

**Title of Session:** Teaching Teachers - Humor and Stress

**Moderator:** Dianne Allen

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Room: Teaching Teachers Group

**DianneA:** now let's start with introductions

**DianneA:** where are you from, and what is your special area of interest in teaching

**CraigHG:** My name is Craig and I teach high school math and have for the last 6 years.

**MarysolRo:** My name is Marysol, I'm from Texas A&M-Kingsville and I am majoring in Music Education

**LyndseyZ:** Ingleside Texas and I'm doing this for my college class

**CraigHG:** I'm in Virginia.

**LucyK:** I'm Lucy and I'm from San Diego

**VanessaCB:** Hi Dianne , my name is Vanessa. I attend Texas A&M and my major is EC-4

**DianneA:** I am from Wollongong NSW Australia, and my current area of teaching interest is in professional development

**HeatherH:** I'm Heather, I'm from Texas A&M Kingsville and I'm majoring in EC-4

**AdrienneS:** Adrienne from Texas A&M Kingsville, music education major as well

**DianneA:** thanks Craig, Marysol, Lyndsey, Lucy, Vanessa, Heather, Adrienne

**AdrienneS:** Wow Australia, how are things down under?

**DianneA:** Adrienne - cold and windy

**AdrienneS:** well it's been rainy down in south Texas

**AdrienneS:** its winter for you guys right?

**RyanDL:** hello my name is Ryan Lincoln I'm from Austin Tx and I love sociology

**DianneA:** Today's session of Teaching Teachers is scheduled to be focused on Humor and Stress

**DianneA** nods to Adrienne

**DianneA:** thanks Ryan

**DianneA:** and as Craig is interested ... in mentoring

**DianneA:** so let me ask another scoping question ... or two ...

**DianneA:** how many of you have been mentored?

**MarysolRo:** I have

**DianneA:** how many of you are mentoring at the moment?

**CraigHG:** I have.

**LyndseyZ:** me

**LucyK** raises hand

**RyanDL:** me

**CraigHG:** I am mentoring.

**HeatherH:** me

**LucyK** . o O ( not mentoring at the moment, but have been mentored )

**AdrienneS:** been mentored

**VanessaCB:** Not mentoring at the moment

**DianneA:** Wow!

**DianneA:** a group of experts whichever way you look at it

**DianneA:** I work on the basis that if you have been mentored, or if you are mentoring you know a lot, from experience, about mentoring

**VanessaCB:** well I'm interested in mentoring

**RyanDL:** me to

**DianneA:** now another one scoping question ... what for you is your concern with mentoring and with humour and with stress?

**MarysolRo:** what do you mean

**DianneA:** thanks Marysol

**BjB . o O** ( most people probably don't think stress is very funny ;-)

**RyanDL:** my concern is giving the wrong information to the student.....

**LucyK:** For myself, though I've been mentored before - it was not a very formal process - and I'm curious how it is suppose to work

**DianneA:** I am being obscure again!

**DianneA:** Let me fill in some of my interest in this topic

**DianneA:** First I am supposed to be presenting a session at this year's Festival on 25 July on humour and stress

**DianneA:** And I was hoping to get some ideas from you today about what might be most relevant for such a discussion

**MarysolRo:** My concern would be making sure what I'm trying to tell the student stays in their head

**LyndseyZ:** I agree with Ryan what if you say the wrong thing

**DianneA:** second I have recently been observing some students undertaking masters studies in clinical psychology

**OmarR :** I think that humor is a great tool to relieve stress

**CraigHG:** I feel like when I mentor my mentees come to me with so many problems that I never get to see them or communicate to them the humours side of teaching.

**DianneA:** and their presenter has focused on stress as a professional issue

**VanessaCB:** I think a concern would be how to be able to deal with the "stress" of mentoring

**DianneA:** and about how they try and handle it

**VanessaCB:** you can't be stressed out and be mentor

**JosephA:** I am teaching my twelve year old cousin how to effectively write a story, she couldn't come up with anything she thought was interesting so I had her play The Sims 2 and go from there. Some things she comes up with are pretty funny.

