

Project Peace at schools

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Not everyone is able to learn by taking notes and listening to their teacher lecture, and Martin Browne's artist-in-residence addresses the need for alternative teaching practices.

As a former ecological biologist and teacher, Peter Lenton a.k.a Peter Puffin, draws on the arts and fine arts to satisfy the teacher's curriculum goals. With his guitar in hand, Puffin writes songs with students about various topics they have learnt in class, not only reinforcing their lessons but allowing them to express their creativity too.

"Music is such an easy portal, an easy intelligence to tap in kids; it's a universal intelligence that we all have," explained Puffin. "Teachers are quite keen about the multiple intelligences; there are seven or eight different intelligences that kids have rather than just having one or two."

Puffin stresses that it is not a matter of whether or not a student is smart, rather how the student is smart depending on their type of intelligence.

"Musical being the easiest one (intelligence) to access, so if you have kids in your class that just aren't responding for whatever reason, often you can reach them with music intelligence and use that to teach them. As an educator it gives you a chance to reach more kids."

November is Anti-Bullying Month and the students of Martin Browne are concentrating on a peace theme, as they work with Puffin.

"As soon as you start talking about peace, there seems to be no limit to the different ideas they have," said Puffin.

All aspects of peace are explored; from peace with one's self, to relationships, community and eventually in a global context, Puffin encourages the students to honour peace.

"We are honing in the social studies and science topics that lend themselves to celebrating peace."

Bullying is also high on Puffin's agenda and despite

their young age, students can relate to this topic as well.

As music and creating songs are integral to Puffin's artist-in-residence program, after singing *Proud Like A Mountain*, students are able to write additional verses thereby continuing to build on their peace project.

"The song is not about bragging or boasting it's more celebrating all the smartnesses that they have," remarked Puffin.

"This school has a very strong ethic against bullying already. They are a way above the average school in terms of the values they have about respect for each other, respect for guests, respect for other people's stuff."

Students have even begun to write their own poetry, sharing it with Puffin and displaying their innovative talents.

"The teachers have really done a great job here of making the kids feel safe and comfortable to share their creative ideas."

From Nov. 6 to 8 and Nov. 13-15, Puffin has been working with the entire school, engaging students in cooperative activities and artistic expression. At the end of his artist-in-residence term the students will have a CD of the songs they wrote and performed with Puffin, a song book of their original material and the teachers will have material to build upon throughout the year.

Rather than stopping by a school and simply performing or "doing an edu-tainment kind of thing for a week," Puffin hopes to enrich the lives of the students with music.

"My ideal is that they gain a bit more appreciation for music and secondly, that they see that they can use music as a tool for learning," revealed Puffin.

"Ultimately, and this is kind of a lofty goal, that maybe their quality of life is improved just a little bit.

"Because they're singing about things that make life better."

Martin Browne students will have a chance to share

their songs with parents, peers and staff, performing with Puffin on Thursday, his final day as artist-in-residence.

For more information about Peter Puffin's workshops, teaching resources, concerts and artist-in-residence program, visit www.puffin.ca.

