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# Bullying: The effects in relation to third-grade elementary students

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LS 400 Capstone Project:

Bullying: The effects in relation to third-grade elementary students

Shelby Wilson

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BULLYING

#### Abstract

The researcher focused on the way bullying affects students inside the classroom and at home. The participants for the Capstone Project included 29 third-grade students in a public elementary school located on California's Central Coast. The project analyzed the personal experience the students have with bully's. The researcher implemented a lesson plan that allowed students to be educated on the topic to create a safe classroom. The researcher found that 19 out of 29 students in the classroom had experienced or witnessed some form of bullying on their school campus. The researcher also found that 21 out of 29 students do not feel comfortable enough to confide in an adult about a bullying situation. The researcher plans to be an elementary school teacher and will use this information to ensure that bullying in the classroom is minimal and continue to educate students on the bullying topic.

Keywords: traditional-bullying, cyber-bullying, effects

#### Introduction

Cyber-bullying has developed into a recurrent and serious issue that is affecting students emotionally and physically across the globe. Cyber-bullying is defined as the sending, sharing, and or posting of negative, harmful, false, or mean content about someone else without their consent (Litwiller & Brauch, 2013). In today's society where children and adults spend hours on social media, students in this generation have a higher probability of falling victim to cyberbullies. As technology becomes more accessible to younger pupils, cyber-bullying increases and has impacted many students abilities to feel safe at home as well as school. Since students have access to their social media accounts 24 hours a day, there often isn't an escape from cyberbullies unless they take the initiative to delete their applications, but even then it can still follow them into the classroom in the form of traditional bullying.

According to a study performed by Patchin & Hinduja in 2006, Up to a third of today's youth have reported that bullying affects them at school as well (Betts, Spencer, Gardner, 2017). The students who are experiencing these situation will not participate in class or have the same personality when they go home because they are not feeling well mentally. Often times students are not aware of the role they play in a bullying situation and even if they are not involved directly but have still witnessed it and not spoke up for the victim, then they are still apart of the problem. Students often do not realize that although they might just be playing around that the their peer does not think it is funny or nice. It has become alarmingly apparent that parents, teachers, and staff are not educated enough in the issue to be able to effectively handle these situations.

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#### **Traditional Bullying**

The connection between cyber and traditional bullying is extremely important because majority of the time if a child is experiencing cyber-bullying, then there is a high probability that they are unfortunately experiencing traditional bullying as well when they are attending school. Bullying is the way in which aggression occurs when a person abuses his or her power in a negative way, that will intentionally bring harm to another person either physically or mentally (Adalalah, 2018). Traditional bullying is the form of bullying that has been occurring for many years in the classroom, lunchroom, playground, and at home in students neighborhoods. In traditional bullying, the bully-victim relationship consists of using derogatory language, being physically and mentally abusive, being intimidating, and establishing dominance over the victim ( Bonanno & Hymel, 2013). The victims in this situation are often terrified to attend school and will go to great length to avoid it.

#### **Cyber-Bullying**

A study was conducted and in which the analysis suggested that there are four specific components in relation to cyber-bullying which are; behavior that is aggressive, being done repeatedly, happens between a victim and a perpetrator who are not equal in power, and occurs online through smartphone applications. (Kowalski et al. 2014, p. 1073). Cyber-bullying and traditional bullying have the same characteristics, the only difference being one happens online and the other take place in person. The reality is that if cyber-bullying is occuring, there is a greater probability that the bullying is happening in school as well, whether it be students talking about what they saw online and spreading more rumors, or the bully attending the same school and carrying out the bullying face to face through a traditional sense.

#### **Effects of Bullying on Youth**

There has been many studies conducted to understand the relationship between cyber and traditional bullying and how victims from both can struggle in the classrooms to learn. Being bullied, in any form, can affect the way a student perceives school making them less confident, not able to trust peers or teachers, and having an impact on their self-esteem (Betts, Spenser and Gardner, 2017). These can be warning signs for teachers and parents who are wondering why their child is underperforming or acting different in a short period of time.

Cyber and traditional bullying both can have very extreme effects on their victims. The victims become less interested in school because their perception of the school system change, They don't feel safe because they know their bully is going to make their day miserable as soon as they come in contact. Often the teachers are not aware of the bullying because the victim and students who are aware won't tell either, so the victim is left to fend for themselves. The victim will start to shut down mentally and become very quiet and oftentimes will start to act out at both home and school because they are looking for help but don't know how to ask for it. Most times these students will start to fall behind in class and homework because they have lost interest in it or are too preoccupied with their situation to care about the work.

