



# The Canadian Children's Book Centre

**Survey Analysis**

**Written By: Martine Dordolo**

**The Canadian Children's Book Centre**

## Executive Summary

This report was written to present the most common outcomes and impacts that resulted from this year's TD Grade One Book Giveaway which took place in Fall of 2019, as well as the outcomes and impacts of using children's literature to teach children about Indigenous culture and truth and reconciliation. On October 3, 2019, a survey consisting of both open-ended and closed-ended questions was distributed to subscribers of the Canadian Children's Book Centre's newsletter, various school boards across Canada, and various social media platforms acquired by the CCBC and the researcher. The purpose of the survey was to examine the efficacy of children's literature on a child's understanding of Indigenous culture and truth and reconciliation when used as a teaching tool. We invited teachers, early childhood educators and librarians to participate in this survey.

This report will begin by providing background information regarding TD Grade One Book Giveaway. In this section, information regarding the history of TD Grade One Book Giveaway is provided, as well as information about the program that took place this year. Subsequently, this section of the report will also provide a differentiation between the words impact and outcome, as it is essential that readers adequately comprehend the difference between the words while reading the analysis. The next section of this report is the analysis of survey responses, which acquires two different sections. The first component of this section will present outcomes and impacts of using books as a tool to teach children about Indigenous culture and truth and reconciliation, and the second section of the analysis will focus specifically on the impacts and outcomes of using "My Heart Fills With Happiness" as a tool to teach children, which was the book chosen for this year's TD Grade One Book Giveaway program. The report will then provide a conclusion in regards to the efficacy of children's literature on a child's comprehension of Indigenous culture and truth and reconciliation based on findings.

Subsequent to the survey analysis, a list of recommendations is provided to professionals who work with children. This section provides readers with the top eight most common books respondents reported using in their practices with children, as well as further direction to where professionals can locate additional lists of texts acquiring Indigenous themes. Finally, effective practices and activities discovered through the analysis will be recommended to professionals, as they may be interested in incorporating these into their own work with children.

## **Purpose**

The purpose of this report is to present an analysis of responses to a survey that examined the efficacy of children's literature on a child's understanding of Indigenous culture and truth and reconciliation when used as a tool to teach. The survey, consisting of both closed-ended and open-ended questions, invited educators and librarians to share personal experiences in regards to using the text "My Heart Fills With Happiness", as well as any other texts used as a tool to introduce children to these topics. Specifically, this report will present the most common outcomes and impacts of using children's literature to teach about these important topics. These outcomes and impacts have been determined through survey responses of 488 participants, who accessed the survey through the Canadian Children's Book Centre's newsletter, various school boards across Canada, and various social media platforms acquired by the CCBC and the researcher. This report will discuss background information regarding TD Grade One Book Giveaway, along with information regarding the difference in meanings between the words *impact* and *outcome*. Furthermore, this report will explain the importance of analyzing outcomes and impacts of a program, rather than only evaluating the outputs. Finally, this report will provide recommendations for professionals who work with children based on main findings.

## **Background Information**

Since the year of 2000, the Canadian Children's Book Centre has coordinated an exciting program called "TD Grade One Book Giveaway", which has been sponsored by the Toronto-Dominion Bank since the program's establishment (CCBC, 2019). Since this date, the Canadian Children's Book Centre selects one Canadian children's text per year to be distributed to every child enrolled in the first grade across Canada (CCBC, 2019). The national program promotes children's development of literacy and encourages children to develop a love and appreciation for Canadian literature (CCBC, 2019). This year, the book selected for the program is called "My Heart Fills With Happiness", which was authored by Monique Gray Smith and illustrated by Julie Flett (CCBC, 2019). The book depicts Indigenous culture through beautiful illustrations and text, and children have received/will receive the dual-language edition of the book in either English and Plains Cree, or French and Plains Cree, this Fall (CCBC, 2019).

Within this report, the impacts and outcomes that resulted from this year's TD Grade One Book Giveaway as well as using children's literature (any texts) as a tool to teach children about Indigenous culture and truth and reconciliation will be presented. It is essential that we recognize the difference in meanings between the words *outcome* and *impact* (Harding, n.d.). An outcome is a result that is measurable, indisputable and definite, and can be objectively perceived as an accurate result by any individual; this is a direct and short-term result (Harding, n.d.). Moreover, an impact is a long-term result, and is a change that cannot always be perceived the same way by every individual (Harding, n.d.). This result is often subjective and immeasurable; the result cannot always be viewed the same way by everybody, and sometimes not even seen at all by others (Hardy, n.d.). For example, if an individual is impacted emotionally by an event,

others will be unable to view the impact (Hardy, n.d.). The best way to remember the difference between the two words is to understand that an outcome is a result that is short term, whereas an impact is a long-term result (Hardy, n.d.).

