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TEACHING CHILDREN ABOUT SOCIAL JUSTICE THROUGH PICTURE BOOKS

by

Brooke C. Sorenson

**Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree**

of

**HONORS IN UNIVERSITY STUDIES
WITH DEPARTMENT HONORS**

in

Elementary Education

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2005

Teaching Children about Social Justice through
Picture Books

Honors Thesis

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Fall 2005

Teaching Children about Social Justice through Picture Books

“Boys can’t play with dolls!” “A girl can’t be a doctor!” “Those people look weird!” “He’s too dumb to play with us!” “My mommy says I can’t play with you!” Unfortunately, phrases like this can be heard on a typical elementary school playground. As teachers, we have the difficult task of teaching about social justice and working to uproot prejudice and discrimination.

I am choosing to devote much of my professional career to teaching. My goal is to create a classroom of learning where children feel safe, confident, valued and respected. A classroom like this has no room for discrimination, but undeniably children will come to school with learned prejudice. I want to build a safe forum where sensitive topics can be discussed, feelings shared, and all children feel equally valued. I also want to instill a sense of social justice and respect for human rights in all of my students. Often times children’s books can serve as a bridge or a way to vicariously experience social justice situations, and they provide a vehicle to foster empathy (Sandmann, 2004).

After doing literature reviews, observation, and analysis in the classroom, I have focused my research on using children’s literature to teach about social justice. My first research question was: *How does reading and discussing children’s books with social justice themes impact young children’s attitudes about social justice?* I wanted to see if children’s attitudes can indeed be changed through open discussion and reflection on social justice issues using picture books. My second research question was: *What is the*

teacher's role in facilitating discussions around books with social justice themes? As a teacher, I wanted to understand the nature of my role.

Conducting an action research project has provided an opportunity for me to reflect on my own practices. This type of systematic inquiry has informed my teaching and will possibly inform that of others.

Teaching About Social Justice

Children are not born bigots; they learn what they live. Scholars suggest many natural tendencies and learned habits contribute to social injustice. Young children observe many differences in dress, skin color, eye shape, and so on (Dever, Sorenson, & Broderick, 2005). These observations affect how they feel about another child based on what they have previously heard, seen, or been taught (Darling-Hammond, French, & Garcia-Lopez, 2002). Furthermore, children, much like adults, can be exclusive of others because of a powerful human tendency to gravitate toward people who remind them of themselves. People who are similar to themselves make them feel safe. Essentially, there is less fear of rejection from peers when similar motives and experiences are easily found or recognized in others (Darling-Hammond, et al, 2002).

Children learn attitudes from those who are most influential in their lives—parents, grandparents, caregivers, teachers (Dever, et al, 2005). In the absence of role models who embrace social justice for all, diversity will likely yield exclusions as students form alliances based on academic, race, or socioeconomic similarities (Darling-Hammond, et al, 2002).

Public school teachers are well positioned to teach young children about social justice. To varying degrees, classrooms provide a context for interacting with those who

are different. As the citizens of tomorrow, children can learn to find common ground and work with those who may not share their point of view. The classroom is also a place where each child's uniqueness is appreciated and valued. If they feel appreciated and valued, children will develop a stronger self-esteem and they will be more productive (Darling-Hammond, et al, 2002).

The National Council for the Social Studies (1994) also urges teachers to teach for commonality in a democratic society. They propose:

As citizens of a democracy, we support our republic's most important ideals: the common good, i.e., the general welfare of all individuals and groups within the community.

Our moral imperative as educators is to see all children as precious and recognize that they will inherit a world of baffling complexity. Our responsibility is to respect and support the dignity of the individual, the health of the community and the common good of all. This responsibility demands that we teach our students to recognize and respect the diversity that exists within the community. (pp.5-6)

Teaching with a multicultural and anti-bias perspective respects the dignity and worth of all students. Our nation is composed of people from varying backgrounds, and understanding differing cultures and ways of life is a way to respect human dignity (Darling-Hammond, et al, 2002).

Teaching for social justice in elementary school begins with an anti-bias environment. This should include bias-free materials that reflect multiple cultures and ways of living in a positive light, conflict resolution strategies, prejudice reduction

activities, and cooperative learning. In addition, children's literature can be used as a vehicle to teach about social justice (Fertig, 2003).

