7-2013

Humor in the Classroom: A Series of Three Workshop Plans

Roger Ramirez
SIT Graduate Institute

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Humor in the Classroom

A Series of Three Workshop Plans

Roger Ramirez

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Arts in TESOL degree at the SIT Graduate Institute, Brattleboro, Vermont

July 2013

IPP Advisor: Beth Neher
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Acknowledgments

I want to express my gratitude to Beth Neher for her invaluable support, timely and thorough feedback, and insightful comments. It was a true pleasure and honor having you as my IPP advisor. I felt the love with which you approached this project. What a gift!

It is an honor for me to thank Mary Scholl, my dear friend, mentor, and source of endless inspiration. She has taught me so much and inspired me to do so much over the years. “Thank you” does not seem to be enough to express my gratitude.

I would like to thank Emma Torres and Amanda Rossi for so many hours of co-training and delivering workshops together. Both of them are part of these workshop plans in some way, shape, or form. I am extremely grateful for all the love and joy they put into the work we do together at CEM. You both inspire me!

I would also like to thank all the teachers I had the opportunity to share these workshop plans with and for inspiring me to develop this project to better serve students in their learning process.

Finally, this project would be impossible without my partner, Nicolas Cardenas, whose support, encouragement, and unwavering love allowed me to carry out and enjoy this long process. He listened to me patiently and wholeheartedly as I rambled on and on about this project. I would also like to thank him for helping me proofread all three workshop plans.
Abstract

This materials development project explores the role, use and forms of humor in the classroom. This IPP is a collection of a series of three workshop plans for ELT teacher trainers located in Latin America. The workshop plans are preceded by a rationale that explains the relevancy of the topic, the author's personal belief statement, and an exploration of final key learnings from developing this project. Each workshop plan is followed by a reflection on aspects that went well along with suggestions for further improvement and a revised version of the workshop plan.
Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) Descriptors

Curriculum Development
Teacher Workshops
Student Teacher Relationship
Teacher Behavior
Student Behavior
Student Engagement
Resource Materials
Humor
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Introduction
Humor in the classroom

“The person who can bring the spirit of laughter into a room is indeed blessed.”
-Bennett Cerf

Fifteen different stuffed animals, fifteen students and fifteen ways of making connections between the stuffed animals and the students. This was a moment when I used humor in the classroom in order to keep students engaged and foster a nurturing classroom environment. It was a Friday afternoon, and my students had just finished talking with a partner about what they had learned during the week. We were doing a whole class sharing, and each student had to mention one thing they had learned. As students raised their hands to share, I gave them a stuffed animal, as a tactile element to hold while they talked, and mentioned three or four unique and playful words that described why I had chosen that stuffed animal for them. All the descriptive words I used reflected positive qualities of my students. They all seemed to find this quick moment funny and inspiring. I noticed that each student seemed to feel validated and acknowledged; my students also found the link I made between them and a particular stuffed animal funny, lighthearted, playful and overall humorous. This moment did not take more than ten seconds for each of the students, but it did seem to go deep within their hearts and souls.

The use of humor in the classroom can be an amazing tool for creating moments that help encourage participation and learning. The converse is also true: the use of humor can be a medium for shutting students down and making them feel discouraged. Humor has
dark and negative sides, such as ridicule, mockery, stereotyping, scorn, derision, contempt, etc., which could potentially degrade and dehumanize a student. This IPP concerns the power of positive uses of humor. For the purposes of this project and the workshop plans included, effective humor is defined as the use of words, images, stories, incongruity, etc. to make something amusing, comical, absurd, ridiculous, laughable, or even preposterous. Humor can inspire laughter and/or pleasure and can help engage students and promote meaningful learning.

In order to fully comprehend and follow the workshop plans designed for this project, it is essential to understand the premise of this work. Humor is an effective tool teachers can use to maximize students’ learning if used intentionally and thoughtfully. First of all, when used consistently, humor can help create and maintain a learning environment where students feel relaxed and free to participate more actively. The more students laugh and enjoy the class, the more relaxed and comfortable they feel. Secondly, humor can serve as a means for teachers and learners to connect in a way that helps promote a more trustworthy relationship. Once a meaningful connection or bond is created, students become more willing to take risks in their learning and to trust the process that will help them become more successful speakers of English. Thirdly, humor has the power to help create memorable and enriching experiences that will allow students to better remember language and content covered in class. When humor is used as part of an activity or teacher instruction, students can create associations between what makes them laugh and the content. Finally, humor can help keep students on task and engaged with the lesson. Even if students do not find a particular lesson interesting, the effective use of humor can help keep students alert, focused and engaged throughout the lesson.
In order to better understand the role of humor in the classroom, it is helpful to have an overview of what previous literature and research have discovered about its role in learning. While the use of humor has not been extensively researched there are a number of authors who have dedicated time and work to this topic.

Morrison (2008) argues that humor can be used to maximize learning and help students remember content more effectively. Maximizing learning refers to the intention of creating more opportunities in the classroom during which students can practice, use and/or make sense of the language. She explains that memories are strengthened when links are created between positive emotions and content. Morrison has spent over a decade of her professional life observing classrooms, interviewing students and teachers and carrying out research in which she has studied the links between humor and learning.

Through research related to the psychology of humor and the application of humor in education, Martin (2007) discovered that when humor is used in the classroom as a strategy for helping students to remember content, scores in tests and exams are higher. He explains that students’ ability to remember knowledge and content increases when associated with the moments of the lesson when they have fun, enjoy learning and are engaged.

According to Banas (2011), the use of humor helps build cohesion in the classroom, thus helping learning develop in a safer environment. He explains that cohesion in the classroom is when students begin getting along and respecting and supporting each other in their learning processes. The more cohesive the group is the safer the environment becomes for students to participate more willingly and freely. A safe environment is one in
which students feel comfortable taking risks with the language without the fear of being judged or made fun of. Banas also suggests that humor has the power to soften criticism and feedback received from peers and the teacher.

Berk (2002) researched the use of humor in the classroom as a way to connect with students and engage them in learning that would facilitate their academic success. He emphasizes that humor has a number of psychophysiological benefits such as being able to detach mentally from professional and personal problems so that both teachers and students can engage more easily in the learning process. Berk also explains that humor can help students engage in learning activities even if they come to class distracted and not ready to concentrate on the lesson.

Through extensive research, Gorham (2009) concludes that when the teacher uses humor in the classroom there is a positive influence on immediacy and learning. Students seem to clarify and remember the language more easily and faster when humor is used involved in the task. Finally, Loomans and Kolberg (2002) present a descriptive analysis of different types of humor styles. They also offer a large selection of activities that help both teachers and students use humor more effectively in the classroom to maximize student learning.

The purpose of this materials development project is to offer a series of three workshop plans focused on the relevance and use of humor in the classroom to help maximize learning. These workshop plans, while usable by teachers from around the world, are mainly targeted at training in-service teachers of English or trainers who teach in Latin America. For each of the three workshop plans, the sequencing is as follows:
original workshop plan, reflection after delivering the workshop and the revised workshop plan, taking into account after considering reflection and feedback.
Rationale for the series of three workshop plans
Humor in the classroom

“Laughter by definition is healthy” – Doris Lessing

This workshop project highlights the relevancy of using humor in the classroom as well as exploring how humor can help foster and maximize student learning. The rationale for the project includes the following beliefs about humor and learning:

Humor increases overall mental functioning.

Humor keeps learners focused and engaged.

Humor maximizes learners’ ability to think creatively.

Humor fosters a nurturing environment.

Humor creates connections between the teacher and learners.

Humor helps learners become more positive.

Humor has both benefits and challenges.

Humor is bound to culture.

Humor increases overall mental functioning

Using humor in the classroom can exponentially increase students’ overall mental functioning. Using physiological evidence, Fry (1984, quoted in Berk 2002), highlights that using laughter increases the levels in the body of a substance called catecholamine. This chemical property helps improve the functioning of the right and left hemispheres of the brain. Berk (2002) states, “Inducing laughter prior to and during coverage of a specific topic in class can prime students’ brains so they have increased alertness and memory” (p.49). This can make a difference in students’ abilities to be engaged in a lesson as well as
remember and internalize language they encounter more effectively.

**Humor keeps learners focused and engaged**

Keeping students on task, focused on learning and engaged during the entirety of a lesson can be a challenging task for both new and experienced teachers. Humor, however, can serve as a strategic and helpful means of getting students to be present to the class and staying focused. Sylwester (1995) explains how learning is driven by a human being’s ability to pay attention and how paying attention is driven by one’s emotions. Using humor effectively in the classroom elevates students’ sense of interest, focus, excitement and ultimately attention. As a consequence, learning occurs as a more organic and natural process. As Berk (2002) states, “Regardless of what content you teach or how you teach, humor used as a systematic tool can serve as the hook or paddles of your dreams” (p. 6). This highlights how humor can be an effective resource for motivating students to become active, attentive and engaged during classroom time.

**Humor maximizes learners’ ability to think creatively**

Loomans and Kolberg (2002) explain that humor plays an essential role in creating an optimal learning environment where students feel that it is safe to participate more actively. When students experience a sense of joy and fun in the classroom they tend to feel safer and more relaxed resulting in an ability to be more creative. According to Morrison (2008), “Humor and creativity are great companions, each a perfect complement for the other in nourishing thinking” (p.3). He elaborates by stating that humor is a resource for increasing the potential for more divergent thinking among learners. Creativity equips
human beings with a stronger ability to carry out higher order thinking skills, such as problem solving, and Morrison (2008) addresses this saying, “Creativity is the ability of the brain to bring together diverse ideas that will generate the thinking necessary for complex problem solving” (p.3). Thus, enhancing effective uses of humor and creativity in the classroom will promote a culture of learning where students develop more critical thinking and problem solving skills.

**Humor fosters a nurturing environment**

Having a safe, welcoming, non-threatening and nurturing environment in the classroom can help create a culture of learning where students participate and interact with language more actively. As Morrison (2008) states, “Humor contributes to that optimal learning environment. It is brain-compatible both in creating an enriched context for learning and for assisting individuals in the learning process” (p.6). Promoting a learning context in the classroom where students experience joy and laughter helps transform the environment into a friendlier and more familiar place. Students seem to be able to produce more and thrive as learners when they feel relaxed and safe in class. As Morrison (2008) suggests, “When you find fun, laughter, and teachers with a sense of humor, learning thrives” (p.6).

**Humor creates connections between the teacher and learners**

Students seem to feel more comfortable participating and taking linguistic risks in the classroom when they have a strong bond or connection with the teacher. Humor serves as an effective way for teachers to create connections with their students. According to
Berk (2002), “Humor can chop down, smash, demolish, even vaporize the pre-existing barriers that separate you from your students. It opens up communication that’s not based on fear or intimidation.” Using humor as a strategy to develop a better sense of communication with students is likely to help create a space where the learners can approach learning more confidently and safely. In my experience, when teachers use humor to connect and create rapport with their students on a humanistic level, the learners become more willing and open to take on an active role in the classroom.

**Humor helps learners become more positive**

Frustration in a language classroom is common. Learning a new language, especially at earlier stages of the process, can be challenging for many students. Not having the tools needed to communicate successfully right from the beginning, and not fully understanding the amount of time that learning a language takes can cause frustration and stress. However, humor has a unique way of transforming those negative feelings and energies into something more positive and beneficial for learning. As Morrison (2008) says, “Humor can be applied to redirect one’s negative energy into a positive form—a highly developed cognitive skill. Recognizing internal frustration and learning to react with humor is beneficial for our health” (p. 109). Approaching difficult and potentially frustrating situations with humor and positive energy can help keep students relaxed, open to new ideas and willing to continue trying. It also serves to reduce competitiveness among students and to create bonds of ‘we’re all in it together.’
Humor has both benefits and challenges

Using humor in the classroom can be tricky. Often what might be intended to make students laugh and feel more relaxed can come across negatively in the form of ridicule, disrespect or offense. According to Loomans and Kolberg (2002), “Humor can act as a social lubricant or a social retardant in the educational setting. It can educate or denigrate, heal or harm, embrace or deface” (p.14). Understanding the difference between these two sides of humor is both a complex and a sensitive task. I have found that there is, in many cases, a fine line between when humor is effective and helpful to learning and when it becomes a hindrance and a source of frustration and alienation.

For this reason, part of the main goal and intention of two of the workshops is for participants to understand and analyze the role of humor and its impact on learning. It is also a goal of these workshops to raise participants’ awareness of different styles of humor and awareness of which of the styles can contribute positively, and which are more likely to damage, the learning environment.

Humor is bound to culture

The use of humor in Latin American culture is an essential piece of everyday living and personal identity. According to Beezley (2000), “Humor invests popular culture with a wonderful sense of whimsy... Humor appears in music, art and handicrafts; it helps make popular culture pleasurable. At the same time, these expressions (of humor in music, art and handicrafts) reveal the deep grain of humor that runs through popular culture in Latin America” (p.4). Latin Americans use humor in many different contexts, including education and the classroom, in a vivid and lively way. Inside a classroom, some common forms or
representations of humor used by the teacher and/or among students are: sarcasm, satire, irony, jokes, wordplay, ridicule, mockery, self-deprecation, stories, anecdotes, stereotyping, imitating and clowning. Some of these humor practices are effective and helpful for student learning while others hinder learning and negatively affect students’ sense of confidence and developing feelings of safety in the classroom.
Personal belief statement
Humor in the classroom

“Humor is a spontaneous, wonderful bit of an outburst that just comes. It’s unbridled, it’s unplanned, and it’s full of surprises.” – Erma Bombeck

I believe humor has the power and potential to be used in the classroom as an impressive tool for fostering and maximizing learning. In my experience, humor serves most importantly as a way to help create bonds and connections between the teacher and the learners. The stronger the connection between the two, the more willing and open learners will be to take risks, the safer they will feel, and the more participative and independent they will be in their own learning process.

Further, I believe that humor can be used in the classroom to keep learners alert, awake, engaged and focused on the subject matter and task at hand. If learners are naturally engaged with the lesson through moments of joy and laughter, they will be more present to what they are doing and stay on task more readily.

I am also convinced that the effective use of humor and the creation of a more relaxed, positive, friendly and safe environment provides a learning space in which students will feel comfortable, can be themselves and will be able to use language more naturally. In other words, when humor is used to inspire and create harmonious moments in the classroom, learners feel looser and freer to be spontaneous and use language in a more natural manner.

Another belief I hold is that when humor is used in the classroom, learners are more successful at remembering content covered. Learners make meaningful associations between what they were studying or learning and what they were laughing or smiling
about when the moment of humor occurred. This helps learners develop their long-term memory.

Finally, I strongly believe that humor has medicinal and healing qualities that can make a learner, or human being in general, go from feeling depressed, bored, sad, miserable, etc. to feeling encouraged, excited, happy and inspired.

I have undertaken this exploration of using humor effectively in the classroom for all of the above reasons and because I believe that since humor is so embedded within culture, ways of living and the educational setting, it is important to help educators create an explicit and deeper awareness of different roles and styles of humor in the classroom, and how they can affect student learning.
Final key learnings
Humor in the classroom

In carrying out this workshop design project on the role, use and forms of humor in the classroom, I have gained a huge amount of knowledge and a deeper awareness and understanding of the topic. I have narrowed down my final key realizations and learnings to the following points.

The power of humor

The positive results of using humor in the classroom transcend my own ability to understand how humor really works and all of its effects on learners. Through carrying out this project and developing the workshops, I realized that I could never completely understand the impact humor had on learners and teachers.

There were a number of times during and after the delivery of the workshops when participants approached me saying that the way in which humor had been used in the workshops transformed their personal beliefs in regards to learning and teaching. Some of them mentioned that they started to believe more in humor as a bridge that could connect the learners, the teacher and the content in a smooth and organic way. I also had learners say that the safe and friendly environment created in the classroom through the use of humor helped them see and experience learning more positively. Learning had become more interesting, meaningful and exciting to them.

When I started this project, I thought of humor as a teaching tool to keep students engaged, maintain a positive energy in class, and encourage students to pay more attention and feel more interested in the lesson. However, I now realize that humor does much more
than simply support learning. Humor has the potential to transform attitudes and beliefs both students and teachers hold in relation to how effective learning can and does occur.

**Humor might not be for all teachers**

Humor is a powerful tool that might not fit all teachers’ styles. The use of humor is effective when it is used naturally and when it is believable. If a teacher does not feel comfortable using certain or specific types of humor, then this might not be a strategy he or she will find helpful using in the classroom. A teacher who does not enjoy or fully believe in the effectiveness of humor could come across as fake and/or insincere.

