

THE SENSE OF HUMOR

Using Humor, Laughter and Improvisation
to Train, Motivate and Inspire.

Presented by
Michael Edgar Myers



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Wavelength Teacher Comedy



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MAKING SENSE OF HUMOR

The Sense of Humor is involves

- H _____
- L _____
- C _____

HUMOR (n.)

A _____ phenomenon, personal and subjective, influenced by culture, language, intelligence, tastes, preferences, values and the mood of the moment. – *World Laughter Tour*

LAUGHTER (v.)

A _____ response to express mirth, pleasure, derision or nervousness with an audible, vocal expulsion of air from the lungs that can range from a loud burst or sound to a series of quiet chuckles, and is usually accompanied by characteristic facial and body movements.

– *Webster's Unabridged*

COMEDY (n.)

A purposeful, formulaic use of _____ to induce _____ through physical, visual or auditory stimulation.

– *Wavelength, Inc.*

The Soul of Wit

(a brief summary)

- **Humor exists without comedy;**
- **Laughter exists without humor;**
- **Comedy cannot exist without laughter (trust us)**

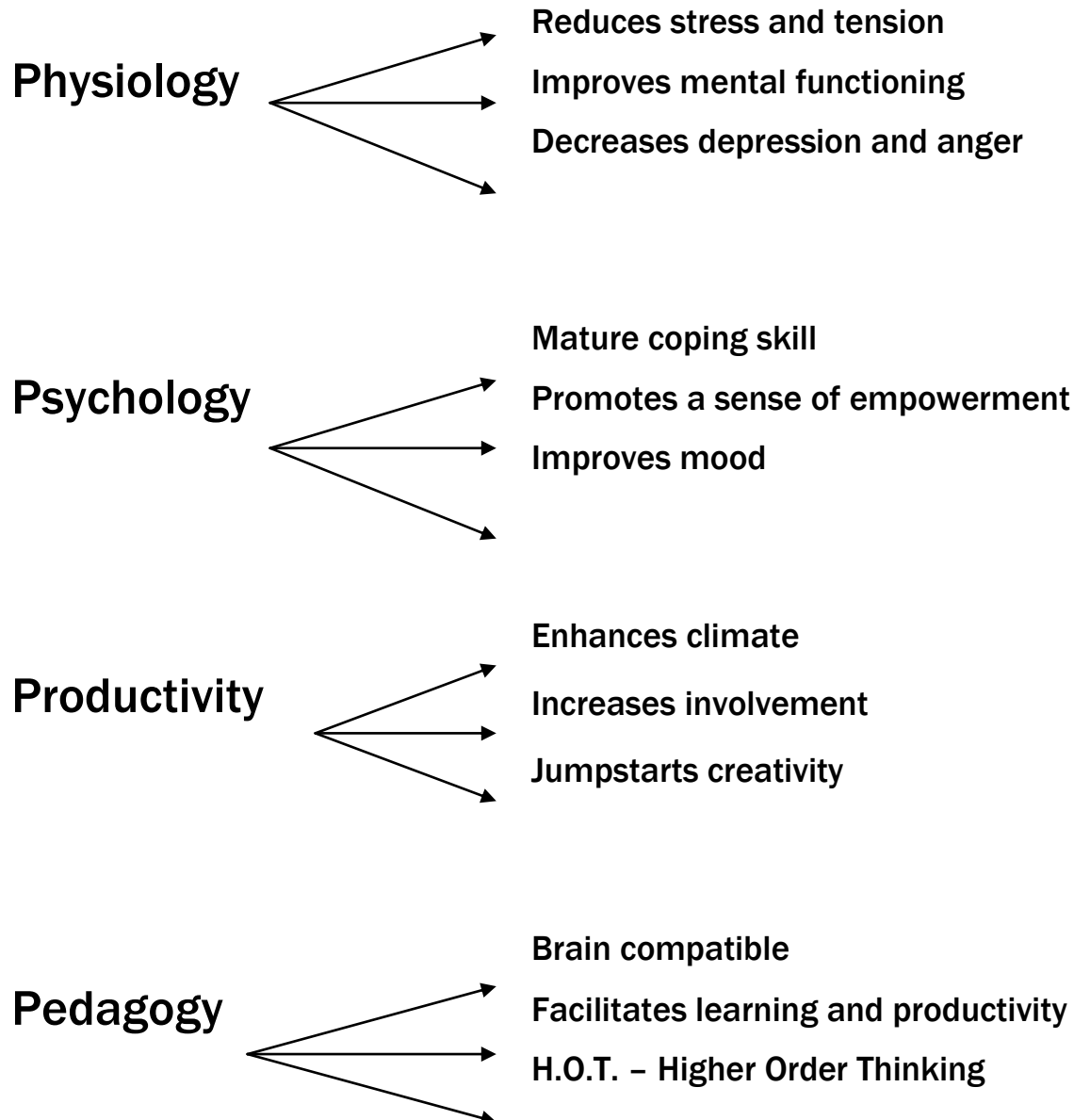
- All three may co-exist: We are born with a sense of humor and laughter; some are born with a skill for comedy.
- Laughter and comedy can be taught.
- Humor, Laughter and Comedy can be developed to form our Sense of Humor.

