A Joke is a Serious Thing: Using Humor In Library Instruction

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A Joke is a Very Serious Thing: Using Humor in Library Instruction

- Humor—why should you use it?
- Anyone can be funny, right?
- How do YOU make others laugh?
- Now what?
- Bibliography
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Humor--why should you use it?

Anyone can be funny, right?

How do YOU make others laugh?

Now what?
1. Reduce Anxiety
2. Increase Learning
3. Improve Communication

Humor is a catalyst for classroom "magic".
Reduce Anxiety

Participants:
• 206 junior/senior university students, 65 different institutions
• 128 university teachers, 14 Arkansas universities.

Procedure:
• Faculty poll: thirteen-part questionnaire
• Student poll: same thirteen-part questionnaire & example of how a teacher used humor effectively.

Results:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Students agree/strongly agree</th>
<th>Professors agree/strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Relieve Stress</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gain Attention</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create Healthy Learning</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Whitney, Kelly W. "Teachers report of how they used humor with students perceived use of such humor." Education 122, no. 2 (2003): 337-347.
Increase Learning

Participants:
- 508 undergraduate students from San Diego State University.
  - Separated into classes of 23 - 45 students

Procedure:
- Received lecture with relevant humor or lecture without humor.

Conclusion:
- Humor improved retention of the material up to six weeks after initial lecture.
- Recall increased for only those based on humorous examples.
Humor is a catalyst for classroom “magic.”

1. Reduce Anxiety
2. Increase Learning
3. Improve Communication
Is there a humor gene?

Participants:
- 127 pairs of female twins
- 71 identical twins (100% identical DNA)
- 56 fraternal twins, (share only 50% DNA)

Procedure:
- In separate rooms, twins were to rate comic strips 0-10, 10 being absolutely hilarious.
Conclusion:

- NO genetic factor to what people think is funny.

"If you don't have a sense of humor, it's just not funny!"

"I don't get it."
"Humor doesn't come to everyone, but everyone can work to develop a humorous approach to teaching."

Antony Brewerton, Oxford Brooks University

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Humor Styles Questionnaire

People experience and express humor in many different ways. Below is a list of statements describing different ways in which humor might be experienced. Please read each statement carefully, and indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with it. Please respond as honestly and objectively as you can. Use the following scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Totally Disagree</th>
<th>Moderately Disagree</th>
<th>Slightly Disagree</th>
<th>Neither Agree nor Disagree</th>
<th>Slightly Agree</th>
<th>Moderately Agree</th>
<th>Totally Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. I don't have to work very hard at making other people laugh -- I seem to be a naturally humorous person.
2. If I am feeling depressed, I can usually cheer myself up with humor.
3. If someone makes a mistake, I will often tease them about it.
4. I let people laugh at me or make fun of my expenses more than I should.
5. I make other people laugh by telling funny stories about myself.
6. My humorous outlook on life keeps me from getting overly upset or depressed about things.
7. People are offended or hurt by my sense of humor.
8. I will often get carried away in putting myself down if it makes my family or friends laugh.
9. I laugh and joke a lot with my friends.
10. If I'm by myself and I'm feeling unhappy, I make an effort to think of something funny to cheer myself up.
11. Sometimes I think of something that is so funny that I can't keep myself from saying it.
12. I often go overboard joking or trying to be funny.
13. I enjoy making people laugh.
14. It is my experience situations are often a lot more enjoyable when people are laughing.
15. Sometimes people are doing it just to please me.
16. If I'm having a good time joking around, I really feel I'm having a good time.
17. I have no problem being the center of attention.
18. I don't need to use humor for the situation.
19. If I don't like a joke, I just let it go.
20. Letting others family in get

Scoring Instructions for Humor Measures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Affiliative Humor</th>
<th>Self-Enhancing Humor</th>
<th>Aggressive Humor</th>
<th>Self-Defeating Humor</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>1.</td>
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<td>13.</td>
<td>14.</td>
<td>15.</td>
<td>16.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>18.</td>
<td>19.</td>
<td>20.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total: Total: Total: Total:
Affiliative humor: use of humor to facilitate relationships and reduce interpersonal tensions.

Examples?

Anecdote?

witty banter
affirming of Self & others
attraction
interpersonal cohesiveness
cheerfulness

jokes
extraversion
positives moods and emotions
not taking themselves overly seriously

intimacy
relationship satisfaction
Affiliative humor: use of humor to facilitate relationships and reduce interpersonal tensions.

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relationship satisfaction
Self-enhancing humor: use of humor to maintain humorous perspective even in the face of stress.

Examples? Anecdote?

- humorous outlook on life
- coping humor
- emotion regulation
- intrapsychic focus

Sigmund Freud:

"Healthy defense mechanism that allows one to avoid negative emotions while maintaining a realistic perspective on potentially aversive situation."

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sigmund_Freud
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Aggressive humor: use of humor to enhance the self at the expense of others.

Negative
- ridicule
- put-down
- derision

Positive
- satire
- sarcasm
- teasing

Examples? Anecdote?
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Examples? Anecdote?
Self-defeating humor: use of humor to enhance relationships at the expense of self.

Examples? Anecdote?
Self-defeating humor: use of humor to enhance relationships at the expense of self.

Examples? Anecdote?
Questions?
Comments?
Suggestions?