

Unit: Building Classroom Community for First Grade

Lesson 5: Appreciating Differences and Respectful Communication

Read Aloud: *Featherless/Desplumado*
written by Juan Felipe Herrera,
illustrated by Ernesto Cuevas, Jr.

Lesson Objectives (Day 1 and Day 2)

- Students will listen to *Featherless/Desplumado* and accompanying teacher comments to build understanding of the key ideas and details of the text
- Students will demonstrate understanding of the text by answering questions about key details in the text
- Students will follow agreed-on rules for discussion in the whole group and when talking with partners
- Students will practice active listening, as demonstrated by restating others' responses, building on them, and asking clarifying questions
- Students will build an appreciation for individual strengths and challenges to help establish a supportive classroom community
- Students will discuss characteristics of and practice respectful communication (e.g., using classmates' names, tone of voice, body language, and word choice)

Common Core Standards

- RL.1.1, RL.1.2, RL.1.3
- SL.1.1/1-A/1-B/1-C

NOTE: *Featherless/Desplumado* is a bilingual book. This lesson could also be presented effectively in Spanish. See the end of this lesson for additional English Language Learner support strategies.

Day 1: Read Aloud to Understand the Book

Before Reading

1. Gather your class and explain that you'll be reading aloud and talking about another book today.
2. Briefly review the photo supports for active listening and partner conversations.
3. Introduce the book by saying, ***"This book is called Featherless/Desplumado. The boy in the book, Tomasito, uses a wheelchair to get around. He was born with a condition called spina bifida, which makes him unable to walk. He has a goal in this book. Let's read to find out what it is and if he manages to achieve it."***

During Reading

1. Focus your questions on characters' strengths and challenges, as well as on previously discussed themes of emotions and goals. Ask the whole class some questions to the whole class and sometimes ask partners to converse.
 - ***"What does Tomasito's father give him? What does Tomasito notice about the bird?"***
 - ***"Why does Tomasito say, 'Smiling is tough?'"***
 - ***"Why does Tomasito feel grumpy?"***
 - ***"What is Tomasito's goal?"***
 - ***"What part of soccer is challenging for Tomasito? What can he do?"***

- **“What does Tomasito dream about? What does he try to do? What happens?”**
- **“Does Tomasito achieve his goal? How? How does he feel when he scored?”**

After Reading

1. Ask the class brief questions to retell the key events of the story, such as “What happens first? What happens next? How does the story end?”
2. Introduce the words *challenge* and *strength*. Review Tomasito’s challenges (e.g., he can’t run or kick the ball because of his spina bifida) and then spend a few minutes talking about his strengths (e.g., he has strong arms to move his wheelchair, he is brave to head the soccer ball).
3. Explain that another day you’ll reread the book and notice more about the other characters besides Tomasito.

Day 2: Discuss and Respond to the Book

Before Reading

1. Explain that today you’ll reread *Featherless/Desplumado*. You’ll pay extra attention to how the characters in the book talk to one another and how their conversations make each of them feel.
2. You’ll get started by observing a pretend conversation. With a student partner, model the opposite of your desired behavior in a dramatic way. (For instance, say, “Hey you! You’re so short, you can’t even reach the coat hook!” and roll your eyes.)

3. Ask students to note your behaviors and guess how it may make the other person feel.
4. Brainstorm how you might revise your communication, explicitly noting the target behaviors of using someone’s name and using a friendly tone, body language, and words.
5. Ask students to pay attention to how the characters talk to one another in the book, especially about challenges and strengths.

During Reading

1. Choose places to stop for discussion about characters’ communication. For instance:
 - **“What does Marlina say when Tomasito has his head on his desk?”**
 - **“What does Papi do and say when he notices that Tomasito is grumpy?”**
 - **“What does Tomasito say to his bird?”**
 - **“What does Marlina say when Tomasito tries to score a goal?”**
 - **“How does Papi react when Tomasito tries to walk?”**

NOTE: The communication examples in this story are quite positive. If you feel your class needs more negative examples for contrast, you might refer back to the bully in *King for a Day*.

2. As you restate students’ comments, use consistent language to highlight the target behaviors of using names and using a friendly tone, body language, and words.

After Reading

1. Say, ***“In this book, Tomasito is frustrated by some of his challenges. His father and his friend Marlana help him realize his strengths. Let’s think for a minute about how we could communicate with one another as respectfully as the characters do in the book.”***
2. Ask students to brainstorm with partners what they might say or do in the following situations, made specific to your classroom.
 - Someone answers a question incorrectly.
 - Someone knocks something over.
 - Someone can’t do something on the playground.
3. Depending on your class and school population, you may wish to include some scenarios/discussions related to respectful communication about peers’ accommodations and supports (e.g., wheelchair, assistive technology, special education services, adaptive seating, etc.).
4. End your discussion with a summary statement about classroom values. For instance, ***“Let’s always try to talk to one another respectfully and help everyone realize all the ways we are strong, just like the characters in Featherless.”***

Extension

NOTE: You’ll need to set up this activity in advance by hiding a collection of items around your classroom or in another defined area (see ideas below). Place some at floor level and inside small spaces. Place some at student height and slightly higher.

1. Share a personal story related to how you accomplished a task by combining your strengths with someone else’s. (For example, you are good at driving long distances and your spouse is a good navigator. Together you managed a road trip.)
2. Explain that you’ll be playing a collection game. You’ll need to use everyone’s strengths to complete the game.
3. Explain what you have hidden. Ask students questions such as:
 - ***“Are you better at reaching things up high or crawling to find things down low?”***
 - ***“Who feels strong at finding things that are hidden? Who feels strong at figuring out where [items] go once they are found?”***
4. Assign or allow students to volunteer for roles. For instance, four students could be the “organizers” of found items and the remaining students could be divided into “look near the floor,” “look on tables and counters,” and “look up high” groups.
5. As the class hunts for items, comment on student strengths and challenges (e.g., ***“You have sharp eyes and you spotted that card. Shayna’s arm is a bit longer than yours, so she helped you reach it.”***) Also compliment respectful communication.

6. After the activity, ask students the following questions and/or share your own observations:

- **“Who noticed a friend’s strength?”**
- **“Who noticed something that was challenging?”**
- **“Who noticed someone [demonstrating an aspect of respectful communication you’ve discussed]?”**

Hidden-Collection Ideas

- Cards with students’ names to be matched to photos in a pocket chart when found
- Number cards to be organized in sequence or matched to a number strip or chart
- Puzzle pieces to be assembled
- Letter or word cards to be arranged into a secret message

ELL Support Strategies

- Act out additional classroom communication scenarios and teach specific phrases related to giving encouragement/reassurance and asking for/offering help.
- Structure the Extension activity to be manageable for your students’ language levels. Support use of relevant phrases (e.g., “Look over/under/near,” etc.)

BOOK INFORMATION

Featherless/Desplumado

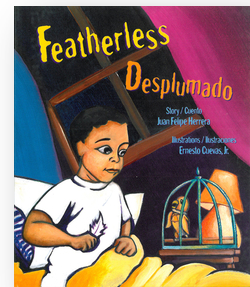
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RESOURCES ON THE WEB

Check out the complete **Building Classroom Community Unit for First Grade** at

<https://www.leeandlow.com/collections/279>

Learn more about *Featherless/Desplumado* at www.leeandlow.com/books/2777



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