Using Children's Literature as a Vehicle

Children's books serve as a way to vicariously experience social justice situations (Sandmann, 2004). Children's literature provides a medium for talking about these issues in a non-personal way (Darling-Hammond, et al, 2002). Often a discussion about sensitive issues and personal prejudices can be difficult because, when children are encouraged to be open about their individual feelings and biases, there is a risk that feelings will be hurt. Children's books provide a safe forum because social justice issues are addressed in the context of the story rather than from personal experience (Dever, et al, 2005).

Learning is enhanced when children's literature is coupled with good discussion. Through honest and open discussion students will ideally be able to sort through the layers of difference. They learn that they share many similarities regardless of their differences (Darling-Hammond, et al, 2002).

Dever et al. (2005) found in their study, which examined teaching about social justice with second graders, that children responded empathetically to the plight of oppressed characters in children's books. Many responses revealed feelings of sympathy or sadness. In some cases, children responded as advocates for the oppressed. For example, after hearing the story *Fly Away Home* by Eve Bunting, children expressed sadness for the homeless family. Many children after hearing *Amazing Grace* responded with feelings of empathy and advocacy, indicating they would be Grace's friend or stand up for her to the oppressors. Similarly, after listening to *The Story of Ruby Bridges* by

Robert Coles, children expressed concern about right and wrong and responded empathetically to Ruby's plight.

Kevin Kumashiro (2004) shares ways he has learned to guide a discussion around a sensitive issue such as discrimination after reading children's literature on the subject. He begins by explaining that it is not enough to expose children to a wide variety of literature if they continue to analyze it in the way it has traditionally been done. Instead, students need to be asking very different kinds of questions about whatever they are reading. Four types of questions to possibly include in a literary discussion are: (1) traditional analysis questions such as character development, plot, themes, and author's intent, (2) questions pertaining to the relevance of the novel to individual personal lives, (3) questions asked about or through a contrary perspective, and (4) interpretations of the societal problem, potential harm, and effect it might have. Kumashiro suggests that the literature becomes a personally meaningful experience, connections are made and the social justice issues are articulated. He further suggests that social justice awareness is raised, specific identities are examined and compared, and stereotypes are analyzed and explained.

The Project

To teach about social justice using children's literature, I selected four books to use for reading and discussion in a second grade classroom based on their varying themes, literary strength, illustrations, and content. In discussions before and after reading each selected book I wanted to capture the children's ideas, attitudes, prejudices, feelings and reactions to the story. They included:

Amazing Grace by M. Hoffman. This is a story of a young African American girl who loves to dance, sing, and act out stories. When her school held auditions for a play called *Peter Pan*, Grace immediately decided to try out for the leading role. Encouraged by her Nana, Grace practiced and tried out for the part despite a classmate that told her she could not because she was a girl and another who told her she wouldn't make it because she was black.

William's Doll by W. P. du Bois. Young William wants a doll more than anything. His parents buy him new toys such as a basketball and a train set. William's brother and neighbor laugh and call him names when he pretends to be taking care of a beautiful doll. Only his grandmother seems to understand why William needs a doll.

Be Good to Eddie Lee by Virginia Fleming. Eddie Lee is a young boy suffering from Down's Syndrome. His neighbor Christy has been told by her mother that she must be kind to Eddie Lee, but she and her friend Jim Bud find him strange. Eddie Lee follows the two friends to a nearby pond one morning and annoys them with his awkward movements, slow speech, and childishness. Christy has to learn to see beyond his outer deficiencies and discover the goodness inside Eddie Lee.

The Other Side by Jacqueline Woodson. This book is set in the South where some discrimination is still common. The little African American girl Clover and her Caucasian neighbor Annie notice each other in their back yards, but they are divided by a long running fence that they each have been instructed not to cross. They conquer the barrier between them by playing and talking on the fence, imagining a day when it might be knocked down.

The Research Setting

The project *Teaching Social Justice through Children's Literature* was conducted at North Park Elementary in North Logan, Utah. The class selected was Mrs. Wendy Western's second grade class where I completed a section of my student teaching. The student population is primarily white, middle class, and members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.

Procedures

To gain multiple and perhaps varied perspectives, a purposeful, maximum variation sample of six children was selected to participate in this study. These children were representative of the class in terms of gender, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, and religion. In my selection of six children there were three boys and three girls total, including one African American boy, one Polynesian girl, two Caucasian boys, and two Caucasian girls, with one girl in a wheelchair because she had Spina Bifida. The children's ages all ranged between seven and eight years old. Each one of these students had fairly good communication skills and similar to their second grade peers, their ability to take perspective and feel empathy was reasonably developed.