However, having said this, I do realize it is important to understand that there are many forms of humor, and it might actually be a matter of finding the style of positive humor that reflects the teacher’s persona/character, their way of connecting with others, and their level of awareness and compassion. We all have different personalities and approaches to teaching, and that is part of what makes learning such a rich and meaningful experience for our learners. We also all have ways, or the potential for ways, of expressing and/or responding to humor positively in our interactions with others including the interaction that is teaching.

**Humor has many forms**

When I first started this project I had limited knowledge of types of humor and ways in which humor could be used in the classroom. I knew about telling jokes, wordplay, the use of funny stories and anecdotes, parody and other negative forms of humor like hurtful sarcasm, cynicism, ridicule and stereotyping.
As I researched and developed the workshops, I realized that humor was much broader and more complex than I had imagined. There were new varieties of humor and ways in which humor could be expressed and used in the classroom. Some of these new forms that I encountered, discovered, or expanded my knowledge of, were, for example, body language and facial expressions, inspirational comedy, incongruity, tragedy, scorn, self-deprecating humor, and derision. With some of these potentially more destructive forms of humor, like derision and scorn, I further realized how they do not serve learning positively.

I realized that learning more deeply about humor, learning about the new and different forms of humor and how these can either help or hinder learning in the classroom was a task worth putting time and effort into. Integrating a variety of humor styles into one’s teaching practices can help reach a larger number of students and their different learning preferences. Being aware of what humor styles might have negative consequences on students can help the teacher design safer and more effective activities and lessons.

I saw that my workshops kept evolving, reflecting my own awareness of more and different types of humor and how these affected student learning in both positive and negative ways. My learning is that I am sure this evolution will continue and I will continue to learn and to refine my understanding of the complexities of humor, the positive uses, and how it affects student learning.

**Humor can be a double-edged sword**

Before starting this project, I had not thought much about ways in which humor could hinder learning in the classroom. I was aware of the possibility of humor causing
negative effects in learners, but did not realize how tricky using humor could really be in some situations. For example, I came to realize that with lower levels, a positive strategy like wordplay or telling a funny story could become a hindrance if students did not understand the humor or the language the humor was embedded in was beyond their understanding, and so they just felt overwhelmed and frustrated.

I also learned that not all students always appreciate the same style or forms of humor the teacher might choose to use in the classroom. I came to understand that the use of humor is safer and more effective when it is used intentionally, naturally, and with a sense of authenticity. It is important for us teachers and trainers to be intentional about how different forms of humor are integrated into the classroom and aware of how these may affect each learner and his or her motivation towards learning.

**My own style of humor**

I have always known that humor was a huge part of my teaching style, but working on this project has resulted in my becoming much more aware of my own use of humor in the classroom. For example, reflecting on my own teaching practices and on preferences I discovered in the workshop deliveries, I have deepened my knowledge of the types of humor I commonly integrate into my teaching and training: using tactile and fun elements like stuffed animals, wands, bells, rods, masks and puppets; using humorous anecdotes and stories; using body language, facial expressions and hand gestures; and incongruity.

Learning more about who I am as a teacher has helped me to be more aware of what I do in the classroom and why I do what I do, hence, allowing me to better serve my
learners and the learning process. Now, each time I walk into a classroom, I am much more principled about the forms of humor that I use and more aware of the purposes they serve.

**The potential paradox in planning to use humor**

As I originally thought through and planned these workshops, I had as my main goal to build teachers’ awareness and confidence in intentionally and thoughtfully integrating positive humor into their lessons in order to enrich their students’ learning. However, I encountered a potential paradox: once humor is planned, it becomes intentional and strategic, and potentially loses the critical elements of authenticity and naturalness. I realized there was another strand or occurrence of humor that teachers need to be aware of and open to: humor that can arise spontaneously, instinctively and authentically in the classroom from either teacher or students. I have come to realize how important it is for teachers to recognize instances when humor comes out unplanned and unintentional and for them to allow it to be experienced and enjoyed.

I personally believe that both planned and unplanned humor are effective tools that can help student learning. I also believe that they can coexist in a classroom. There can be moments focused on a planned activity that include a form of humor and minutes later something humorous will come up spontaneously, or someone (teacher or student) might respond to something with humor unexpectedly or spontaneously. As long as these forms of humor come across as genuine and are positive (i.e., they are shared humor with everyone, not humor at the expense of someone in the room), I believe that they can be immensely helpful for student learning.
Thus, my final key learning has two pieces: 1) humor can be part of the classroom experience in both planned and spontaneous ways; and 2) it is important for teachers to be aware of these two possibilities for humor and to understand which better suits their teaching style/persona so that humor is positive, believable, and genuine.
Appendix 1

**Workshop plan #1: The role of humor in the classroom**

**Session overview**

Aim: To explore the role of humor in the classroom and how it affects learning

Objectives:

Participants will be able to...

- Discuss their opinions on the role of humor in the classroom.
- Identify four different humor styles.
- Analyze how the use of different humor styles in the classroom can help and/or hinder learning.

**Materials**

- Humor quotes
- Humor styles handout
- Poster paper and markers
- Cards with the humor scenarios

**Assumptions for this workshop**

- The use of humor in the classroom is culturally accepted throughout Latin America.
- Most teachers use humor in the classroom, but might not be fully aware of how it impacts learning.
- Teachers in Latin America will find this topic engaging and relevant since they regard humor and laughter highly as part of their cultural identity.
Potential challenges

1. Participants might not know all the vocabulary included in the handout about the four humor styles.

2. Participants might find it difficult to understand the +/- signs in the handout for the four humor styles.

3. Some participants might feel that using sarcasm is mainly an effective use of humor since it is culturally very common. They might not agree with the idea of sarcasm being on the negative side of the use humor in the classroom.

Solutions for the potential challenges

1. When participants first receive this handout, you can have them work in small groups and clarify any words that they do not know or are not sure of. Walk around the classroom and help trainees if they still need some help.

2. After participants are clear on the vocabulary included in this handout, emphasize on what the “+” and “-” signs mean. Ask them comprehension check questions like: “According to this handout, which are some negative forms of humor? Which are some positive ones? What would “ridiculing” be? What about parody?”

3. For this potential challenge, I have designed scenarios #1 and #3. These experiences will help illustrate the role of sarcasm in the classroom and how it may help/hinder learning. Since sarcasm is common in Latin America, I think that a good consensus would be to acknowledge that sarcasm can be both helpful and hindering depending on your audience, the context and how students feel when sarcasm is used in the classroom.
## Workshop plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stages and purposes</th>
<th>Procedure</th>
<th>Timing and interaction</th>
<th>Trainer notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Stage #1**        | Participants read two or three quotes related to joy and humor in the classroom and discuss what they think about these quotes. *Quote possibilities:*  
Quote #1: “Humor brings insight and tolerance. Irony brings a deep and less friendly understanding.” – Agnes Repplier  
Quote #2: “Everything is funny as long as it happens to somebody else.” – Will Rogers  
Quote #3: “Humor is emotional chaos remembered in tranquility.” – James Thurber  
Quote #4: “Humor is our greatest national resource, which must be preserved by all costs.” – James Thurber  
Quote #5: “It is bad to suppress laughter. It goes back down and spreads to your hips.” – Steve Allen  
Whole group share with 2-3 comments and thoughts. | 10 min. | You might consider adding other quotes related to humor that you personally find relevant and helpful for the teaching context of the participant you are working with. You could also ask your participants if they know of any quotes that they would like to share. You might also want to think about the possibility of using a funny video of your selection to use as a way of getting participants’ attention at the beginning of the session. |
| **Stage #2**        | Participants discuss in pairs: what is the role of humor in the classroom?  
Whole group share.  
In groups of three or four, participants make a poster with their thoughts on what | 10 min. | The goal during this task really is for participants to voice their own thoughts and opinions in relation to the topic of humor in the classroom. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage #3</th>
<th>30 min.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participants will be able to experience different types of humor in role-plays and analyze how humor can help and hinder</td>
<td>These scenarios can be role-played in two different ways. You could give the participants the cards and they try acting them out in small groups or you could role-play being the teacher yourself and the students would be your</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students make five different groups and receive one scenario card each. Participants have 5 minutes to prepare their role-play and take turns presenting in front of the rest of the class. After each role-play, participants discuss in groups of three how humor helps and/or hinders learning. Participants absolutely need to be told that all the scenarios serve as simple examples and are not real information.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>type of humor helps and hinders learning in the classroom. Participants will come back to this poster later in the session. Whole group share.</td>
<td>recommend, if possible, giving each participant a marker when completing the poster and telling them that they can all write down ideas. There does not have to be one single designated scribe. This would help create a more equal balance in terms of participation and ideas shared. If you do not have poster paper and markers, an alternative would be to get students sharing their opinions and thoughts orally and then writing some of their main thoughts after the discussion on the board. Another alternative might be to ask groups to discuss with everyone keeping notes, and then in the end organizing a jigsaw to exchange thoughts and discuss.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
learning.

**Scenario #1:** The teacher walks into the classroom and asks students what they did during the weekend. When students provide answers the teacher responds sarcastically. Some possible sarcastic responses could be: “Oh really, that sounds like fun”, “What were you thinking”, “That’s something I’d like to do” and “Oh, that’s nice. I actually went to the best hotel in the country this weekend. I bet none of you have ever stayed there. It’s really expensive. Around $300 a night.”

Students share their thoughts in groups of three.

Whole group share.

**Scenario #2:** The teacher walks into the classroom and asks students what they know about the people from different countries in Latin America (Costa Rica, Argentina, Nicaragua, Mexico, etc.). After students share their thoughts, the teacher stereotypes. Some possible comments are: “Costa Ricans are always so lazy”, “Argentines believe they are so superior than others”, “Nicaraguans drink too much”, etc.

Students share their thoughts in groups of three.

Whole group share.

**Scenario #3:** The teacher walks into the classroom and asks students to describe what they are wearing. After students give their answers, the teacher makes comments about the students and what they are wearing. Some possible comments are: “You are wearing some loud neon pink shoes. Wow! I can barely see anything else”, “What’s up with that T-shirt you are wearing?”, etc.

Having the students be in charge of role-playing would make the session much more student-centered, however you would risk them not getting the exact idea intended for each humor style. Feel free to change the scenarios and use your own jokes, materials, situations and resources. Just make sure that the different humor styles and aspects that both help and hinder learning are represented in the scenarios and role-plays.
wearing? It looks like one my grandma wears” and “I think you might have bought those pants at the local thrift shop”.

Students share their thoughts in groups of three.

Whole group share.

**Scenario #4**: The teacher shares a funny lighthearted joke or a personal story that is engaging and fun. Here is a possible joke:

-Why was 6 afraid of 7? Because 7 8 9.

Students share their thoughts in groups of three.

Whole group share.

**Scenario #5**: The teacher models an activity for a task. This activity should be one where students have lots of warmhearted and inclusive fun completing it. Here is an example: The teacher models singing a song that he or she rewrote to synthesize content covered in class. For this workshop, you could use the quotes introduced earlier as the content.

Students share their thoughts in groups of three.

Whole group share.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage #4</th>
<th>Participants will be able to read about four different humor styles and identify behaviors from the five</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participants receive a handout describing Joy Master, Fun Meister, Joke Maker and Life Mockers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participants read the handout individually and then check with a partner to see if they understand all the vocabulary and terms included.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>15 min.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Some of the vocabulary on this worksheet might be new for some of your participants. It is essential that you give them time to check the vocabulary and then that you check it.
### Scenarios that match each humor style.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scenarios</th>
<th>Whole group share.</th>
<th>T-S</th>
<th>together as a whole group. This will help the participants be more fluent with identifying the aspects of humor portrayed in the role-plays.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participants decide in groups of three which humor style was represented in each of the scenarios they experienced earlier.</td>
<td>S-S</td>
<td>Both the “Joke Master” and the “Fun Meister” have both positive and negative qualities and aspects depending on how these types of humor are used. Be sure to go through this handout and identify these two sides with the participants. Here are the answers for the identifying task: Experience #1: Life mocker Experience #2: Joke maker Experience #3: Fun meister Experience #4: Joke maker Experience #5: Joy master</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Whole group share.</td>
<td>T-S</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Stage #5

**Participants will be able to synthesize their learning from the workshop.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scenarios</th>
<th>Participants go back to their poster and add any final thoughts they have to what helps and what hinders learning.</th>
<th>15 min.</th>
<th>If you chose not to use a poster and had your participants write their ideas on the board, then they would now share in their groups orally what they would add and then go back to the board and add 1-2 more ideas.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participants put their posters up on the board or walls. They walk around reading what other groups wrote.</td>
<td>S-S</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Whole group share.</td>
<td>S</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>T-S</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stage #6</strong></td>
<td><strong>10 min.</strong></td>
<td><strong>T-S</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students will be able to share one aspect of the workshop that they would like to consider when teaching.</td>
<td></td>
<td>This last activity is an effective way of getting participants to make a connection between what they have learned during the workshop with their teaching practice. This is also a helpful way of encouraging participants to try new teaching practices. Listening to everyone's action plan during the whole group share is not necessary. You might want to ask for 3-4 volunteers only. This will depend on how much time you have left at the end of workshop.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Handouts and worksheets

**Five humor scenario cards**

**Scenario #1:** The teacher walks into the classroom and asks students what they did during the weekend. When students provide answers the teacher responds sarcastically. Some possible sarcastic responses could be: “Oh really, that sounds like fun”, “What were you thinking”, “That’s something I’d like to do” and “Oh, that’s nice. I actually went to the best hotel in the country this weekend. I bet none of you have ever stayed there. It’s really expensive. Around $300 a night.”

**Scenario #2:** The teacher walks into the classroom and asks students what they know about the people from different countries in Latin America (Costa Rica, Argentina, Nicaragua, Mexico, etc.). After students share their thoughts, the teacher stereotypes. Some possible comments are: “Costa Ricans are always so lazy”, “Argentines believe they are so superior than others”, “Nicaraguans drink too much”, etc.

**Scenario #3:** The teacher walks into the classroom and asks students to describe what they are wearing. After students give their answers, the teacher makes comments about the students and what they are wearing. Some possible comments are: “You are wearing some loud neon pink shoes. Wow! I can barely see anything else”, “What’s up with that T-shirt you are wearing? It looks like one my grandma wears” and “I think you might have bought those pants at the local thrift shop”.

**Scenario #4:** The teacher shares a funny lighthearted joke or a personal story that is engaging and fun. Here is a possible joke:

- Why was 6 afraid of 7? Because 7 8 9.

**Scenario #5:** The teacher models an activity for a task. This activity should be one where students have lots of warmhearted and inclusive fun completing it. Here is an example: The teacher models singing a song that he or she rewrote to synthesize the quotes introduced earlier in the workshop.
Reflection on workshop plan #1: The role of humor in the classroom

Strengths

1. Sharing beliefs during Stage #2

Participants made groups of three and were asked to make a poster about when humor helps learning and when humor hinders learning. Each group had around ten thoughts and opinions for both what helps and hinders learning. When I told them they had one minute left to finish they wanted more time. This was the moment in which I realized that this topic was meaningful to these trainees. I think that what was helpful during this activity was that participants had a chance to voice their own personal experiences, thoughts and opinions. They gained insight and perspective from listening to others. I believe adults have a wealth of experience and knowledge and they enjoy sharing with and learning from others.

2. Revisiting the poster during Stage #5

Participants were asked to go back to the poster they had started earlier in the workshop and add more ideas. There were a number of moments in which I observed participants noticing and negotiating the meaning of key elements from the workshop. Going back to their original posters gave participants a chance to analyze and synthesize key concepts and ideas from the workshop. I believe that it is essential to provide participants with opportunities to synthesize the concepts and content of the workshop.

3. Working with the humor styles handout during stage #4

Participants were given the handout with the descriptions for each of the four humor styles. They first read the information individually and then had to identify the different humor styles represented in each of the scenarios they experienced earlier in the
session. I noticed participants underlining and highlighting ideas in the handout. As they were sharing their thoughts in small groups, they were making relevant connections between the experiences they had and the theory. I believe that providing students with handouts including theoretical pieces will help them better analyze and understand the experiences they have.

**Areas for growth**

1. Quotes in Stage #1

   Participants read five quotes related to the importance of humor. These quotes were not specific to teaching or education. I noticed the trainees discussing about the relevancy of humor for life in general. My goal was for participants to talk about their prior knowledge and thoughts for humor in the classroom based on these quotes. This task did not go in the direction that I intended. I realized that it was essential that the quotes for this session were directly related to classroom experiences and teaching. I believe that in order for a task to be carried out and implemented as planned it is essential to choose appropriate materials. I also learned that as part of the planning of this workshop it is vital to always have the objectives of the session in mind while choosing appropriate quotes. The quotes and materials used have to help guide participants towards meeting the objectives of the session. I believe that all the materials and activities included in a workshop should work together to support participants in meeting the objectives of the session.

