

# Teaching is Too Important to Take Seriously

## CLASSROOM IDEAS AND ACTIVITIES

THESE ACTIVITIES AND IDEAS ARE LISTED IN ORDER TO SPARK YOUR CREATIVITY. THEY ARE ALL ACTIVITIES I HAVE SEEN OR USED MYSELF.

WE START OFF WITH IDEAS THAT ARE DIVIDED INTO THE FIVE FINGERS OF LAUGHTER, WHICH ARE BOTH IDEAS FOR YOUR CLASSROOM AND YOUR LIFE. THIS IS FOLLOWED BY A LISTING OF SEVERAL OTHER ACTIVITIES YOU CAN USE IN YOUR CLASSROOM.

### LAUGHTER IS GOOD

- ☞ MAKE DISCIPLINE WRITING ASSIGNMENTS INTO HUMOROUS EXAGGERATIONS
- ☞ WHEN KEEPING STUDENTS IN DETENTION, PLAY OLD BAD MUSIC
- ☞ PLAN LAUGH BREAKS AS AN INCENTIVE

### PRACTICE PHWH

- ☞ SING, HUM OR WHISTLE TO YOURSELF
- ☞ DANCE (EVEN IN THE CLASSROOM)
- ☞ WATCH A SILLY MOVIE WITH NO REDEEMING VALUE (AIRPLANE! OR YOUNG FRANKENSTEIN ARE GOOD STARTS)
- ☞ LISTEN TO A "WACKY" DISC JOCKEYS ON THE WAY TO WORK
- ☞ PLAN TIME TO DOODLE
- ☞ PLAN TO WATCH A SUNRISE OR A SUNSET
- ☞ PLAN A DAYDREAM
- ☞ CREATE YOUR OWN STRATEGIES BY FOLLOWING THE ATTACHED LAUGHTER EXERCISE PLAN
- ☞ PLAY BOARD GAMES WITH FAMILY OR FRIENDS
- ☞ PLAN TIME TO PLAY WITH YOUR CHILDREN (OR GRANDCHILDREN)
- ☞ PLAN TIME TO PLAY LIKE A CHILD (PLAY WITHOUT ABANDON)

### SMILE! DAMN IT! SMILE!

- ☞ SMILE AND TELL PEOPLE TO "HAVE A GOOD DAY!" - ENOUGH SAID.

### ALLOW YOURSELF TO LAUGH

- ☞ INTENTIONALLY MAKE MISTAKES
- ☞ GIVE SOME KIND OF CREDIT TO STUDENTS WHO CATCH YOUR MISTAKES (ONLY GIVE CREDIT IF THEY CATCH YOUR MISTAKES AND NOT OTHER STUDENTS.)
- ☞ PURPOSELY STUMBLE OVER WORDS
- ☞ WHEN YOU MAKE A MISTAKE TALKING, EXAGGERATE IT
- ☞ WHEN SOMETHING FUNNY HAPPENS IN YOUR CLASS, LAUGH AND LET THE STUDENTS SEE YOU LAUGH. (ONLY DO THIS IF THE HUMOR IS NOT DEGRADING TO ANOTHER PERSON.)

## LAUGH AT THE WORLD AROUND YOU

- ☞ TELL AMUSING STORIES OF YOUR LIFE
- ☞ KEEP A FILE OF FUNNY ITEMS, ESPECIALLY IF IT PERTAINS TO YOUR SUBJECT
- ☞ KEEP TRACK OF FUNNY THINGS SAID IN CLASS
- ☞ USE STUDENTS OR TEACHERS NAMES WHEN CREATING QUESTIONS OR PROJECTS
- ☞ KEEP A BULLETIN BOARD OF FUNNY THINGS FROM THE NEWSPAPERS, MAGAZINES, THE INTERNET, ETC.
  