HUMOR'S EFFECTIVENESS

★ HAPPIER ★

★ HEALTHIER ★

★ MORE EFFECTIVE ★



THEORIES OF HUMOR

I. Incongruity Theory - (Kant, Schopenhauer)

- ❑ Multiple meanings
- ❑ Detecting ambiguities
- ❑ Sudden shift of perspective

II. Superiority Theory - (Plato, Aristotle, Descartes)

"Everything is funny as long as it's happening to someone else."

- Mark Twain

- ❑ Humor to inflate our own ego
- ❑ Humor to deflate others we feel are superior
- ❑ Seeing flaw in others as compared to ourselves

III. Relief\Release Theory - (Freud)

- ❑ Temporary freedom from our restrictions
- ❑ Rebellion against the repressive or uncontrollable
- ❑ Levity in a tense situation.

IV. Humor as a Form of Play - (Eastman)

- ❑ A reversion to childish innocence

V. Humor Exposes the Truth - (White)

- ❑ Rips away the veils of pretense
- ❑ Reveals truth of human nature and human affairs

From "License to Laugh" by Richard A. Shade

KEYS TO THE SUCCESSFUL USE OF HUMOR

I. Relationship

- Know your audience
- Tell stories with a purpose

II. Rapport

- Have an understanding of your audience's feelings
- Should be laughing with, not at someone

III. Setting

- Make sure the humor is appropriate for the space
- Humor should enhance, not distract

Areas of humor to likely avoid:

- Sexual
- Ethnic/racial
- Religious
- Hostile/Sick
- Demearing to Men/Women



From "A Laughing Place" by Christian Hageseth III, M.D.

HOW TO DEVELOP YOUR PERSONAL SENSE OF HUMOR

- ❑ Look for humor in everything

“Nothing is quite as funny as the unintended humor in reality.”

- Steve Allen

- ❑ Collect humor –

Keep a journal/file/bulletin board/library/ of:

Books	Magazines	Videos/Audio tapes	
Jokes	Stories	Cartoons	Headlines
Signs	Anecdotes	Excuses	Oxymorons

MEM’s Educational Pinterest boards

[UnCommon Core Comedy](#) [Toons](#) [Sometimes I Just Find Stuff Funny](#)
[Books on Humor & Cognitive Science](#) [Association for Applied & Therapeutic Humor](#) (AATH)

- ❑ Smile more - Lighten up - Be more playful
- ❑ Participate in humorous activities
 - Dress up for “dress-up” day
 - Create/perform in a sketch written by/for your colleagues
 - Make a presentation in costume
- ❑ Hang out with funny people - try the humor buddy system
- ❑ Use humor in your correspondence/surveys/tests
- ❑ Try out other styles/forms of humor
- ❑ Tell stories on yourself
- ❑ Have some sort of humor always at the ready