The parents of these children were informed of the purpose and content of the project before I begin. They were also given an opportunity to preview the books before they were read and ask any questions concerning the intent of the project before giving their informed consent. By informing the parents, they were in a better position to reinforce the learning at home because they understood the purpose of the activity.

The project spanned four consecutive weekly read aloud sessions (approx. 20 minutes), during which I read one of the selected books focusing on a social justice

theme. We had a pre-reading discussion to find out what the children's knowledge, attitudes, and feelings were about the social justice theme (approx. 5 minutes). As suggested by Kumashiro's (2004), I posed questions dealing with characters, plot, themes, and author's intent as they related to the particular social justice issue in each story. The discussion questions were intended to engender discussion about the issue. Discussion questions included: (*Amazing Grace*) *Can girls play a boy's part in a school play? Can a black person play the part of a white person in a play?* (*William's Doll*) *Is it okay for boys to play with dolls? (Be Good to Eddie Lee) What are people with disabilities like? Do they have the same feelings as ours?* (*The Other Side*) *Can a white girl child play with a black child? Do black and white people ever do things differently?*

Following the reading, I again posed a question to engage the children in a discussion (approx. 5 minutes). I was curious to find out if their responses, attitude, or demeanor concerning the social justice topic had changed at all. The questions in the post discussion included: (*Amazing Grace*) *How do you think Grace felt when the children told her she could not be Peter Pan?* (*William's Doll*) *How do you think William felt when his brother and neighbor told or laughed at him for wanting a doll? Why do you think William's family reacted like that when he wanted a doll?* (*Be Good to Eddie Lee*) *How do you think Eddie Lee felt when JimBud wanted to leave him?* (*The Other Side*) *How do you think Clover might have been feeling the first time she sat on the fence with Annie?* In addition to asking "feeling" questions (questions that might invoke sympathetic, empathetic, or indifferent responses) I wanted to see if the children would respond with advocacy if I asked them what they might do in that situation. Advocacy questions I posed after reading *Be Good to Eddie Lee* and *The Other Side* were: *What*

would you do if you were Christy and had a neighbor like Eddie Lee? What would you do if you were Clover and knew you weren't supposed to cross that fence?

Data Collection

Each social justice reading session was tape recorded. Afterwards the tapes were transcribed, capturing the pre- and post-discussions along with any comments made during the read aloud. This method of data collection was chosen over written responses from each student because many second graders are limited in their writing capacity. I reasoned that participating in an open discussion would give them a greater chance to share any feelings and comments.

During this entire project I also kept a reflexive journal. In this journal I wrote my reflections, insights, details, and any challenges I noticed during the reading and discussion sessions. I also recorded the specific questions I asked and noted whether they were effective in opening up a discussion with the students.

Data Analysis

Children's learning was assessed by identifying emerging themes in the transcriptions of the conversations. The steps used to determine specific themes in the discussions were: (1) read and record my thoughts (memoing) to get a feel for children's attitudes in each discussion, (2) examine the individual responses and break them down into units of meaning, (3) group similar responses or units of meaning, and (4) define and name each cluster or category of data. My thesis advisor was used as a peer debriefer and the classroom teacher helped to assist with member checks as verification strategies.

Findings

Four themes emerged from data analysis. They include: stereotyping, empathy, advocacy, and change in demeanor.

Stereotyping

If children displayed any stereotypes during the session it was in the pre-reading discussion. For example, no one felt that Grace should play Peter Pan because they viewed boys and girls roles as irreversible. Responses such as *Girls are sickening!* or *That's weird* demonstrate that these young children do embrace gender stereotypes. I posed the question *Do you think that a girl can try out for a boy's part in a school play?*

The conversation continued as follows:

Boy 1: I wouldn't try out for a girl's part.

Girl 1: I wouldn't either. I wouldn't try out for a boy's part. Never.

Girl 2: Me either.

Boy 1: I would hate a girl's part.

Teacher: *(to the girls) You wouldn't? Why would you not try out for a boy's part?*

Girl 1: That's weird. (laughs) I couldn't do it.

Girl 2: I don't know. I just can't.