- ☞ POST FUNNY STORIES OUT OF TABLOIDS LIKE THE WEEKLY WORLD NEWS
- ☞ KEEP A CARTOON COLLECTION AND ASK STUDENTS TO CONTRIBUTE
- ☞ WHEN IN DOUBT, READ OUT LOUD THE NEWSPAPER COMIC STRIPS
- ☞ DO SOMETHING TOTALLY UNEXPECTED IN CLASS, ESPECIALLY WHEN STUDENTS START TO LOSE INTEREST.
- ☞ FIND A "HEMI". FIND SOMETHING THAT DEFINES YOU, WHETHER IT IS FUNNY TIES, T-SHIRTS OR A COLLECTION OF SOMETHING
- ☞ KEEP A FILE OF STUDENT EXCUSES.
- ☞ CHALLENGE STUDENTS TO ADD TO THE STUDENT EXCUSE FILE.
- ☞ CREATE FUNNY AWARDS TO GIVE TO STUDENTS THROUGHOUT THE YEAR FOR THINGS LIKE WHEN A STUDENT ACHIEVES THEIR PERSONAL BEST.
- ☞ EXCLUDE WORDS I.E. ALGEBRA, ONLY SAY "THE A WORD" OR IN ENGLISH "THE G WORD" GRAMMAR.
- ☞ EXAGGERATE WORDS
- ☞ TEACH THE TEACHER - WHERE STUDENTS TEACH YOU A NEW SKILL
- ☞ REPEAT WORDS AND TOPICS OVER AND OVER
- ☞ ALWAYS HAVE SOMETHING TO WRITE WITH YOU IN ORDER TO WRITE DOWN HUMOROUS THINGS THAT YOU SEE HAPPEN.
- ☞ USE MUSIC
  - PLAY FUNNY OR UNUSUAL MUSIC DURING WORK TIME.
  - (FOR EXAMPLE PLAY DIFFERENT WORLD MUSIC.)
  - PLAY SPECIAL MUSIC THAT FITS THE ACTIVITY IN THE CLASSROOM.
  - (FOR EXAMPLE, "PHANTOM OF THE OPERA" FOR A FINAL.)
  - HAVE STUDENTS MAKE UP SONGS FOR TOPICS USING NURSERY RHYMES OR OTHER WELL KNOWN MUSIC.
- ☞ USE PROPS - SOME OF THE ONES I HAVE SEEN ARE:
  - FUNNY NOSE
  - FUNNY NOSE AND GLASSES
  - FUNNY HAT
  - FUNNY CLOTHES INCLUDING T-SHIRTS AND TIES THAT FIT THE SUBJECT
  - MAGIC WAND TO MAGICALLY QUIET A CLASS
  - EGG TIMER OR HORN FOR REVIEW GAMES
  - BASKETBALL WHISTLE TO CALL FOULS DURING ACTIVITIES
  - REFEREE FLAG TO CALL PENALTIES DURING ACTIVITIES
  - BIG FUZZY DICE
  - PLASTIC HORN
  - DANCING COWS (DON'T ASK)
  - CONCRETE DUCKS
  - TWISTER WHEEL TO USE TO MAKE CLASS DECISIONS LIKE POP QUIZZES.
  - TUXEDO JACKETS FOR REVIEW GAMES
  - MOST ANYTHING THAT IS NOT USUALLY SEEN IN A CLASSROOM WILL WORK AS LONG AS YOU MAKE IT YOUR OWN.