HUMOR PRACTICE

Sounds of Laughter Exercises

“Warm Up”

Ho-ho-ho

Works the Diaphragm

Ha-Ha-Ha

Works the Mouth and Jaw

He-He-He

Works the Lips and Cheeks

“Ho-Ho, Ha-Ha-Ha-Ha Dance”

Ho-ho-Ha-Ha-Ha

Ho-ho-Ha-Ha-Ha

--

Add A Clap

--

Add a Dance in Place

--

Raise Your Hands and Shout ‘Yeah’

I GOT THE HUMOR IN ME

Today I Discovered:

Something Humorous I’m Going to Try Is:

Final Words

“He who laughs, lasts.”

– Mary Pettibone Poole, author, “A Glass Eye at the Keyhole,” 1938.
(Let’s assume this idea also applies to the female pronoun.)

RESOURCES AND REFERENCES

The Association of Applied and Therapeutic Humor - Mission: "To advance the understanding and application of humor and laughter for their positive benefits." AATH provides state-of-the-art, evidence-based information about current research and practical applications of humor to education, health-care, business, and government. www.aath.org

Energize Your Meetings with Laughter. Sheila Feigelson, ASCD Publishing, 1998 www.ascd.org.

The Humor Project, Inc. Joel Goodman, Founder. (Produces annual "Positive Power of Humor" Conference.) 480 Broadway, Ste. 210, Saratoga Springs, NY 12866, (518) 587-8770 www.HumorProject.com

Improvisation for the Theatre. Viola Spolin, Northwestern U. Press, 1983

The Laughing Classroom. Loomans & Kolberg, H J Kramer, Inc., 2005

Laughing Matters: Strategies for Building a Joyful Learning Community. *Susan Stephenson & Paul Thibault, Solution Tree Press, 2006*

A Laughing Place. Christian Hageseth III, M.D., Berwick Publishing Company, 1988

License To Laugh. Richard A. Shade, Teacher Ideas Press, 1996

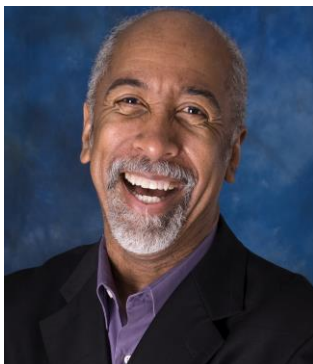
"She Who Laughs, Lasts." Article by Jim Winter in *Principal* magazine, March/April 2004. NAESP Publications. www.naesp.org

Unscripted Learning: Using Improv Activities for the K-8 Curriculum. Carrie Lobman & Matthew Lundquist, Teachers College Press, 2007

Using Humor to Maximize Learning. Mary Kay Morrison, Rowman & Littlefield Education, 2008

WAVELENGTH – Improvisational comedy ensemble using humor, laughter and spontaneity to train, motivate and inspire educational professionals. Training DVDs, CDs, interactive workshops and live performances for professional learning. www.wavelengthinc.com

World Laughter Tour - Famous for its two-day Certified Laughter Leadership workshop "to teach people enjoyable, systematic, self-care strategies." www.worldlaughtertour.com



Michael Edgar Myers is teaching artist based in Chicago. Michael's teaching artist roles include serving as an actor, director, playwright, essayist, educator and audio-book narrator.

Michael has been a member of the educational comedy troupe Wavelength since 1988, appearing in 49 states and overseas in such memorable characters as "Gen. Wormwood," the militaristic superintendent; Smith, the shell-shocked diversity teacher; Bernie, the schizophrenic principal.

Michael teaches workshops in team building, conflict management and listening, has presented at ASDC, NSCD, and AASA, and is widely known to be a former high school English *student*.