Teacher: *(to the boys) You didn't want to try out for a girl's part either. Why not?*

Boy 2: Girls are sickening!

Teacher: *How about you? What do you think?*

Boy 3: I wouldn't like to.

Since *William's Doll* also addresses gender issues I was curious to see if the same gender stereotypes were displayed when I reversed the situation and posed a question about boys' roles. They responded with very similar feelings as shared in *Amazing Grace*. I asked, *do you think boys can play with dolls?* In their discussion each girl indicated that they thought a boy playing with dolls was girlish, weird, or funny:

Teacher: *I want to ask you a question. Do you think boys can play with dolls?*

(Several students): no! (laughter)

Girl 1: Well, my brother plays with Barbies!

Teacher: *Your brother plays with Barbies?*

Girl 1: Well, when he was nine.

Teacher: *What do you think about that?*

Girl 1: It's funny. He was like a girl.

Girl 2: My brother-in-law who was a boy played with a Barbies.

Teacher: *Well, is that fine? Can boys play with Barbies? What do you think about that?*

Girl 2: They can, but it's weird.

Girl 3: I have a cousin and he only has sisters and he plays with Barbies and dolls and so one time he was like, "Let's play dolls!"

Teacher: *Oh! And what do you think?*

Girl 3: Kind of weird and funny.

Regardless of whether I was talking about the roles of boys or girls, the children showed gender stereotypes and expressed some trepidation or concern in the pre-reading discussion about reversing those roles in any way.

The books *Amazing Grace* and *The Other Side* both addressed the issue of race, but the feelings they expressed in each book were very different. The discussions were interesting since it was a heterogeneous group of children. In *The Other Side* the children recognized that slavery used to be prevalent in the United States, but indicated now that black and white people don't really do things differently.

Teacher: *Do you ever think that black people and white people do things differently?*

Students: (in unison) No.

Boy 1: I don't think he's different. (Points to black student)

Boy 2: They used to make black people into slaves.

Teacher: *You are right.*

Girl 1: And there are white people slaves.

Teacher: *That's true too. They had maids and servants. Do you see any of that now?*

Students: (all): No.

Teacher: *Do you see white families do different things than black families?*

Students: No.

With this book the students seemed to show very little stereotyping over race and skin color. However, in the story *Amazing Grace*, they were quick to suggest that the color of skin does matter in a situation such as a school play. Another question I posed for them was *Do you think a dark person could try out for the part of a white person in a play?* The first response points out that some of the children in our group are dark. The same question was then asked to the two dark skinned students in the group. They responded:

Boy: Yes. You could just get a costume that is white. Or you could just put a lot of makeup on.

Girl: It wouldn't work. And I hate makeup!

Then the other students share similar feelings by responding that it would be hard to cover up your skin or find a good costume to change or hide the skin. No one suggested that the color of skin actually doesn't matter; rather, the children were looking for ways to hide the skin color. These attitudes and responses in this reading seemed to suggest that race does not go unnoticed by children, nor is it viewed as unimportant.

Although the students revealed gender and race stereotypes in discussions before reading *Amazing Grace* and *William's Doll*, there were no previous stereotypes revealed in the discussion of disabilities while reading *The Other Side* and *Be Good to Eddie Lee*. Instead, their responses showed a considerable degree of fairness and acceptance in their views towards persons with disabilities, which was categorized as empathy.

Empathy

Empathy was the most common response to all four books. The definition of empathy is identification with and an understanding of another's situation, feelings, and

motives. Within the theme of empathy, children talked about feelings of acceptance, fairness, sadness, and friendship.

After reading *Be Good to Eddie Lee* one boy pointed out, “*it doesn’t matter what we look like, it just matters what is in your heart*”. When I asked another student whether or not he thought persons with disabilities were smart, he replied, “*Sometimes they can’t really talk, but they are probably pretty smart, though. Like that boy, he knows how to control his wheelchair with that thing*” (hand operated device). They also all agreed that disabled people needed friends and “*were just like a normal person*”. These comments were a demonstration of empathy as they showed understanding and acceptance of another’s situation.

Empathy was also shown after reading all four books when I asked how each of the characters probably felt. The most common answer was “sad” or “bad.” One boy showed he understood well what William must have been feeling when his friends laughed at him because he responded by saying, “*(William felt) really bad, and he felt sad in his stomach*”. Their answers also revealed feelings of sadness and empathy for Grace. Following are answers to the post-reading question *How do you think Grace felt when the children told her she could not be Peter Pan?*

Boy 1: Sad because they really wouldn’t let her. She felt bad like she couldn’t do it.

