

9-2013

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

Linda Sizemore

*Eastern Kentucky University, linda.sizemore@eku.edu*

Ashley Cole

*Eastern Kentucky University, ashley.cole@eku.edu*

Follow this and additional works at: [http://encompass.eku.edu/faculty\\_staff](http://encompass.eku.edu/faculty_staff)



Part of the [Information Literacy Commons](#)

---

## Recommended Citation

Linda Sizemore and Ashley Cole. "A Joke is a Serious Thing: Using Humor In Library Instruction" Kentucky Library Association/ Kentucky ASL Joint Conference. Louisville, Kentucky. Sep. 2013.


This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the EKU Libraries at Encompass. It has been accepted for inclusion in Library Faculty and Staff Papers and Presentations by an authorized administrator of Encompass. For more information, please contact [Linda.Sizemore@eku.edu](mailto:Linda.Sizemore@eku.edu).

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

Examples?  
Anecdote?

General Theme: Greater awareness and ability to understand and regulate emotions in response to stressors

Examples:  
- humorous outlook on life  
- coping behavior  
- emotion regulation  
- intrapsychic focus



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

Examples?  
Anecdote?

General Theme: Affirmation of self or others, interdependence, interpersonal connectedness

Examples:  
- witty banter  
- affirming or self or others  
- affection  
- interpersonal connectedness  
- cheerfulness  
- relationship positivity



**Aggressive humor:**  
use of humor to enhance the self at the expense of others

Examples?  
Anecdote?

Negative:  
- ribbing  
- put-down  
- derision

Positive:  
- satire  
- sarcasm  
- teasing

**Self-defeating humor:**  
use of humor to enhance relationships at the expense of self

Examples?  
Anecdote?





linda.sizemore@eku.edu  
Name: ashley.cole@eku.edu

**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

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

Examples?  
Anecdote?

General Theme: *Use of humor to maintain humorous perspective even in the face of stress*

Examples:  
- comedian's outlook on life  
- coping behavior  
- comedian's regulation  
- satirical humor



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

Examples?  
Anecdote?

General Theme: *Use of humor to facilitate relationships and reduce interpersonal tensions*

Examples:  
- witty banter  
- self-deprecating humor  
- affection  
- interpersonal cohesiveness  
- cheerfulness

Relationships: *friendship, teamwork, attraction, interpersonal cohesiveness, relationship, intimacy, relationship, intimacy, relationship, intimacy*



**Aggressive humor:**  
use of humor to enhance the self at the expense of others

Examples?  
Anecdote?

Negative:  
- ribbing  
- put-down  
- derision

Positive:  
- satire  
- sarcasm  
- teasing

**Self-defeating humor:**  
use of humor to enhance relationships at the expense of self

Examples?  
Anecdote?




linda.sizemore@eku.edu  
Name: ashley.cole@eku.edu

# 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

[linda.sizemore@eku.edu](mailto:linda.sizemore@eku.edu)

Name: [ashley.cole@eku.edu](mailto:ashley.cole@eku.edu)

# 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?

**1** Reduce Anxiety

**2** Increase Learning

Humor is a catalyst for classroom "magic".

**Increase Learning**

**Participants:**


- 106 undergraduate students from San Diego State University
- Separated into classes of 23 - 43 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.
- **Recalls increased** for only those based on humorous examples.



**Reduce Anxiety**

**Participants:**

- 254 undergraduate university students at different institutions
- 126 laboratory teachers at Arkansas universities

**Procedure:**

- randomly split into two equal groups
- students with same behavior and questionnaire in example of how a teacher used humor effectively

**Results:**

|                               | Students | Teachers |
|-------------------------------|----------|----------|
| Students agree strongly agree | 85%      | 90%      |
| Teachers agree strongly agree | 85%      | 90%      |
| Students agree                | 10%      | 10%      |
| Teachers agree                | 10%      | 10%      |

**3** Improve Communication

# 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:

|                                     | Students agree/strongly agree | Professors agree/strongly agree |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Relieve Stress                      | 85%                           | 96%                             |
| Gain Attention                      | 85%                           | 96%                             |
| Create Healthy Learning Environment | 80%                           | 93%                             |

