made to the originals to incorporate them in commercial elementary reading programs?

BACKGROUND

Commercial reading programs have changed dramatically over the years. In the 1980s, the literature-based movement was a primary catalyst for change and has had a significant effect on basal reading programs (Morrow & Gambrell, 2000). The movement toward literature-based instruction called for the use of authentic texts in classrooms, a term which referred primarily to unedited and unabridged literature written by authors of children's books. When some state education departments called for literature-based reading programs, publishers responded by producing anthologies that purportedly included large quantities of unabridged, original, authentic children's literature (Hoffman, et al, 1994; Reutzel & Larsen, 1995).

In the past two decades a number of studies have examined basal reading series for types of writing (Flood & Lapp, 1990), inclusion of current reading research and practices (Gieniec & Westerholt, 1994), features of

pupil text (Hoffman et al, 1994), engagement factors (McCarthy et al, 1994), authorship and discourse types (Murphy, 1991), extent of basal usage (Hayden, 1996), teacher choice and practice (Harker, 1991; Jobe & Hart, 1991), and instructional flow (Meyer, Greer, Crummey & Boyer, 1992). Few studies, however, have closely examined the nature and effect of changes that take place when publishers adapt children's books for anthologies (Reutzel & Larsen, 1995). Studies that have looked at the "basalization" of children's literature have suggested that the nature of some changes profoundly affects the meaning of the original stories and these have implications for classroom use (Goodman, 1988; Goodman, Shannon, Freeman & Murphy, 1988; Reutzel & Larsen, 1995; Sakari, 1996; Shriberg & Shriberg, 1974). Existing research, however, does not give a clear and complete picture of the extent and pervasiveness of the adaptations made in current reading programs for elementary grades.

Our study sought to close these research gaps and to broaden our understanding of the texts that affect the reading experiences of children.

METHOD

Details of text analysis vary from study to study. We developed a categorization system similar to that used by Jeffrey and Roach (1994) and endorsed by Neuendorf (2002), which we employed to determine the number and percentage of text selections and illustrations. This system is described in a subsequent section.

Data Sources

We used two primary data sources. The first was all anthologies for grades 1 through 6 in each of the three current and most widely used commercial reading programs in Canada. Each provincial ministry of education in Canada had authorized at least one of these programs: Cornerstones Canadian Language Arts by Gage (1998–2001), Collections by Prentice Hall Ginn Canada (1996–2000), and Nelson Language Arts by Nelson Thomson Learning (1998–2001). Henceforth, we refer to these as Gage, Ginn, and Nelson. In our review of these programs, the term basals did not appear. Rather, publishers referred to their student reading materials as either student books or student texts. Given the prevalence of the term anthology in the materials, we adopted this usage to refer to commercial reading (language arts) student books or texts.

The second data source consisted of published trade books containing the original versions of the anthologized literature selections. We obtained

these from a network of private, public, school, and university libraries, as well as from archives and bookstores.

Procedure

We asked all ministries of education in all ten provinces and the three territories of Canada to identify the three most extensively used commercial reading programs in their jurisdictions. From responses, we selected the Gage, Ginn, and Nelson programs and contacted the publishers for complete program sets. A number of sources guided our selection of stories from these programs, including *The Dictionary of Reading* (Harris & Hodges, 1981) in which story was defined as "a prose or poetry narrative, real or imagined, tale" (p. 310). To establish our story choices, we adopted the following criteria:

- The story was previously published (i.e., an authentic work not written by in-house commercial publishers' writers). We examined the publishers' cited acknowledgements to determine eligibility for meeting this criterion and to provide the source of the original work.
- We required that the story was available as a stand-alone trade book.
- The story was not published only as part of a collection of many authors; however, we did accept a selection that was published in a collection of a single author's works, as a trade book.
- If multiple versions of the story existed (as is the case with many fables and folk tales), we looked for a particular version that the commercial program specified (e.g., dePaola's *The Princess and the Pea*).