It is very important that we study the impacts and outcomes of TD Grade One Book Giveaway in addition to the outputs (Fritz, 2019). While outputs allow us to see the quantifiable results of the program, measuring the outcomes and impacts of the program will provide us with much deeper insight (Fritz, 2019). Measuring the outcomes of TD Grade One Book Giveaway allows us to comprehend the direct results of the program and how participants were immediately affected, and measuring the impacts allow us to see long term differences the program has made in peoples' lives (Fritz, 2019). Studying the impacts enables us to see the positive changes we have made in peoples' lives, and gives us insight on how we can proceed with the event in the future (Fritz, 2019).

### **Highlights**

- *80.25% of respondents used books related to Indigenous peoples in their classrooms to open discussions about Indigenous culture with students*
- *77.89% of respondents indicated that they had more in-class discussions about Indigenous culture subsequent to reading these books to the children*
- *51.13% of these respondents indicated that children demonstrated more knowledge regarding Indigenous culture after reading the books*
- *Children's literature is an effective tool when teaching children about truth and reconciliation, as well as educating children on the purpose of Orange Shirt Day*
- *Children's literature acquiring themes regarding Indigenous culture and truth and reconciliation were used by many participants to engage children in socio-emotional learning*
- *Children made deep, meaningful connections when educators read texts regarding these themes with children*
- *Children demonstrated higher levels of empathy subsequent to reading "My Heart Fills With Happiness, as well as an elevated understanding of the perspectives of others*

### **Analysis**

#### ***Outcomes of Using Books as a Tool to Teach About Indigenous Culture and Truth and Reconciliation***

A significant 80.25% of respondents indicated that they have used books related to Indigenous peoples in their classrooms to open discussions about Indigenous culture with students. Furthermore, 9.26% of respondents indicated that they have not yet done so, but plan to. A high 77.89% of respondents indicated that they had more in-class discussions about Indigenous culture subsequent to reading these books to the children. 51.13% of these

respondents indicated that children demonstrated more knowledge regarding Indigenous culture after subsequent to reading the books.

Several respondents indicated through qualitative responses that books are a very effective tool when facilitating discussions with children about Indigenous culture, residential schools, and truth and reconciliation. One respondent expressed their appreciation for children's literature, and also explained the important role it serves in their classroom to teach children about these topics: *"With literacy books are the channel (I think) to all teaching, hard subjects to discuss, along with identity and a way to cope with hard issues- whether as an outlet or to find other struggling, so you know you are not alone. With regards to reconciliation, as I am a non-Indigenous [person], it allows me to place context for myself and students and discuss something that may not be discussed. Also, the curriculum is fairly open, so you can fit most books into your planning without much out of the box thinking"* (Question 6, Response #174).

Children's books were a very effective tool for a large number of professionals on, or around the time, of Orange Shirt Day. Many respondents expressed that children's books helped to explain the important purpose of Orange Shirt Day. One respondent stated *"It [children's literature] has helped explain the reasons behind Orange Shirt Day. I used to find it tough to teach about residential schools to young children (grades 1 and 2), but the books have really helped support learning about residential schools and also the concept [that] every child matters and acceptance which also helps support kids recognize the diversity within our own environments. We've had discussions around how to treat one another, how to respect one another, and our diverse cultures* (Question 6, Response #51).

### ***Impacts of Using Books as a Tool to Teach about Indigenous Culture and Truth and Reconciliation***

Many respondents indicated that they have used children's books that acquire themes regarding Indigenous culture and truth a reconciliation to engage children in social-emotional learning and discussions. According to many respondents, this is an effective way to promote children's development of empathy for others, understanding the perspectives of others, and understanding and expression of one's own emotions. One respondent stated *"After reading the books, my students gained a new perspective or were better able to articulate that we should be more tolerant of others and their beliefs"* (Question 6, Response #132). In regards to understanding one's own emotions, one respondent shared a moving story about how a book they used in their classroom inspired their students: *"After reading Trudy's Rock Story, my students were inspired to choose their own rocks to hold to and tell their worries. I used stones from the dollar store, but once the weather got warmer, we went outside to gather our own special rocks. The students really connected with Trudy and saw her experience reflected in their lives"* (Question 6, Response #110).