# Increase Learning

## Participants:

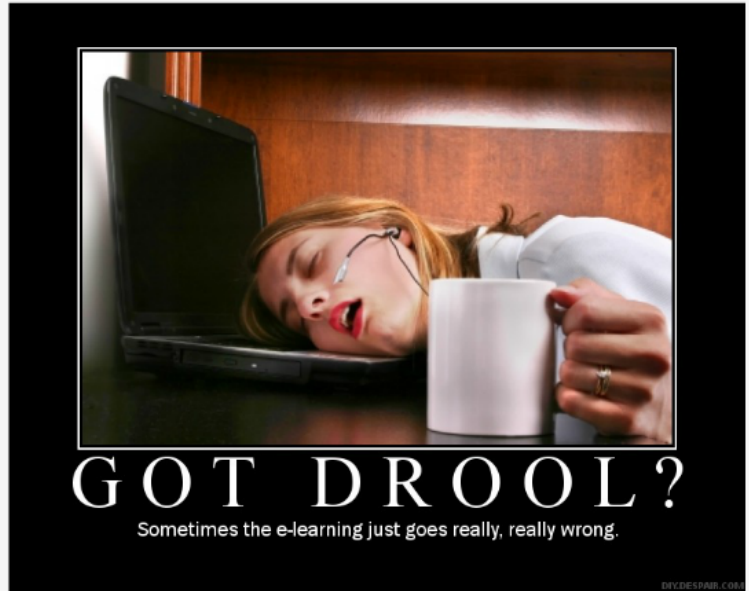
- 508 undergraduate students from San Diego State University.
- Separated into classes of 23 -45 students

## 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.



**1** Reduce Anxiety

**2** Increase Learning

Humor is a catalyst for classroom "magic".

**Increase Learning**

**Participants:**


- 106 undergraduate students from San Diego State University
- Separated into classes of 23 - 43 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.
- **Recalls increased** for only those based on humorous examples.



**Reduce Anxiety**

**Participants:**

- 254 under/graduate university students at different institutions
- 126 laboratory teachers at Arkansas universities

**Procedure:**

- randomly split into two equal groups
- students with same behavior and questionnaire in example of how a teacher used humor effectively

**Results:**

|                                  | Students agree strongly agree | Teachers agree strongly agree |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Reduce Stress                    | 85%                           | 90%                           |
| Gain Material                    | 82%                           | 88%                           |
| Gain Healthy Learning Experience | 90%                           | 90%                           |

**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:

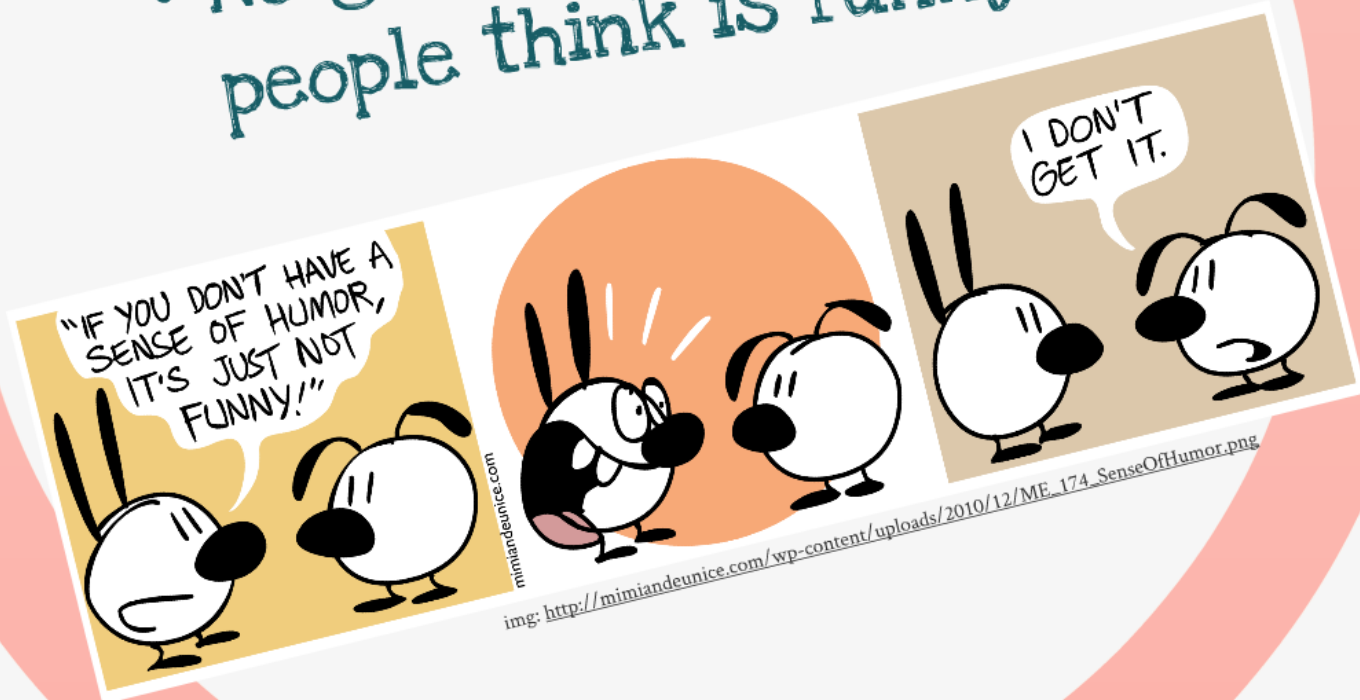
- In separate rooms, twins were to rate comic strips 0-10, 10 being absolutely hilarious.



img http://2.bp.blogspot.com/\_A1E04tCRzT/TrWmVw\_vI/AAAAAAAAAOI/kZLs0e2g/400/image014.jpg

Conclusion:

- NO genetic factor to what people think is funny.