2. Role-playing the scenarios in Stage #3

   In groups, participants were given a classroom scenario to role-play. I noticed that some of the trainees interpreted the situations differently from what I had imagined. This
made the processing of these scenarios more challenging because not all the humor styles were illustrated effectively. For this reason, I think that since the trainer has a specific intention for this activity it is important that they guide or direct the role-play themselves. Based on this thought, I believe there are moments in a session where it is important for the trainer to maintain more control over the activities so that it is carried out in a way that supports and guides participants in achieving the objectives of the session.

3. Looking at other posters in Stage #5

Participants were told to walk around the classroom and look at the rest of the posters. I noticed during this activity that while they were walking around looking at the posters they started getting off task and talking about unrelated topics. The lack of a more controlled task opened up opportunities for students to go off task and start disengaging. Since it was towards the end of the session, participants were also starting to feel tired and ready to leave. This made it even more difficult to keep participants on task and attentive. It seems to me that in order for the participants to stay on task, while completing this gallery walk activity, they should be given a specific and controlled task. Based on this realization, I believe that when designing the latter parts of a workshop it is essential that the activities have specific qualities that will keep participants engaged and interested in the lesson.

**Suggestions for improving the workshop plan**

1. Choosing quotes that are more closely related to teaching during stage #1 instead of more general ones so that the discussion is more focused on the topic of the workshop.

2. Having the trainer role-play being the teacher with the different scenarios during stage #3 instead of having the participants doing this so that the true intentions for each scenario are conveyed.
3. Giving participants a more specific task when they walk around looking at other posters during stage #5 instead of just telling them to walk around and look at the posters.
Revised workshop plan #1: The role of humor in the classroom

Session overview

Aim: To explore the role of humor in the classroom and how it can affect learning

Objectives:

By the end of the session participants will be able to...

- Articulate their beliefs about the role of humor in the context of learning.
- List qualities associated with four different styles of humor.
- State at least three ways different styles of humor can help and/or hinder learning.

Materials

- Humor quotes
- Humor styles handout
- Poster paper and markers
- Cards with the humor scenarios

Assumptions for this workshop

- The use of humor in the classroom is culturally accepted throughout Latin America. Some of the most common forms of humor found and used are sarcasm, parody, imitating family and friends, ridiculing others, stereotyping, innocent jokes and high level of lighthearted playfulness.

- Most teachers use humor in the classroom, but might not be fully aware of how it can affect learning.

- Teachers in Latin America will find this topic engaging and relevant since they regard humor and laughter as part of their cultural identity.

Potential challenges

1. Participants might not know all the vocabulary included in the handout about the four humor styles.
2. Participants might find it difficult to understand the +/- signs in the handout for the four humor styles when they have to identify the different styles of humor present in the different scenarios.

3. Some participants might feel that using sarcasm is mainly an effective use of humor since it is culturally very common. They might not agree with the idea of sarcasm being on the negative side of the use humor in the classroom.

**Solutions for the potential challenges**

1. When participants first receive this handout, you (the trainer) can have them work in small groups and clarify any words that they do not know or are not sure of. Walk around the classroom and help participants if they still need some help.

2. For this potential challenge, it is important to go over this handout with participants as part of setting up the activity where they have to identify different humor styles for each of the scenarios. After you have checked the vocabulary included in this handout and participants are clear on all the terminology, emphasize what the “+” and “-” signs mean. Ask them comprehension check questions like: “According to this handout, which are some negative forms of humor? Which are some positive ones? What would “ridiculing” be? What about parody?” This will help you see if your participants have understood the idea of the “+” and “-” signs and which types of humor are considered positive or negative.

3. Scenarios #1 and #3 are designed specifically to address this potential challenge. These experiences will help illustrate the role of sarcasm in the classroom and how it may help/hinder learning. Since sarcasm is common in Latin America, it would be useful to acknowledge that sarcasm can be both helpful and hindering depending on your audience, the context and how students feel when sarcasm is used in the classroom.
## Workshop plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stages and purposes</th>
<th>Procedure</th>
<th>Timing and interaction</th>
<th>Additional trainer notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stage #1</strong></td>
<td>Overview of Stage: Below you will find five quotes. Choose the ones you feel will work best in your context and with your participants (Ps). You could also choose other quotes if you have favorites of your own. The idea here is for Ps to start identifying key aspects of humor in the classroom and sharing their opinions and thoughts in regards to the topic. Encourage Ps to start thinking about the role of humor in the classroom and how it might affect learning.</td>
<td>10 min.</td>
<td>After implementing this session a number of times and reflecting on it, I highly recommend using quotes related to the use of humor in the classroom instead of general quotes referring to humor. This adaptation helps make the discussion more focused on learning and teaching. You might also want to think about the possibility of using a funny video related to the use of humor in the classroom of your selection to use as a way of getting participants’ attention at the beginning of the session.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants</td>
<td>Instructions to participants: Read the quotes. For each one, answer three questions. What does the quote mean? Do you believe it is true in general? How could it be related to learning in the classroom? You have five minutes.</td>
<td><strong>T-S</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>activate prior</td>
<td>Quote possibilities:</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>knowledge and</td>
<td>Quote #1: “Regardless of what content you teach or how you teach, humor used as a systematic tool can serve as the hook or paddles of your dreams” – Ronald Berk</td>
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<td>engage with the</td>
<td>Quote #2: “When you find fun, laughter, and teachers with a sense of humor, learning thrives.” – Mary Kay Morrison</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>topic.</td>
<td>Quote #3: “Humor can act as a social lubricant or a social retardant in the educational setting. It can educate or denigrate, heal or harm, embrace or deface.” – Diana Loomans</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants share</td>
<td>Quote #4: “Humor can chop down, smash, demolish, even vaporize the pre-existing barriers that separate you from your students. It opens up communication that’s not based on fear or intimidation” – Ronald Berk</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage #2</td>
<td>Whole group share with 2-3 comments and thoughts after Ps’ discussion.</td>
<td>T-S</td>
<td>15 min.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants share ideas about different types of humor and the potential impact of each on learning.</td>
<td><strong>Overview of Stage:</strong> The aim for this stage is to get Ps thinking more specifically about types of humor and how each might potentially help and/or hinder learning. Since this is the first time you are introducing the idea of different types of humor, you might first want to ask Ps what are some types of humor that they are familiar with. Answers to this question might have already come up in the previous stage. Build off of what Ps have already mentioned and talked about. The intention is to scaffold Ps’ understanding of the existence of different types of humor and how they may help and/or hinder learning. After this discussion on types of humor, Ps will create a poster by brainstorming how each type of humor could potentially help/hinder learning. The poster will capture their initial ideas and they will then come back to the poster and add more ideas after the experiences they have later in the lesson. Make sure to tell participants to leave some space on the poster so that they can add more ideas later.</td>
<td>The goal during this task really is for participants to voice their own thoughts and opinions in relation to the topic of humor in the classroom. I recommend, if possible, giving each participant a marker when completing the poster and telling them that they can all write down ideas. There does not have to be one single designated scribe. This would help create a more equal balance in terms of participation and ideas shared. <strong>Alternatives:</strong> (1) If you do not have poster paper and markers, get students to share their opinions and thoughts orally and then to write some of their main thoughts after the discussion on the board. (2) Ask groups to discuss</td>
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</table>

**Instructions to participants:** We have already talked a bit about humor and its role in the classroom. What are examples of different types of humor? **Whole group share** as trainer takes 2-3 minutes to elicit some answers. **Instructions to participants:** Now that we have a list of types of humor, let’s think more specifically about what types of humor help learning in the classroom and what kinds can hinder learning in the classroom. In groups of
three or four, you will have 10 minutes to make a poster with your thoughts about what types of humor helps and hinders learning in the classroom. You will come back to this poster later in the session so make sure you leave some space to add more ideas.

Participants work in groups for 10 mins.

Whole group share: What was one thing that seemed relevant to your group as you were working on this poster? Let’s hear one person from each group.

Stage #3

Participants experience different types of humor in scenarios and analyze how different styles of humor can help and hinder learning.

Overview of Stage: For these role-plays, it is essential that you read through the scenarios in detail. Make sure you have a clear sense of the type of humor that is intended for each scenario. If you feel that role-playing or acting is not your forte, then practice these beforehand! After each role-play get Ps in small groups and have them analyze the role-plays. Ask them to discuss what helped/hindered learning based on each role-play. Ps must be told that all the scenarios serve as simple examples and are not real information.

Instructions to participants: You will experience five different scenarios. Each scenario depicts a different type of humor being used in the classroom. I will be the teacher for each scenario and you will be the students. Feel free to take on an active role as a student in each of the role-plays. For each of them, observe carefully the way in which humor is used and how it helps or hinders learning. After each experience, in groups you will discuss what happened in the scenario, how you felt, and how the humor used in the scenario helped and/or hindered learning.
### Scenario #1: The teacher walks into the classroom and asks students what they did during the weekend. When students provide answers the teacher responds sarcastically. Some possible sarcastic responses could be: “Oh really, that sounds like fun”, “What were you thinking”, “That’s something I’d like to do” and “Oh, that’s nice. I actually went to the best hotel in the country this weekend. I bet none of you have ever stayed there. It’s really expensive. Around $300 a night.”

Participants share their thoughts in groups.

**Whole group share.**

### Scenario #2: The teacher walks into the classroom and asks students what they know about the people from different countries in Latin America (Costa Rica, Argentina, Nicaragua, Mexico, etc.). After students share their thoughts, the teacher stereotypes. Some possible comments are: “Costa Ricans are always so lazy”, “Argentines believe they are more superior than others”, “Nicaraguans drink too much”, etc.

Participants share their thoughts in groups.

**Whole group share.**

### Scenario #3: The teacher walks into the classroom and asks students to describe what they are wearing. After students give their answers, the teacher makes comments about the students and what they are wearing. Some possible comments are: “You are wearing some loud neon pink shoes. Wow! I can barely see anything else”, “What’s up with that T-shirt you are wearing? It looks like one my grandma wears” and “I think you might have bought those pants at the local thrift shop”.

Participants share their thoughts in groups.

**T-S** that both help and hinder learning are represented in the scenarios and role-plays. For scenarios #1 and #3, the use of sarcasm will most likely come up. The intention of this workshop is to argue that sarcasm is mainly an aspect that hinders learning since not all students will feel safe with sarcastic jokes and comments. It is also important to acknowledge that in some contexts, sarcasm is appreciated and understood as an intelligent form of humor. What I find helpful to tell participants, as a conclusion for this discussion, is that sarcasm is not helpful for learning unless everyone feels safe and no one feels offended. Since it is hard to assess if someone felt offended or not, I tend to avoid sarcasm in the classroom.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Whole group share.</th>
<th>T-S</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Scenario #4</strong>: The teacher starts asking students questions using the past tense. For instance, Where did you go yesterday? Who was your best friend in elementary school? Where did you grow up? Then, suddenly the teacher shares a funny lighthearted joke or a personal story that is engaging and fun. Here is a possible joke: Why was 6 afraid of 7? Because 7 8 9.</td>
<td>T-S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants share their thoughts in groups.</td>
<td>S-S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whole group share.</td>
<td>T-S</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Scenario #5</strong>: The teacher models an activity for a task. This activity should be one where students have lots of warmhearted and inclusive fun completing it. Here is an example: The teacher models singing a song that he or she rewrote to synthesize content covered in class. For this scenario, the trainer could rewrite a song integrating the quotes focusing on humor in the classroom used in Stage #1.</td>
<td>T-S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants share their thoughts in groups.</td>
<td>S-S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whole group share.</td>
<td>T-S</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Stage #4**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overview of Stage: For this activity, it is essential to go over the handout with the Ps before they get started. First have Ps work in small groups to check all the vocabulary included. If after working with their groups they still have doubts, check the meaning of these words with the whole class. After working with the vocabulary, clarify what the “+” and “−” signs mean. Ask them comprehension check questions like: According to this handout, which are some negative forms of humor? Which are some positive ones? What would “ridiculing” be?</th>
<th>15 min.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participants read about four different humor styles and identify behaviors from the five scenarios that match each humor style.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
What about parody? This will help you see if your Ps have understood the idea of the “+” and “-” signs and what type of humor is associated with each sign. Once the handout is clear, you can move on to the task. Ps decide in small groups what humor style was represented in each of the scenarios they experienced earlier.

**Instructions to participants:** Now that we have had a number of experiences with the use of humor in the classroom, we are going to look at what types of humor are associated with each scenario. This will help us better understand what types of humor help/hinder learning.

You are going to get this handout. Look over it quickly. Do you see any works or expressions you are unfamiliar with?

Now, check with others in your group to see if they can help you understand. Help others if they don’t understand.

Participants work in groups for 2 mins.

**Instructions to trainer:** Ask groups if there are expressions they still don’t understand. Clarify and check these expressions.

**Instructions to participants:** Are there any expressions you would like some clarification for?

The trainer clarifies doubts and checks understanding.

**Instructions to participants:** Now let’s look at the “+” and “-” signs in the handout. What do you think these signs stand for? According to this handout, which are some negative forms of humor? Which are some positive ones? What would ridiculing be? What about parody?

| Participants be more fluent with identifying the aspects of humor portrayed in the role-plays. Both the “Joke Master” and the “Fun Meister” have both positive and negative qualities and aspects depending on how these types of humor are used. Be sure to go through this handout and identify these two sides with the participants. Here are the answers for the identifying task:
| Experience #1: Life mocker
| Experience #2: Joke maker
| Experience #3: Fun meister
| Experience #4: Joke maker
| Experience #5: Joy master
| **T-S**

| S
| S-S

| S-S

| T-S

| T-S
| The trainer elicits some answers. | T-S |
| Are there any more questions about this handout? | T-S |
| The trainer answers questions Ps might have. | T-S |
| **Instructions to participants:** Now that we have a better understanding of the handout, in groups decide which humor style was represented in each of the scenarios you experienced earlier. | T-S |
| Participants work in groups for 10 mins. | S-S |
| **Whole group share:** What style of humor did you notice in scenario #1? Scenario #2, #3, #4 and #5? | T-S |
| **Stage #5** | 20 min. |
| Participants synthesize their learning from the workshop. |  |
| **Overview of Stage:** During this stage, Ps go back to their posters and add new ideas they have after all their experiences and discussions. Allow for Ps to share what they have learned. Have Ps first revisit their posters and add more ideas so that they can start synthesizing. After this, ask all groups to put their posters on the wall for a gallery walk. It is important at this point to structure this task so that students stay on task and focus on noticing and gathering information from other groups. Tell your Ps to walk around reading what other groups wrote and to select from each poster 2-3 ideas that they did not include in their poster and find relevant. |  |
| **Instructions to participants:** In your original poster groups, look at your poster and add additional thoughts you have about what helps and what hinders learning in the classroom. | T-S |
| Participants work for 8 mins. | S-S |
| **Instructions to participants:** Put your posters | T-S |
| If you chose not to use a poster and had your participants write their ideas on the board, then they would now share in their groups orally what they would add and then go back to the board and add 1-2 more ideas. |  |
When other groups wrote and select from each poster 2-3 ideas that you did not include in your poster and find relevant.

Participants walk around for 5 mins.

Instructions to participants: Now get back together with your group and add any additional thoughts you would like to add to your posters. You have 3 minutes.

Whole group share: What was one thing that you noticed in the other posters that you added to yours? I would like to hear 2-3 voices.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage #6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participants make connections between what they have learned in this workshop and their teaching practices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants share one aspect from the workshop that they would like to try out next time they teach.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overview of Stage: Ask Ps to think about connections they can make between the use of humor in the classroom and their own teaching practices. First give Ps some individual thinking time. This will help them process their thoughts and prepare to share. Allot 2-3 minutes for them to think alone. Then have Ps work in small groups sharing 2-3 meaningful connections they made. Finally ask Ps to think about one approach to or use of humor that will be new that they would like to try out next time they teach based on the conversations they just had in groups. They could also think about teaching practices that they would like to try not doing in class because it does not contribute to students’ sense of safety.

Instructions to participants: Individually, what connections can you make between the use of humor in the classroom and your own teaching practices? Think of at least 2 connections. You have 2-3 minutes.

Share and discuss in small groups 1-2 of the connections you made between what we’ve talked about today and your own teaching.
Participants share in groups for 3 mins.

Instructions to participants: Think about something new you would like to try out next time you teach based on the conversations you just had in groups. You could also think about things that you might consider not doing in relation to the use of humor in the classroom.

Participants share in groups for 4 mins.

Whole group share: What is one thing you would like to try out or avoid doing next time you teach? I would like to hear 2-3 voices.