Boy 2: Sad because she wanted to play Peter Pan.

Girl 1: Yeah, and (she was sad) because she was black.

The students seem to understand the unfairness in each particular situation. Their responses and their reflective demeanor indicated they could feel for Grace, William, and other characters in each book as well as understand the challenges faced.

Advocacy

After reading *Be Good to Eddie Lee* and *The Other Side* the students showed empathy, but in these books it was taken a step further to where they expressed advocacy. First, students commented that Eddie Lee felt sad or bad because the other kids were mean to him and they quickly became his advocates:

Teacher: *What would you do if you were Christy in this situation?*

Boy 1: I would not leave him.

Girl 1: Yeah, I wouldn't leave him either.

Boy 2: I'd kick him (Jim Bud) in the water.

Girl 1: I'd kick Jim Bud in the water too for being mean.

Boy 1: I would go back and tell his mom.

Boy 3: Well, I would go tell my dad.

Girl 1: I would tell both of them.

Boy 2: If I were Jim Bud I wouldn't be so mean.

Teacher: *Okay. Instead what would you do?*

Boy 1: I would try to change.

Teacher: *Change?*

Boy 1: Um, yeah, change my actions.

These responses indicated that they would take action to help Eddie Lee because they understood the injustice of the situation. The children also responded as advocates after reading *The Other Side* when I asked what they would do if they were Clover (the black girl) to help Annie (the white girl) in the story:

Girl 1: I'd go over the fence.

Boy 1: Me too.

Boy 2: I would want to knock down the fence, too.

Girl 2: That's what I was going to say.

Girl 1: If I was going to knock down the fence I would have to take an axe or something.

Girl 2: You know those circle things on the fence, I would break those down.

Teacher: *Seriously though, you probably couldn't actually be able to break down the fence. What would your parents think?*

Boy 2: Yeah, they might be mad.

Boy 1: Just climb over it, then.

Girl 2: I would say, "let her play!"

Change in Demeanor

The last category I identified, although it doesn't derive directly from the transcriptions of the discussions, is a definite change in demeanor. With the first pre-reading discussions the children were all quick to answer with common stereotypes and misconceptions. After reading each book, however, their demeanor definitely changed. Their answers were much more reflective (looked pensive), slower (hesitation in their answers), and had a different tone to them (thoughtful voice rather than brash). I believe the books and discussions helped them to think reflectively on their own ideas, and therefore caused a change in their demeanor.

To illustrate the change in demeanor in dialogue and comments, following are responses given by several students in both the pre- and post-discussions while reading *William's Doll*.

Boy 1:

(Pre-reading discussion)

Teacher: *Oh! What do you think when boys play with dolls?*

Boy 1: I have before. (Girls laugh)

Teacher: *You have? And did you like it? Was it fun?*

Boy 1: No. It was boring.

Teacher: *What kinds of things do you like to do that aren't boring?*

Boy 1: Play football!

(Post-reading discussion)

Teacher: *Do you think that was right that William's father didn't let him have a doll?*

Boy 1: No!

Teacher: *Why not?*

Boy 1: Because he really really wanted a doll.

Teacher: *Well, if you saw another boy playing with a doll, do you think it would be weird?*

Boy 1: No.

Teacher: *Why do you think "no"?*

Boy 1: It makes kind of sense that a boy would want to play with a doll.

Girl 1:

(Pre-reading discussion)

Girl 1: I have a cousin and he only has sisters and he plays with Barbies and dolls and so one time he was like, "Let's play dolls!"

Teacher: *Oh! What do you think when boys play with dolls?*

Girl 1: Kind of weird and funny.

(Post-reading discussion)

Teacher: *Well, if you saw another boy playing with a doll, do you think it would be weird?*

Girl 1: It's not that weird.

Girl 2:

(Pre-reading discussion)

Girl 2: My brother-in-law who was a boy played with a Barbies.

Teacher: *Well, is that fine? Can boys play with Barbies? What do you think about that?*

Girl 2: They can, but it's weird.

(Post-reading discussion)

Teacher: *So should he have been able to have a doll, even if his dad thought it was a girl's toy?*

Girl 2: Well, he really wanted to play with the doll, so he should have one.