It imperative that students and adults understand the role in which they play in any bullying situation. Teachers are often not educated enough to prevent bullying or to understand the serious effects a bully can have on its victim. A study on teachers awareness of bullying based on gender revealed that teachers are often biased on this subject, meaning they often think that one gender is bullied more than the other which is in fact not true (Sezer, Yilmaz, & Fatma, 2015). Every bullying situation is different, with having differentiating circumstances and risk factors and must be handled carefully. It is important that teachers invest in their students emotional stability by creating a safe place for them to learn. It is also imperative that students, understand the role they play in a bully-victim situation as well. Bystanders are just as connected to the problem as the bully is, meaning it is important for students to stick up for their peers by telling an adult when the victim is too scared to.

#### **Research Surveys and Studies**

Mishna, Kassabri, Gadalla, and Daciuk (2012), conducted a study in where they analyzed cyber-bullying through three categories such as the bully, victim, and bully-victim. The purpose of the study was compare those three categories to a fourth one, a person who is not involved in the bullying situation, and then determine what constitutes these specific situations. The results suggested that thirty percent of the students in that study were involved in cyber-bullying as either the bully or the victim, and one in four of the students had been both the bully and victim in certain situations. The results also suggested that the victims were more willing to tell their peers about the situation than a parent or teacher. Chapin (2014), conducted a study in which he focused on one specific social media application know as Facebook, and the experience that students had with cyber-bullying through this app. The results of the study suggested that eightfour percent of students used the Facebook application and thirty percent of those eight-four had experienced some form of cyber-bullying, only eighteen percent of those students voluntarily quit the application after their experience.

Litwiller and Brausch (2013), conducted mental health study in connection to cyberbullying and its effects on high school students. They surveyed the students on how often they experienced bullying, what their specific experiences were, and if suicide was an idea they ever considered in connection to the bullying. The results suggested that thirty percent of the BULLYING

participants had thought about harming themselves or committing suicide has a coping mechanism.

Hood and Duffy (2006), conducted a study in which they had students answer questions in relation to bullying on various social media applications. The results suggested that eighty percent of those students have received some sort of hate comments, racial slurs, or negative comments in regards to their religion. The results also suggested forty percent of those student have tried to communicate their concerns for their safety to both their teachers and parents but did not see results.

#### **Conclusion**

With this research in mind, a lesson plan will be created to inform both students and teachers of what cyber-bullying is, the effects it can have on their peers, and the role in which they personally play in the situation. This lesson plan will be specific to third grade students but will be made to access all classrooms regardless of grade. The research has informed the researcher that there are various issues and concerns in connection to cyber-bullying and traditional bullying. The issue is that teachers and students are not informed enough on the various types of bullying and how to handle these situations effectively. The goal is to create a lesson plan that can be used district wide so that all schools and classrooms have the same protocol when teaching their students about the bullying topic. Another goal is to ensure that students are aware that they are not alone in this situation and that their teachers can help them, and most importantly that their peers care about them.

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#### Project

The researcher had witnessed several bullying situations in Mrs. Oceans (this is a pseudonym used for protection of the teacher) third-grade class, which led to the research of cause and effect relationships of bullying in elementary schools. As stated in the community partner profile, the researcher had previously asked Mrs. Ocean what the protocols were in a bullying situation and if there was any program set up to prevent it. Mrs. Ocean informed the researcher that there was not any such program and she usually did not know how to handle these situations. Referring back to the literature review, teachers are lacking the skills and education to prevent their students from being bullied and bullying each other (Sezer, Yilmaz, & Fatma, 2015). Mrs. Ocean's lack of education on bullying became very clear to the research which led to the creation of a lesson plan that will educate both students and teachers on the bullying topic to prevent future incidents. The researcher will provide detailed information on the design, implementation, and evaluation using evidence to support the claims in the literature review.