*The handouts remain the same for this revised version of the workshop plan.
Appendix 2

**Workshop plan #2: Understanding your humor style**

**Session overview**

Aim: To familiarize participants with their own humor style as teachers

Objectives:

Participants will be able to...

- Identify their own humor style as teachers
- Discuss about specific traits for four different humor styles
- Analyze past classroom experiences to better understand their personal humor styles

**Materials**

- Word splash handout
- Humor inventory worksheets
- Handouts with key information for each humor style
- “Reflecting on past a past experience” handout

**Assumptions for this workshop**

- Participants will most likely be aware of the type of humor they personally enjoy and find funny, but they might not be aware of the type of humor they use as teachers in the classroom.
- Participants have had experiences in the past where as teachers they used humor in the classroom, or they have been a student in a classroom where humor was used.

**Potential challenges**

1. Participants might feel uncomfortable sharing their results of the humor styles inventory, especially if “Life mocker” is their predominant style.
2. Participants might not remember a past experience where they have used humor in the classroom.

3. Participants might struggle with filling out the grid where they have to analyze a past experience they have had with humor.

**Solutions for the potential challenges**

1. After students complete the humor styles self-assessment, let them know that these results are personal and private. They can decide not to share their results, or to share some parts of it.

2. If trainees do not remember or want to share a past experience they have had as a teacher, they can choose to work with an experience they had in which they were the student.

3. For this task, model using the grid with an experience of your own. This will help them better understand how to work with the grid. It will also help them feel safer sharing an experience of their own.
**Workshop plan**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stages and purposes</th>
<th>Procedure</th>
<th>Timing and interaction</th>
<th>Trainer notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stage#1</strong></td>
<td>Participants receive a handout with a splash of words related to different types of humor styles. Individually, they circle words they find might describe the type of humor they enjoy or identify with. The trainer checks in with the trainees and asks how completing this task was for them. Elicits 2-3 thoughts.</td>
<td>5 min.</td>
<td>I suggest having students complete this task individually and not share with a partner because if they happen to choose more negative traits of humor like ridiculing and insulting, they could feel uncomfortable sharing with others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stage #2</strong></td>
<td>Participants complete a humor inventory worksheet. Individually, they read through a number of statements for four different types of humor and check the ones that are true for them. Tell participants that this tool is not perfect and that it is possible that they do not agree with the results. Ask them to be honest with themselves and tell them that the results are private. Participants share with a partner their results or something that struck their attention as they were completing the inventory. The trainer asks participants what they are thinking right now. Whole group share</td>
<td>15 min.</td>
<td>In my experience implementing this activity, I have noticed that participants who scored high in the “Life Mockers” checklist might not share their results afraid of being judged. It is important to highlight that this tool is not the only possible tool and that it is not perfect. It could potentially provide results that participants do not agree with. In this case, the intention is for the trainees to become more familiar with the existence of these different humor styles and potentially identify with one.</td>
</tr>
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</table>
### Stage #3

Participants will be able to read and describe key information for one humor style and listen about key information for the three other styles.

- **Participants** jigsaw key information for each of the humor styles.

  There are four different reading pieces, one for each humor style. Have each participant read the humor style they had as their strongest when doing the inventory task.

  Participants read the humor style they are assigned individually.

  Participants with the same humor style get together and share their thoughts on the information they read.

  Now make new groups of four of five people. Each group should have at least one person for each reading.

  Whole group share.

  For this activity, you could also assign the readings instead of having them read the one about their own humor style. Having them read about their own might be more engaging because it is relevant to who they are and having them read about other will allow them to see other perspectives.

  25 min.

### Stage #4

Participants will be able to reflect on a past experience where they used humor in the classroom to analyze what type of humor it was.

- **Participants** think of a past experience where they used humor in the classroom. If they cannot think of something, they could also choose a moment where they were students in a classroom where their teacher used humor.

  Individually, students fill out the handout labeled “Using humor in the classroom – Reflecting on a past experience”.

  Participants describe the moment they chose, analyze what type of humor they used and conclude what this might mean in terms of the type of humor they prefer or tend to use in the classroom.

  Participates share their answers and thoughts in groups of three or four.

  Whole group share.

  During this task, it is important to tell participants that they can choose between a lighthearted experience or perhaps one where they felt the humor they used wasn’t helpful. You could also have students think about two different past experiences, one they felt that was helpful and one that they weren’t happy or pleased with.

  25 min.

I also suggest providing participants with a model or sample for this task before they...
### Stage #5

Participants will be able to synthesize their learning by taking notes and sharing one thing they have learned from the workshop.

| Participants journal about what they have learned about themselves and their own personal style of humor when teaching. |
| Give participants 2-3 minutes to write down in their own journals or notebooks anything that has been relevant to them during this workshop in understanding their humor style. |
| Have trainees stand up and make one big circle. Ask them to mention one thing they would be willing to share with the whole group about what they have learned about their humor style as teachers. You could use a stuffed animal, a hackey sack ball or something similar to pass around as they share. They take turns sharing until everyone has participated. |

**10 min.**

**S**

**S-S**

For this closure activity, you can have participants both write about what they have learned and share with the whole group in a circle, or perhaps just one of the two options. I personally feel that it is more insightful when trainees get to hear other thoughts and perspectives in relation to the topic.

- start doing it alone. You could think about an experience to complete the handout and then share it with your trainees. Sharing yours first will help participants both better understand the task and also feel safer and more comfortable sharing theirs when they are asked to.
### Handouts and worksheets

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parody</th>
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Are you a Joy Master?
Use the following checklist to determine your Joy Master skills.

_____ 1. I bring joy and inspiration to my students.
_____ 2. My humor is inclusive and brings those around me closer.
_____ 3. Although far from naïve, I have a healthy, internalized “second innocence.”
_____ 4. My students feel better about themselves after spending time in my classroom.
_____ 5. My playfulness is full of affirmation and acknowledgement of others.
_____ 6. I am able to ignite faith, hope, and a sense of optimism in my classroom.
_____ 7. My sense of humor has a healing effect on those around me.
_____ 8. My sense of humor expands the minds of those around me.

If you have checked five or more of the statements, congratulations! As a Joy Master, you know how to take humor to its highest form! As a role model, your warm sense of humor will be an inspiration to others.

Are you a Fun Meister?
Use the following checklist to determine your Fun Meister skills.

Positive Traits

_____ 1. I am considered to be an expressive and funny teacher.
_____ 2. I use lots of gestures and movement when I am teaching to keep my students’ attention.
_____ 3. I am a natural imitator, and my students often ask me to imitate someone or something.
_____ 4. I easily and often evoke hearty laughter from my students.

Negative Traits

_____ 5. My humor style sometimes takes a twist and involves ridiculing others.
_____ 6. Sometimes my mimicry becomes cruel and or humiliating.
_____ 7. My sense of humor can lead toward the morbid, making light of tragedy and suffering.
_____ 8. I sometimes regret making humorous and biting comments.

If you have three or more checks in either category, you are definitely a frolicking Fun Meister. Challenge yourself to turn the negative traits into positive ones that can be appreciated by all!

Are you a Joke Maker?
Use the following checklist to determine your Joke Maker skills.

Positive Traits

_____ 1. I frequently entertain students with my clever wit.
_____ 2. I often try to help my students lighten up.
_____ 3. When I tell a good story in my classroom, you can hear a pin drop!
_____ 4. I enjoy clever wordplay with my students.

Negative Traits

_____ 5. My jokes can be off-color or insulting at times.
_____ 6. I am sometimes sarcastic or satirical in my instructional style.
_____ 7. My humor has a tendency to be self-deprecating.
_____ 8. My humor often has a judgmental or critical edge.

If you have checked three or more checks in either category, you are probably a jovial Joke Maker. Challenge yourself to turn negative traits into positive ones that will bring a smile to everyone’s face.

Are you a Life Mocker?
Use this checklist to determine if you are a Life Mocker.

_____ 1. I tend to intimidate students with my sharp tongue and cynicism.
_____ 2. My humor is cold and biting.
_____ 3. I am pessimistic about life and can quickly find fault with any situation.
_____ 4. I am often sarcastic in my day-to-day interactions with students.
_____ 5. I am well respected, but not well liked.
_____ 6. I don’t express affection nor do I give compliments in my classroom.
_____ 7. My humor is usually exclusive, intended to divide others through the method of one-upmanship.
_____ 8. I tend to feel superior and have been told that my humor is degrading.

If you have checked five or more of the statements, beware! What you may consider a “sense of humor” is really your method of lashing out at and hurting others. Take time to analyze what messages you are giving to yourself about the world and your place within it. Look at the positive qualities of the Joy Master, Fun Meister, and Joke Maker to see if they can help you become lighter and more loving toward yourself and others.

Taken from Loomans D. & Kolberg K. (2002, p.18-19). *The Laughing Classroom. New World Library*
Joy Master

You can identify Joy Masters by the lightness of their step. Bounding into rooms, they bring with them a sense of positive expectancy. They light up the places they enter, and they usually have a smile for everyone. Joy Masters take humor and play to their highest forms and use them to heal, affirm, uplift, and inspire others.

They joy that Joy Masters impart is infectious. They rise above the doom and gloom projected by others. They laugh for the sheer joy of laughing and have the ability to bring a ray of hope into seemingly hopeless situations. They believe the world is out to do them good and have learned to transform the pain and disappointment of life into positive learning experiences.

When Joy Masters add their traits to the positive traits of a Fun Meister, they engage in high-level play and merriment. They are always good sports and wouldn’t consider playing a “practical joke” in case it might inadvertently hurt someone.

When their traits combine with the positive traits of a Joke Maker, they are clever and witty wordsmiths who see humor as a way of teaching and reaching.

Fun Meister

Fun Meisters are highly entertaining. They know how to have a rollicking good time, and want to include you in it. They see the potential for fun in almost every situation, but would never be socially inappropriate just to get a laugh.

Fun Meisters are bold with their humor and laugh loudly and unselfconsciously. They are not afraid to slap their knees or buckle over with laughter. They are usually the life of a party. They never laugh “at” people but “with” them. They giggled a lot as children and find it easy to get down on the floor and play with them. They are everyone’s favorite aunt or uncle.

When their positive qualities include the qualities of a Joy Master, Fun Meisters engage in playful, slapstick antics. Many take up clowning as a profession or a hobby.

When Fun Meisters adopt the negative qualities of a Life Mocker, their fun turns against people and becomes degrading and cruel and takes the form of poking fun at and humiliating others.

Joke Maker

Joke Makers remember punch lines and know how to weave funny tales that have others wiping away tears of laughter. Their comic timing is impeccable. They have an uncanny ability to use their voice in strange and humorous ways and are good imitators.

Joke Makers like to create funny stories based on their experiences. They pride themselves on being able to see the humor in even their most difficult lessons. You can always rely on a Joke Maker to have funny turn of phrase, joke, quotations, or story to help you see a situation in a new and different light.

When Joke Makers have the positive qualities of a Joy Master, their jokes are insightful and instructive and can help lift one’s spirit. They love to parody things that they find hypocritical.

When Joke Makers combine their characteristics with the qualities of a Life Mocker, their jokes turn ugly, self-deprecating, and bitingly satiric. They use them to vent their rage and hurt others.

Life Mocker

Life Mockers take humor to its lowest form and use it to ridicule, shame, and dehumanize others. Life Mockers sneer rather than smile. They consider themselves superior to everyone on the planet. They use their humor as a weapon to destroy feelings of charity and contentment. They live mostly in their intellect and are constantly commenting on what is wrong with the world around them. Life Mockers treat life itself as a joke and dismiss joy and fun as frivolous and childish.

Their idea of a hearty laugh is a “Ha, I told you so” type of laugh. They win the admiration but not the affection of their peers through flippancy and total disregard for life. Like sugarcoated poison, Life Mockers’ humor may bring an initial smile, but it ultimately turns people away from them.

When Life Mockers combine their qualities with those of a Fun Meister, they engage in cruel humor disguised as fun. They only laugh deeply when others are hurt or are in pain. They are fond of saying, “What’s the matter, can’t you take a joke?”

Life Mockers are cynical and sarcastic; when they add their traits to those of a Joke Maker, they use humor to degrade and stereotype and keep people from experiencing their common bonds.

Using humor in the classroom
Reflecting on a past experience

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<th>What moment have you chosen to reflect on?</th>
<th>Describe this experience. What did you say or do during this moment?</th>
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**Reflection on workshop plan #2: Understanding your humor style**

**Strengths**

1. Students sharing what they feel comfortable with in Stage # 2

Participants completed a humor style self-assessment individually during this stage of the lesson. After they finished this task, they shared with a partner. As I was giving them instructions for the pair work, they were told to share only what they felt comfortable sharing. When the trainees heard this, at least 5 of them sighed and said “okay”, “good news”, and “I like that”. This demonstrated that for some of them these results were too private to talk about with others openly. I believe that when working with topics that could reveal personal and sensitive information it is essential to create possibilities where participants can opt to keep all or some of the information private. I also find that when dealing with potentially personal and sensitive information, the trainer needs to carefully design the instructions, tasks and questions that will be asked in ways that focus on the content of the task rather than on the personal or deeply held behaviors/beliefs of participants or on things about participants that could provoke negative judgment from others in the group. An exception to this might be if you are working with a group of participants that you know well and you have already established a closer relationship with. In this case, your participants might feel comfortable or safe sharing their more personal emotions and making themselves vulnerable to, or in front of the group. I also strongly believe that the role of the trainer in moments of a workshop like the one described above is to be an empathizer. It is important to take on a role where participants feel that you understand what they feel and that their feelings are valid and natural in the process of learning both professionally and personally. If this challenge is not dealt with
carefully, the participants could feel uncomfortable, embarrassed and/or ashamed among other feelings causing them to shut down in terms of participation and learning.

2. Modeling how to fill in the grid in Stage # 4

Before asking participants to start filling in this grid, I modeled using a personal experience of my own. A number of students mentioned that having this example helped them understand what they were supposed to do. I also noticed a couple of students nodding their heads and saying: “Got it” and “great”. Providing participants with a specific example helped them have a clearer idea of the instructions and expectations for this task. I believe that modeling and giving examples are excellent ways of ensuring that participants understand what they have to do for any given task in addition to having a clear sense of what the expectation for the task is. I also find that modeling this task using a personal experience provides participants with a stronger sense of safety and assurance as they start working with personal experiences of their own. By the trainer sharing their own personal example, participants realize that they are not the only ones sharing and potentially making themselves vulnerable. This sense of community and companionship helps create a sense of safety and acceptance in the classroom. I also believe that the trainer should feel safe sharing their experiences. I personally feel that as a trainer it is important to share personal experiences to the extent that credibility and respect from the participants will not be jeopardized.

Areas for growth

1. The word splash during Stage # 1

For this activity, participants were asked to choose or circle words that they personally identified with when they thought about humor in general. I noticed some of the
participants only choosing positive words. A number of them seemed reluctant to choose words that could be seen as more negative sides of humor. I think that asking them to choose words that they personally identified with was a bit intimidating for them to do. They didn’t seem to feel comfortable recognizing or sharing all their true feelings and thoughts at this stage of the lesson. I think that this task became too risky because participants were suddenly asked to approach the topic in an extremely personal manner at a stage of the workshop where they had not established a sense of safety and ease with the group. From this, I believe two things about teaching/training and learning. First, I believe that the way in which questions or instructions for a task are phrased can make a considerable difference in terms of the outcome of a task. In the case of this activity, changing the question/task from choosing words that participants identified with to words that they thought of when thinking of a specific context where humor is used made them feel more comfortable. By just tweaking the question and the task a bit, the activity became much more approachable and comfortable for students to complete. Second, I believe that it is important when designing activities to think about how safe or risky they might be for participants. It seems to me that for a workshop to be successful it needs to be scaffolded in a way that leads students from safer to riskier tasks. If the activities at the beginning of the workshop are safer, your participants will slowly grow in confidence and feel better about completing tasks that might be emotionally more challenging because they have been prepared for the task. This will help build a safe environment for participants to feel more comfortable participating and ultimately learning.

2. Allowing everyone to share his/her final thoughts during Stage #5
After students wrote their final thoughts down in stage #5, they made a big circle and started sharing one thing they had learned from the workshop. There were 22 participants present and they all wanted to participate. After the seventh or eighth person shared their thoughts, everyone who was not talking seemed to start disengaging. They were chatting with each other, yawning and swaying their bodies back and forth among other body language that seemed to express that they were tired and ready to finish. I think that participants were having this response because they did not have an active role during the majority of the activity. They might also have felt tired because it was the end of the workshop and they had been standing in the circle too long. I think that letting everyone share something at the end of the workshop with 22 participants hindered their ability to stay focused during the closure of the workshop. I also think that it is essential that participants have a chance to reflect on and share their learning at the end of a workshop in order to create a sense of closure. For this reason, it seems to me that when wrapping up a workshop it is essential to design a closure activity that will keep students engaged and focused on the topic. They must have an active role for the most part of the task. I feel that when designing an activity for the end of a workshop it is important to think about how tired the participants might be and what classroom configuration would help their learning. Based on this thought, I believe that when designing closure activities it is important to have set ups and configurations where participants have a more active and kinesthetic role that will help them stay on task and attentive.

