Using Appropriate Humor to Enhance Teaching and Learning

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teacher
(noun)
a person who helps you solve problems you'd never have without them.
Outline

• What is humor anyway?
• Why use humor in teaching?
• Do you have any tips for using humor effectively?
• Do you have any examples?
• Does humor work?
So, what is humor anyway?

“Humor is the result of the expected running head-long into the unexpected.”

• (Me, about a month ago)
"Now that desk looks better. Everything's squared away, yessir, squaaaaared away."
Why use humor in teaching?

WOW! This professor is like a real person!

BACON!

I am super engaged right now!!!!

• Interest
• Engagement
• Memorable
• Positive Affect
The powerful emotion of humor engages students, encourages them [students] to think, promotes learning, and serves as a bridge between educators and students in a joyful manner.


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Additional reasons I use humor

• I teach . . .
  – Technical courses
  – Math intensive
  – Required of all department majors
    • Agricultural Communications
    • Agricultural Leadership
    • Agricultural Education
    • Agricultural Systems Management
Any tips???

• Keep focus on the subject matter
  • Humor is a tool; the subject matter is the thing!

Avoid these topics:

• Gender
• Sex
• Ethnicity
• Appearance
• Handicapping conditions
• Religion
• Politics
• Disparaging comments / Sarcasm

When in doubt, leave it out!!!!!
So . . . who can you make fun of?

You poor, poor piglet . . .

I can’t believe I lost that bet!!!

I can’t believe I lost that bet!!!
Got any examples?
Unusual or Interesting (Fun Fact)

- Have hobby: Whistling
- Most proud of: Being President of my sorority (DDD)
- # Wins 7/12
- Classically trained opera singer, can sing in 5 languages
Naked Numbers

“Mommas don’t let your numbers grow up to be naked . . .

Let ‘em be gallons and bushels and such.”
Name that Engine Part

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
Engine Parts ID Scoring

• 14 - 15 correct = Master Gearhead
• 12-13 = Gearhead
• 10 -11 = Master Mechanic
• 8 - 9 = Apprentice Mechanic
• 6 – 7 = Wrench Turner
• 4 – 5 = Wrench Loser
• 2 -- 3 = Jiffy Lube Customer
• 0 – 1 = Can’t Find Jiffy Lube
Unit-Factor Example Problem

- Water flows from the outlet of an irrigation pipe at a rate of 200 cubic inches per second. What is the flow rate in gallons per hour?

\[
\frac{3000 \text{ Gal.}}{\text{hour}} = \frac{1 \text{ gal.}}{231 \text{ in}^3} \times \frac{200 \text{ in}^3}{1 \text{ sec.}} \times \frac{60 \text{ sec.}}{1 \text{ min.}} \times \frac{60 \text{ min.}}{1 \text{ hr.}}
\]
How much wood (trees/year) would a woodchuck chuck . . . if a woodchuck could chuck wood:

• At the rate of ½ tree per hour
• Assuming an 8-hr work day and a 220 day work year
• as per the current Woodchuck Union contract.
AM I A HORSE?
A HELPFUL FLOW CHART

Are you a horse?

No -> Maybe

How many legs do you walk on?

Two -> Yes

Can you read and write?

Yes -> Liar, you're reading this

No -> You're not a horse

Four -> Yes

Really?

No -> You're not a horse

Yes -> Liar, you're reading this
Masonry Construction

Block Construction
Poured-in-place Construction
Tilt-up Construction
Are We Really Doing This???

• An Example:
  – Four-stroke cycle engine operation

![Intake](image1)
![Compression](image2)
![Power](image3)
![Exhaust](image4)

Intake    Compression    Power    Exhaust
Are We Really Doing This???
Does humor work?

- Makes class **fun** even when the topic isn’t
- Most difficult course . . . not mathematically inclined . . . **joy** to attend
- I didn’t want to miss . . . interactive and entertaining . . . felt engaged
- Takes his job seriously, but make class **fun**
- **Funny** and knows how to get the class **involved**
- Made a class I expected to **hate** one of the **best** I have **EVER** taken!
Questions . . .

Comments . . .

Complaints . . .

Anybody know a good joke?