

THE USE OF UNIPACS IN THE STUDY OF HUMOR

by 6791

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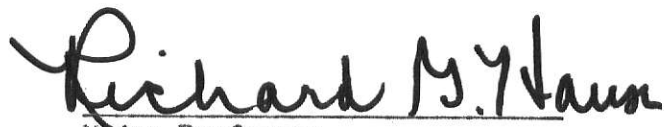
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

As long as there have been teachers and there have been students, there has been humor in the classroom. Perhaps this has been unwanted humor with Billy sticking Sally's pigtail in the inkwell or the little boy who was caught daydreaming and punished with the hickory stick while his classmates struggled to suppress their giggles. Or perhaps the teacher has used humor to add zest to the lessons or to ease a tense situation.

Since humor has always been in the classroom it is time to put it in correct perspective. The problem then is to find if humor does have a place in the classroom and if it does, in what way should humor be implemented.

Since individualized instruction seems to be the desired goal for many of the ills in education, and a unipac with its pretest, behavioral objective, diversified learning activities, self-test, and post test which are all built around a single concept seems to be an excellent approach to individualization, the writer proposes to combine the "study" of humor with individualization through the use of unipacs.

These unipacs will be designed to teach the student humor through learning activities built around the cognitive and psycho-motor domains and to help expand his sense of humor through activities emphasizing the affective domain. The learning activities will emphasize a multi-media and diversified materials approach designed to meet the unique needs of each student. These unipacs will provide a motivational backdrop for the other learning activities in which the students will be engaged.

CHAPTER II

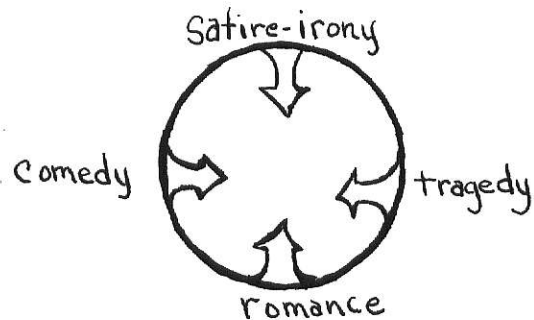
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The realm of literature about humor will be reviewed in four phases:

(1) a discussion of the definition of humor; (2) a summary of the psychological theories of humor; (3) a review of the research that has been done in this field; and (4) the humanitarian aspects of humor.

I. DEFINING HUMOR

It is a difficult task to define this nebulous term...humor. Being an English teacher makes it even more difficult since the term "comedy" is also widely used in the curriculum. Comedy, in its literal sense, should retain its relationship with tragedy. William G. McCollom has illustrated these opposing forces in the following way:¹



Horace Walpole state his view of comedy in a letter to Sir Horace Mann when he wrote that "the world is a comedy to those that think, a tragedy to those who feel."²

¹William G. McCollom, The Divine Average (Cleveland: Case Western Reserve University, 1971), p. 45.

²James K. Feibleman, In Praise of Comedy (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1937), p. 201.

James K. Feibleman states that all of the arts serve at one time or another as conveyors of comedy whether it be a funny picture, a piece of sculpture, literature, or dancing. Comedy also varies according to the object, person, issue, or institution under derogation and according to the degree of intensity. A comedy can be light and entertaining or satirical and biting.³

Truth seems to be an important element of comedy. Red Skelton said, "Humor is actual truth,"⁴ and Elmer M. Blistein commented that "the truth and the comedian are frequently tactless."⁵

Blistein makes another interesting observation about comedy and its audience. He finds the audience is basically primitive in its reaction to a comedy. The audience may appear to be highly civilized if judged according to speech, manners, and dress, but there is a primeval urge in any theatre audience that demands something more than intellectual stimulation, more than entertainment, more than comedy and laughter. In order to stand in awe, the people demand a victim, a victim who is destroyed. But this is not the role of the comic character who must be flexible, who must thrive on the spirit of compromise, who must have the ability to see the human situation from more than one point of view, and who is thus civilized. It is the tragic character who is also primitive, who captures the audience's awe.⁶

Feibleman explains the literal place of humor within the context of comedy. He states that there are degrees of comedy. He finds these degrees

³Ibid., p. 203.

⁴Don Herold, Humor in Advertising (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1963), p. 10.

⁵Elmer M. Blistein, Comedy in Action (Durham, N. C.: Drake University Press, 1964), p. 4.

⁶Ibid., p. 18.

to be:⁷

- Joy
- Divine Comedy
- Humour
- Irony
- Satire
- Sarcasm
- Wit
- Scorn

Reading up the list shows that comedy increases the breadth of its field of criticism but lessens the intensity of the criticism. Humour (notice the older form of the spelling which comes from the Greek idea that all men possessed four humours), for instance, is directed at a wider subject matter than is wit, but it is not so biting. Reading down the list, the converse is true; the intensity of the criticism is increased, and the breadth of the field is decreased. In this light wit does not deal with as much material as does humour, but it is more effective in attacking that with which it does deal. Thus comedy is intense over a narrow field and diffuse over a broad field.

To Feibleman joy is laughter without malice, reflects the happiness of childhood, and comes close to pure ecstasy. Divine comedy criticizes but with love, and it is so universal in ideas that the bitterness of personal and contemporary references are negligible. Humour is merely the recognition of the limitations of things and events. Irony, satire, and sarcasm are all directed against contemporary foibles as found in customs and institutions. Wit is the same as the above three, but it is directed at a narrower target. It chooses one contemporary item of weakness or even the foible of a single individual for attack. Feibleman concludes by stating that there is actually nothing funny about scorn, which is at the bottom of the list.⁸

⁷Feibleman, op. cit., p. 205.