3. The jigsaw activity in Stage #3

For this activity, participants were asked to read about the humor style that was their strongest from the inventory they had previously completed. After students read their
piece for this jigsaw, they got into groups with people who had the same reading. In this moment, I noticed that only one person had read about the “Life mocker”. For me, there were evidently two problems with this situation. First of all, this participant seemed to be singled out as the “Life mocker”. This participant was standing alone as the rest of the participants walked around making groups. His reaction was to say: “Am I the only terrible one?” as he laughed. When this happened, I apologized and asked him to join one of the groups and they started sharing. I am not sure if or how bad he felt about what happened, but there is a high chance that he did feel uncomfortable. Secondly, I only had one person who had read this section. This was not enough to include this piece as part of the jigsaw. Only one of the groups had someone sharing the information from the “Life mocker” reading. After they shared, I quickly described the traits of this humor style and moved on with the workshop. I believe that when working with topics that deal directly with participants’ personal attributes it is vital to think about implementing activities that will not put them on the spot and make them feel vulnerable or embarrassed because if not they could potentially shut down. For example, with this jigsaw activity, it would be more effective to assign the readings randomly or to have participants choose a reading of their choice that they might be more curious about without labeling it as their own humor style. The trainer needs to think about designing tasks that will not single participants out and will create an inclusive and safe environment. I also believe when using a jigsaw technique in a workshop that the trainer must make sure that all the readings involved are equally distributed among the participants.
Suggestions for improving the workshop plan

1. Asking participants to choose words that they associate with when thinking of humor in different contexts and why for the word splash activity in stage # 1 instead of words that they identify with personally.

2. During the final closure task of this workshop, having a limited number of participants sharing their final thoughts or making smaller groups so that everyone has a chance to share without the task becoming too long and disengaging. Another possibility is to have students share in a “popcorn” style where they share a thought quickly and briefly in no longer than 10 seconds and then someone else immediately jumps in with their thought in and so on.

3. Assigning the readings for this jigsaw randomly instead of having participants read their most predominant humor style. Not only would this ensure groups with similar numbers but it would also help prevent participants feeling vulnerable, embarrassed, or uncomfortable because their personal humor style can be hurtful or problematic.
Revised workshop plan #2: Understanding your humor style

**Session overview**

Aim: To familiarize participants with their own humor style as teachers

Objectives:

By the end of the session participants will be able to...

- List four different styles of humor
- Say what their dominant humor style is
- Describe specific traits of each of the four different humor styles
- Describe and explain types of humor they have used in the classroom

**Materials**

- Word splash handout
- Humor inventory worksheets
- Handouts with key information for each humor style
- “Reflecting on past a past experience” handout

**Assumptions for this workshop**

- The trainer is capable of noticing the overall feelings of the participants and making decisions related to approaching the content of this workshop based on those feelings and needs.

- The trainer is familiar with jigsaw activities and has used jigsaw activities either as a teacher or a trainer in their classrooms.

- Participants will most likely be aware of the type of humor they personally enjoy and find funny, but they might not be aware of the type of humor they use as teachers in the classroom and how it potentially affects their teaching and students’ learning.

- Participants have had experiences in the past where as teachers they used humor in the classroom.
• Participants are familiar with the concepts and language “help learning” and “hinder learning.”

**Potential challenges**

1. It might be challenging for the trainer to deal with participants’ emotions and feelings that could be triggered while/after completing activities in this workshop plan like the humor inventory.

2. The trainer may find it difficult to give clear instructions for the jigsaw activity in stage #4.

3. Participants might not understand all the words included in the word splash handout used in stage #2.

4. Participants might feel uncomfortable sharing their results of the humor styles inventory, especially if “Life mocker” is their dominant style.

5. Participants might struggle with filling out the “Reflecting on a past experience” grid where they have to analyze a past experience they have had using humor in the classroom.

6. Participants have not necessarily attended the first in this series of workshops. While linked, the workshops also function as stand-alone sessions and participants may not realize this.

**Solutions for the potential challenges**

1. For this challenge, make sure that you (the trainer) always provide participants with individual thinking or journaling time so that they can process what they are thinking and feeling before perhaps having to share with peers or the whole class. I also highly suggest telling your participants before carrying out risky tasks like the humor inventory that they can share only what they feel comfortable sharing. They need to know that they can keep results, opinions and feelings private if that is what they prefer. Finally, I think that the way in which you design the questions that you ask your participants is essential. Design questions that do not focus on emotional reactions, but rather the content of the task. See the questions suggested in the procedural section of the workshop plan.

2. For the implementation of this jigsaw activity, I highly recommend, as you are preparing, mapping out on a piece of paper what the groups would look like once they are made based on the number of participants you have. If you do not know how many you will have, then you could map out a class with both an odd and an even number of trainees. I also find helpful when doing jigsaw activities to assign
letters or numbers. For this specific task, there are four readings so you will need to assign at least 4 letters or numbers. Everyone reading the same material would receive the same letter or number. Below you will find some examples of different possible configurations. These are just examples. Please make your groups based on the numbers you have in your workshop.

Initially your class would look like this:

\[
\begin{array}{cccc}
A & A & B & B \\
A & A & B & B \\
C & C & D & D \\
C & C & D & D
\end{array}
\]

Once students have mastered the material, your classroom would look like this:

\[
\begin{array}{cccc}
A & B & A & B \\
A & B & A & B \\
C & D & C & D \\
C & D & C & D
\end{array}
\]

If you do not have even multiples, your classroom could look like this:

\[
\begin{array}{cccc}
A & B & A & B \\
A & B & A & B \\
C & D & C & D \\
C & D & C & D
\end{array}
\]

Or like this:

\[
\begin{array}{cccc}
A & B & A & B \\
A & B & A & B \\
C & D & C & D \\
C & D & C & D
\end{array}
\]

3. Have participants work in small groups and check the vocabulary with each other before completing the task. Walk around the classroom monitoring and providing clarification for the vocabulary if your participants still have doubts. If there are expressions that no one knows, clarify as a whole group.

4. After participants complete the humor styles self-assessment, let them know that these results are personal and private. They can decide not to share their results, or to share only some parts of it. Use at least two or three of the suggestions to help prepare participants for this stage included in the workshop plan.

5. For this task, model using the grid with an experience of your own. This will help them better understand how to work with the grid. It will also help them feel safer sharing an experience of their own.

6. In order to help participants and trainers who did not attend the first of this series of workshops, begin the workshop discussing a bit about aspects of humor that both
help/hinder learning. Use the handout labeled “The two sides of humor” for participants to discuss and then share some of their own thoughts. This handout includes the main conclusions from participants who have attended the first workshop. Let participants know that this was one of the main objectives of the workshop. The rest of the objectives from the first workshop will be addressed when participants do the jigsaw activity and draw their own personal conclusions towards then end of the workshop.
### Workshop plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stages and purposes</th>
<th>Procedure</th>
<th>Timing and interaction</th>
<th>Trainer notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stage #1</strong></td>
<td>Overview of Stage: This stage aims to support participants (Ps) in having an overall understanding of what was covered in the first workshop of this series in case you and/or the Ps did not attend the first workshop. &lt;br&gt; &lt;br&gt; Tell your Ps that this is the second workshop of a series of three focused on humor in the classroom. Let them know even though these three workshops are linked, each of them also functions as a stand-alone session. &lt;br&gt; &lt;br&gt; Give your Ps the handout labeled “The Two Sides of Humor”. Make sure you tell your Ps that these were some of the final thoughts from Ps who attended the first workshop. Have them work in small groups reading the information and discussing whether they agree or disagree with the ideas. &lt;br&gt; &lt;br&gt; Instructions to participants: Welcome to this workshop. Just so that you know, this is the second workshop of a series of three focused on humor in the classroom. Even though these three workshops are linked, each of them also functions as a stand-alone session. We are going to start this session by looking at some of the final thoughts participants came up with during the first workshop of this series. This will help you better understand where this second workshop is coming from and some key aspects of the role of humor in the classroom. &lt;br&gt; &lt;br&gt; In small groups, I want you to look at this summary of when humor can help and/or hinder learning from the previous workshop in order for them to have an overall sense of what was covered in the first workshop.</td>
<td>10 min.</td>
<td>The intention of this stage is to provide participants and even trainers who did not attend the first workshop with an overall sense of what was covered in this workshop. This stage should be brief because it is not the main focus of the workshop, but it will help your participants have a stronger sense of where this workshop is coming from and the relevance of the role of humor in the classroom. &lt;br&gt; &lt;br&gt; If you and your participants have already worked with workshop #1, then you might not need to do this stage. However, this stage might also be an effective way of reviewing key aspects from the previous workshop. If you still have the posters your participants made with what helps/hinders learning, use your own examples instead of the ones included in the handout for this stage. This will make the...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
hinder learning. Which ideas do you agree or disagree with? Why?

Participants work in groups for five mins.

Whole group share: Now, I would like to hear 3-4 voices. What were some ideas you agreed or disagreed with and why?

| Stage#2 | Overview of Stage: The handout used in this stage has a number of vocabulary items related to humor. There could be some words that your Ps do not know. Make sure you give them both individual time to check the words and also pair or group time to clarify concepts with each other. It will be helpful if you walk around checking in with the groups and helping them with doubts they still have.

After working with the vocabulary in the handout, have Ps circle for the first context, underline for the second and draw clouds for the third for the words they associate with when they think of each specific context. You will be giving Ps three different contexts to think about: a party, a comedy movie and a classroom. For this piece, you can do one context at a time and give Ps time to discuss which words they chose and why before moving on to the next context.

Instructions to participants: Individually, look at all the words in the handout and see which ones you know or do not know. You have 2 minutes.

Work with a partner or in groups of three and help each other clarifying the meaning of any words you might not know.

Pairs/groups work for 3 mins. | activity much more personal and relevant for your participants.

| | 15 min. | For this stage, it is important to make sure all your participants are clear on the meaning of the vocabulary included in the handout. If they do not understand some of the words it will be difficult for them to complete the task. I highly suggest if you decide to change or adapt this task to avoid having them associate these words with their own personalities and humor styles. When I have done this in the past, it becomes too personal and participants tend to start shutting down. |
Instructions to participants: We are going to work with the following contexts of humor:

(The trainer puts these up on the board)

1. At a party with your close friends (circle)
2. In a comedy movie (underline)
3. In a classroom (draw clouds)

Individually, circle words for the first context, underline words for the second and for the third context draw clouds around the words that you associate with when you think of, or encounter humor in, each of the contexts on the board. For example, give me one word you associate with in a comedy movie.

Participants select words in the handout. Allow 1 min. for each context.

Instructions to participants: Now, in small groups of three or four, share the words you chose for each context and discuss why you chose them.

Participants work in groups for 5 mins.


Stage #3

Participants become aware of specific traits for four different humor styles.

Overview of Stage: For this stage, it is essential that you prepare your Ps for the potentially personal and emotional side of the task. Ps will be filling out a humor self-assessment in which their results could highlight a more negative style of humor. Following are a number of steps to follow in order to prepare and scaffold your Ps for 15 min.

In my experience implementing this activity, I have noticed that participants who scored high in the “Life Mocker” checklist might not share their results afraid of being judged.
| Participants discover their dominant style of humor. | the humor styles inventory. | It is important to highlight that this tool is not the only possible tool and that it is not perfect. It could potentially provide results that participants do not agree with. In this case, the intention is for the trainees to become more familiar with the existence of these different humor styles and potentially identify with one. |

- **Instructions to trainer:** Ask Ps if they have ever done an inventory type activity and what their experience was like. Elicit a few examples of experiences from the Ps.

Tell your Ps that they will be doing an inventory activity intended as a self-assessment that will help them have an overall idea of what their personal dominant humor style is. Share your own experience completing self-assessment tools. I suggest sharing an experience where perhaps your score or result was not what you were expecting. This will help model the potential for a surprising/unexpected outcome and establish a shared experience between the trainer and the Ps, and the safety that comes from knowing someone else had our experience and so will be sympathetic or even empathetic.

- **Instructions to trainer:** Explain that this inventory is not a perfect tool and that its results might not reflect precisely who we are as human beings or professionals.

Tell Ps this self-assessment checklist comes from “The Laughing Classroom” by Diana Loomans. Some information about Diana Loomans: She is a speaker, author, success coach, and founder of The Quantum Life Institute. She has been a pioneer in the human potential field for over two decades.

Explain that the goal of this self-assessment is to better understand personal humor styles in order to develop skills in using humor to ultimately serve their students’ learning more effectively. Tell your Ps that if they better understand their own humor styles they will be able to use the qualities of humor as an effective tool in helping students learn. Ask Ps in what way they

| | | Alternative |

In case you feel that the implementation of this task is too risky or that you might not feel confident dealing with the potentially challenging reactions from participants like feeling overwhelmed or frustrated with their results, here is an alternative. You could post only the statements for each of the humor styles around the walls of your classroom and have participants walk around putting a check next to those that they feel might be part of their humor style. After this, you could ask participants to talk with a partner and share overall which were two humor styles they felt
think humor can help students learn. Ps discuss. Elicit their ideas (e.g., humor helps keep Ss engaged, interested in the lesson, alert, and positive about learning and being in class).

Tell your Ps that the inventory looks at four humor styles and that they will find that they have a little bit of all of the four humor styles. They will have results for all four humor styles, not just one.

**Instructions to participants:** What do you think your two dominant humor styles are? (The trainer writes the four humor styles up on the board for the Ps to see them all)

Participants work individually for 3 mins.

**Instructions to participants:** Now that you have an idea of what your potentially dominant humor styles might be, let’s do the humor styles inventory and see what happens. Individually, read the statements for each of the humor styles and check the ones that you feel might be true for you. After you finish the checklist for each humor style, add up how many you checked and read the note at the end of the list. You have 10 minutes.

Participants work individually for 10 mins.

**Instructions to participants:** Now, in pairs, talk about one or two aspects that caught your attention as you were doing the inventory.

Participants work in pairs.

**Whole group share:** What is one thing that caught your attention as you were doing this inventory? I would like to hear 2-3 thoughts.
### Stage #4

Participants read and describe key information for one humor style and listen about key information for the three other styles.

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<tr>
<td><strong>Overview of Stage:</strong> In this stage, your Ps will be reading more detailed information about the four different humor styles. The main task for this stage is a jigsaw activity. Please plan instructions for the jigsaw task carefully. You want to make sure that you assign the four readings randomly amongst Ps so that no one feels that they are given one that necessarily identifies their humor style. This will help avoid putting Ps on the spot and potentially having them shut down.</td>
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**Instructions to the trainer:** There are four readings so you need to divide Ps into four groups. Designate groups as Group 1, 2, 3, 4 OR as Group A, B, C, D. Ps count off in order so that each one has a number (1-4) or letter (A-D). Ps move into groups with Ps who have the same number/letter as they do. Don’t worry if there is an odd number in any of the groups. At this stage there can be a couple groups with 1 fewer or more Ps than other groups.

**Instructions to Participants:** (Trainer counts off from 1-4 “1, 2, 3, 4, 1, 2.....”) Move so that everyone you are sitting with has the same number/letter as you do. All the 1s (As) sit together, all the 2s (Bs) and so on. Form a group. Look around this is your Home Group.

I’m going to give you a reading. Everyone in Group 1 is going to get the same reading; everyone in Group 2 is going to get the same reading and it is different from the reading for Group 1 (and so on). You will read the text and do a task: read and find 3-5 key pieces of information that best describe the humor style you have. You have 5 minutes.

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</table>
| 40 min. | Making groups can be tricky sometimes, especially when doing jigsaws. Something that helps me as a trainer is to think about how many groups I want and then to count students off by that same number. So, if I want 5 groups, then I count all my students off by 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5.

