

Team Work from the *Inside Out*

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“I don’t want to work with Sabria!” a student yelled a loud with a look of disgust on his face while another student yelled across the room with anger, “I’d rather die than be in her group.” All of this occurred while I was explaining which groups the students would be in for math stations for the day. My first thought as the teacher of this room of rowdy students was how much sadness Sabria must have felt when students said they didn’t want to work with her. When I looked at Sabria’s face, I saw fear in her eyes and could feel the sadness in her heart. As a few seconds went by, I watched Sabria’s fear and sadness turn into disgust and anger as she yelled back at those students, “No one wants to be in your group either! I hate you guys!” This quickly turned my classroom into a forum for a full-fledged debate (and not the good kind that a teacher hopes for her students to have). The thought that immediately ran through my head was, “Why do students feel that way about others in their classroom? And why do they feel it is okay saying that aloud about other students?” Sadly, this is a typical cry-out during any given day in my special education middle school classroom.

As the teacher of a room of 13 special education students, I have reflected that one of the reasons why my students feel okay saying things like that aloud is because we have not explored as a class the nature of feelings (what you feel, how you feel, and how to act appropriately when you feel those feelings) or the concept of what it means to work together as a collective unit or team in the classroom. And as their teacher, I felt that was my job to teach them these exact things. So if this sounds like a typical cry out during your classroom teaching, this unit is for you! Join me on a journey of emotions and teamwork from the *Inside Out*.

Student Background

I teach at the George Read Middle School, a Title I school in New Castle, Delaware. Students in my classroom come from all walks of life. I have two groups of 13 very active Special Education Middle School students who are in 6th, 7th, or 8th grade with current reading levels anywhere from Pre-Primer to 3rd grade. All students receive 90 minutes of direct instruction in both Reading/ELA and Math on a daily basis to help strengthen and build upon their foundational skills.

The students in my class reside in several sections of greater New Castle County and Wilmington. We have a diverse student population made up mostly of African American males. I have one Hispanic student who is fluent in English. My classroom provides specialized educational programming in an inclusive setting for adolescents who may

have a continuum of disabilities, including physical, cognitive and health-related. All George Read students receive free lunch because of their low family income. I also have several students in my class with a history of homelessness and parental/guardian abuse. Just this year alone, I have had to call the Department of Services for Children, Youth and Families (DFS) five times for five different students who have come in with bruises, marks, or cleanliness issues. These problems at home are some of the reasons why I feel that my students have such a hard time expressing their emotions in proper ways and an even harder time working together as a classroom team.

Objective

In the urban school where I teach 6th, 7th and 8th grade inclusion special education math and science, the students that enter into my Integration B program often lack appropriate academic skills. As I have found over the last three years of teaching, they are even more likely to lack appropriate social skills. Not only do my students lack the social skills needed to communicate with each other, but they also lack the ability to work as a team. Because of the severity of their learning disabilities, most students come to my program in 6th grade to fill in the gaps in their reading levels and math abilities and return to a less intense special education setting when these gaps have been filled. However, most students do not make the progress they need and end up staying in our program for all 3 years of their middle school experience. This means that most of my students stay with the same teachers and the same students for all 3 years of middle school. While this can sometimes be a good thing if they are with students that they like, it can also be a bad thing when students with different personalities and different interests are asked to mingle with each other for 3 long years. The goal of this unit is to help fill in the social gaps needed to have my students work together towards a common goal. I will fulfil this goal by using the Disney Pixar Movie *Inside Out* as a way to address social skills that my students lack, especially how to display emotions properly in the classroom.

This unit has two objectives. The first is to teach the students how to collaborate as a team with each other effectively to reach a shared goal, as the emotions (joy, sadness, anger, disgust, fear) learn to work together in *Inside Out*. The second is to model and teach my students how to feel and express their sometimes heightened middle school emotions properly in a classroom setting.

Rationale

This unit may be taught at either the beginning of the school year to set expectations and classroom rules or whenever you feel that your students need a re-set. For example,

coming back from Christmas break may be a great time to re-gather your students and reinforce classroom expectations around social skills and teamwork.

This unit will teach students effective ways to express their emotions in the classroom while also teaching them how to work as a collective unit or team.