Respondents reported that when reading these books to/with children, they make very deep, valuable connections to the story in many ways. One respondent shared a powerful story of how using books surrounding Indigenous culture and/or truth and reconciliation left an impact on their class. This respondent stated *"More students are speaking out in class with pride about stories that they have heard in their homes about their personal story that is positive memories. This has not happened in the past for my class"* (Question 6, Response #26). Another respondent shared how they made their own connection to the story: *"I found out late in life that my grandfather was a guard at a residential school. Reading I am not a number allowed me to discuss the ramifications of residential schools to the best of my ability- trying to open their eyes to things done to our Indigenous peoples based solely on racial biases"* (Question 6, Response #130)

Many educators shared stories about meaningful activities they engaged children in that were influenced by the books they used regarding Indigenous culture, residential schools and truth and reconciliation. One respondent shared *"At least once a year, I have all of my students borrow a book by an Indigenous author from the library. After reading their books, we do a sharing circle, a piece of art and a written response to the book. This is a great way to introduce children to a variety of Indigenous texts and learning"* (Question 6, Response #217).

### **Analysis: TD Grade One Book Giveaway**

This section of the analysis will discuss the most common impacts and outcomes that have specifically resulted from the distribution of "My Heart Fills With Happiness", which was distributed in accordance with this year's TD Grade One Book Giveaway program. It is important to note that because "My Heart Fills With Happiness" was distributed quite recently, not all grade one children living in Canada had received the text at the time the survey data was collected. 13.52% of respondents indicated that they had used the text in their classroom to open discussions about Indigenous culture with students, while 29.92% of respondents indicated that they had not yet done so, but plan to. Furthermore, several respondents indicated within qualitative responses that they were unable to provide a response due to the fact that they had not yet received the text. However, there were still a significant number of qualitative responses provided by participants who did acquire the text.

### ***Outcomes of "My Heart Fills With Happiness"***

The children who received "My Heart Fills With Happiness" loved the story, as well as the illustrations that comprise the book. One respondent stated *"The students loved the story and the artwork. There is awareness of looking for similar stories and artwork in other books now for those students"* (Question 6, Response #17).

A significant amount of professionals indicated that they used "My Heart Fills With Happiness" to facilitate discussions with their students regarding what fills their own hearts with happiness. Children were able to deeply connect with the story in this way. One respondent

stated *"We had Monique come and read the story with our students. It is a book that is revisited regularly to share how our heart is filled with happiness- making it an ongoing conversation"* (Question 6, Response #7).

### ***Impacts of "My Heart Fills With Happiness"***

An extensive amount of respondents indicated several ways in which children made meaningful connections to "My Heart Fills With Happiness". Both Indigenous children and non-Indigenous children made very deep connections to the story by relating the story to their own culture, families, personal experiences, and connecting with the characters. One respondent stated *"They loved the illustrations, connected with ways their own culture is reflected (Indigenous students) [and] relate to similar practices in their own families (non-Indigenous students)"* (Question 7, Response #61). Another respondent shared a meaningful way one of their students responded after reading the story: *"One child identified that she speaks a different Indigenous language and is a jingle dancer"* (Question 7, Response #43).

Many respondents engaged children in meaningful activities that were influenced by "My Heart Fills With Happiness". One respondent shared how she utilized the book to create a book with the children: *"Our students were first introduced to this book last year as it was part of the Global Read Aloud. After reading, students responded to the prompt '\_\_\_\_\_ fills my heart with happiness' which was made into a book that's kept in our school library and still used. This book continues to be well loved. We're using it now while featuring books about gratitude* (Question 6, Response #206).

Several respondents indicated that children demonstrated higher levels of empathy subsequent to reading the story, as well as an elevated understanding of the perspectives of others. Students demonstrated a stronger understanding that others' have diverse experiences that differ from their own. One respondent stated *"I believe that students are more understanding and accepting of all the challenges that many Indigenous students face. We are all hoping to make a difference"* (Question 7, Response #97).

Many professionals also indicated that they had discussions with children that consisted of acknowledging that different things make different individuals feel happy. According to one respondent, *"They [children] understand that different things make people happy. They were excited to share their own thoughts and hear the thoughts of classmates"* (Question 7, Response #51).

### **Conclusion**

Subsequent to analysing both quantitative and qualitative responses collected from 488 respondents, it is valid to conclude that children's literature is very effective in assisting teaching children topics encompassing Indigenous culture and truth and reconciliation. Children's books that acquire these themes can assist professionals in engaging children in socio-emotional

learning, and children also make meaningful connections to their own lives when reading these books, or having these books read to them. Furthermore, TD Grade One Book Giveaway made a positive difference in the lives of young children, as "My Heart Fills With Happiness" was a book children loved, made meaningful connections with, and promoted their development of empathy. It is in the best interest for professionals who work with children to use children's literature as a tool to assist in teaching children about all of these important topics.