I also suggest after getting started with assigning participants a number to get them saying their number as you point at them instead of you saying it for them. This will help them better remember their number when they have to form their groups. You might also want trainees to say their letter or number back to the whole group after all numbers have been assigned just to double check they know their number. This will help avoid confusion and potential chaos as participants start grouping up with their fellow teachers. | T-S |
| Participants in groups read the same text and do the task for five mins.                                      | S-S |
| Instructions to participants: Now discuss your answers. Be sure you all have the same answers and take notes of these answers so that you can share them with a new group later on. You have 5 minutes. | T-S |
| Participants discuss for 5 mins.                                                                          | S-S |
| Instructions to participants: I want you to move to a new group. Please listen carefully. One person in each group stay where you are. Everyone else, take your reading and move to a different group. In the new group there will be one new person from Group 1, one from Group 2, and so on. If you arrive at a group and there is already someone from your Home group there, come up here. You have 1 min to form a new group. Go! | T-S |
| Instructions to trainer: If there is an odd number of Ps, the ones who are extra need to be added to the new groups. See the diagram in Solutions to Challenges. Reassure Ps who share the same number/letter that they will both contribute. Check the groups. | T-S |
| Instructions to participants: In your new groups, take turns. Tell others the humor style you read about in your Home group and share 2-3 pieces of information that best describe that humor style. Be critical listeners. Ask questions if you do not understand or want clarification. Make notes. You have 10 minutes total for everyone to share. | T-S |
| Participants share in their groups.                                                                        | S-S |
| Whole group share: What is something that struck you after sharing with your groups?                      | T-S |
### Stage #5

**Overview of Stage:** Have your Ps go back to their original seats. Tell Ps to think of a past experience they have had in the classroom where they have used humor. This must be an experience that reflects their usual sense of humor. Ps will be using this experience to analyze and reflect on their use of humor in the classroom. Please read the handout (Using humor in the classroom) for this activity carefully. Provide Ps with an example for using this handout before they have to do theirs. You will find an example below in the instructions to Ps. This step could take around 8 minutes.

**Instructions to participants:** I would like for you to think of a past experience where you have used humor in the classroom. Think of a moment that reflects your usual sense of humor and not something that happened only once, or once or twice only. It can be a moment of lighthearted humor or one in which you realized the humor affected class atmosphere negatively for one, some, many of the students. Once you have chosen an experience, we are going to use it to reflect on our use of humor in the classroom. Here is an example of what I am thinking about:

**What moment have you chosen to reflect on?** 
*My students rewriting and singing songs in front of the whole class.*

**Describe this experience. What did you say or do during this moment?**
*I was teaching a class and had asked my students to choose a song and rewrite the...*
lyrics for it using vocabulary they had learned that week.
I modeled first by singing my version of “Macarena”. My students laughed for the majority of the performance. After I modeled, they worked in groups of four and chose songs like “We are the Champions”, “My heart will go on” and “Baby one more time”. Each group had around 15 minutes to prepare their song. They then took turns singing their song to the rest of the class. As each group took turns presenting to the class, the rest of them laughed, smiled and clapped a number of times.

What type of humor do you think you were using in this moment? What humor style do you think it might relate to?
I think I was using an inclusive and very playful type of humor. Everyone seemed to come closer together and bond as we were all being a bit silly and having fun. This would be “Joy master”.
I wonder though if some of the students felt that they were being made fun of by others. There was lots of laughing and even though I felt like it was an innocent type of laughter, perhaps for some it was embarrassing and maybe humiliating.
In this case, the humor type would be the negative side of the “Fun meister”.

What does this tell you about your style of humor as a teacher in the classroom?
It seems like I tend to try to bring lots of innocent and playful humor into my classroom, but I need to be careful that it does not turn into an opportunity for some students to ridicule others or for some to feel overly embarrassed or humiliated because of the nature of the task.

Instructions to participants: Now, you are going to work with the experience you thought of before my example. What was example did you think of? If you have not
chosen a moment yet, you have one more minute to choose one.

Participants think individually.  

Instructions to participants: Here is the worksheet we will be working with. I would like for you to fill out the first column only. What moment have you chosen to reflect on? (Give each participant a handout) You have 2 minutes.

Participants fill this out individually.  

Instructions to participants: Work with a partner. Share what experience you chose. You have 3 minutes.

Participants work in pairs for 3 mins.

Instructions to participants: Now, move on to columns #2, 3 and 4. Fill out these three columns individually. You have 10 minutes.

Participants work individually for 10 mins.

Instructions to participants: Work with a partner. Share your thoughts. You have 5 minutes.

Participants work in pairs for 5 mins.

Whole group share: After completing this task, what is one thing you are thinking about right now that is relevant to you? 5 minutes for this group share.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage #6</th>
<th>Overview of Stage: For this last stage, the main intention is for your participants to</th>
<th>20 min.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participants synthesize</td>
<td></td>
<td>For this closure activity consider the number of</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
their learning by taking notes and sharing one thing they have learned from the workshop.

| their learning by taking notes and sharing one thing they have learned from the workshop. | synthesize and draw conclusions about what has been most meaningful for them in this workshop. Allow Ps to have enough time to journal about what they have learned today. Have them make notes about what they have learned about each of the four humor styles and how each of these styles applies to them as teachers. You could also have them share one concrete thing they would like to take from the session and use as part of their teaching. For the last section of this stage, when Ps make a big circle to share, be sure either to have one big circle where you hear from 4-6 Ps so that it does not go on for too long, or if you want everyone to share something make more circles with smaller groups. If you feel like everyone is really engaged, you can try to have one big circle and have everyone share something briefly. This is something you need to decide based on the overall feeling of your group at this point of the workshop. 

Instructions to participants: Journal about what you have learned today. There are three pieces I would like for you to journal about:

1. What have you learned today about each of the four styles of humor?

2. How do these four styles of humor relate to you as a teacher?

3. What is one concrete thing you would like to take with you today and integrate into your teaching?

You have 10 minutes to journal and take notes about these questions.

Participants journal for 10 mins. | participants you are working with. If you have many and not much time left, you could have them do this in small groups of three or four and then elicit a couple of thoughts for the whole class to hear. Another possibility is to have students share in a “popcorn” style where they share a thought quickly and briefly for no longer than 10 seconds and then someone else immediately jumps in with their thought and so on.

Instructions to participants: Stand up and

| T-S | S | T-S |
| make one big circle. Tell us one thing you would be willing to share about what you have learned about your own humor style as a teacher. We are going to pass this hackey sack ball around for whoever would like to say something. |
|---|---|---|
|  |  |  |
### Handouts and worksheets

#### The Two Sides of Humor

Thoughts from participants who attended 
workshop #1: The role of humor in the classroom

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Humor can help learning when it...</th>
<th>Humor can hinder learning when it...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-Is genuine and lighthearted</td>
<td>-Makes fun of others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Includes all the students</td>
<td>-Stereotypes people and behaviors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Helps create a safe and friendly</td>
<td>-Focuses on tragedy and suffering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>environment</td>
<td>-Is degrading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Is humanizing and/or insightful</td>
<td>-Involves sarcasm directed at a person, a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Inspires students</td>
<td>person's experiences or beliefs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Involves a respectful sense of play</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*The rest of the handouts remain the same for this revised version of the workshop plan.*
Appendix 3

Workshop plan #3: Humor based activities

Session overview

Aim: To analyze and create humor based activities using specific criteria.

Objectives:

By the end of the session participants will be able to...

- List and describe specific criteria for designing humor based activities
- Apply criteria to describe and discuss the design of humor based activities
- Design humor based activities using a set of criteria

Materials

- “Criteria for humor based activities” handout
- Selection of ten handouts and worksheets for humor based activities.
- “Reflecting on humor based activities” handout

Assumptions for this workshop

- The trainer is able to manage time effectively so that there is enough time to implement at least three different activities in stage #2.
- The trainer is capable of reading the description of an activity and delivering it in a way that makes sense to the group of teachers they are working with. The trainer can also make slight changes to the activity based on participants’ responses and needs as the activity is being implemented.
- Participants will most likely find this workshop useful and helpful because they tend to appreciate learning about practical and easy-to-follow activities that they can use in their classrooms.
- After the trainer provides some examples, participants will be capable of mentioning some aspects that they consider help create more successful humor based activities.
Potential challenges

1. It might be challenging for the trainer to choose 3-5 humor based activities out of the seven options.

2. It could be challenging for the participants to have to design a completely new activity using the criteria for humor based activities.

3. Participants might want more examples of humor based activities than what they will experience during the workshop.

Solutions for the potential challenges

1. For this challenge, I suggest carefully reading the overview for each of the activities. This overview will help you have a clearer idea of the main purposes for each of the tasks. Choose activities based on what you feel might be more helpful for the participants you are working with.

2. Make sure you tell your participants that they do not have to create a new activity in the second stage. Tell them that it is not about reinventing the wheel, but about seeing through a different lens. It is fine for them to choose an activity that they have already done before and adapt it to make it a humor based activity.

3. Also for potential challenge #2, participants will experience at least three examples of humor based activities and this will help them have a basis for creating their own.

4. For challenge #3, if your trainees still want more examples of humor based activities after the workshop is over, you can give them the activities that you did not use as handouts. Participants love leaving workshops with handouts and ideas they can use in their classrooms.
### Workshop plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stages and purposes</th>
<th>Procedure</th>
<th>Timing and interaction</th>
<th>Additional trainer notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stage#1</strong></td>
<td><strong>Participants list and explain criteria for “humor based activities”</strong></td>
<td><strong>15 min.</strong></td>
<td><strong>I highly recommend providing participants with a couple of examples for what makes for a successful humor based activity. They might not know what to say without the examples.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Instructions to trainer:</strong> For this first stage, the idea is to elicit from the participants criteria they feel helps make a humor based activity successful.</td>
<td><strong>Ask participants the following question to elicit criteria: What do you think helps make a successful humor based activity? For example, does it need to include an element of fun? Should it be something where everyone participates?</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have your trainees work in pairs or small groups and then have a whole class discussion.</td>
<td><strong>Once your participants have shared their thoughts/criteria, give them the handout labeled “Criteria for humor based activities”. Have them compare their ideas with this handout. Encourage them to add ideas that they came up with and are not on the handout at the bottom of the page. Tell your trainees that they will be using this list of criteria to analyze 3-5 humor based activities.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Instructions to participants:</strong> We are going to think about a set of criteria for humor based activities. In groups of three, think about what helps make a humor based activity successful and why?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participants work.</td>
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<tr>
<td>What did you come up with? I would like to hear 3-5 thoughts.</td>
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</table>
### Stage #2

**Participants**

Participants experience a number of humor based activities and analyze each activity in terms of the criteria they were given.

**Instructions to trainer:** During this stage, your participants will experience and process a number of humor based activities. The idea is for them to have/experience examples of humor based activities, use the criteria to analyze the activities and reflect about how they can adapt these activities to better fit their teaching contexts.

First, give the trainees the handout labeled: “Reflecting on Humor Based Activities”. Have them read this handout in pairs to get more familiar with it. Tell them that they will also need the handout with the criteria for this stage of the workshop.

Explain to your participants that they will be the students and you will be the teacher for a number of humor based activities. After each activity, they will go back to the “Reflecting on Humor Based Activities” handout for processing. This will allow the trainees to reflect and better understand the design of humor based activities.

In the handouts section of this workshop plan, you will find seven different humor based activities. These activities are taken from “The Laughing Classroom” by Diana Loomans and Karen Kolberg. Please choose two that you feel best fit your training context and/or you find most relevant for your participants.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(Pass out handout with criteria) In this handout, you will find a set of criteria for humor based activities. Compare the criteria to the ideas you had come up with. Add any of your ideas to the handout that are not present. What from the criteria struck your attention? What questions do you have in regards to the criteria?</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>T-S</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stage #2</strong></td>
<td>45 min</td>
<td>During this stage, you will not be able to do all the humor based activities with your participants, but you can give these to them as handouts at the end of the workshop. In my experience delivering this workshop, trainees always appreciate leaving the workshop with as many ideas as possible of activities they can potentially use in their classrooms. Participants love in general receiving handouts at the end of workshops!</td>
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</table>
your trainees. You will be implementing these activities with your participants where it says "Implementation of humor based activity" below in the instructions to participants. All of them highlight different aspects and uses of positive humor. In the overview for each activity, you will see what type of humor is emphasized. Read the overviews and procedures for each activity carefully before you decide which ones to use.

Follow the following steps during this stage:

1. Do the activity with your participants. All the instructions and procedures for each activity are in the handouts you have to choose from.

2. Reflect on the activity. Use the handout "Reflecting on humor based activities" for this. In this handout, your participants have to describe the activity, analyze what criteria is present in the activity, and think of what adaptations they would make for the activity to better fit their teaching context. Participants first work on this handout individually, then in pairs or small groups and finally they share their findings with the whole class.

3. Move on to your next humor based activity and repeat steps #1 and #2 until you work with 3-5 different activities.

**Instructions to participants:** You are going to experience a number of humor based activities. After each activity, you are going to process the experience using this handout (pass the handout around).
Take one minute to get familiarized with this handout.

What do you notice in this handout? How many columns are there? Which one is the description? What’s the second column? Why might the third column be helpful for you to think about? (Elicit answers/thoughts from participants).

You will also need the handout we worked with earlier with the criteria. Make sure you have it with you.

For each of these activities you will be the students and I will be the teacher. We will do the whole activity as it is designed.

**Implementation of humor based activity #1**

Individually, fill out the three columns of the handout “Reflecting on humor based activities”.

Now, share your thoughts with a partner or in groups of three.

I would like to hear 3-5 thoughts about this humor based activity and what you noticed. What criteria were present? What adaptations would make to this activity to have it better fit your teaching context?

**To the trainer:** Repeat the same steps starting above where it reads “Implementation of humor based activity #1” for each humor based activity you carry out with your participants. Do at least three!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage #3</th>
<th>Participants create their own humor</th>
<th>25 min.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Instructions to trainer:</strong> During this stage, you participants will create their own humor based activities. The idea is that</td>
<td>I highly suggest walking around and monitoring your participants as</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Instructions to participants:

In groups of three or four, you are going to design a humor based activity using the criteria from the handout we have been working with. You do not have to create a completely new activity. You can choose something you have already done in the past and adapt it so it becomes a humor based activity.

- Participants work in their groups designing the activity.
- Now, each group will describe their activity. The rest of you have to try to guess what criteria are reflected in their activity. You can refer to the handout with the criteria if you need it.
- Groups take turns describing their activity. The rest of the trainees guess about the

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<th>Activity</th>
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<td>they use the criteria they worked with earlier in the workshop to design a new activity. This application task will help your participants gain practice in using the criteria for designing humor based activities.</td>
<td>Make small groups of three or four and have students work together creating a humor based activity. The activity they create can also be an adaptation of something they have done in the past. It definitely does not have to be something completely new. This task is not about reinventing the wheel, rather seeing with a different perspective and a different lens, a humor based lens.</td>
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<td>After the participants have finished designing their activity, have them take turns describing their activity. The rest of the trainees guess what criteria the group thought of as they designed the activity.</td>
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<td>Instructions to participants: In groups of three or four, you are going to design a humor based activity using the criteria from the handout we have been working with. You do not have to create a completely new activity. You can choose something you have already done in the past and adapt it so it becomes a humor based activity.</td>
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<td>they are working on creating their activities. They might need some support and it is always helpful for participants to be able to ask questions and now that the trainer is available in case they have a question or need some help with the task they are working on.</td>
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<td>When your participants start sharing and describing the activities they have designed, you might want to tell them that they have a limited amount of time per group. If you do not manage the time effectively here, this section of this stage could take much longer than what has been allotted for it. I suggest giving each group three to five minutes maximum to describe their activity. If you have a large classroom, you could also have groups share their work with another group instead of the whole classroom. This would help maximize time during this stage of the workshop.</td>
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| Stage #4 | criteria the group included in their activity. | 15 min | During this stage, I have found that when asking participants to think about what they have learned that it is effective to have two different options. Some trainees find it helpful to journal and write in order to synthesize and process information while others prefer just to sit with their thoughts as they reflect.

### Instructions to trainer:
The purpose of this stage is mainly to wrap-up and for participants to share what has been most meaningful and helpful to them as teachers during this workshop. Allow your participants to have 2-3 minutes of either individual thinking or journaling time. This will help them process their learning and prepare for to share with the whole class. Then have participants work in groups of four or five sharing one thing that has been meaningful to them in this workshop. After they have shared in their groups, ask for 3-5 trainees to share what they mentioned or heard someone say with the whole class.

### Instructions to participants:
I would like for you to take 2-3 minutes to journal or think individually about what you have learned during the past 75 minutes or so of your life. What has been most relevant or helpful for you as a teacher? Choose one thing that you would be willing to share with your peers.

Participants journal or think individually.

Now, I would like for you to work in groups of four or five and share one aspect that has been most meaningful and helpful to you as teachers during this workshop.

Participants share in their groups.

Finally, I would like 3-5 people to share what they mentioned or something that they heard in their small groups with the whole class.

3-5 participants share their thoughts with the whole class.
Handouts and worksheets

Criteria for Humor-Based Activities

The following are some criteria that help teachers design activities that create a sense of joy and laughter in the classroom. Try to include at least three to five of these and you will potentially have a much more fun classroom. Remember that along with these ideas it is essential that learning is still the focus of the activity. Feel free to add any additional criteria to the end of the list that you believe/feel could help create even more joyful learning experiences!