**DianneA:** Craig, do you have a humorous story about teaching that you can share with us?

**OmarR :** some people deal with stress in so many different ways

**DianneA** nods to Omar

**OmarR :** hahaha

**VanessaCB:** what was the outcome Dianne

**DianneA:** can I ask you, how do you deal with stress Omar?

**OmarR :** I go fishing

**JosephA:** Fishing is relaxing.

**RyanDL:** I just go in my room and go to sleep..

**VanessaCB:** ha ha...I do the same thing

**DianneA** remembers fishing as very therapeutic, and from my childhood experience of 'holidays'

**VanessaCB:** or my favorite I go shopping

**MarysolRo:** fishing is always fun

**JosephA:** I sing, sing as loud as I can and all the stress and frustration seems to go away. Of course nobody is around when I do it.

**OmarR :** the sound of the water I think is what does it for me, the sound of the waves

**DianneA** grins to Joseph

**AdrienneS:** lying down and listening to music helps me relieve stress

**HeatherH:** I clean and do dishes...which I hate doing the most so it's kinda odd

**AdrienneS:** going to the beach is also great

**DianneA:** interesting .. the role of music ... that is one of my important emotional outlets too

**OmarR:** clean and do dishes, that's unusual

**AdrienneS:** music is a powerful thing

**HeatherH:** yeah I know

**AdrienneS:** Heather, you clean?

**CraigHG:** I was mentoring a new teacher while she was teaching a history class. She was so nervous at the sight of me jotting down things that instead of saying the British flag, she said the British fag. Most of the kids did not get the joke, but she realized she did not have to be perfect and when she began mentoring later in her career she always came back to that story. Humor got her through a rough spot in her teaching

**HeatherH:** only when stressed!!! lol

**OmarR:** hahaha, I hate to do the dishes

**AdrienneS:** hahaaa that's funny

**RyanDL:** me to

**HeatherH:** it's my least fav thing to do but when stressed I can just concentrate on that and nothing else

**DianneA:** sometimes the cleaning process is about managing and preparing for the future, I do it from time to time, once upon a time when I was younger it seemed to coincide with my monthly cycle

**AdrienneS:** hah

**HeatherH:** lol

**CraigHG:** I often think we don't laugh enough at the little things that make our jobs that much more unique than everyone else's

**RyanDL:** some people smoke a lot when stressing..

**LucyK:** I've been doing a lot of cleaning and organizing as well Dianne

**AdrienneS:** sometimes it's the little things that can really brighten your day

**DianneA:** Craig's story has included a word joke ...

**DianneA:** has anyone else got a story of the humorous side of teaching?

**RyanDL:** no

**OmarR :** laughing and smiling is a great stress reliever if I can't get away

**CraigHG:** You're right about that.

**OmarR :** a comedy movie

**LyndseyZ:** I agree

**JosephA:** Well if you're funny you can usually get your students attention, they'll laugh and feel more comfortable.

**DianneA:** let me also share with you some of my other background about humour ...

**VanessaCB:** true true Joseph

**OmarR :** I agree Joseph

**MarysolRo:** yup

**CraigHG:** we are in careers where we take our work home with us, and when you can't laugh, you seem to give up

**LucyK:** If I don't laugh, I would cry Craig ;)

**OmarR :** that's right

**DianneA:** Arthur Koestler links it to creativity and play and play to creativity ... and the nature of humour, especially of ambiguous meanings of words, the pun say, is one of the forms of humour and tools of the joker

**CraigHG:** That is one of the hardest things about being in education. We all have the right mindsets, just not enough time energy money support

**VanessaCB:** amen Craig

**CraigHG:** As long as they are tears of joy :)

**DianneA:** trouble is, so far as I can see, that sometimes those sorts of jokes and humour can backfire ... the recipients don't understand