#### Design

The researcher's goal was to create a lesson plan on bullying prevention that could be used school-wide and eventually in the district so that everyone handles each situation with the same urgency. The school that the researcher chose, is located in a coastal city that is very diverse especially in the community surrounding the school. The school is in a suburban area where majority of the population is bilingual. The neighborhood surrounding the school is has a low crime rate which reflects in the school mission and vision statements of wanting a safe environment for all students. The researches has completed service learning hours required by the various LS courses at CSUMB at this school and is very familiar with their values and expectations.

This school and the whole district's mission is to implement multiculturalism in every classroom to ensure all students receive knowledge about all various cultures outside of their own but also feeling represented in their own culture. This school envisions that all students will be served and provided effective instruction and a positive school structure. They are continually reconstructing their school system to ensure that they are always up to date on current issues, technologies, and concerns in order to best serve all of their students. Students have access to Chromebooks, only during class time, where they use online modules to further their learning experience. They want all students to be engaged in deep learning that will prepare them for the 21st century and the challenges that come with being an adult.

This school has a small population of about 400-500 students with a mix of different cultures, races, and really focuses on the students having creative outlets in all classrooms. The population has a high percentage of low-income families and offers many ways to keep students and families involved if they need any help. Parents are encouraged to be very involved in student academic life and there are many programs to service those parent-teacher-student relationships. The school offers a variety of afterschool programs so students can further their education and get help with homework. The school also encourages community members surrounding the school be involved in the school life as well and contribute to the learning as parents do but through donation or volunteering. The school and district have a strict non-tolerance policy in regards to bullying, sexual harassment, and any discriminatory practices, they want everyone to feel safe and really enforce these values.

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Reflecting on the literature review, the researcher made connections with the behavior of certain students in relation to their homework and schoolwork. The students that the researcher knows were experiencing bullying often would not participate in class, complete their homework, or socialize with their classmates. Students who are experiencing bullying often will change their perceptions of school and see it as a negative unsafe place where they can not trust their peers or teachers, which will reflect in their schoolwork and behavior in the classroom (Betts, Spenser, & Gardner, 2017). The researcher constantly saw the same students not participating in class and not receiving points for their homework when it was time to collect it. It became more evident that these students were experiencing some form of bullying when a student asked the researcher if they could help them find a way to make friends because their classmates were very mean to them. The researcher immediately informed the teacher of the situation to which she responded that she will keep an eve on the situation, but could not really do more than that for now. The researcher was aware of how rare it is for a student to confide in an adult on their bullying situation and knew it was very important that the teacher finds a way to help the student. Students will eventually shut down mentally and physically which can have serious long term effects on the student and their personality traits (Betts, Spenser, & Gardner, 2017).

The researcher created a lesson plan with all the information from the literature review in mind and thinking specifically on the situations witnessed in Mrs. Ocean's third-grade classroom. It is imperative that all teachers and students understand the severity of bullying and the effects it can have on any person. The lesson plan will be used to inform the teacher of what students perceive bullying as and the experiences that have while also educating the students on how they can prevent it in the future. The students will be given two vocabulary terms and asked to openly discuss the terms and what knowledge they already possess. The students will create in their groups, a list of rules to contribute to the classroom rule poster board.

#### Implementation

The lesson plan was implemented in a total of two hours during one class session. The researcher and Mrs. Ocean prepped for the lesson while the students were at recess so that everything went smoothly and the students had enough time to think of thoughtful answers. When the students arrived in the classroom, the researcher made sure that the students had enough members present in the table groups so that everyone had a group to collaborate with. To begin the lesson, the researcher stuck the vocabulary terms Traditional, Cyber, and Bullying to the whiteboard. Mrs. Ocean asked her students to think quietly about the terms on the board for a few moments. After two minutes, she asked the students to talk amongst their table groups on what the terms mean to them and after a few moments they will share some answer. The researcher asked the students to raise their hands and say some words or phrases that connect with the terms on the board. Students responded with phrases such as "Being mean", "Bad names", and "Mean comments" (refer to Appendix A). The researcher made sure that the students were aware that there wasn't any wrong answer as long as it was appropriate. After every group had a chance to share some ideas, Mrs. Ocean informed the students that they were going to watch a short video in relation to bullying called "Bullying" (Fight Child Abuse, 2018) and to see if their responses are the same. After the video was over, the class had a short discussion on what they saw, felt, and think about the clip.

