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Teaching Social Justice Issues Using Informational Texts

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Teaching Social Justice Issues Using Informational Texts

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Research Question

How can I integrate the Common Core State Standards of reading and understanding informational texts with teaching social justice issues in an elementary school classroom?

Methodology

- ◆ Second grade classroom with 27 students (11 males, 16 females)
- ◆ Field notes, lesson plans, video, audio, and student work samples
- ◆ 3-lesson unit with a focus on the strategy of finding the main idea and details of a text
- ◆ Each lesson had a social justice issue that was discussed

Literature Review

- ◆ Goss (2009) described how to co-construct with students *a curriculum that promotes social justice and yet is grounded in their everyday lives.*
- ◆ Since standards guide focus on students' ability to comprehend and analyze what they read, *reading and writing standards can easily be addressed through any of the social justice-themed texts that were introduced.* (Zambo, 2011; Cunningham, 2013; Fox, 2006; Sandmann, 2004; Seban, 2011)

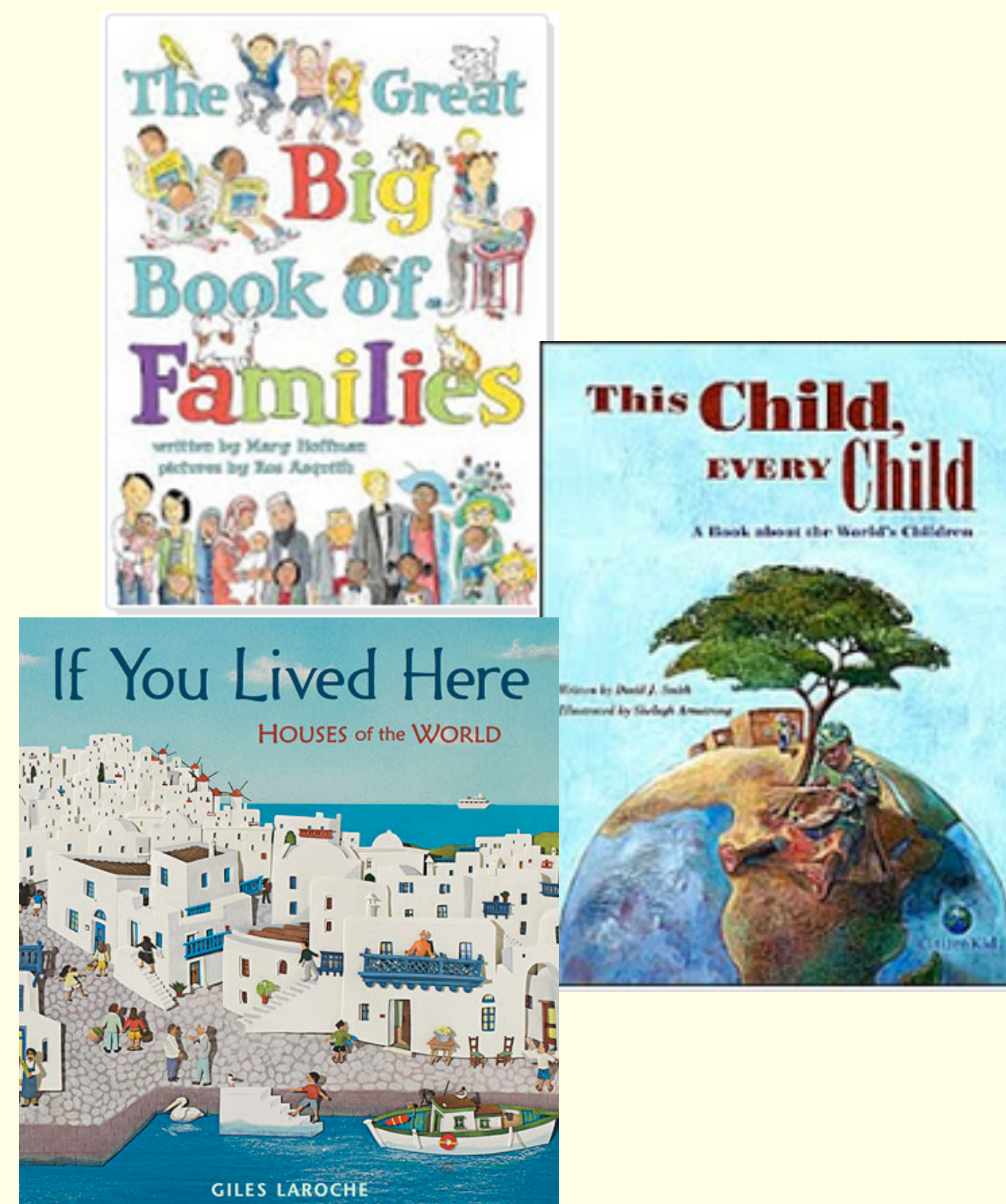


Figure 1: Informational Texts

Informational text picture books with social justice themes were utilized in each lesson.



Figure 2: Student Work Example

This assignment demonstrates the integration of identifying main idea and details and describing a social justice issue.

Findings

- ◆ Choose informational texts that encompass a social justice theme as the main idea.
- ◆ Choose texts that are appropriate for grade level reading.
- ◆ Create assignments that assess students' mastery of the standard for reading and understanding informational texts.
- ◆ Enable/encourage discussion about the social justice issue presented in the text.

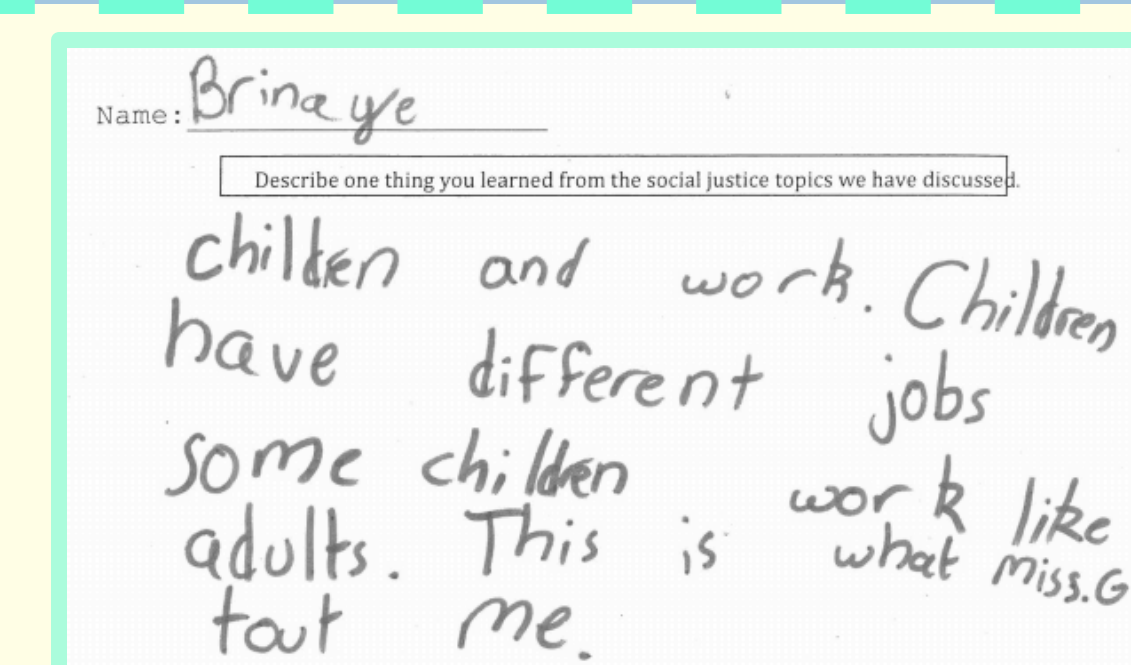


Figure 3: Exit Slip Example

A student recalls one of the social justice topics we learned about in class.

Conclusions

- ◆ The standard for reading and understanding informational texts was easily addressed through social justice themed texts.
- ◆ Relating the social justice topic to the students' every day lives promoted engaging and insightful conversation.