**LucyK:** That's why laughing and finding humor in things is they way to get through it.

**CraigHG:** You're right and that is where the audience has to be evaluated

**DianneA:** or some of the ambiguity lets loose something darker for the recipient than the propounder meant

**CraigHG:** if they don't get it, forget it

**VanessaCB:** yes....it's hard to know what will offend people

**LucyK:** definitely

**CraigHG:** yeah, that is the worst.

**HeatherH:** very hard

**MarysolRo:** or move on to something else they will understand

**RyanDL:** very

**LucyK:** I have some teacher friends I know I can say anything too -- others ... not so much

**DianneA:** and notice Lucy that a good laugh can transform into tears and provide the same release

**VanessaCB:** some people aren't as easygoing as others

**OmarR :** some student's do get offended

**MarysolRo:** I think as you get to know the individuals you're mentoring, you pick just what you can and can't say

**LucyK:** isn't that the truth Dianne

**RyanDL:** you're right about that

**CraigHG:** the kids are so much more than we were at their age.

**LucyK:** I find myself laughing with my students all the time!

**VanessaCB:** geez louise are they ever

**MarysolRo:** they are exposed to so very much these days

**LucyK:** Most of them are ELL and so come up with some funny stuff

**OmarR** : that's right

**CraigHG**: New teachers that come in never seem to understand that the kids are sitting in their desks for 8 hours and need someone to let loose on them even of only for a moment

**VanessaCB**: yes.....but at the same time it's what they are exposed to at home

**DianneA** nods to Craig

**HeatherH** : yeah

**AdrienneS**: yup

**CraigHG**: but again, parameters need to be set

**JosephA**: if you and your students joke a lot, then some of those jokes they come up with can be inappropriate.

**MarysolRo**: I remember those days

**LucyK**: I also have a group that comes to my class after school - homework club - and that is so important to know Craig

**DianneA**: and students have emotion and physical stresses that need releasing too

**LucyK** nods to Dianne

**CraigHG**: true, but again, setting borders from the start lets the students know you feel stress and they do too and sometimes it is ok to laugh at yourself

**VanessaCB**: but what about respect for authority

**LucyK**: Definitely!

**RyanDL**: yeah that's why they start smoking at a young age

**OmarR** : if the can sit and play video games at home for hours at a time, they can sit through the day

**AdrienneS**: but a video game sparks their interest...not school

**LucyK**: If you set up parameters at the beginning of the year and are consistent - the respect for authority comes hand in hand

**AdrienneS:** so we have to make it our job to spark their attention about what we're teaching

**CraigHG:** that needs to be implemented from the get go. I am not saying that this should occur daily, but we are humans and we mess up just like our kids.

**JosephA:** Omar, all work and no play equals very bored students, classrooms need to be fun.

**DianneA:** so if I ask you to think about an example of when humour really worked for you, as a student or a teacher, mentor or mentee, could you describe that instance for us?

**JosephA:** to a limit of course

**AdrienneS:** as long as your students know when to joke and when to be serious, the respect for you will be there but you have to show them the difference

**OmarR :** make them pretend the outcome of the lesson is like winning in the video game

**CraigHG:** You're right and that should be implemented

**CraigHG:** Respect your students and they will respect you

**MarysolRo:** Exactly

**LyndseyZ:** I agree

**RolandoM:** I agree.

**RyanDL:** I agree

**AdrienneS:** Yup, I remember I wanted respect from my teachers when I was in school

**JosephA:** I had a teacher once, who before we wrote she would share a funny story with us. That made me think about similar situations and write about them.

**AdrienneS:** still do...

**RyanDL:** if I feel that I'm not respected I'm going to get real rude

**MarysolRo:** that's the mentality of most students Ryan

**CraigHG:** I have felt that way.

**LyndseyZ:** everyone does

**VanessaCB:** yep

**RyanDL:** some people can put up with it

**DianneA:** and if I ask you to think about an example of when humour really DID NOT work for you, as a student or a teacher, mentor or mentee, could you describe that instance for us?