The next step in the lesson to be implemented was the survey that had 10 questions in connection to the research from the literature review, so that the researcher can see what the students were experiencing in their own on life. Mrs. Ocean and the researcher passed out a

survey to each student, read the directions to them, and made sure they understood that the survey was anonymous and they should answer as truthfully as possible (refer to photo 1 and Appendix B). The students answered all the questions in less than 10 minutes and turned them in to the researcher. The researcher and Mrs. Ocean thanked the students for their honesty and ensured them that their answers would not be shared with anyone at their school and that the information is being used to help create a safe place for them to learn in the future.

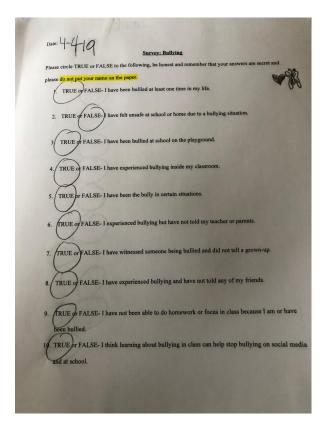


Photo 1 (Shelby Wilson, 2019)

While the students were taking their surveys, the researcher wrote a few scenarios on the whiteboard and Mrs. Ocean passed some cutouts that said "right" or "wrong" on them. The researcher explained to the students that they will discuss each scenario on the board and put the cutout next to the answer they think is correct (refer photo 2 below and to Appendix C). The student asked each other their thoughts and tried to come but with the best answer possible. After

each group had a turn to place their answer on the board, the teacher and researcher initiated a classroom discussion on if they have experienced any of the scenarios.

Making fun of a friend because they don't have new clothes electronics or shoes 6. Laughing at son When they say the Wrongx 2. Telling a teacher when I see 7. Bragging abo Someone bullied. Right and the Helping a person when I Right now they are being bullied. Sharing my toys and polies with everyone Right

Photo 1 (Shelby Wilson, 2019)

The final step in the lesson was the students creating a list of rules in each of their groups. Mrs. Ocean and the researcher passed out copy paper and a marker to each group and explained to them that each member of the group must write one rule on the paper that will be used to help keep the classroom safe from bullying. Mrs. Ocean and the researcher went to each group, asked them a group name they wanted, and fake names that will be used for the research. The reason the researcher and Mrs. Ocean had to be involved in this part is they wanted the students to have enough time to create their rules as a group and not spend a large amount of time on a group name. This involvement really helped the process go faster so the researcher and Mrs. Ocean went around and made sure each student had written one rule on the group paper (refer to Appendix D). After twenty minutes, Mrs. Ocean told the students that each group would have to contribute two rules from their paper that they agree on that will be used for the classroom rule poster. Each group announced two rules and Mrs. Ocean wrote it on a poster board as the students helped her (refer to photo 2 and Appendix E). To wrap up the session Mrs. Ocean and the researcher thanked the students for their amazing participation and listening skills. The students were very proud of their posters and asked to take a group photo at the end of the session, it was very apparent the students felt closer to each other (refer to photo 4)

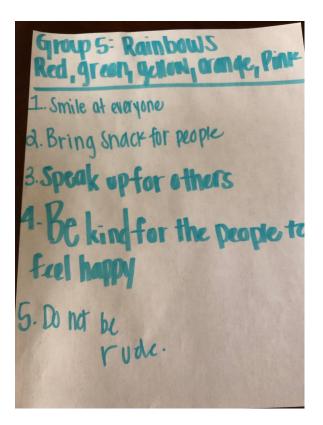


Photo 3 (Shelby Wilson, 2019)



Photo 4 (Shelby Wilson, 2019)

#### Evaluation

The researcher found that the lesson plan was successful in educating both the student and teacher on what bullying is and how it can affect their peers. Evidence in success can be found in the group rules the students created (refer to Appendix D). The researcher did note that the lesson plan should be more than one class session because often times throughout the implementation, the researcher had to speed up the thinking and discussion part of each section. The researcher also noticed that students were sometimes not comfortable sharing their personal experiences, that should be noted in the lesson plan that the teacher needs find a way to break barriers with the students so that they may feel comfortable enough to share their experiences. Another challenge faced in the implementation is the lack of knowledge the teacher had on social media subjects because Mrs. Ocean often could not relate to those topics that the students were discussing. The researcher also realized that the students did not always want to collaborate with the other students in the group because of bullying or not feeling comfortable around their peers.