# Learned OR Innate

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

Antony Brewerton, Oxford Brooks University

## 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.

Charles Lynn, Fran Hochberg, Alex J MacGregor, Harold Snider, and Tim D. Spector. "Happy Families: A twin study of humour." *Twin Research* 3, no. 1 (2000): 17-22.

Conclusion:

- NO genetic factor to what people think is funny.



PRACTICE

FAIL

REPEAT

### 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:

|                  |                     |                   |                            |                |                  |               |
|------------------|---------------------|-------------------|----------------------------|----------------|------------------|---------------|
| Totally Disagree | Moderately Disagree | Slightly Disagree | Neither Agree nor Disagree | Slightly Agree | Moderately Agree | Totally Agree |
| 1                | 2                   | 3                 | 4                          | 5              | 6                | 7             |

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

### Scoring Instructions for Humor Measures

| Affiliative Humor | Self-Enhancing Humor | Aggressive Humor | Self-Defeating Humor |
|-------------------|----------------------|------------------|----------------------|
| 1.                | 2.                   | 3.               | 4.                   |
| 5.                | 6.                   | 7.               | 8.                   |
| 9.                | 10.                  | 11.              | 12.                  |
| 13.               | 14.                  | 15.              | 16.                  |
| 17.               | 18.                  | 19.              | 20.                  |
| <b>Total:</b>     | <b>Total:</b>        | <b>Total:</b>    | <b>Total:</b>        |

# Affiliative humor:

use of humor to facilitate relationships and reduce interpersonal tensions.



witty banter

affirming of self & others

attraction

positives moods and emotions

interpersonal cohesiveness

cheerfulness

not taking themselves overly seriously

relationship satisfaction

jokes

extraversion

intimacy

## Examples?

## Anecdote?



YouTube

# Affiliative humor:

use of humor to facilitate relationships and reduce interpersonal tensions.



witty banter

affirming of self & others

extraversion

attraction

positives moods and emotions

intimacy

interpersonal cohesiveness

not taking themselves overly seriously

cheerfulness

relationship satisfaction

## Examples?

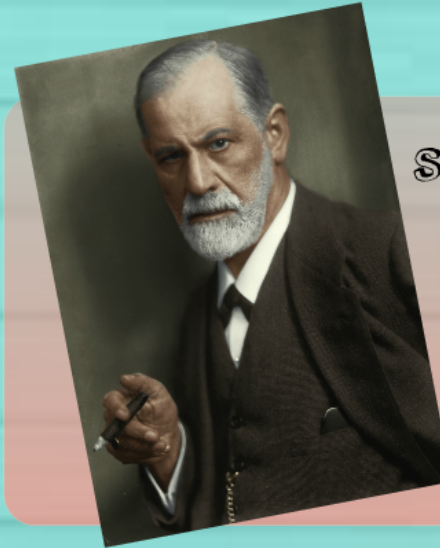
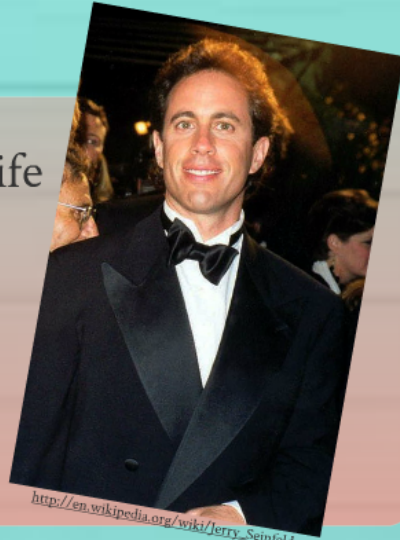
## Anecdote?