# Teaching is Too Important to Take Seriously

## OTHER ACTIVITIES YOU CAN USE IN YOUR CLASSROOM

- ✍️ HAVE STUDENTS CREATE COMIC STRIPS AS A REPORT
- ✍️ HAVE STUDENTS TEACH A PORTION OF THE CLASS
- ✍️ GIVE POINTS FOR CREATIVITY IN PROJECTS AND PRESENTATIONS
- ✍️ HAVE STUDENTS CREATE SONGS OR RAPS ABOUT TOPICS
- ✍️ CREATE SILLY SONGS OR RAPS AS MEMORY TOOLS
- ✍️ USE "TEACH THE TEACHER" WHERE STUDENTS TEACH YOU A NEW SKILL SINCE YOU ARE TEACHING THEM SOMETHING NEW THEY GET A TURN AT TEACHING YOU SOMETHING NEW. THIS IS ONE OF MY FAVORITE WAYS TO BRING LAUGHTER INTO THE CLASSROOM.
- ✍️ PUT FUNNY QUESTIONS ON QUIZZES AND TESTS
- ✍️ USE FUNNY SENTENCES ON SPELLING TESTS
- ✍️ READ A JOKE OF THE DAY AND LET STUDENTS CONTRIBUTE
- ✍️ HAVE A TOP JOKE OF THE WEEK CONTEST WHERE STUDENTS RATE JOKES IN AN OLYMPIC SCORING SYSTEM.
- ✍️ HAVE STUDENTS CREATE TOP TEN LIST OF WHY THEY WILL USE YOUR SUBJECT OR TOPIC IN LIFE.
- ✍️ HAVE STUDENTS USE THEIR BODIES TO MAKE THE DIFFERENT SUBJECT SHAPES, I.E. A QUESTION MARK, AN ALGEBRAIC EQUATION.
- ✍️ "REPLAY" NEGATIVE CLASS MOMENTS IN AN EXAGGERATED POSITIVE WAY.
- ✍️ CREATE A SCAVENGER HUNT FOR A BOOK FOR A READING ASSIGNMENT
- ✍️ ASSIGN A PROJECT WHERE STUDENTS DESIGN A HUMOROUS ADVERTISING CAMPAIGN TO PROMOTE A POINT OF VIEW. FOR EXAMPLE A HUMOROUS ANTI-SMOKING CAMPAIGN FOR HEALTH CLASSES.
- ✍️ ART TEACHERS CAN HAVE STUDENTS STUDY A SECTION ON CARTOONING OR START A CARTOONING CLUB. (THIS CAN BE A GREAT CROSS-CURRICULAR ACTIVITY WITH SOCIAL STUDY CLASSES)
- ✍️ LANGUAGE ARTS TEACHERS CAN SPONSOR A COMEDY WRITING CLUB
- ✍️ HAVE A PROBLEM OF THE DAY (OR WEEK) WHERE YOU GIVE CLASSROOM MONEY AS PRIZES. AT THE END OF EACH GRADING SESSION HAVE AN AUCTION WHERE STUDENTS CAN BY SILLY PRIZES OR EXTRA ITEMS. THE SILLIER AND CHEAPER THE PRIZES THE BETTER THIS WORKS. I HAVE SEEN THIS USED UP THROUGH HIGH SCHOOL AND IT ALWAYS WORKS.
- ✍️ GIVE POINTS FOR CREATIVITY FOR PROJECTS.
  - POSSIBLE GRADING RUBRIC - EQUAL POINTS FOR THE FOLLOWING
  - ACCURACY
  - DETAIL
  - CREATIVITY (ORIGINALITY)
  - ORGANIZATION
  - PRESENTATION
- ✍️ ALSO BE CREATIVE IN YOUR PROJECTS. FOR EXAMPLE SOME OF MY FAVORITE PROJECTS I HAVE SEEN INCLUDE:
  - THE VIDEO ADVENTURES OF DOGMAN
  - THE PROJECT WITH TWO BRAINS
    - STUDENTS HAD A CHOICE OF A PROJECT WHERE THEY WOULD USE THEIR LEFT SIDE OF THEIR BRAIN OR THE RIGHT SIDE OF THEIR BRAIN.
  - DO VAMPIRES REALLY EXIST?
  - HARRY & SALLY GO TO MCDONALD'S

**☞ PLAY GAMES FOR REVIEW.**

**THIS HAS BEEN A GREAT WAY TO BRING LAUGHTER INTO THE CLASSROOM WHILE AT THE SAME TIME BEING A FANTASTIC WAY TO REVIEW TOPICS RIGHT BEFORE A TEST. BELOW ARE SOME EXAMPLES I HAVE SEEN USED IN CLASSES.**