After evaluating the surveys, the researcher found that the students had a variety of answers but more than half of the students had experienced some form of bullying either at school or online. The survey also showed that the students did not feel like they could tell their teacher or parents about a bullying situation (refer to Appendix B). The researcher realized that the lesson plan also needs to have more information regarding the roles that the students play in a bullying situation even if they aren't the bully or the victim. Overall, the implementation went smoothly but there was a lot more information and activities the lesson plan should have included. BULLYING

#### Reflection

The researcher had a three successes and equally three challenges throughout the entire project in terms of implementation, creating the project, and ensuring the topic covered all issues the students may have experienced in the classroom. Working with third-graders was a very unique experience because the students are very emotional, intelligent, and innocent beings who are trying to find their way in the world. Bullying is a serious issue that many students have to experiences in their lifetime and it is worsening everyday that social media becomes a societal norm. The researcher's goal was to create a lesson plan that will effectively initiate the conversation of what bullying is and how can students and teachers collaborate to change it.

### Discussion

The researcher had a three successes in the implementation of the project and also three had challenges. As stated in the literature review, students are unlikely to share their experiences of bullying with a parent or teacher and this became very apparent during the first class discussion section of the lesson plan. One of the first challenges was a majority of the students were not comfortable enough to discuss any of their personal business or were not willing to admit it. It was obvious that the students were either embarrassed or simply not comfortable enough with their teacher and peers to share their experiences. Only after a few minutes of the researcher and Mrs. Ocean sharing some of their experiences were the students willing to share their own. The table group discussion parts of the lesson plan was extremely successful because the students were very interested in sharing and hearing what they peers have been through.

Another success in the implementation of the project was showing the short video clip on bullying because it helped give examples of different ways a person can be bullied and different feelings the person may have. Research from the literature review informed the researcher that

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showing movies, videos, or books on bullying can be a very successful on relating to students ways of learning and it was successful. After the students watched the video they were very excited about sharing similar things that have happened to them and how they felt after it. The section of the lesson plan where the students get to stick "right" or "wrong" stickers next to scenarios on the whiteboard was also a success. The students really enjoyed that because it was interactive and they were able to discuss and debate with their table peers on what they right response should be.

Working with Mrs. Ocean was one of the biggest challenges because she was not very open-minded but also would not direct the researcher on the changes she would like made to the lesson plan. Mrs. Ocean also would often try to give the students the answers instead of letting them think and discuss their thoughts on their own. The researcher also had a challenge with the time Mrs. Ocean allotted for the implementation because her students had other things they needed to complete that day, so unfortunately the researcher was being rushed to finish. Overall, the project implementation was a very educating experience and a mild success.

#### Recommendations

The researcher would first recommend introducing the *BULLYING* video as the first step in the lesson plan and having the teacher share some of their personal experiences after, in order to help the students feel comfortable with sharing their own experiences. If the teacher presents the video first then that should allow more time to be spent on discussion instead of waiting for the students to get comfortable. It is also recommended that the teacher allows time for their students to think for themselves and not try to give them to answers. It is important for the students to be able to share their own experiences in a safe environment and not have their teacher affecting their feelings because there isn't a right or wrong way to feel. Deeper research conducted by the teacher is recommended so that they can have a better understanding of what bullying is and the many forms is can take. As stated in the literature review, the researcher found a study that was conducted by a reference showed that teachers should strive to support their students in social, academic, peer and emotional relationships (Spears, 2009). It is also recommended that the teacher the bullying topic beforehand in order to be educated on the subject so when students ask questions, the teacher has a thoughtful answer or solution ready to give to them.

#### Future plans for the capstone

The researcher gained a substantial amount of knowledge from all parts of the capstone and plans to further that research in graduate school. The researcher plans to attend graduate school in one year but has not narrowed down the school of choice but plans to explore the topic of bullying more while attending the school. The researcher also plans to become an elementary school teacher, more specifically third-grade, and would like to teach younger children about the subject to prepare them for the future. The capstone project really helps the researcher understand the different forms of bullying and how some students handle those situations and this will help in the future when becoming an elementary school teacher.