# 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."

Affili





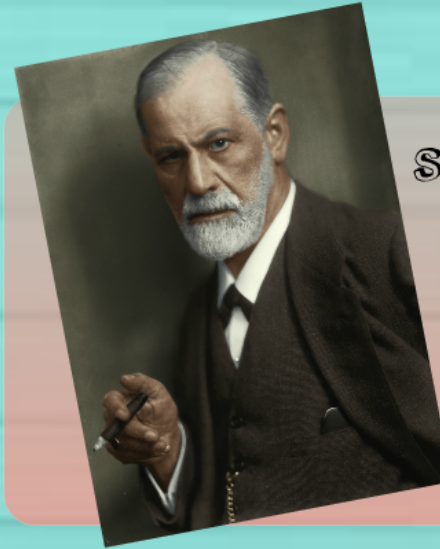
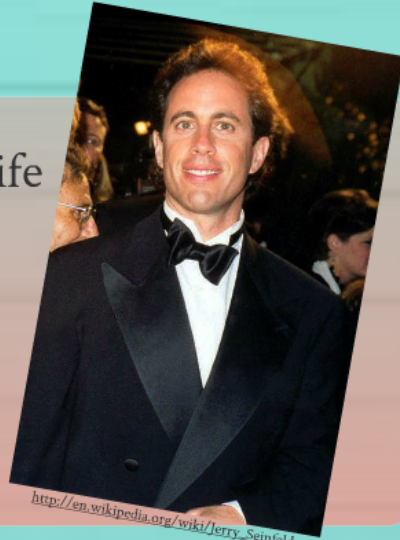
You Tube

# 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."

Affili

# 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?



YouTube

# Aggressive humor:

use of humor to enhance the self at the **expense of others.**

## Negative

- ridicule
- put-down
- derision

## Positive

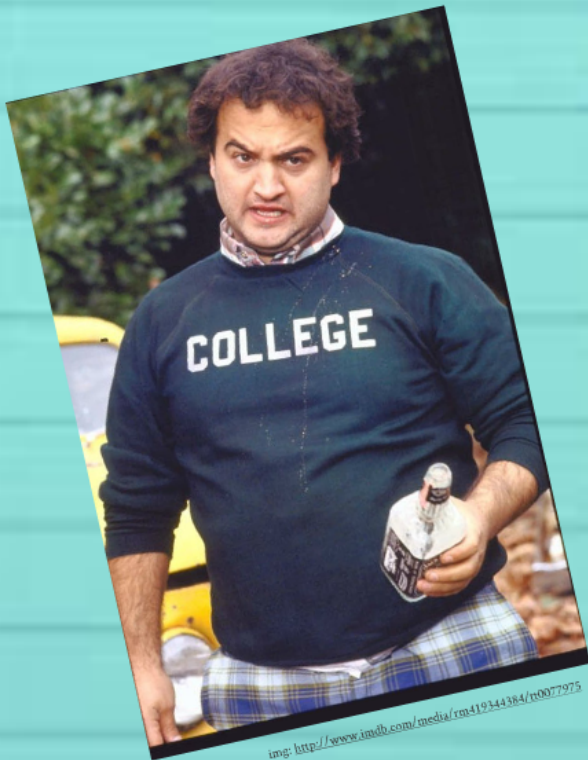
- satire
- sarcasm
- teasing

Examples?

Anecdote?

# Self-defeating humor:

use of humor to enhance relationships  
at the expense of self.



Examples?

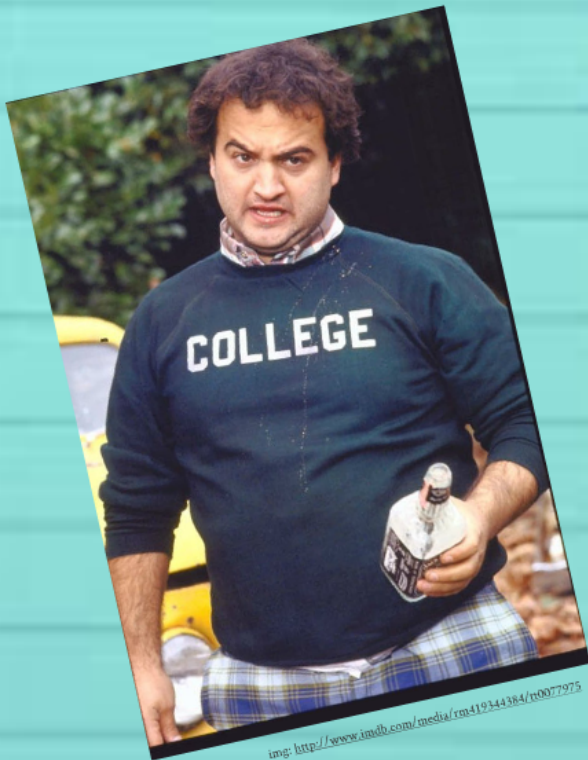
Anecdote?



YouTube

# Self-defeating humor:

use of humor to enhance relationships  
at the expense of self.



Examples?

Anecdote?





Questions?



Comments?



Suggestions?