Our definition of stories included a variety of genres (narrative prose, narrative poetry, legends, myths, fables, folk tales, plays, dramas, readers' theatre, biography, autobiography) but excluded selections such as collages, cartoons, comics, charts, definitions, diagrams, experiments, how-to and instruction articles, Internet reports, interviews, magazine and newspaper excerpts, maps, non-narrative poetry, puzzles, quizzes, recipes, reports, riddles, songs, tongue-twisters, and all designated student writings.

We calculated the percentage of selections that met the criteria for authentic stories for each grade and for each publisher. The selections that did not meet the criteria were neither included nor considered in any further analyses or calculations. We then procured the originals of the identified and criterion-matching stories to compare to their counterparts in the anthologies. We noted any differences from the original and established these categories: text omitted, added, substituted; illustrations omitted, added, or substituted; sequence of illustrations altered; font style,

size, colour altered; page layout changed; questions or instructions given, author or artist information, suggested resource links or activities in teacher guides. Some of these categories had multiple subcategories that indicated the nature or extent of the change. For example, if text were altered, we noted whether the alteration involved a word, phrase, sentence, paragraph, titles or subtitles, punctuation or spelling, or other details such as changing the shape of a poem. If publishers altered illustrations, we tabulated the instances where they reduced, cropped, enlarged, or changed detail, colour, or illustrator.

Reliability

We developed the categorization system to code text and illustration discrepancies between the trade book and the anthology versions. Using an iterative process, we examined and discussed samples of various changes as we developed the coding categories. We applied the preliminary categories independently and discussed difficulties with the system. We refined the categorization system each time problematic cases arose. We again applied the revised categories independently and modified them until we reached agreement. One of the authors then analyzed and coded all selections according to the agreed-upon system. We pulled a 10% random sample of the coded selections, which the lead author coded. On the basis of a match-mismatch approach, our scoring reliability ranged from 87% to 100% across the selections. We held weekly meetings to resolve issues and concerns.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Previously Published Selections

Table 1 provides a breakdown of the number of selections, number of previously published selections, and number compared to originals by grade and publisher. Of the total 1126 selections across grades 1 through 6, only 413 (37%) were previously published stories and these ranged from a low of 4% for Nelson at grade 1 to a high of 55% for Gage at grade 4. The three published anthologies were similar in the average percentages of previously published stories (Gage 41%, Gage 32%, and Nelson 39%). We found the lowest percentages of stories at grade 1 (Gage 11%, Ginn 9% and Nelson 4%) and the highest percentages at grades 3 and 4, where over half (51%–55%) of both the Gage and Nelson programs consisted of previously published literary works.

TABLE 1
Total Selections, Selections Previously Published, and Selections Compared to
Originals by Publisher and Grade

Grade	Total Selections			Selections Previously Published			Selections Compared to Originals		
	Gage	Ginn	Nelson	Gage	Ginn	Nelson	Gage	Ginn	Nelson
One	64	61	47	7(11%)	5(9%)	2(4%)	7(100%)	5(100%)	2(100%)
Two	59	60	52	22(37)	14(23)	25(48)	21(95)	13(93)	25(100)
Three	51	82	43	27(53)	34(41)	23(53)	27(100)	32(94)	21(91)
Four	64	89	53	35(55)	32(36)	27(51)	33(94)	30(94)	27(100)
Five	60	84	58	28(47)	33(39)	16(28)	26(93)	32(97)	15(94)
Six	57	88	53	27(47)	30(34)	26(49)	25(93)	28(93)	25(96)