**JEOPARDY**

**THERE ARE GREAT FREE ONLINE JEOPARDY SET-UPS.**

**CHALKBOARD FOOTBALL**

**HAVE A LIST OF RUN QUESTIONS AND PASS QUESTIONS FOR TEAMS TO CHOOSE FROM AND THEN BASIC FOOTBALL FIRST DOWN RULES**

**PAPER WAD BASKETBALL (IN THE TRASHCAN)**

**SIMILAR TO FOOTBALL, BUT HAVE 2 AND 3 POINT QUESTIONS**

**WHO WANTS TO BE AN A STUDENT?**

**ALSO FREE VERSIONS ONLINE**

**BEAT THE TEACHER**

**RACING THE TEACHER TO ANSWER QUESTIONS**

**BINGO**

**PUT ANSWERS ON CARDS AND STUDENTS COVER THEM UP WHEN YOU GIVE THE QUESTION THAT MATCHES.**

**TIC TAC TOE**

**SIMILAR TO BINGO**

**BATTLESHIP - FOR MATH CLASSES**

**BALDERDASH - FOR ENGLISH CLASSES**

**CHARADES**

**PICTIONARY**

**\$20,000+ PYRAMID**

**FEAR FACTORING**

**CONCENTRATION**

**SURVIVOR,**

**OR MAKE A GAME BASED ON ANY REALITY SHOW OR BOARD GAME.**

## RESOURCES AND BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Berk, R.A. "Student ratings of 10 strategies for using humor in college teaching."  
*Journal of Excellence in College Teaching*, 1996
- Berk, R.A. *Professors are from Mars and Students are from Snickers*.  
Madison, WI: Mendota Press, 1998
- Berk, R.A. "Does Humor in Course Tests Reduce Anxiety and Improve  
Performance?" *College Teaching*, 2000
- Bryant, J. and Zillman, D. "Using Humor to Promote Learning in the Classroom"  
*Journal of Children in Contemporary Society*. Vol. 20 No. 1-2, pg 49-77,  
1988
- Burgess, Ron, Nelson, Cynthia, and Dryer, Darsi *Laughing Lessons: 149 2/3 Ways  
to make Teaching and Learning Fun*. Free Spirit Publishing, 2000
- "Center for Preventative Cardiology Humor Study"  
[www.theage.com.au/breaking/0011](http://www.theage.com.au/breaking/0011)
- Civikly, J.M. "Humor and the Enjoyment of College Teaching" *New Directions  
for Teaching and Learning*. No. 26, June 1986
- Civikly-Powell, Jean. "The Lighter Side of Learning". *NEA Advocate Online*.  
August 1999
- Cousins, Norman. *Anatomy of an Illness*. New York: Bantam Books, 1979
- Dickinson, Dee. "Humor and the Multiple Intelligences" *New Horizons for  
Learning*, 2002 ([www.newhorizons.org](http://www.newhorizons.org))
- Dieter, Ron. "Why use humor in the Classroom?" *Iowa State University Center  
for Teaching Excellence Newsletter* Vol 11, No. 2 Nov/Dec
- Droz, Marilyn *Laughing While Learning: Using Humor in the Classroom*.  
Sopris West, 1996
- Fiegelson, Sheila. *Energize Your Meetings with Laughter*. Association for  
Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1998.
- Gadanidis, George, Gadanidis, Janette M., and Huang, Alyssa Y. "Using Humor  
To Gain Math Insight." *Mathematics Teacher in the Middle School*.  
Dec 04/Jan 05, Vol. 10, no. 5
- Gertz, Kathryn Rose. "Why Laughter is Good for You." *Family Circle*  
January 18, 2005
- Goldin, E. and Bordan, T. "The Use of Humor in Counseling: The Laughing Cure"  
*Journal of Counseling and Development*, 1999

