



Toronto
District
School
Board

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To Whom It May Concern:

I was invited to visit Elkhorn Public School to observe the culminating lesson of Journey Into Peace: A Bullying Prevention Program Through Visual Art. This program was being given to the school's three Grade 5 classes.

In the lesson's opening discussion the students reflected on a progression of the key concepts which had been developed through the program. The students' vocabulary and thoughtful responses showed that they had a meaningful understanding of the program's content. In an earlier lesson, the students had created expressive line drawings showing their personal "difficult" place and their "better place". Then they had created mind maps of appropriate strategies for managing difficulty, from which each student had selected their own personal "best" strategies. The culminating activity's challenge asked each student to use paper sculpture techniques, learned in an earlier lesson, to create "bridges" between their difficult place and their better place. This experience allowed students to think about and find a way to signify, using paper sculpture, the nature of their own best strategies. This was a most engaging and effective activity; the students' art expressions came about as a result of processing their ideas in a very personal way.

In looking at other examples of student work which was created in the program, students had used paper sculpture to define and show the difference between conflict and bullying, and they also created a "portrait" of a quality in a leader, who had impressed them by their ability to create change in the situations of conflict and bullying which had surrounded them. In another activity, students experienced an "equal balance of power": an integral component of peaceful community.

I found this to be both a creative and innovative approach to teaching bullying prevention. The students enjoyed the experience and were eager to talk about their ideas and the artwork which they had created.

I would recommend this program highly to other schools and school boards.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gary Crawford', with a decorative flourish at the end.

Gary Crawford, Vice-Chair, TDSB
Trustee – Ward 18