In spite of the influence of the literature-based movement in Canada over the past two decades, more than 60% of the selections in the most widely used Canadian reading (language arts) programs were not previously published literary works (i.e., original literature). Although it is difficult to make direct comparisons to previous studies because different researchers have looked at different aspects of reading programs, we discovered some striking contrasts, particularly in grade 1, where the range among Canadian publishers was from 4% to 11%. Our results were noticeably lower than those reported by American studies conducted in the 1990s. Hoffman et al. (1994) studied five American basal programs and reported, "practically all of the selections were drawn from published literature" (p. 53) in the then-new 1993 first-grade basals. Anderson (1995) also reported in 1993 a substantially higher percentage (87%) of literature-based stories in first-grade student anthologies by four American publishers. In our study, the percentage of previously published stories ranged from 23% to 48% in grade 2 and is higher again in grades 3 through 6 (28% to 55%), though still significantly lower than reported by Wepner and Feeley (1993) for grade 1 (39%) and grade 4 (88%).

Canadian curricula currently call for students to gain experience with multiple types of texts. Perhaps publishers are responding to that call by sacrificing previously published original literary works to allow for the inclusion of a wide array of text types from a variety of sources, including billboards, newspaper snippets, notes, and student writing. Of interest is the fact that our results are similar to those reported over a decade ago (Murphy, 1991) for five Canadian basal anthologies at grades 1, 3, and 5 (publication dates between 1984 and 1988). Although Murphy's research

questions and categorization methods differed from ours, she found high proportions of selections and pages at grade 1 consisting of “house-written” material (“texts for which no specific acknowledgement was given” [p. 134]). Additionally, she reported grade 3 to have the lowest proportion of house-written materials of any grade and that the trend to incorporate reprinted material leveled off by grade 5. Her findings are comparable in that we found the average percentage of previously published selections peaked at grade 3 (49%) and dipped again by grade 5 (38%). Reasons for these trends merit further investigation although, overall, we found the percentage of previously published authentic children’s literature in the programs we analyzed to be surprisingly low, given that the publishers advertised and promoted these programs as literature-based anthologies.

Nature and Extent of Changes

As can be seen in Table 1, we compared almost all the previously published selections in the anthologies with their corresponding originals — 394 of 413, or 95% of them. The remaining 5% included those selections for which we were unable, after extensive searching, to obtain the original work for comparison. Thus, we completed all possible comparisons, making our sample large and comprehensive. There was no bias in our sample toward any grade or publisher.

Table 2 provides a summary of the nature and extent of changes made

TABLE 2
Percentage of Selections with Changes by Type of Change and Grade

Changes	Grade						Average
	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Text omitted	43	69	70	58	53	68	60
Text added	79	61	65	67	56	85	69
Text substituted	71	64	79	71	73	73	72
Illustrations omitted	71	92	95	87	74	83	84
Illustrations added	57	39	46	63	64	76	58
Illustrations substituted	71	98	95	76	66	81	81
Illustrations re-sequenced	56	22	22	21	14	14	25
Questions or instructions added	7	36	57	58	56	56	45
Other changes	64	61	79	63	60	72	66

to two key areas, text content and illustrations, and shows the prevalence of the addition of pedagogical questions or instructions. Our results indicate many changes to text, illustrations, and format. These changes affect story meaning, setting, mood, characterization, and the like. Although we analyzed the nature and extent of each specific text-related change (omissions, additions, and substitutions) and illustration-related change (omissions, additions, substitutions, and sequence differences), we report here only the averages (percentage of selections overall that had at least one instance of the indicated change). As can be seen in Table 2, publishers altered the order or sequence of illustrations for 25% of the selections. This finding must be juxtaposed with the high percentages of selections that either omitted (84%) or changed (81%) illustrations. In other words, publishers often made further alterations to the remaining text or illustrations, and even further alterations within those alterations (e.g., by placing out of sequence what is left after deletions). Publishers almost always changed font style, size, or colour, and page layout from the original published works. This finding is consistent with previous research (Reutzell & Larsen, 1995; Sakari, 1996; Shriberg & Shriberg, 1974), wherein font and layout changes were more or less commonplace when publishers anthologize or basalize original literature. Whether text content, illustration, and font and layout changes are a consequence of copyright laws, cost, or convenience is a matter for further investigation. Nonetheless, to appreciate the nature, extent, and potential impact of some of the changes, we present and describe select examples of text-related, illustration-related, and combined text and illustration changes.