**JosephA:** When you feel the need to be rude, just think about why you are teaching.

**BjB:** I have an example...

**VanessaCB:** hmm...Dianne any experiences of your own?

**DianneA** listens to BJ

**BjB:** one time I was helping a Tapped In member who was teaching a class in Tapped In

**CraigHG:** You're right, many teachers that I have mentored have thought that being sarcastic was the way to go. Only the kids take such offense to it, both personally and socially that it makes for such a difficult class

**OmarR:** that's right Craig

**BjB:** one of his students was having trouble with his log in. The person was from Kansas and I commented that "we're not in Kansas any more"...

**LucyK** listens to BJ's story

**BjB:** referring to the wizard of oz

**VanessaCB:** some of those kids are sarcastic and you have to be witty

**BjB:** the instructor felt I was being very rude and reamed me up one side and down the other for putting down someone from Kansas

**OmarR:** hahaha, it was all in humor bj, you didn't mean it

**MarysolRo:** haha

**MarysolRo:** I thought that was funny

**LucyK:** but how interesting -- it's not about intent - more about impact

**BjB:** important lesson...never ASSUME that everyone understands your particular brand of humor

**CraigHG:** But I guess that shows how things can be misconstrued. I liked it though!

**VanessaCB:** I can see how that might offend somebody

**LucyK:** You are so right BJ

**RyanDL:** cool

**HeatherH:** yeah

**OmarR :** great example bj

**AdrienneS:** it all depends on the person..

**JosephA:** Bj that's understandable, it's hard to choose what's appropriate and what's not, especially if you don't know the person personally.

**VanessaCB:** true true

**LucyK:** AND if you are online and not talking to them personally

**DianneA:** any other stories to share, of good or of bad experiences of humour?

**RyanDL:** true

**VanessaCB:** people that have dry sense of humor

**AdrienneS:** I know when I meet people I'm always hesitant of what I have to say because I don't know them....once I get to know them and see how they react to things, I say what I'm thinking

**BjB** blushes...unfortunately, I have a LOT of those kinds of stories...all lessons learned about text communication...so something else to add to the mix is in what medium are you communicating? Face to face is different from text chat

**MarysolRo:** very true

**LyndseyZ:** that's why first impressions say a lot

**CraigHG:** When teachers talk of something that happened in their class, and then it gets back to the student....faculty room stuff

**MarysolRo:** texting can get very confusing

**JosephA:** I know a teacher who joked with his students when he first started teaching, by the end of the school year he let it go too far and was ready to quit. The students started attacking him personally and he didn't know what to do.

**RyanDL:** very true point

**MarysolRo:** because you can't show expression

**CraigHG:** stress reliever for us, not so good for the kids

**MarysolRo:** right, students will start picking up your personality too

**CraigHG:** I have heard of that happening to teachers. When they try to be a "friend"

**MarysolRo:** I know of a teacher that is very sarcastic with his students and he said that over the course of the year, students start picking up his humor and throwing it back in his face

**CraigHG:** Lines need to be drawn when it comes to that. I would not want someone talking to my child that way.

**JosephA:** There are students that will do that, so if you use humor in the classroom, you need to know the limits.

**VanessaCB:** I think also you have to use humor before you begin to feel "burned out"

**VanessaCB:** especially if you feel things are not going your way

**LucyK:** There is definitely a time and place for humor

**DianneA:** BTW ... I am just trying to summarise what people are saying, and I have added something to the whiteboard here in the room, you might like to add something yourself to the whiteboard ... check it out in the main window, and by refreshing your Welcome screen

**JosephA:** Humor would be good before a lecture you know will be boring.

**RyanDL:** right because you know when to use your humor

**CraigHG:** How do we as adults in the education field deal with stress?

**DianneA:** thanks Craig ...

**AdrienneS:** don't take things personal...easier said than done

**CraigHG:** I'm looking for some new ideas to help the new teachers I will be dealing with

**VanessaCB:** look forward to the weekends

**RyanDL:** I go sleep

**DianneA:** I didn't cover that but we did have a list of how we were going about that earlier

**CraigHG:** I guess more importantly, how do we keep from quitting?

**AdrienneS:** the first year is always the hardest

**DianneA:** One of the tips from the Clinical Psychologist I was mentioning is about finding out what, in the profession, constitutes it being 'fun' for you