Although a change in demeanor can't be clearly measured and recorded, the difference in the way they started viewing social justice topics was evident in their voice, answers, and countenance.

Personal Reflection

This study was very informative for me as a professional. I initially wanted to conduct the discussions with just one main focus question. I learned, though, that I needed to be prepared with several open-ended questions in order to keep the conversation alive and continuous for a short period of time. The longer we talked, the more thoughtful the students' responses were. The discussions that were the most interesting were those where I presented several ideas or questions for the students.

I also learned that for the most part the students were happy to be able to talk about themselves in relation to the social justice issue. When I asked a question about a

particular character's situation, each child was quick to interject a similar experience they had or what they would have done in that same situation. I found their openness with the subjects made the books and the experience much richer.

Discussion

During my interpretation and analysis of the project, two specific things were apparent. First, there was a definite change in attitude. Second, each story elicited a different kind of personal response.

As discussed, the change in demeanor was a major indication of a change in attitude. I made note as the attitude changed from stereotypical in the pre-reading discussion to reflective in the post-reading discussion. This pattern was consistent while reading three books: *Amazing Grace*, *William's Doll*, and *The Other Side*. In addition, the attitudes changed with every passing week. Many of the stereotypical responses shared the first week were replaced by thoughtful answers and comments in the fourth week. I believe this can be attributed to two things: (1) the children started to recognize and reflect on their attitude toward social justice issues and (2) they started to predict the types of questions I would be asking, and adjusted some of their answers accordingly. As a result of the students being conditioned to the questions, the first discussion held before reading *Amazing Grace* where both gender and race stereotypes were shared is possibly the most authentic student response.

Even though the children responded stereotypically in the pre-reading discussions of three books, this was not the case while reading *Be Good to Eddie Lee*. Actually, the student responses were very sympathetic and understanding while discussing

characteristics of disabled persons. They repeatedly commented that they were *probably smart and just like us*. Part of the difference in the way they responded could be attributed to the fact that their experience with disabilities was fairly limited. Their classmate in a wheelchair is very bright, social, and friendly. Mentally, she has no deficiencies, and therefore doesn't display some of the characteristic stereotypes quite often associated with disabled people. As a result of their personal experience, during the discussions they never eluded to disabled people "retarded, dumb, slow, incapable, etc..."

The second major student response I noted while listening and reflecting on each social justice conversation was that responses varied depending on the book being read. As Dever et al (2005) found in their study, the ability to feel empathy or advocacy directly related to the children's ability to relate themselves with the characters in the stories.

The stories do indeed provide concrete examples to think about social justice issues, especially when the character is easy to relate with. For example, the character Grace was the same age and in a similar school setting as the research participants. Also, William was easy to relate to because of his similar age and the gender prejudice he experienced is commonly experienced with children.

In contrast, some characters were much harder for children to relate to and as a result their responses to the book weren't as strong. *The Other Side* detailed a story of girls approximately the same age as the second graders, but the setting took place in the South in the 1950's. The children noticed the different dress styles apparent in the illustrations, and also commented that there wasn't the big division between black and

white people as portrayed in the book. Their experience with segregation varied drastically enough that they didn't relate as well with the story. In addition, while reading *Be Good to Eddie Lee* they were initially confused why they didn't want to play with the little Down's Syndrome child who was slower than the rest. Their ability to understand the characters' emotions was limited because they hadn't been exposed to mental disabilities.

In order for the picture books to be highly effective, students must be able to relate to the characters at a personal level. If the setting or social justice issue isn't recognized, the children can't experience the situation vicariously. Because of this I noticed a difference in responses depending on what picture book was read and discussed.

Conclusion

The ability to feel empathy and advocacy is critical towards promoting social justice and eradicating prejudice and discrimination. If children are to develop an attitude of fairness and acceptance towards all races, genders, and abilities, then taking perspective and feeling empathy are two important steps.

High quality literature provides concrete examples for children to think about and relate to several social justice situations. The children responded with empathy (e.g. "*William felt really bad, and he felt sad in his stomach*"), and advocacy (e.g. *I would say, "let her play!"*). In addition, I noticed a change in the children's demeanor throughout the readings and noted as many responses changed from stereotypical in the pre-reading discussions to thoughtful answers after reading.

Quality literature coupled with open discussion is one effective way to help children think about social justice. When added to with other anti-bias strategies, this method will help support the development of social justice.

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