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Comedy in the Classroom:
Using Humor as an Effective Teaching Strategy

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The Limbic System

- **Hippocampus** *(Boeree, 2009)*
  - Learning into memory
  - Short term to long term

- **Amygdala**
  - Creates/stores memory related to emotional response *(Boeree, 2009)*
  - Evaluates social situations and interactions *(Bickert, et al., 2011)*
  - Emotional Intelligence *(Buchanan, et al., 2019)*

- **Basal Ganglia** *(Louise C. Parr-Brownlie, 2016)*
  - Processes emotion and motivation
  - Creating habitual behavior

The big three- *(Andreatta, 2015)*
Movement through the brain

- Frontal lobe - begins here (social and emotional)
- Left hemisphere - Analysis of words and structure
- Right hemisphere - Intellectual analysis of the joke (do you get it?)
- Occipital Lobe - sensory, processing, and visual cues
- Motor functions by physical responses
- Hypothalamus - laughter
- Movement into Limbic System

- “I forgot the joke, but I remember the punchline!”
Humor and Retention (Henderson, 2015)

● Conditions the brain to want to remember by “rewarding” it with dopamine
● “...humor can be an effective intervention to improve retention in students from kindergarten through college.”
● There is a difference between silliness and effective humor
  ○ Must be content-rich
  ○ Age/school-appropriate
  ○ Include repetition
  ○ Do not use sarcasm- should be friendly
  ○ Interactive
  ○ Appropriate amount
  ○ On topic
Classroom Management  (Darling, 1986)

- Humor is a social behavior
  - Builds community  (Henderson, 2015)
- Gets the sillies out in an appropriate manner
  - Allows students to focus on the lesson for a laugh
  - Rather than making their friends laugh
- Creates a safe environment for humor
- Enjoyment = continued behavior (Limbic System)
Humor and culture (Restak, 2013)

- Told in other languages
- Culturally significant
- Based on life experiences
- Making connection
Students with Learning Disabilities and Humor
(Margaret Semrud-Clikeman, 2008)

- When paired with students with no learning disabilities
  - Students with nonverbal learning disabilities showed no difference in humor comprehension
- When the students were grouped between those with “social perceptual difficulties” and those without
  - High variance between the humor comprehension
- Humor is
  - Social
  - Human
  - Universal?
Joke Examples

1. **Knock Knock.**
   Who’s there?
   To.
   To Who?
   To Whom.

2. **Lincoln is doing well in theatres**
   Historically this has not been the case.

3. **Aww, how cute. He has an imaginary friend!**

4. **Uh-oh! Here they come. This could be a problem.**