### **Recommendations**

1. The following is a list of the most common 8 titles reported to be used by respondents. The "Respondents" section in the table refers to the amount of participants who stated that they have used this book in their practice with children.

<b>Title of Book</b>	<b>Author(s)</b>	<b>Illustrator</b>	<b>Respondents</b>
When We Were Alone	David Robertson	Julie Flett	105
Shi-shi etko	Nicola I. Campbell	Kim LaFave	90
Stolen Words	Melanie Florence	Gabrielle Grimard	72
Fatty Legs: A True Story	Christy Jordan-Fenton and Margaret Pokiak-Fenton	Liz Amini-Holmes	69
I Am Not a Number	Jenny Kay Dupuis and Kathy Kacer	Gillian Newland	68
When I Was 8	Christy Jordan-Fenton and Margaret Pokiak-Fenton	Gabrielle Grimard	61
Shin-chi's Canoe	Nicola I. Campbell	Kim LaFave	53
The Orange Shirt Story	Phyllis Webstad	Brock Nicol	46

2. As discussed in the analysis, children's literature is an extremely effective tool in teaching children about Indigenous culture, residential schools, and truth and reconciliation. It is highly recommended that professionals incorporate Canadian children's literature into their practices to teach children about these important topics. In addition to the eight titles listed above, professionals are encouraged to view the wide variety of children's texts recommended on the Canadian Children's Book Centre's website which acquire themes in relation to Indigenous culture and truth and reconciliation (CCBC, 2019).

For children's books with themes regarding Indigenous culture, please visit <https://bookcentre.ca/theme-guide-indigenous-reading>. For children's books that specifically acquire themes about reconciliation, please visit <https://bookcentre.ca/theme-guide-reconciliation>.

3. Educators may be interested in incorporating children's literature into their Social Studies curriculum, as a large amount of educators indicated in their survey responses that they do this for various Social Studies units. Educators indicated that they use children's literature to assist in teaching the following topics within their Social Studies curriculum:
  - Culture (children's own culture and Indigenous culture)
  - Truth and reconciliation
  - Perspectives of Indigenous peoples



- Different historical perspectives
  - Comparing and contrasting between how Indigenous people lived in the past and the ways they live now
  - Nature
  - Identifying different Indigenous cultures/groups
  - Diverse communities in Canada
4. As discussed in the report, children's literature was a very effective tool in teaching children about the purpose of Orange Shirt Day. It is recommended that educators follow this practice on/leading up to Orange Shirt Day in the future. Incorporating children's literature into the event "Orange Shirt Day" can significantly help children better understand the event's important purpose, and will also assist professionals in explaining challenging topics to children.
  5. It is recommended that professionals engage children in socio-emotional learning in accordance with books that acquire themes such as Indigenous culture and truth and reconciliation. We recommend that professionals use children's literature to discuss the following topics (as reported in regards to socio-emotional learning):
    - Empathy
    - Emotions (Understanding one's own emotions and the emotions of others)
    - Discussing how to help and empower others
    - Acceptance of others
    - Understanding and respecting others' perspectives and beliefs
    - Culture (One's own culture and other cultures)
    - Canadian diversity
  6. A large amount of respondents indicated that subsequent to reading "My Heart Fills With Happiness", they facilitated discussions with children regarding what makes them feel happy. It is recommended that professionals do this, as it encourages children to express their selves, and it will also help children understand that things that make individuals feel happy vary among different people.
  7. The following is a list of activity ideas that professionals can engage in subsequent to reading books acquiring themes around Indigenous culture and/or truth and reconciliation. All activity ideas have been captured directly from survey responses:
    - ***"At least once a year, I have all of my students borrow a book by an Indigenous author from the library. After reading their books, we do a sharing circle, a piece of art and a written response to the book. This is a great way to introduce children to a variety of Indigenous texts and learning"*** (Question 6, Response #217).

- ***"[We] made a display on how every child matters"*** (Question 6, Response #133).
- ***"I used a drawing/writing prompt for kindergarten and grade 1 students"*** (Question 6, Response #145).
- ***"...We made bannock bread"*** (Question 6, Response #13).
- ***"...I like to use Turtle Island (the creation story) to talk about how animals work together- I usually use this as a retelling activity with puppets. Most activities you would usually do with any read aloud can be substituted with an Indigenous text"*** (Question 6, Response #125).
- ***"...[We] drew a class timeline of the generations of people [who] went through residential schools to show how many generations of people were affected by residential schools"*** (Question 6, Response #118).
- ***"I used 'The Moccasins' [book] to talk about Indigenous family customs on Orange Shirt Day. The students created their own moccasins (on paper)"*** (Question 6, Response #23).

## References

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