Text-related. Text-related changes include omissions of text, additions of text, and substitutions of text. As noted, omissions or additions range from single words to entire pages of text. For example, Ginn 6 (*Looking for Answers*, p. 22) omits the first page of Moss's (1993) prose poem *I Want to Be*. This omission means readers are not aware of the narrator's question (i.e., what she wants to be) and that the repetition of this question (from five people) sparks her reflections throughout the remainder of the poem.

Additions to text that are at times coupled with text omissions can also alter the intent, the content, or meaning of the original story. Two selections from Gage 6a and Nelson 2 serve as examples of the variety of forms these coupled or dual changes can take. The additions in the Gage 6a version of Granfield's (1995) *In Flanders Fields: The Story Behind the Poem* ("The Story of In Flanders Fields," pp. 114–119) are brief and consist of added subtitles (pp. 115, 116, 118) that break Granfield's original story into segments. The omissions from the original story are lengthy (by at least four pages of text); they included significant historical information of the symbolism of

the "scarlet corn poppy," adoption of the poppy as the memorial flower in Britain, Canada, and the United States, a description of the "poppy mania" of the 1920s, an explanation of how poppies are used to raise funds for war veterans, and the presentation of a map of Europe in 1915. In this particular anthology selection, the omissions shorten and considerably weaken the original story, while the added subtitles serve to segment the already shortened version of Granfield's original story.

The Nelson 2 (Reach Out, pp. 8–13) adaptation of Sanders' (1995) alphabet book, *WHAT'S YOUR NAME? From Ariel to Zoe*, shortens the original book. Nelson uses only half of the original title, and just three of Sanders' original 26 vignettes. However, Nelson then adds two other vignettes for the letter "M" in a way that lengthens the three-page excerpt by two pages, and changes the nature of the selection, which was originally an alphabet book of names. Furthermore, Nelson alters the format of the original work by changing the order of the three original names (Eva, Blakely, Fredron, pp. 9–11), so that they no longer appear in alphabetical order.

We found changes to single words or phrases, as well as to the sequence of paragraphs, stanzas of poetry, or whole pages of text. Examples of word and phrase substitutions included the following: "just started school" became "gone back to school" (Ginn 3, *Spreading My Wings*, p. 41), "four best friends" was substituted with "three best friends" (Gage 4a, p. 18), the "1930s and 40s" became the "1950s" in Nelson 6 (*Going the Distance*, p. 131), and Gage 4b changed a "ten foot carrigana hedge," "cauliflower" and "men" respectively to "couch grass," "cabbage" and "strikers" (pp. 40, 42, 43). The cumulative effect of combinations of substitutions can result in substantial changes that, although difficult to quantify, offer a different reading experience from the original. For example, Nelson's addition of chapter titles gives the illusion of a fairly complex story, but their changing of "boasted" to "said," "hurried" to "ran" and "gobbled and gulped" to "ate" (Nelson 1, *Dive In*, pp. 72, 73, 84) renders a rather dumbed-down version of Vaughan's (1990) chapter story, *Ice Cream*. Vocabulary substitutions such as these substantially alter the meanings and concepts conveyed by the story.

Altering the sequence of text (whether a sentence, stanza, paragraph, or page) can substantially affect the meaning conveyed. The anthology version of Lawson's (1992) story *A Morning to Polish and Keep* (Ginn 5, *Together Is Better*, pp. 4–9) is an example of such altering. In the original story, Amy, the central character, holds up a cherished fishing lure given to her by her Dad to capture memories of a summer morning's salmon catch and a meaningful sibling truce. When the anthology places a page of text out of sequence, the substitution disrupts the action in the latter part of the story

to the point where Amy is holding up the lure (p. 8) before her father gave it to her (p. 9). Yet, in the accompanying Teacher's Resource Module ("Ongoing Assessment," p. 11), the publisher asks the teacher to assess the accuracy of the students' retelling of this story, something that students cannot possibly do correctly because of sequence alterations made in the anthology.