**LucyK:** I think by staying connected with the other teachers AND with our personal life

**RyanDL:** yeah it was for me

**DianneA:** it also includes celebrating success

**JosephA:** Craig, it might help to find a good book. You know when things are getting very stressful and you feel you cannot deal with it, just go to a favorite chair and read a book.

**DianneA:** and noticing success to celebrate it

**CraigHG:** ESPN works

**AdrienneS:** communication with coworkers has to be extremely important

**CraigHG:** Does everyone see that celebration of success?

**DianneA:** what is ESPN Craig?

**AdrienneS:** they will probably understand what you're going through more than anyone else because they are there working as well

**CraigHG:** The Sports Channel...sorry being a wise guy

**RyanDL:** it's all of the highlights of sports

**DianneA:** Oh a joke on the Ozzie presenter without local knowledge!!!

**LucyK:** I agree Dianne -- focus on your successes more than the negative side of teaching

**DianneA:** about time too

**MarysolRo:** sports always get my mind off of things

**DianneA** lol

**HeatherH:** and your coworkers may be able to help you out with whatever it is

**OmarR :** I love espn, even if it's watching the highlights of the days sporting event's

**MarysolRo:** coworkers probably know some tricks to get you through the year or help you with your classroom as well

**DianneA:** the research on dealing with stress notes a number of different levels of strategies ... those that are immediate and short term relievers ...

**JosephA:** My mom watches soap operas to deal with her stress, there's a new episode every day and those people do some crazy, yet entertaining, things

**DianneA:** and those that are slower and have longer life value

**VanessaCB:** take deep breaths

**MarysolRo:** soap operas stress me out

**MarysolRo:** everyone dies and comes back!

**CraigHG:** I wish the administrators within our school realized how valuable we were to the system,

**JosephA:** Yeah they do! lol

**DianneA:** one strategy that is long life is about 'vision' - what you are doing teaching for, and where, in teaching you get your greatest buzz, and holding on to that and refreshing that

**HeatherH:** Too much drama in them! I have enough in my life thank you very much!

**LucyK:** I like that strategy Dianne

**VanessaCB:** I agree with you Dianne

**OmarR :** rest your head back on a recliner and take some deep breaths and smile

**AdrienneS:** that's what keeps my mom sane, she thinks of her students and how she helps them improve throughout the year

**DianneA:** the trouble with short term management techniques is that they can create their own problems

**CraigHG:** That is a great vision, to keep going because it is what we were made for. But that one kid makes your dreams vanish pretty quick

**AdrienneS:** Seeing improvement in a student has to be a great stress reliever

**AdrienneS:** then you know you're doing something right

**CraigHG:** Yeah that is a reason all on its own

**DianneA:** and celebrating with the student in their success Adrienne?

**LucyK:** Isn't that the truth Craig -- I had one such student this past year :(

**VanessaCB:** you always know the appreciation a student has for a teacher when they go back to the school and look for them or those pop up visits

**MarysolRo:** Think of all the positive things you are doing rather than all the negative

**JosephA:** I tutored some friends in high school, it was tough at times, but it did help to see them improve.

**LucyK:** But he was only one of many that had a number of successes!

**CraigHG:** But there can be that great class that makes you realize it is all worth it. I hang on to that and then [send] thank you cards.

**LucyK:** . o O ( amen )

**DianneA** smiles for Craig's thank you cards

**RyanDL:** thanks for the lesson Dianne I have one more

**LucyK:** I teach elementary Craig - not high school - but I have friends who teach high school and that's what they do as well

**CraigHG:** I guess we all make it through and at the end of the day we know there is a child there that will remember us for that one brief moment.