Standards

Delaware has adopted the Common Core State Standards for ELA and Math and the Next Generation Science Standards. I will be addressing CCSS ELA and Writing standards for sixth grade within my unit. This unit will address the following:

- **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.6.1**
Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 6 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.
- **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.6.1.b**
Follow rules for collegial discussions, set specific goals and deadlines, and define individual roles as needed.
- **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.6.1.c**
Pose and respond to specific questions with elaboration and detail by making comments that contribute to the topic, text, or issue under discussion.

Learning Objectives

- ❖ Students will write about various kinds of emotions that we see in *Inside Out* and that we discuss as a class.
- ❖ Students will discuss the characters in *Inside Out* and consider how they develop and change during the movie.
- ❖ Students will work as a team in a group setting.
- ❖ Students will evaluate and answer questions about the emotions presented in *Inside Out*.
- ❖ Students will think and talk critically with their fellow group members about how they can display emotions appropriately and inappropriately in and out of the classroom.
- ❖ Students will learn appropriate ways to display the emotions of Joy, Fear, Sadness, Anger, and Disgust.

Background

I have found in my three years of teaching that students in my special education classrooms struggle with dealing with their emotions and working together as a classroom team the most. I have researched the role of teamwork in the classroom and the roles emotions in students' everyday lives. The findings from my research became the basis of my unit.

Teamwork Overview

According to the Nondestructive Testing (NDT) website, "Teamwork is defined in *Webster's New World Dictionary* as a joint action by a group of people, in which each person subordinates his or her individual interests and opinions to the unity and efficiency of the group. This does not mean that the individual is no longer important; however, it does mean that effective and efficient teamwork goes beyond individual accomplishments. The most effective teamwork is produced when all the individuals involved harmonize their contributions and work towards a common goal."¹

Emotions Overview

The Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning at Vanderbilt University reports, "Young children deal with many of the same emotions adults do. Children get angry, sad, frustrated, nervous, happy, or embarrassed, but they often do not have the words to talk about how they are feeling. Instead, they sometimes act out these emotions in very physical and inappropriate ways."²

Social Emotional Learning

The National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) defines "Social and emotional learning (SEL)" as "the process through which young people and adults acquire the knowledge, attitudes, and skills they need to recognize and manage their emotions, demonstrate caring and concern for others, establish positive relationships, make responsible decisions, and handle challenging situations constructively. These are the skills that allow young people to calm themselves when angry, make friends, resolve conflicts respectfully, and make ethical and safe choices. Research indicates that these skills not only can be taught, but also can be taught by teachers in schools of every type to students of every background. Research summarized by the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning clearly shows that students who receive SEL instruction outperform their peers, get better grades, have higher graduation rates, develop more positive peer relationships, and demonstrate caring, empathy, and social engagement. These students also are less likely to use drugs, engage in violent behavior,

or become delinquents. Young adolescents are experiencing the most rapid period of growth and development since infancy. At no time is it more important for them to learn the skills of impulse control, emotional management, empathy, interpersonal communication, and responsible problem solving and decision-making. We as teachers have a unique opportunity with our students at ages 10 to 14 to have the greatest impact in ‘rewiring’ their brains to stop and think before acting.”³

Strategies

To teach my unit I will rely on several teaching methods, including direct instruction, collaborative pairs and groups, and the use of video segments of the movie *Inside Out*.

I will use whole group direct instruction each day at the beginning of my lessons. There will be activating strategies, an introduction to the concept we are working on that day, and the concept of I Do, We Do, and You Do so that my activities will be scaffolded throughout to ensure that my special education students know exactly what they need to do.

I will assign students to collaborative groups each day throughout this unit. Collaborative groups offer a great way to ensure that all students become engaged in the activity while also promoting the concept of teamwork. While working in collaborative groups, the students will have an opportunity to discuss what they know, explain their opinions to others in their group, and be given an opportunity to collaborate with their fellow classmates.

Classroom Activities

The intensive part of my unit will include lessons encouraging the students to work together in collaborative groups to discuss emotions portrayed in *Inside Out* and discuss occasions when students have felt these emotions, how they have dealt with them, and how they can effectively handle these emotions when they feel them in the classroom. To start this unit, I will place students in groups of 4 students. They will stay in these groups for the whole unit. I will chose these groups carefully and make sure that each group has at least 1 low-, 1 medium-, and 1 high-achieving student.