Another salient example of the effects of altered text sequence occurs in the Gage 4b rendition of Yee's (1991) story *Roses Sing on New Snow: A Delicious Tale*. In the original story, the main character (Maylin) cooked in her father's restaurant ("a spot well known throughout the New World for its fine food") "seven days a week every day of the year," for the "lonely, and cold, and bone-tired" men in Chinatown (whose "families and wives waited in China") because her well-cooked meals always made them "smile" and "renew(ed) their spirits." But when "compliments and tips were sent to the chef," they went to her two "fat and lazy" brothers because "her father kept the kitchen door closed and told everyone it was his sons who did all the cooking" (Yee, 1991, unpaginated). When Gage altered the sequence of text in their anthology (pp. 8–9), the reader is led to conclude Maylin's well-cooked meals stem from a desire to coax a smile from her "fat and lazy" father and brothers, rather than from the lonely, cold, bone-tired men in Chinatown. As a result, it is unclear in the anthology version how Maylin's attempts to renew these men's spirits motivated her love for food. This sequence of text alteration changes the meaning of this part of the story and makes it impossible for students to make reasonable responses to the question in the "Critical Thinking" section of the Teacher's Guide (p. 129) about Maylin's reasons for loving food.

Illustration-related. Illustrations, commonly acknowledged and accepted as an integral part of children's literature, enhance, complement, support, or extend text, and promote learning. As noted in Table 1, we found that omissions and alterations of illustrations were considerably more prevalent than text-related changes. We noted that teachers' guides and resource modules direct students to garner information from illustrations while reading, giving rise to incongruities such as those found in the Ginn 4 materials. The teacher's resource module (*Fur, Feathers, Scales and Skin*, p. 23) identifies Lavies' (1989) *Lily Pad Pond* as a "photo essay," yet the student anthology omits 22 of the 28 original photos and shrinks the remaining six, thereby distorting the original life-sized ratios provided for the pond creature photos (the work of an award-winning veteran National Geographic photo-journalist). Students are then asked to retell the life cycle of the tadpole from a much-impoverished rendition of the original photo essay.

Another type of illustration-related change that makes reading an

altered anthology selection a very different experience from the original work is a change of illustrators, as exemplified in the Ginn 2 (People! Places! pp. 20–26) rendition of Keith's (1968) story *A Small Lot*. In the original, Keith used colour to depict the small lot and the imaginative antics of two fair-haired boys while the surroundings of the lot and the real activities of the boys are depicted in black and white or tones of gray. In the anthology, coloured, cartoon-like (ethnically altered) drawings replace the original multi-layered artwork. Shape, line, colour, proportion, detail, and space are some of the visual elements used to create depth, effect, and realism and together provide a unique experience for children to appreciate the fullness of a story. When these elements undergo radical alteration or complete change, as in this example, the publisher consequently changes students' viewing experiences, and their interpretation of the story will differ from a reading of the original.

Text and Illustration. Although we have discussed text and illustration changes separately, these sometimes occur together in the same selection and the combined effect is noteworthy. We found an example of this combined effect in the Gage 4 version of Czernecki and Rhodes's (1994), *The Hummingbirds' Gift*. The anthology adds a phrase to the title ("A Folk Tale from Mexico," p. 144) and omits the first page, which provides the historical setting for the legendary story that follows. In this omitted first page, Czernecki and Rhodes tell the readers why the Mexican village in the story is important and how it got its name. In addition, they introduce readers to the "weavings," which are the hummingbirds' gift referred to in the title (the villagers learned to produce weavings by watching the hummingbirds). Throughout the original book, the illustrations extend and enhance the text by showing in straw weavings what the story says in the text. None of these weaving illustrations survived the anthologizing process. Removal of the historical background through text omissions and all illustrative evidence of the weavings leave the reader of the anthology version at a disadvantage in understanding the significance of the title, the "gift" of the hummingbirds, and perhaps even the whole story.