#### Conclusion

The literature review educated the researcher on the cyber-bullying and traditionalbullying. The researcher was able to use that knowledge to create a lesson plan that would help teachers and students educate themselves on the topic. The researcher's goal was to ensure that students would feel comfortable with communicating to an adult when they are experiencing these issues. The project implementation had three success and also three challenges but over would consider the project successful. The researcher gained knowledge on how students deal with bullying in any form and where they go to for emotional support. Overall, the researcher has learned that bullying in any form is extremely serious and hopes the lesson plan can be implemented in many schools to combat bullying.

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Appendices

## Appendix A

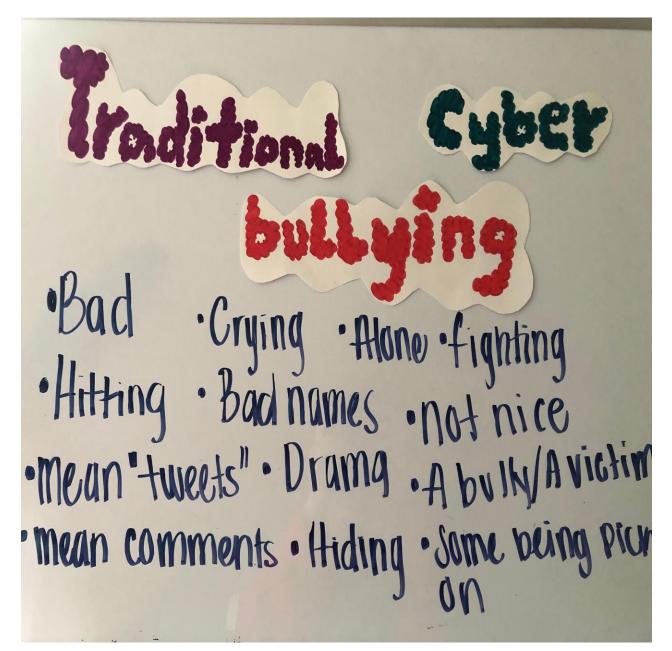


Photo 5 (Shelby Wilson, 2019)

# Appendix B

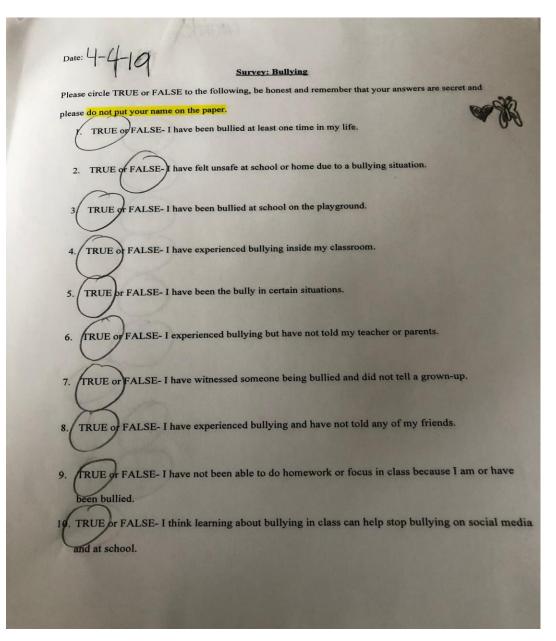


Photo 6 (Shelby Wilson, 2019)

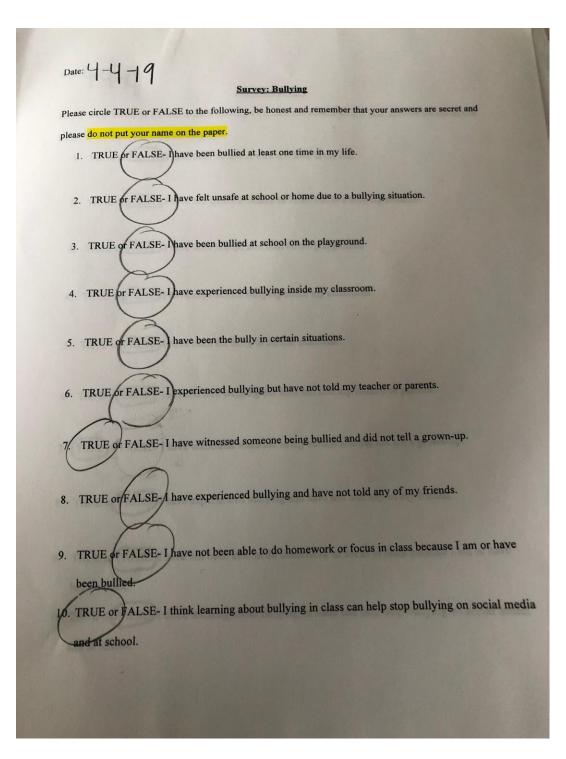


Photo 7 (Shelby Wilson, 2019)