Activating Activities

Journal Prompts

The students will be given 5-10 minutes at the start of each class day to free write about the following topics. One topic will be given per day of the unit. This will help the students begin to think about their emotions while also promoting creative writing within the classroom.

- Journal 1- I am feeling (sadness, fear, joy, disgust, anger) because...
See Appendix A for the sheet they will be using.
- Journal 2- Draw a Memory for Each Emotion!
See Appendix B for the sheet they will be using.
- Journal 3- I feel anger when...
See Appendix C for the sheet they will be using.
- Journal 4- I feel disgust when...
See appendix D for the sheet they will be using.
- Journal 5- I feel fear when...
See appendix E for the sheet they will be using.

Lesson 1

I will introduce the unit by explaining to the students how they will spend a lot of their time over the next three years inside our classroom learning various math and science concepts. While they are at school, they will meet many new people and make many new friends. People they will interact with at school will not always look like them or act exactly the way they do. They will have different skin colors, different ability levels, different interests, and sometimes even speak different languages than yours. However, even though they all may have differences on the outside, on the inside they are all the same.

Everyone feels joy when good things happen. Everyone feels sadness when bad things happen, anger when something rubs us the wrong way, disgust when things gross us out, and fear when things scare us. These emotions can sometimes be hard to navigate through, especially during the middle school years, when things can sometimes become very confusing. Here at school, however, we are a team. We all work together by coming to school every day to learn new things and by working hard to achieve our goals. Sometimes these goals we need to work through together are not just academic but social. For example, how can we handle our joy, anger, sadness, fear, and disgust in appropriate ways? This unit will teach us about our emotions in a fun and exciting way. And while learning about them, we will also learn appropriate ways to handle them in a classroom

and how to work together as a team to work through these emotions that can often be hard to handle.

At this point I will introduce *Inside Out* and give students the graphic organizer titled “Get to Know your Emotions” (Appendix F). They will use this graphic organizer during lesson 1 and the first thirty minutes of the movie to take notes on what each emotion looks and sounds and like and what the emotion’s job is. I have decided to chunk the movie into two 45-minute segments because my students have working memory issues and I feel that this will be the most effective way to work with this movie in the classroom. Splitting the movie into two 45-minute segments will allow us to watch part of the movie, then have a group discussion, and then complete a team activity at the end of each section.

Lesson one will introduce the emotions to the students. After watching the first 45 minutes of the film, students will work with their group members to fill out one large graphic organizer as a team. See Appendix F for a worksheet that can be enlarged for collaborative group work.

Before putting the students into groups, I will need to come up with collaborative group rules either by explaining the teacher-created rules to the students (see Appendix G for these) or by creating them as a whole group. If the students’ abilities allow the second strategy, creating them as a whole class would most likely foster some buy-in with the students and allow them to feel more in charge of the learning of this unit.

I will also establish roles of the groups (see Appendix H for the list of roles and duties of each group member). I will make sure students know exactly what their job duties are for that day and then switch student roles each new day.

The goal of lesson 1 is to have the students, working in their group roles to fill in the graphic organizer and then presenting their group findings, identify the leading emotions presented in *Inside Out*.

Lesson 2

This lesson will begin with a brief review of the previous lesson that discusses the emotions and the graphic organizer that students filled out during lesson 1. Then students will watch the remaining 45 minutes of the movie. As a whole class, we will discuss the key points of the movie. I may use all or a few of the following questions to lead the whole group discussion.

- When we first meet Riley, the main character of *Inside Out*, Joy is most often in charge of her thoughts and personality. Which emotion(s) do you feel most often at school? Which emotions do you most feel at home?

- Riley and her family go through a lot of changes—for example, when they move from Minnesota to San Francisco. Have you ever gone through a big transition?
- How are the “core memories” made? What are some of your core memories?
- What do the core memories have to do with Riley’s personality?
- When Sadness touches one of the happy core memories, she colors it blue. What do you think is going on then? Is it possible that our current moods can color our past memories? Can they shape the ways we define our personality?
- When Riley’s mother tells her that she is helping her parents by being their “happy girl,” Riley feels pressure to show them only her joy. What do you think of this pressure? How does this make you feel?
- Do you think that our school values certain emotions over others? Which ones?
- At the end of the movie, Joy learns that other emotions, especially Sadness, are also important. How did she learn this?
- Do you think it is easier for males or females, or for younger or older people, to express different emotions? Which ones? Why?