I. The use of humor in the activity is inclusive and all the students can participate.

II. Laughter is created in the activity by the use of innocent humor and jokes.

III. The activity is playful in a way that the learners feel safe and respected.

IV. The activity promotes optimism and positive reinforcement for the learners

V. Learners feel inspired and motivated as they are participating in the activity.

VI. Learners are smiling and laughing without ridiculing, humiliating and/or mocking their peers.

VII. The teacher/students uses lots of gestures and body language during the activity that keeps students engaged and attentive.

VIII. The teacher/students tells funny, insightful, and/or instructive stories during the activity that students enjoy paying attention to.

IX.

X.
# Reflecting on Humor-Based Activities

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Activity description</th>
<th>Criteria present in this activity</th>
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<td>What did you do in this activity? Make notes that will help you remember this activity.</td>
<td>What criteria for activities that foster positive humor, joy and laughter did you notice in this activity?</td>
<td>What's your opinion about this activity? Can you use it in your classroom? What changes would you make to it so it better fits your teaching context?</td>
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Humor based activity #1

7. Pass the Compliment!

Overview
Can you imagine what would occur in the future if all gatherings conducted by the United Nations started out with three compliments given to each nation attending? It’s a little hard to imagine, which is why this exercise was created. Based on the old “Pass the Whisper” game, this activity is fun and energizing, while slipping in the soothing strokes that will act as a salve for students.

Activity
[Say to students:] How many of you remember playing the game “Pass the Whisper”? It is also called the “Telephone Game.” Well, for those of you who aren’t sure, it is a listening game. We are going to play a special version of it today called “Pass the Compliment.” Please stand up and begin to think of a complimentary word that you would like to give to the person behind you. Use a word that compliments the person’s character, such as friendly, clever, or kind, rather than one that compliments the person’s appearance, such as slim, handsome, or attractive. If you don’t know the person behind you, imagine that you are giving the person this compliment as a gift. Wouldn’t it be great if we could give people a positive quality just by whispering it in their ears? Well, who’s to say we can’t?

Does everybody have a word? We are going to do this by rows. We’ll start with the head of the row. Please turn to the person behind you and whisper, “I want you to know that I think that you are …” For example, you might use the word incredible. Then whisper your compliment.

The next person will whisper, “I want you to know that I think that you are incredible and fabulous.” The third person must remember the first two compliments and add a third, and so on all the way down the row. The last person in the row must say the entire complimentary sentence aloud! [The row then checks to see if each student heard the compliments accurately.]

Variations
Pick one student at the end of each day and have his or her classmates give that student a compliment. Or take a compliment break in which students give
group compliments randomly, such as, "We're great team workers!" or "We're good and getting better all the time!" Or start an "I'm great because..." sheet of paper going around the room. When the last person has added his or her comments, read the entire list back to the class.

Instead of compliments, have a student in the first row make a funny face. When the student has made a face that he or she can maintain, the student turns around and shows it to the next person. Encourage students not to laugh or lose their concentration. The student who is passing the "funny face" holds the pose until the student who is receiving the face can imitate it. Once the second student has mirrored the first student's funny face as closely as possible, that student makes a different facial expression. He or she then turns around and passes the new face to the next person. This continues until everyone has had a chance to imitate a face and make up a new one. We promise that this game will produce many laughs.

Every joy is gain, and gain is gain, however small. — Robert Browning

Humor based activity #2

8. Wacky Wordies

Overview
Is a picture really worth a thousand words? What about a picture that includes words? Wacky Wordies are a wonderful way to whet one’s whimsical whistle! They also exercise both sides of the brain simultaneously, since this Warm-up involves looking at pictures while interpreting them. Wacky Wordies are a hit with all ages.

Activity
[Say to students:] We are now going to try a Warm-up called Wacky Wordies. You’ll notice there are some examples on the board. To find the hidden phrase, you look at the picture, read the words, and then see if you can put them together to create a meaningful saying. Let’s try the first one together. [“Circles under the eyes.”] If you know the answer, please remain silent so that everyone gets a chance to guess. [Take about thirty seconds before moving on.] How many people think they have found the answer? You’ll have another opportunity to guess when we look at the other nine Wacky Wordies. “Circles under the eyes” is the correct answer. Did anyone come up with another answer? We are usually taught to look for one right answer, but I want you to know that right now it’s okay to come up with more than one right answer. Now, you’ll have a few more minutes to look over the other examples.

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See page 147 for answers.

Variations
Have students break into small groups and brainstorm well-known phrases and sayings. After coming up with a list, give them time to create their own Wacky Wordies. Use them in future Warm-ups or ask your students to drop new ideas for Wacky Wordies into a special box labeled “WACKBOX.”

14. Commonalities

Overview

Students need to learn to celebrate and appreciate individual differences. But they also need to discover the things that they have in common. This exercise is a very quick method of helping students to find similarities and share them with one another. It’s much easier to resolve conflicts when you know there are many things you have in common. This Warm-up helps students to see one another as human beings instead of as stereotypes.

Activity

[Say to students:] I’d like you to find two other people who are wearing at least one color of clothing that is the same as a color you are wearing. These two people must be people you do not know very well. You will then form groups of three. Please find some space in the room, and then, as a threesome, squat down. Don’t sit: squat.

You will have exactly two minutes to talk as fast as you possibly can. What you are going to talk about is yourself. Your goal is to find one thing that the three of you share in common. Maybe you’ve traveled out of state, maybe everyone likes cold pizza for breakfast. It doesn’t matter what it is, as long as the three of you share it.

When you find something in common, you are going to be so excited that you’ll leap, and I mean leap, to your feet and shout the number “One!” with as much enthusiasm as you can muster. Then return to the squatting position, and keep talking until you find a second thing in common. Then leap to your feet and shout out the number “Two!” The idea is for the three of you to find ten things that you have in common, within two minutes.

Now, I know how creative you are! You’re already thinking of things like “Are we cool? Yeah, we’re cool. One!” “Do you cut your fingernails? Yup. Two!” “Do you speak English? Yeah. Three!” This is cheating. Your goal is to discover obscure and unusual facts about one another. Facts such as: “My brother rides a unicycle.” “Really? My mom does, too.” “I ride one, too.” “One!” Don’t go for the obvious. Dig a little deeper. Ask strange and wonderful questions. Ready . . . Go!

Variations

A standard variation of this game is called the “Scavenger Hunt.” First you gather unusual information about your students. Don’t let them know why you are collecting this information. You then create a series of statements that reflect what you’ve learned. Write these statements on a sheet of paper, making sure to leave enough room for a student’s signature or initials. (There should be one statement per student.) Make enough copies of the statement sheet for all your students. Sample statements include: Find someone who has six older brothers; find someone who has had his or her tonsils removed; and so forth.
Give the class a time limit and rules for the game. The objective is for all the students to match a person with each statement. When they have found a match, they then ask the student to write his or her name next to the statement. The first student who has a signature for each statement is the winner. You can create rules, such as: You can only ask the same person two questions, or the first person to come up with ten matches is the winner. At the end of the game, you can read off each statement and ask the students to stand if a statement is true for them.

Humor based activity #4

5. Dr. Genius

Overview

The word genius is an intriguing and often misunderstood word. Some people associate genius with an innate quality belonging only to a privileged few. And, yet, brain research is replete with evidence that we all have hidden genius, and that we use less than 5 percent of our mental capacity. This activity will bring out the hidden genius in everyone and add a tremendous richness to any lesson.

Activity

[Say to students:] How many of you believe that you have hidden genius within you? [Usually this question evokes laughter, although the very young will raise their hands unabashedly!] I believe that there are tremendous reservoirs of ideas of genius waiting to be uncovered within each of you. We're going to play a game that will help bring out your genius. It's called Dr. Genius. I'd like you to imagine that you are a world-renowned genius, and that you have made a discovery or have invented something new. The world is eating out of your hand and rolling out the red carpet everywhere you go.

I'll give you a few moments to think about what you have discovered. Maybe it's a cure for AIDS or an amazing new physics discovery, or perhaps you have created a telecommunication tool that can decipher extraterrestrial languages. Your invention can be as practical or as crazy as you would like it to be. Once you know your discovery or invention, we will call you Doctor [student chooses a name].

[Props of some sort are very useful, such as white shirts with students' Doctor names written on the back, hats made out of construction paper with the names written on the front, or name tags.]

[Have all the students choose a name and a "discovery," and then give them the following instructions.]

When we play Dr. Genius, answer all questions and participate in class as your genius character. Ask questions about topics that would interest your character, and call your classmates by their Dr. Genius titles as well. Think, move, and breathe the way your character would. I will also be portraying a character, though we all know, as your loyal and humble teacher. I am already a genius! You will be amazed at your ideas and thoughts as Dr. Genius. In your other classes, you may be considered an average student, but don't ever utter that obscenity in this room. When you walk into this classroom, in character, you become a genius. Albert Einstein, watch out!

Variations

Have your students pick a new Dr. Genius character each month. Or have students write some of their homework assignments as their character, especially if it is an assignment that allows for commentary. This adds a dimension of humor, insight, and intelligence that will take your students way beyond their "ordinary capacities."

Humor based activity #5

7. Creative Debate

Overview
A good debate is a great way to stimulate the mind and to get the blood flowing! This Laughing Lesson will bring a whole new world of ideas and perspectives into the classroom. It is especially suited to courses that require more than one perspective, such as history, science, psychology, or communications classes.

Activity
[Say to students] Today we are going to approach our class discussion in a unique way. Will the first two rows [how you gather ten to twelve students is up to you] please bring your chairs up to the front of the room so that row one faces row two. Does everybody understand me so far? Great! Now, our issue in debate today is going to be [choose a relevant topic].

Row one, you will be "for" the issue, and row two, you will be "against" it. But this will not just be an ordinary debate. I am going to ask you to decide upon a character from the past, present, or future who supports the position that you are taking—either for or against. In our debate, you will become this character for the sake of a lively discussion. It’s okay if you do not agree with the side that you are given. All the better, because it will help you to see from a different perspective. If you like, you can take on the posture, voice, or mannerisms of your character, but the most important thing is that you represent that character’s perspective on the issue under discussion.

I’ll give you a few minutes to decide upon a character while we think about questions to ask you. You will respond to any questions asked only if “the spirit moves you.” After about ten minutes of discussion between rows one and two, the rest of the class can ask a question of either row, or of a particular character. Before we begin the debate, I’d like you to introduce yourself, as your character, to the rest of the class.

Variations
Have the class split into teams and carry on smaller debates without an audience. Or plan the event ahead of time so that the debate teams can come dressed in appropriate costumes, having researched phrases and gestures for their characters.

8. The Wizard

Overview
Any teaching unit can be enhanced by using this lighthearted Laughing Lesson. The Wizard is a wonderful alternative to the usual stand-up oral report. The students must listen closely to one another and work as a team to answer questions successfully. Even if their answers aren’t always logical or accurate, the laughter evoked by the often funny responses helps to disperse any tension created by giving a report in front of a group.

Activity
[Say to students:] We have been studying [the example here is famous African-American leaders] in this month’s unit, and each brainstorming group has researched a famous leader. As a part of your oral presentation, you will have the opportunity to answer several questions as the Wizard.

Will the first group of four come up to the front of the room and stand next to one another, shoulder to shoulder. You are now transformed into the Wizard! Although you have four bodies, you have only one mind. We are going to ask you several questions, and, as the Wizard, you will answer as best you can. You are allowed to speak only one word at a time. The person standing at the end of the Wizard’s line will begin. You must listen closely to one another and add your word to the sentence, so that the sentence makes sense. Remember, you are trying to answer the question as well as you possibly can. Example:

Question: Who was Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.?
Wizard’s Answer:
Student #1 He
Student #2 was
Student #3 a
Student #4 famous
Student #1 black
Student #2 leader
Student #3 who
Student #4 said,
Student #1 ‘I
Student #2 have
Student #3 a
Student #4 dream.”
Variations

This exercise can be played with two people transforming into the Wizard. The students speak one word at a time, until they have explained their information or given their report. It's even more interesting to have two Wizards (two groups of two) conversing with each other. One Wizard can be the New Wizard and ask the other Wizard questions. Remember, you do not have to spend a tremendous amount of time playing a game to receive its beneficial effects. Just opening a presentation with this technique will be enough. Make sure that you always set a time limit on the games; otherwise, everyone will want to play them for hours.
Humor based activity #7

9. What Are You Doing?

Overview

This Play Break is guaranteed to wake up and shake up your students. They will receive a mighty dose of cognitive dissonance, because their body is saying one thing while their brain is asserting the opposite. The result is a mental “implosion” and a physical “explosion” in the form of hearty laughter. It will take a few minutes of explanation to teach this Play Break, but once they have experienced it, your students will want to play it every day. This game has worked as a Play Break for the early grades through the college level. After a few minutes of playing, your students will be refreshed and ready to get back to their work.

Activity

[Say to students:] I’d like you to find a partner using the following method. Wink with either your left eye or your right eye, and then find another person who is winking with the same eye as you. If you find that you are the only one left winking your left eye, and all the others are winking their right eyes, wink with both eyes and let someone else decide. Now, with your partner, determine who has the most siblings. The person with the most brothers and sisters will begin. If you have the same number of siblings, decide who has the youngest sibling, and that person will begin.

When I say, “Go,” I’d like the person who starts first to mime an activity. It could be anything, such as beating eggs in a bowl. It’s important for you to perform the physical activity with one hundred percent enthusiasm. Your partner is going to ask you one question and only one question. And that question is: “What are you doing?” Everyone repeat after me: “What are you doing?” Good.

Now, the body and the brain are very sympathetic. If you are pretending to beat eggs in a bowl, you’ll automatically want to respond to the question “What are you doing?” by saying, “I’m beating eggs in a bowl.” But you must be more clever than that. What you have to think of is a radically different activity from the one you are performing, such as combing your hair. So, as you are beating eggs in the bowl, you are going to say to your partner, “I’m combing my hair.” Then you can stop performing your activity.

Your partner must immediately act out the activity you mentioned. He or she starts to comb his or her hair. Then you ask the question “What are you doing?” Your partner has to say anything other than the activity he or she is miming, such as “Washing the dishes.” [Set a time limit of one or two minutes for this Play Break.]
Example
First person: [Begins miming brushing his/her teeth.]
Second person: What are you doing?
First person: I'm vacuuming the rug.
Second person: [Begins miming vacuuming the rug.]
First person: What are you doing?
Second person: I'm winding my watch.
First person: [Begins miming winding his/her watch.]
Second person: What are you doing?
First person: I'm jump-starting a 747!

Variations
It's okay for students to make up ridiculous or incongruent activities. It's the responsibility of the students' partners to figure out how they are going to mime strange activities, such as "shaving my back" or "climbing to the moon on a rope ladder."

Reflecting on workshop plan #3: Humor-based activities

Strengths

1. Using the “Reflecting on humor-based activities” handout in Stage #2

   After each experience working with the different humor-based activities, participants were asked to go back to this handout in order to reflect on the experience. They had to describe the activity, discover what criteria were present in each activity and explain how they would adapt the activity for their teaching contexts. I noticed while they were working with this handout that they were able to find at least 3-5 pieces of criteria for each task. They also came up with 1-2 different ways of adapting the activity to better fit their context. After working with this handout, five participants made comments mentioning how the questions had been helpful in making connections between the activities, the criteria and their realities as teachers. I feel that this handout was effective at guiding the participants through a cycle of reflection that was relevant to their needs as teachers. Based on this experience, I strongly believe that asking teachers to reflect on teaching practices using a specific set of criteria and lens can significantly help the teacher better understand what helps and/or hinders students’ process of learning and their teaching.

2. Designing or readapting a humor-based activity during Stage #3

   In stage #3, participants were asked to create a humor-based activity or to make changes to an activity they had used before to turn it into a humor-based activity. When participants first heard that they had to create a humor-based activity using the criteria we had been working with, they seemed a bit overwhelmed. Immediately, after I said “to create a humor...”, three to five participants started whispering to each other. I asked what
was wrong. I wondered if what I had said was not clear or did not make sense to them. They then mentioned that they did not feel they had enough time to create a whole new activity for something that was so new to them. I then explained that they could also just choose an activity they already knew and adapt it so that it fit the criteria for a humor-based activity. Right after I said this, they all in unison said: “Ah, ok!” I believe that the idea of having to create a whole new activity using a set of criteria that was new to them seemed overwhelming and too difficult. From this I understand how important it is for trainers to be aware of what is manageable and what is an appropriate level of challenge for participants. This awareness and engagement is essential in keeping participants engaged, on task and learning in ways that make sense to their professional development. It is essential that trainers are aware and present to participants’ actions and behaviors in response to what is being asked of them and what is happening in the class. Developing the ability to notice participants can support the trainer in making decisions on the spot that will help participants feel more supported and better serve their training and development. Being able to reflect in action and make immediate decisions during a workshop session is essential in maximizing learning opportunities that are most meaningful and helpful for participants.

