

Presentation Proposal – NACADA Regional Conference 2019 – Region 4

Title: Advising is a Joke: How the Theory and Philosophy of Humor can Influence Advising Practices

Format: Interactive Topic Discussion

Chicken: How do I cross the road?

Advisor: Well, there are plenty of ways to cross the road. We've discussed in a previous meeting you aren't strong in flying, but you've identified walking as a strength. Have you considered walking across the road?

Chicken: But flying would get me there quicker, wouldn't it?

Humor is defined in Merriam-Webster's Dictionary as a "normal functioning bodily semifluid or fluid..." wait, what? Scratch that...

Humor is defined in Merriam-Webster's Dictionary as a "quality which appeals to a sense of the ludicrous or absurdly incongruous." Okay, that's better.

As advisors, we search for methods and strategies to help us connect with our students in order to help them navigate difficult, stressful, and unfamiliar situations. These are all-too-familiar situations for academic advisors, especially those working with students entering competitive programs with rigorous entrance requirements.

Research has shown that humor used in educational settings such as classrooms can create "a cheerful learning climate, enhance social bonding through increased student-instructor interaction, add variety to lectures, decrease test anxiety, and provide enjoyment and laughter" (Hackathorn, Garczynki, Blankmeyer, Tennial, & Solomon, 2011). During this interactive session, participants will learn about the history of academic research on humor, and be able to identify several ways they can effectively incorporate humor into their advising practice.

As a result of this presentation, participants will be able to:

1. Recognize several different types and forms of humor
2. Understand some of the essential theories and academic research related to humor, including:
 - a. The three traditional theories of humor (Superiority, Relief, and Incongruity)
 - b. McGraw and Warren's Benign Violation Theory
 - c. Dan O'Shannon's Model of Humor
3. Discover connections between humor theory and advising theory
4. Utilize humor as a valuable tool in enhancing the student-advisor relationship

The presentation outline is as follows:

1. Presenter will introduce relevant theories and frameworks related to the academic study of humor
2. Present correlations between humor and familiar theories and frameworks related to both college student development and academic advising

3. Outline best practices for using humor in individual advising sessions, group advising sessions, and online communication (email, social media)
4. Participants will be assigned specific student scenarios and think of strategies to utilize humor in addressing the scenario, then further engage in group discussion by discussing experiences of utilizing humor in their advising practice

Abstract

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References

- Hackathorn, J., Garczynski, A. M., Blankmeyer, K., Tennial, R. D., & Solomon, E. D. (2011). All kidding aside: Humor increases learning at knowledge and comprehension levels. *Journal of the Scholarship of Teaching & Learning*, 11(4), 116–123. Retrieved from <https://login.proxy.lib.fsu.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=eue&AN=69540232&site=eds-live>
- Humor [Def. 1]. (n.d.). In *Merriam Webster Online*, Retrieved Oct. 29, 2018, from <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/humor>
- Humor [Def. 3]. (n.d.). In *Merriam Webster Online*, Retrieved Oct. 29, 2018, from <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/humor>