- Gorham, Joan and Christopel, Dianne. "The Relationship of Teacher's use of Humor in the Classroom to Immediacy and Student Learning" *Communication Education* Vol 39 No. 1, Jan 1990
- Herbert, Patrick J. "Humor in the Classroom: Theories, Functions and Guidelines" ERIC Doc ED336789, 1991
- Hill, Deborah. *Humor in the Classroom: A Handbook for Teachers (and Other Entertainers)* Charles C Thorne Publications LTD, 1988
- Klein, Allen. "How Can You Laugh at a Time Like This?" *Association for Applied and Therapeutic Humor* October 2001
- Jacobson, Arlene, editor, "A Hearty Laugh", *Courier-Journal*. Louisville, KY. March 31. 2005, pg H1
- Loomis, Diane and Kolberg, Karen. *The Laughing Classroom: Everyone's Guide To Teaching with Humor and Play*. Tiburon, CA:HJ Kramer Inc, 1993
- Lundberg, Elaine M. and Thurston, Cheryl Miller. *If They Are Laughing...* Ft. Collins, CO: Cottonwood Press, Inc., 1992
- "Make Me Laugh: Using Humor in the Classroom" *Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development Online*. 2001
- Marzano, R., Marzano, J., Pickering, D. *Classroom Management that Works: Research-Based Strategies for Every Teacher*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD 2003
- Marzano, R., Pickering, D., Pollock, J. *Classroom Instruction that Works: Research-Based Strategies for Increasing Student Achievement* Alexandria, VA: ASCD 2001
- Medgyes, Peter. *Laughing Matters: Humor in the Language Classroom* Cambridge University Press, 2002
- Miller, Dr. Michael. "Center for Preventative Cardiology Report on Humor" University of Maryland, 11/14/2000
- Moldavan, C. "Tips for Beginners:Attention Getters...". *Mathematics Teacher* Vol. 86, No. 4, pg 297, April 1993
- Moody, R.A.. *Laugh After Laugh: The Healing Power of Humor*. Jacksonville, FL, Headwater Press 1978
- Ortman. Mark. *The Teacher's Book of Wit: Quips, Quotes and Anecdotes to Make Learning More Fun*. Wise Owl Publications, 1996
- Parsons, J.R. "Competency-Based Teaching education Module No. 2499 on Classroom Humor". *Contemporary Education*. Vol. 48, No. 2, pgs 110-111, 1977

- Paulson, Terry. *Making Humor Work*. Los Altos, CA:Crisp Publishing 1989
- Pollio, H.R. B., Charlene Kubo. "Are Funny Groups Good at Solving Problems? A Methodological Evaluation and Some Preliminary Results" *Small Group Behavior*, Vol. 14, No. 4, Pg 379-404, Nov. 1983
- Powell, J.P.A., L.W. "humor and Teaching in Higher Education". *Studies in Higher Education* Vol. 10, No. 1, pg 79-90, 1985
- Recker, Nancy "Humor in Life"  
[www.ag.ohio-state.edu/~online/hug-fact/5000/5219.htm](http://www.ag.ohio-state.edu/~online/hug-fact/5000/5219.htm)
- Shade, Richard A. *License to Laugh: Humor in the Classroom*. Englewood, CO: Teachers Ideas Press, 1996
- Sowell, Carol "Is Laughter the Best Medicine?"  
[www.mdusa.org/publicationn/quest/q34laughter.html](http://www.mdusa.org/publicationn/quest/q34laughter.html)
- Sylwester, Robert. *A biological brain in a Cultural Classroom: Applying Biological Research to Classroom Management* Corwin Press, 2000
- Teven, J.J. and McCrosky, James C. "The Relationship of the Perceived Teacher Caring with Student Learning and Teacher Evaluation" *Communication Education* Vol. 46, No. 9, 1997
- Thweatt, Katherine S. and McCrosky, James C. "Teacher Nonimmediacy and Misbehavior: Unintentional Negative Communication". *Communication Research Reports* Vol. 13, No. 2, pgs 198-204, 1996
- Weaver, Richard and Cotrell, Howard. "Ten Specific Techniques for Developing Humor in the Classroom" *Education* Vol 108 No. 2 Winter 1987 pg 187