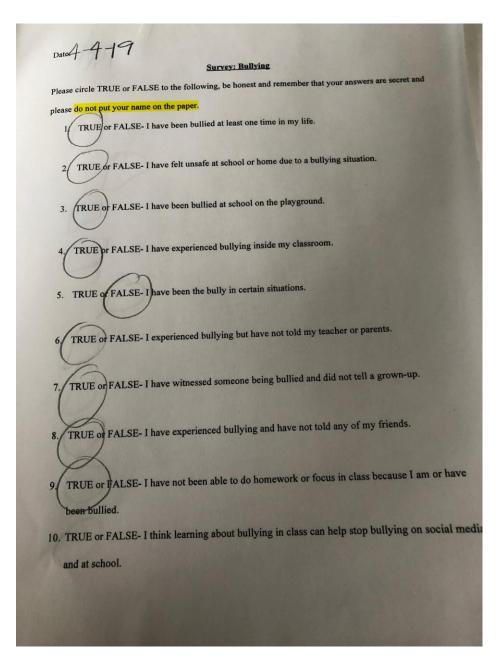


Photo 8 (Shelby Wilson, 2019)

## Appendix C

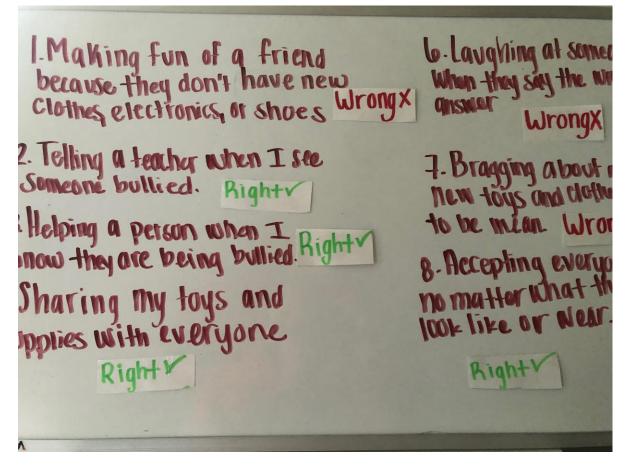


Photo 9 (Shelby Wilson, 2019)

# Appendix D

3-Marver Thanes, in an, Captain 1. Be tike to all people. . To not get intruble . akingfun of somene is not only what is yours. Touch Be Kind

Photo 10 (Shelby Wilson, 2019)

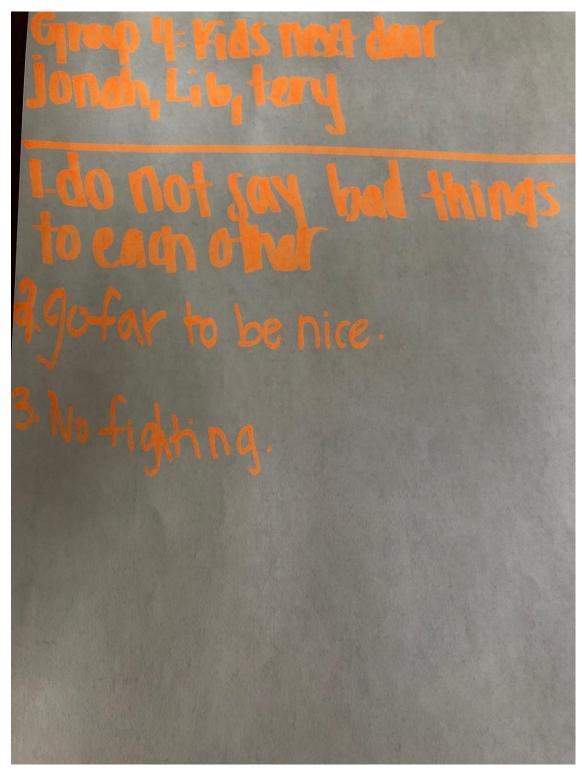


Photo 11 (Shelby Wilson, 2019)

roup 5: Rainbows **Green** -. Smile at everyone d. Bring snack for people 3. Speak up for others kind for the people to . Do not be rude.