Textual and illustration changes sometimes reflect multicultural concerns, although the changes that are made do not appear to be guided by any clear rationale. We found multiple changes of an ethnic and racial nature that did not always respect the integrity of the original work. Although examples of publishers' changes to increase diversity occurred, such as the transformation of a blond preschooler in Waddell's (1994) *Big Big Sea* into an older child of unidentifiable racial origins (Nelson 3, *Keepsakes and Treasures*, p. 30), the publishers sometimes lost authentic ethnic content

in the process. A clear example occurs in the anthology version of Abeel's (1994) poem *If You Want to See* that features both textual and illustration changes. Gage 6b replaces the original watercolour painting by the renowned artist Charles Richard Murphy (imbued with Aboriginal significance and symbols, on which the poem is based) with a photo of three children, each of different racial origins. Two stanzas of the original poem that refer to Aboriginal heritage are omitted, thereby removing the legitimate Aboriginal textual content as well. As a result of these text and illustration changes, the publisher has removed all authentic Aboriginal content, even though the anthology version features diverse multicultural content in the photo that replaces the original work of art. Thus, rather than a celebration of multicultural and multiethnic literature, what we found is a loss of authenticity and a hodgepodge of what we interpret to be politically correct content.

CONCLUSION

Given the potential influence of commercial reading programs on classroom practice and student outcomes (Barksdale-Ladd & Thomas, 1993; Barr & Sadow, 1989; Crawford, 1997; Hoffman et al., 1998; Shannon & Crawford, 1997; Venezky, 1992), the examination of widely used classroom materials is vital. Analysis of the stories offered to children in language arts anthologies shows that publishers make substantial changes when they adapt trade books. Documentation of the nature and extent of changes between original stories and the student anthology versions allowed us to raise the question of whether these differences have any substantial effect on student learning outcomes. This study provides a foundation and springboard for further investigation into elementary school children's reading materials in Canada. For example, a study in which a researcher interviews children about their interpretations of, preference for, and response to authentic and anthologized stories would be very instructive and interesting.

The results of our study suggest that Canadian commercially produced reading programs are not as rich in authentic literature as publishers' imply. Not only is the quantity of literature generally less than one would expect from an anthology, but also publishers compromise the quality by alterations to the original to incorporate it in anthologies. Although some might suggest the changes made during the anthologization of children's literature are cosmetic, our findings suggest the contrary. Based on the extensiveness and pervasiveness of the changes we have reported, we conclude that many of the text and illustration omissions, additions, and

substitutions affect the reading experiences of students using these anthologies. When the changes impoverish the original selections, children's reading experiences are, in turn, impoverished.

The pressures of time, testing, limited resources, and multigrade classes make commercial reading programs attractive in some cases. It is our position that commercial reading programs could be a wonderful resource. However, why publishers of commercial programs diminish, misrepresent, or destroy authentic literature through the types of alterations we have described is perplexing. Alterations such as those we have discussed often lessen the aesthetic, cultural, educational, pleasurable, and cognitive potential of the original stories. Hence, research is needed to study the ways such textual and illustrative alterations affect children's reading experiences. Investigation into whether publishers make changes for commercial reasons such as for publishers' convenience, space limitations, economic concerns, or in response to consultants and ministry personnel is also needed. We conclude that it is critical for teachers and consultants to be cognizant of the many alterations made to the original children's literature and the less-than-acceptable instructional errors in the teachers' manuals of many of the commercial reading programs.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This research was supported by a grant from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, 410-99-0197 to the first author. The authors thank anonymous reviewers for their thoughtful and helpful comments.

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