**Areas for growth**

1. Providing participants with a definition for humor-based activities

   At the very beginning of the workshop, I asked participants to brainstorm what they thought made humor-based activities successful and effective for student learning. I noticed participants discussing and taking some notes, but at times there was some silence and the participants kept on looking at me. They seemed to be asking for some more
guidance and support for this task. When I asked them how I could help them, most of them said that they did not really understand what I meant by “humor-based activities”. They were struggling with the task because they did not understand the language I was using. I believe it is essential to make sure that all concepts you ask participants to think about are absolutely clear to them. The participants needed a definition or description for humor-based activities before they could brainstorm what makes them effective or not. Providing participants with a clear understanding of the concepts at hand and helping them prepare for a task in a way that scaffolds their learning is essential in setting participants up for success.

2. Telling participants to include at least 2-3 aspects of the criteria when designing their activities

   In stage #3, participants worked in groups designing or adapting an activity using the criteria for humor-based activities. As they were completing this task, I walked around the classroom monitoring. I noticed that they were checking off the pieces of criteria and discussing about how to include all the criteria from the handout they had. I kept walking around and I noticed that all the groups were trying to make the activity include all the criteria I had given them. I heard some of the participants saying that it was impossible and crazy to include all the criteria. They seemed frustrated with the task at the moment. Once I realized that I had not been specific enough about how many of the criteria to include and that the students seemed a bit overwhelmed with the task, I adapted my instructions. I told them that the expectation was that they would include at least three criteria. After giving these new instructions, participants seemed relieved. They all pretty much agreed that not having to use all the criteria was much more realistic and manageable. I believe that when giving instructions it is necessary to be very specific and unambiguous about the
expectation of the task. Including detailed instructions in the procedure can be an effective way of thinking through the tasks and what instructions are essential for the participants to fully understand what is expected of them. I also strongly feel that application tasks must be manageable and realistic considering the time participants have to complete the task and the skill they have creating and/or adapting activities. Finally, in writing this reflection, I realized how significant it is to think from a perspective other than one’s own when preparing instructions and designing workshops. Trying to see from the participants’ point of view can help create instructions and tasks that are clearer, easier to follow and more concise. It is also essential to check understanding of the instructions for a task through the use of questions and visuals that will show if participants are following or not. Another helpful technique is to give instructions more than once and in more than one way to help ensure everyone has been reached.

3. Implementing at least three humor-based activities in Stage #2

In stage #2 of this workshop, participants experienced two different humor-based activities. The activities went well and the participants did an excellent job reflecting on them and discussing how they would adapt the activities to fit their contexts. However, after the two activities, all the participants agreed that they wanted to see at least one more activity. They felt that two were not enough. It seems to me that they enjoyed the activities and that they found this section of the workshop to be most relevant and useful for them as teachers. These teachers truly appreciate and find it helpful when they receive practical ideas to use in their classroom. I also wonder if perhaps two activities were not sufficient for seeing and understanding most of the criteria for humor-based activities. Perhaps one of the reasons why participants wanted to experience more activities is because, as adult
learners, they better understand concepts and ideas when they have a chance to go through a meaning-making process. Experiencing the use and role of humor through activities allowed them to be more critical and make sense of the criteria they were working with. Participants seemed to make meaningful connections between their teaching realities and the ideas presented in this session when they had the chance to experience firsthand the use of humor in the activities. For this reason, I believe that the experiential part of this workshop is powerful in terms of creating a space for participants to see the true impact, and make sense of a specific teaching practice. It seems to me that learning is maximized when participants are provided with experiential opportunities where they have the chance to draw their own personal conclusions and thoughts. I also believe that workshops should be practical, hands on, and offer participants useful ideas and activities they could use in their everyday teaching.

**Suggestions for improving the workshop plan**

1. At the beginning of the session, before asking participants to brainstorm aspects that make humor based activities successful, provide trainees with a definition for this concept. I also suggest before giving the definition to elicit from participants what they think humor based activities might be. I am sure some participants will most likely have some ideas and thoughts to share.

2. During stage #3, when participants design or adapt an activity of their own using the criteria, make sure that the expectation for this task is clear. Tell them that they need to include at least three pieces of criteria. Make sure participants know that it is definitely not necessary to try to include all of the criteria.
3. During stage #2, have participants experience at least three to five humor based activities depending on the time available to the trainer.
Revised workshop plan #3: Humor-based activities

Session overview

Aim: To analyze and create humor-based activities using specific criteria

Objectives:

By the end of the session participants will be able to...

- List and describe specific criteria for designing humor-based activities
- Apply criteria to describe and analyze the design of humor-based activities
- Design humor-based activities using a set of criteria

Materials

- “Criteria for humor-based activities” handout
- Selection of ten handouts and worksheets for humor-based activities.
- “Reflecting on humor-based activities” handout
- Poster with the definition of humor-based activities on it.

Assumptions for this workshop

- The trainer is able to manage time effectively so that there is enough time to implement at least three different activities in stage #2.
- The trainer is capable of reading the description of an activity and delivering it in a way that makes sense to the group of teachers they are working with. The trainer can also make slight changes to the activity based on participants’ responses and needs as the activity is being implemented.
- Participants will most likely find this workshop useful and helpful because they tend to appreciate learning about practical and easy-to-follow activities that they can use in their classrooms.
- Participants may mention some aspects that they consider help create more successful humor-based activities.
**Potential challenges**

1. It might be challenging for the trainer to choose 3-5 humor-based activities out of the seven options.

2. It could be challenging for the participants to have to design a completely new activity using the criteria for humor-based activities.

3. Participants might want more examples of humor-based activities than what they will experience during the workshop.

**Solutions for the potential challenges**

1. For this challenge, I suggest carefully reading the overview for each of the activities. This overview will help you have a clearer idea of the main purposes for each of the tasks. Choose activities based on what you feel might be more helpful for the participants you are working with or ones that you have experience with and feel positive about.

2. A) Make sure you tell your participants that they do not have to create a new activity in the second stage. Tell them that it is not about reinventing the wheel, but about looking at an activity through different lens. It is fine for them to choose an activity that they have already done before and adapt it to make it a humor-based activity.

   B) Also for potential challenge #2, participants will experience at least three examples of humor-based activities and this will help them have a basis for creating their own.

3. For challenge #3, if your trainees still want more examples of humor-based activities after the workshop is over, you can give them the activities that you did not use as handouts. Participants love leaving workshops with handouts and ideas they can use in their classrooms.
## Workshop plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stages and purposes</th>
<th>Procedure</th>
<th>Timing and interaction</th>
<th>Additional trainer notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stage#1</td>
<td>Overview of Stage: Start this first stage by asking participants (Ps) if they have ever chosen to use activities or materials that involve humor and perhaps help lighten the mood/atmosphere of the class. This could be through readings, warm ups, stories, jokes, comics, etc. This intro might help Ps link their experience to the focus of the workshop. For this first stage, the idea is to elicit from the Ps criteria they feel helps make a humor-based activity successful. I suggest first defining the concept “humor-based activities”. Have Ps in pairs or small groups of three brainstorm what they think a humor-based activity might be. After they have shared and there has been a whole class discussion, share the following definition, which this session is based upon: <strong>Humor-based activities</strong>: activities that foster positive humor, laughter, joy and/or inspiration as well as meaningful language learning practice. Have the definition ready on a poster so that you can put it up on the board or a wall without taking up too much time. At this point, emphasize the fact that a humor-based activity is not just about fostering fun and laughter, but is also a means to learning and using language. If this discussion has not come up yet, ask the following question: Why do you think it is important that humor-based activities also include a focus on language learning?</td>
<td>20 min.</td>
<td>After working on the definition of “humor-based activities”, you might want to put up a poster with the definition of this concept. This will help participants have a visual reminder of this concept all throughout the workshop. This visual might come in handy later on in the session when they have to analyze activities. I find it is extremely important to highlight at this stage of the workshop that even though these activities are humor-based, learning is still fundamental. Fun just for fun will not necessarily help students improve their language abilities. Learning or linguistic practice still needs to be part of these activities. I highly recommend providing participants with a couple of examples for what makes for a successful humor-based activity. They might not know what to say without the examples.</td>
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</table>
After working with the definition and emphasizing on the relevance of language in humor-based activities, ask Ps the following question to elicit criteria: What do you think helps make a successful humor-based activity? For example, does it need to include an element of fun? Should it be something where everyone participates?

Have Ps work in pairs or small groups and then have a whole class discussion.

Once Ps have shared their thoughts/criteria, give them the handout labeled “Criteria for humor-based activities”. Have them compare their ideas with this handout. Encourage them to add ideas that they came up with and are not on the handout at the bottom of the page.

Tell Ps that they will be using this list of criteria to analyze 3-5 humor-based activities.

**Instructions to participants:** Have you ever chosen to use activities or materials that involve humor and perhaps even help lighten the mood/atmosphere of the class? Examples of this could be the use of readings, warm ups, stories, jokes, comics, etc. that involve humor of some sort. Talk with a partner for 3-4 mins.

Participants discuss for 3-4 mins.

**Instructions to participants:** What did you talk about? I would like to hear 2-3 thoughts.

2-3 participants share their thoughts.

**Instructions to participants:** What does the phrase “humor-based activity” mean to you? In your opinion, what is a humor-
<table>
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<th>based activity?</th>
<th>Instructions to participants: What did you come up with? I would like to hear 3-5 voices.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participants discuss for 2-3 mins.</td>
<td>For this workshop session, we are going to define humor-based activities as follows (put up poster):</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Humor-based activities:</strong> activities that foster positive humor, laughter, joy and/or inspiration as well as meaningful language learning practice.</td>
<td>Instructions to participants: Notice that, according to this definition, humor-based activities are not just about fostering fun and laughter, but also a means to learning and using language. Why do you think it is important that humor-based activities also include a focus on language learning? Talk with a partner.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants discuss for 2-3 mins.</td>
<td>Instructions to participants: What are your thoughts? I would like to hear three thoughts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructions to participants: Now that we have this definition, think about a set of criteria for humor-based activities. In groups of three, answer the following question: When designing a humor-based activity, what should it include so that it is successful and why? For example, would you include an element of fun? Why? Would it be something in which everyone participates? Why?</td>
<td>Participants work for 3-4 mins.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Stage #2**

Participants experience a number of humor-based activities and analyze each activity in terms of the criteria present, language students would be practicing, and adaptations they would make.

**Overview of Stage:** During this stage, Ps will experience and process a minimum of 3 (depending on your time you could do 4 or 5) humor-based activities. The idea is for them to go through the following cycle for each activity:

- Experience examples of humor-based activities
- Describe the activities
- Identify criteria present in each activity
- Identify language students would be practicing/using for each activity
- Reflect on how they would adapt these activities to better fit their teaching contexts

In the handouts section of this workshop plan, you will find seven different humor-based activities. These activities are taken from “The Laughing Classroom” by Diana Loomans and Karen Kolberg. Please choose 3-5 that best fit your training context, you find most relevant for your Ps and/or that you have experience with and feel positive about. You will be doing these activities

| Instructions to participants: What did you come up with? I would like to hear 3-5 thoughts. |
| Instructions to participants: In the handout I will be giving you, you will find a set of criteria for humor-based activities. Compare the criteria to the ideas you came up with. Add any of your ideas to the handout that are not already listed. (Pass out the handout with the criteria). |
| Whole group share: What criteria caught your attention? What questions do you have right now? |
| **45 min** |

During this stage, you will not be able to do all the humor-based activities with your participants, but you can give these to them as handouts at the end of the workshop. In my experience delivering this workshop, trainees always appreciate leaving the workshop with as many ideas as possible of activities they can potentially use in their classrooms. Participants love in general receiving handouts at the end of workshops!

Other resources you could use or give your participants to refer to and find more ideas for creating humor-based activities are:
with Ps where it says “Implementation of humor-based activity” below in the instructions to Ps. All of them highlight different aspects and uses of positive humor. In the overview for each activity, you will see what type of humor is emphasized. Read the overviews and procedures for each activity carefully before you decide which ones to use. You will see that there is procedure and instructions given for each activity. During the training, give the Ps the handout labeled: “Reflecting on Humor-Based Activities”. Before the first experience, have them read this handout in pairs to get familiar with it. Tell them that they will also need the criteria handout for this stage.

Explain to Ps that they will be the students and you will be the teacher for a series of humor-based activities. After each activity, they will go back to the “Reflecting on Humor-Based Activities” handout to process the experience. This will allow Ps to reflect on and better understand the design of humor-based activities.

Follow these steps during this stage:

1. Do the activity with Ps. Use the instructions and procedures given for each activity.

2. Ask Ps to reflect on the activity using the handout “Reflecting on humor-based activities”. Using the handout, Ps describe the activity, analyze what humor-based activity criteria is present in the activity, identify language students would be practicing, and think of adaptations they could make to the activity to better fit their teaching context. Ps first work on this handout


individually, then in pairs or small groups and finally share their findings with the whole class.

3. Move on to your next humor-based activity and repeat steps #1 and #2 until Ps have experienced and analyzed 3-5 different activities.

**Instructions to participants:** You are going to experience a number of humor-based activities. After each activity, you are going to process the experience using this handout (pass the handout around).

Take one minute to familiarize yourself with this handout.

What do you notice in this handout? How many columns are there? Which one is the description? What’s the second column? Why might the third column be helpful for you to think about? What do you do in the last column? (Elicit answers/thoughts from participants).

You will also need the criteria handout we worked with earlier. Make sure you have it with you.

For each of these activities you will be the students and I will be the teacher.

To the trainer: Implement humor-based activity

**Instructions to participants:** Individually, fill out the four columns of the handout “Reflecting on humor-based activities”.

Participants work alone for 3-4 mins.

**Instructions to participants:** Now, share your thoughts with a partner or in groups of three.
Participants work in groups for 3-4 mins.

Whole group share: I would like to hear 3-5 thoughts about this humor-based activity and what you noticed. What criteria were present? What language would students be practicing? What adaptations would you make to this activity to have it better fit your teaching context?

To the trainer: Repeat the same steps starting above where it reads “Implementation of humor-based activity #1” for each humor based activity you carry out with your participants. Do at least three!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage #3</th>
<th>25 min.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participants create their own humor-based activities using at least three pieces of criteria.</td>
<td>I highly suggest walking around and monitoring your participants as they are working on creating their activities. They might need some support and it is always helpful for participants to be able to ask questions and now that the trainer is available in case they have a question or need some help with the task they are working on. When your participants start sharing and describing the activities they have designed, you might want to tell them that they have a limited amount of time per group. If you do not manage the time</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Based lens.

After the Ps have finished designing their activity, have them take turns describing their activity. The rest of the Ps guess what criteria the group thought of as they designed the activity.

**Instructions to participants:** In groups of three or four, you are going to design a humor-based activity using at least three pieces of criteria from the handout we have been working with. You will not use all the criteria in the one activity. You do not have to create a completely new activity. You can choose something you have already done in the past and adapt it so it becomes a humor-based activity.

Participants work in their groups designing the activity for 10 mins.

**Instructions to participants:** Now, each group will take turns describing their humor-based activity. While one group is presenting, the rest have to identify criteria they included in their activity. You can refer to the criteria handout if you need it.

Groups take turns describing their activity. The rest of the Ps guess about the criteria the group included in their activity.

### Stage #4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overview of Stage</th>
<th>15 min</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participants share one aspect from the workshop that was most meaningful and helpful to them as</td>
<td>During this stage, I have found that when asking participants to think about what they have learned that it is effective to have two different options. Some participants find it helpful to journal and write in order to</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teachers.</td>
<td>been meaningful to them in this workshop. After they have shared in their groups, ask for 3-5 Ps to share what they mentioned or heard someone say with the whole class.</td>
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3-5 participants share their thoughts with the whole class.
**Handouts and worksheets**

### Reflecting on Humor-Based Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity description</th>
<th>Criteria present in this activity</th>
<th>Language learning goals</th>
<th>Changes/adaptations</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What did you do in this activity? Make notes that will help you remember this activity.</td>
<td>What criteria for activities that foster positive humor, joy and laughter did you notice in this activity?</td>
<td>What language point or points do students practice doing this activity?</td>
<td>What’s your opinion about this activity? Can you use it in your classroom? What changes would you make to it so it better fits your teaching context?</td>
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*The rest of the handouts remain the same for this revised version of the workshop plan.*
References


