

Phenomenon of bullying in elementary school

[Education](#), [School](#)



When faced with a wall of confusion and unfamiliarity, it is the natural instinct for a young toddler to shy away and sit in the dark. This same instinctive nature came back to a young boy on his way to the Land of Opportunity from the inner city of Mexico. On arrival to the currently frozen state of Michigan, the boy passes the ruins of a great industry—it's almost déjà vu. He passes lost souls on the streets (again?) only this time they're frozen to the ground. He passes dilapidated buildings covered in white powder—a new sight. But then he hits a wall. It's not something he can see or touch, but he knows it's there. On this side of the wall, there's no longer a lingering feeling of familiarity. Now, he sees what seemed like castles illuminated with shining lights. He sees a huge sign: Oakland Mall. A mall? He had only heard stories of the endless stores filled with goods he'd never heard of before. He sees police cars pass on occasion. A new sense of confused security came about him. He sees kids throwing snowballs at each other in a park, laughing and yelling. Despite the peculiar confusion and having to leave his dear friends behind in tears and tantrum, Troy, Michigan didn't seem too bad. However, this joy was short lived after being reminded by his mother that he must return to la escuela in the morning.

Upon arrival to the elementary school, his nervousness and confusion returned, and it was prevalent with the beads of water that formed at his eyes. All of a sudden, light tears began to roll down his cheeks. All of a sudden, he longed to be back in Mexico. All of a sudden, he had a deep need for his friends he so unwillingly left behind. As his mother hugs him goodbye, she says in her sweet motherly tone, 'te amo', and she leaves for her own adventure in the new city. Soon, the boy finds himself standing in front of a

huge class struggling to introduce himself despite the English classes he used to take. A few giggles ripple out; He feels alone. Being told to find an empty seat, he quickly tries to find a seat with the least intimidating looking kids. I guess I didn't look very intimidating. The idea of the new kid sitting next to me was pretty cool even though my classmates visibly thought otherwise with their sneer faces. After all, that was me only a few years earlier. To other kids, he became the subject of teasing when it came to him to read out loud, or the butt of a stereotyped joke " Do you like burritos?". Befriending an outsider such as him wasn't hard at all since I was able to empathize with his feelings of unfamiliarity. Alas, the empathetic feelings weren't enough to push past his distraught feelings of moving and missing his friends. He struggled to keep a positive attitude even when he was talking to the teacher. The language barrier didn't help his situation either; kids would take advantage of his inability to respond to complex questions and ask something like, " Hey Josué! What was the math lesson about? I wasn't listening!" And all he could respond with was a heavily accented " I don't know" and a shy shrug.

Fortunately, I caught on to the bullying and teasing albeit not as fast as I should've since I was afraid of judgement and teasing myself. Josué began to miss school days to avoid being ridiculed, and I noticed how he'd ask to stay inside for recess, or he'd sit alone next to a wall. Despite these obvious signs of self-isolation, our teachers never caught on, He would even begin silently crying in the middle of class because of embarrassment, but even then, all that would happen is more quiet teasing and a trip to the counseling office. It took more than just opening up to him to truly get to talk to him. Over a

month of small-talk, encouragement, and even a connection between our mothers is what it took to finally get a study session and a real conversation with him. At first, he wouldn't deviate at all from the simple school conversation, but after showing my ability to empathize with his situation, he finally softened up after realizing he had someone to relate to. He told me of his old life in Mexico; he told me of the great friends he left behind; he shared the wild stories of inner city Mexico. Through sharing his stories, he was able to feel much more comfortable to talk to me, and I was truly inspired to help him. I did my best to help him understand our complex language of slang and figurative language. I gave him ways of how he could actually communicate positively with the kids at school. I helped give him a voice. Within a few weeks of meeting on a regular basis, I'd been able to connect with Josué on a real level of mutual understanding. It wasn't until two months later, however, that I saw a truly remarkable transformation happen; he didn't just come out of his shell, he exploded in a wake of confidence and self-acceptance. In a biographical presentation, he awed the class with one of his amazing stories from Mexico featuring a chase around the city and straight through a live gunfight to find his little sister. He spoke with such confidence and fortified tone that I didn't even recognize he was speaking at first.

It was truly inspiring to see him able to make other friends with now unbroken English and a real smile on his face. However, I didn't realize the reason behind his change was because of me until his mother came to our house one afternoon in tears, but not sad tears. She said, " I thank you so

much for doing what I never could". And thus, I felt my first experience with true friendship.