After leading the whole group discussion, I will put the students back into collaborative groups, switching the roles of the students in each group. Each group will be assigned one of the following emotions: joy, sadness, anger, fear, disgust. After I have explained the difference between appropriate and inappropriate displays in general terms, each group will use the graphic organizer “How to Show your Emotions!” (see Appendix I) to list appropriate and inappropriate ways to display their particular emotion in and out of the classroom. Each group will have 15-20 minutes to complete this activity.

Lesson 3

After reviewing the topics addressed in the previous lesson, I will give the groups 10-15 minutes to practice role-playing appropriate and inappropriate ways to display their emotion. At the end of this time, each group will come to the front of the room and present a role play of their emotion. While each group is performing, students in the other groups will fill in their graphic organizers. I will create a large group graphic organizer with each group’s findings and enlarge this graphic organizer, which I will reinforce through the rest of the school year to help remind students of appropriate and inappropriate ways to display emotions.

Appendix B

Draw a Memory for Each Emotion!

SADNESS



JOY



DISGUST



FEAR



ANGER



Appendix C

I feel ANGER when

Draw a picture of a time when you felt ANGER.



Appendix D

I feel DISGUST when

Draw a picture of a time when you felt DISGUST.



Appendix E

I feel FEAR when _____

_____.

Draw a picture of a time when you felt FEAR.



Appendix F

Get to know your Emotions!

I am the emotion...	<i>My Job is to...</i>	<i>I look and sound like...</i>
Joy		
FEAR		
Sadness		
Disgust		
Anger		

Appendix G

GROUP RULES!

Give your full attention to the group

Respect all members of your group & their thoughts

On task at all times

Use inside voices

Participate actively with your group

Stay at your group table and in your seat

Appendix H

Group Roles and Duties

Group Role	Duties	Sentence Starters
Leader	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Start the group work • Make sure everyone understands the activity • Make sure the group is focused • Make sure everyone is doing their role 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Let's get started by... ✓ Does everyone understand what we need to do? ✓ Let's keep on track; we have a lot to complete, such as.... ✓ Let's make sure we are all doing our group roles and duties that follow.
Speaker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give feedback on the group's work • Present the group's findings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Shall I start with.... ✓ How should I begin our presentation? ✓ Let me practice sharing out findings...
Scribe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write down all information from the activity • Highlight important information for the speaker to share out 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Can you say that again, please? ✓ How should I write that? ✓ Does this make sense? ✓ Did I miss any points we said?
Time Keeper	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Know how much time the group has for each activity • Remind the group how much time they have left at several times throughout the activity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ We have ___ minutes to complete this. ✓ We have ___ minutes left to work. ✓ Let's move on to the next part; we have ___ minutes left.

Appendix I

How to show your Emotions!

When you feel the emotion of...	Appropriate ways to show this emotion...	Inappropriate ways to show this emotion...
Joy		
FEAR		
Sadness		
Disgust		

<h1>Anger</h1>		
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Appendix J

- **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.6.1**
Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 6 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.
This standard is met in activity 1 when the students are working in their group roles to fill in the graphic organizer and then presenting their group findings, identify the leading emotions presented in *Inside Out*. This is also addressed in the other lessons where the students are answering and asking questions in various forms (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 6 topics.
- **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.6.1.b**
Follow rules for collegial discussions, set specific goals and deadlines, and define individual roles as needed.
This standard will be met in activity 1, 2, and 3 when the students are working in their collaborative groups and their roles.
- **CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.6.1.c**
Pose and respond to specific questions with elaboration and detail by making comments that contribute to the topic, text, or issue under discussion.
This standard will be met in activity 1,2, and 3 when the students are answering and responding to questions about the movie *Inside Out*.

Bibliography

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Notes

¹ “Teamwork.”

² *Teaching Your Child to: Identify and Express Emotions.*

³ “Everyday SEL in Middle School.”