Photo 12 (Shelby Wilson, 2019)

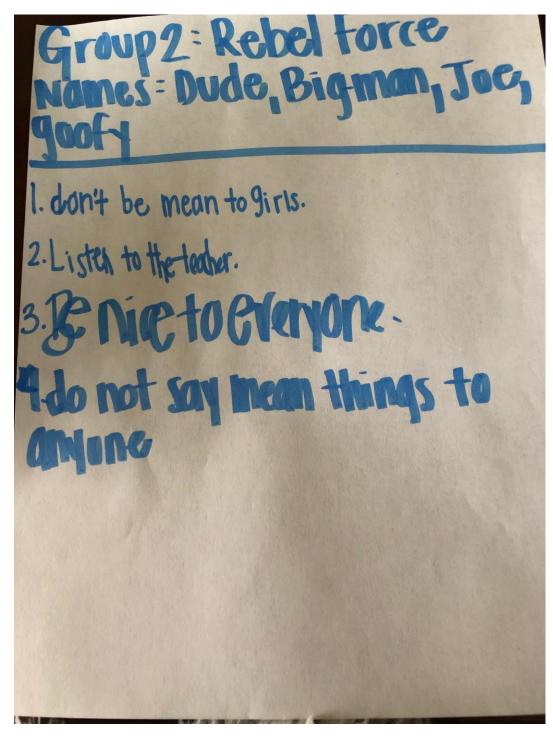


Photo 13 (Shelby Wilson, 2019)

Group 1: Princesses ES- Tasmi o hot be Mean. 2. Always be nice. ). Do not Laugh at your friends. 4-Share your things with everyone your hands to

Photo 14 (Shelby Wilson, 2019)

# Appendix E

5- Step Lesson Plan: Fight the Bully!	
discus a. b. c.	n Overview: Educating students on bullying prevention through video, class ssion, and sensory activities Subject: Social Studies Grade level: Third Measurable Learning Objective: Students will create a list of rules that will be used to combat bullying inside their classroom. Summary: Traditional and Cyber-Bullying are societal norms that most students experience on a daily basis in their classroom and at home. This lesson plan will inform the teacher of what the students know about these topics and their personal experience they may feel comfortable sharing. Students will create rules that they feel will help with combating traditional and Cyber- Bullying. Then, as a class they will agree on rules that are allowed and prohibited in the classroom so that everyone is on the same page to ensure all students needs are being met.
<b>2. Imple</b> a.	<b>mentation</b> Learning context: This lesson will fit in with the societal norms unit. Students
	will be learning about laws and rules that affect their everyday lives and decisions, during this lesson plan they also will learn how bullying situation and
	decisions, during this lesson plan they also will learn how bullying situation and what they can do to change the norms on this subject.
b.	<b>Strategy teaching:</b> Class discussion, think-pair-share, and collaborative work.
с.	<b>Time allotment:</b> 2 or more class periods, enough time to establish comfort with
	students.
3. Procedure	
a.	Anticipatory set: Teacher will put the terms on the board and ask the students
	to think quietly and then as a group on what the terms mean.
b.	Modeling: The teacher will walk through each part of the lesson with the
	students because it is collaborative teacher/student work.
с.	Guided Practice: Teacher will share their personal experiences on the topic to
	help students understand what is being asked of them
d.	<b>Independent Practice:</b> Students will share their own personal experiences and create the poster board.
e.	Closure: To conclude the lesson, the students will provide two rules prefer

group for the classroom rule poster board. Then the poster will be hung and used in reference when any bullying situation happens.

f. **Follow-up**: Any time a bullying situation occurs the teacher should implement the lesson again to refresh the class on what is appropriate behavior in the classroom and what is not.

### 4. Materials and resources

- a. **Instructional Materials:** Survey, cutouts to use for scenarios, poster board, and markers.
- b. **Resources**: Teacher will show "Bullying" video and all other information will be class discussion based.

## 5. Standards and assessment

- a. **Standards**: 3.4 Students understand the role of rules and laws in our daily lives and the basic structure of the U.S. government
- b. Assessment plan: Students will be graded on their participation that is required

for the group rules paper. Each student must contribute one rule.