**MarysolRo:** we all have that one teacher we really remember

**HeatherH**: yep :)

**JosephA**: It must feel good for elementary teachers to see students they taught graduate from high school.

**AdrienneS**: ya

**HeatherH**: and I still visit her

**DianneA**: am I too old or does anyone else remember 1066 and all that?

**CraigHG**: What is that?

**LucyK**: 1066?

**BjB**: magna carta!

**DianneA**: a book of student bloopers

**VanessaCB**: 1066?

**DianneA**: mostly of value for sharing in the staff room rather than the class

**AdrienneS**: never heard of it

**DianneA**: I am Oz Lucy, with a British heritage!

**DianneA**: has anyone seen anything else more recent?

**LucyK** laughs with Dianne

**DianneA**: and I wonder too, about how 'regional' 'national' some humour is ...

**CraigHG**: True, I am a Northerner and Southern humor perplexes me.

**MarysolRo**: that's how we hope students will feel when they see us

**MarysolRo**: good example Dianne

**DianneA**: and I have had my most humorous TI heldesk to be my sparring partner!!!

**OmarR**: David how do you deal with stress in the class room

**DavidWe** guesses everyone knows the joke about Carnegie Hall

**DianneA** listens

**DavidWe**: I stay out of the classroom, Omar

**LucyK** . o O ( Carnegie Hall? )

**DavidWe** teaches teachers for the most part

**DianneA**: because this is a new one for me

**OmarR** : hahaha

**DavidWe**: I'm not a classroom teacher

**OmarR** : got it

**DavidWe**: So...(here's the joke)

**DavidWe**: The tourist is looking around at the corner of 57th Street and 7th Avenue and asks the smart-aleck New Yorker, "How do you get to Carnegie Hall?"

**BjB** groans

**DavidWe** hopes everyone knows that Carnegie Hall is at the southeast corner of 57th Street and 7th Avenue

**LucyK** waits patiently for punchline

**LucyK** . o O ( do now )

**DavidWe** . o O ( Bj is supposed to be helping someone in Reception and not paying attention )

**DavidWe**: and the smart-aleck New Yorker says...

**DavidWe** . o O ( anyone? )

**AdrienneS**: haha

**LucyK** and waits

**DavidWe**: P R A C T I C E

**DavidWe** . o O ( rim shot! )

**LucyK** major GROAN

**DavidWe** goes back to his corner to look up better jokes

**LucyK** . o O ( David, David, David )

**DianneA** slowly gets the point!

**DavidWe** thinks Lucy knew that one

**JosephA**: Am I the only one who doesn't get it?

**AdrienneS**: ah those New Yorkers

**DianneA**: and that seems like as good a point to close our practice relevant session on humour and stress for teachers and mentors

**LucyK**: thinks David needs to keep reading his book on jokes

**DavidWe**: I've got more, Lucy, believe me

**DianneA**: you timed it just right David, and did have just the right kind of joke

**DavidWe** smiles

**LucyK**: oh I believe you

**DianneA** turns green with envy

**CraigHG**: Thank you for the information everybody.

**AdrienneS**: haha thanks Dianne!

**LucyK**: Thanks Dianne!

**HeatherH**: thanks all for everything!!!!

**AdrienneS**: and everyone

**DianneA**: hope to see you all at Festival when we can explore this some more

**OmarR** : jokes, great way to deal with stress

**DavidWe**: Come to New York, Lucy. I'll buy you a cup of coffee

**MarysolRo**: thanks everyone

**LyndseyZ:** thanks

**LucyK:** all the way from CA??

**LucyK:** just for coffee and those jokes?

**DavidWe:** okay, I'll come to CA

**LucyK** smiles

**JosephA:** This has been interesting, hopefully I can be on during the festival.

**DavidWe** . o O ( really good coffee in Oakland )

**LucyK:** Thanks David -- gotta run :)

**VanessaCB:** well it was good talking to everyone

**DavidWe** waves

**DavidWe** heads to reception

**JosephA:** Good bye everyone.