⁸Ibid., p. 206.

This is basically how humor fits into the entire range of comedy, but the use of humor in this project will be more general than the above definition. People from widely differing backgrounds have attempted to define humor in this more general way.

Don Herold, an advertising cartoonist, states:

What is humor anyway? It is a sort of differential gear which enables us to keep both wheels on the ground and run along without jolts in spite of the variation between the way things ought to be and the way they are. God knew that people would bump into each other and stumble over things, so He saw it would be necessary to put a little "give" in human nature. Humor is the "give." If folks were entirely brittle, the entire human race would be cracked into smithereens in a few months. Someone once said, "God could not be everywhere, so He made mothers." It is equally true that for the same reason (that he could not be everywhere to explain things) that He made funny bones.⁹

This explanation not only gives a view of humor but also starts building a case for the need for humor. Children certainly cannot be "brittle" as they undergo the many changes of maturation. Funny bones may spare a great number of tears and fist fights during these trying years.

Savignac, a French poster artist, recommends humor because "modern man does not have many opportunities to laugh. Humor is the antidote to the harsh realities of life."¹⁰

These people have personal definitions and opinions of humor. Others believe there is a difference between humor and a sense of humor.

Carolyn Wells, prominent author about humor, says that humor and the sense of humor are not the same, but they are not inseparable... "Humor and the sense of humor need not necessarily lie in the same brain."¹¹ Humor is creative,

⁹Herold, op. cit., p. 9.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 177.

¹¹Carolyn Wells (ed.), An Outline of Humor (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1923), p. 13.

while the sense of humor is merely receptive and appreciative. A person can appreciate humor and thus have a "sense of humor" without actually telling jokes or indulging in any other form of humor. This is comparable to one who appreciates art or music but cannot paint a portrait or compose a song.

Professor Brander Matthews has noted,

Ample as the English vocabulary is today, it is sometimes strangely deficient in needful terms. Thus it is that we have nothing but the inadequate phrase "sense of humor" to denominate a quality which is often confounded with humor itself, and which should always be sharply discriminated from it.¹²

Carolyn Wells also states that a man with a sense of humor is a joy to know and to be with. If he possesses both humor and a sense of humor, he is already an immortal.¹³

Leewin B. Williams uses an anecdote to explain sense of humor.

Speaking of a sense of humor, one of our great important requisites is an imagination that shall be able to see two things at once. A man who has no sense of humor sees only one thing at a time. For instance, there was a certain judge sitting in a court room with two lawyers, and one of the lawyers got mad at the other over an argument and suddenly turning upon him said: "Of all the unmitigated, consummate asses that ever lived, you are the absolute limit!" And the judge, rapping heavily with his gavel, cried: "Gentlemen, you forget that I am present!"¹⁴

Humor, then, is like beauty and is found in the eye of the beholder. A person with an acute sense of humor will see comic in stones, wit in the running brooks, while a person with a dull or absent sense of humor can see no fun except in the obvious jest.¹⁵

¹²Ibid.

¹³Ibid., p. 14.

¹⁴Leewin B. Williams, Encyclopedia of Wit, Humor, and Wisdom (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1949), p. 1802.

¹⁵Wells, op. cit., p. 15.

William Hazlitt shows what people laugh at through examples:

We laugh at absurdity; we laugh at deformity. We laugh at a bottle nose in a caricature; at a stuffed figure of an alderman in a pantomime... A dwarf standing by a giant makes a contemptible figure enough. We laugh at the dress of foreigners, and they at ours. Three chimney sweepers meeting three Chinese in Lincoln's Inn Fields, they laughed at one another till they were ready to drop down. Country people laugh at a person because they never saw him before. Anyone dressed in the height of the fashion, or quite out of it, is equally an object of ridicule. One rich source of the ludicrous is distress with which we cannot sympathize from its absurdity or insignificance. It is hard to hinder children from laughing at a stammerer...at a drunken man, or even at a madman. We laugh at mischief. We laugh at what we do not believe. We say that an argument or an assertion that is very absurd, is quite ludicrous. We laugh to show our satisfaction with ourselves, or our contempt for those about us, or to conceal our envy or our ignorance. We laugh at fools, and at those who pretend to be wise--at extreme simplicity, awkwardness, hypocrisy, and affectation.¹⁶

Hazlitt tries to explain why people laugh. This perhaps would be a proper place to discuss other proposed theories about the cause of humor and laughter.

II. PSYCHOLOGICAL THEORIES OF HUMOR

From the time of Plato to Freud to Max Eastman, man has been interested in the cause of humor. It is almost humor in itself to see how widely these brilliant men can disagree on such a "simple, common" emotion as humor.

Plato's theory has come to be known as the Derision Theory. He believed that the pleasure that a person derives through laughter is an enjoyment of other people's misfortune. The person laughs because the misfortune makes him feel superior, and his vanity is gratified because he is not in a similar situation.¹⁷

Frustrated Expectation or Disappointment Theory are the terms applied to

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷Ibid., pp. 4-5.

Aristotle's view of humor. He thought that a person may laugh at someone else, but when laughter arises from a deceived expectation, the person actually laughs at himself for making such a mistake. Aristotle also viewed the comic as having "some defect or ugliness which is not painful or destructive. For example, the comic mask is ugly and distorted, but does not cause pain."¹⁸ Humor, therefore, must be making terrible faces playfully, and this is funny simply because it offends our sensibilities.

Immanuel Kant tended to agree somewhat with Aristotle's theory, but he saw frustrated impulses as a cause of laughter. He believed that laughter results from "the sudden transformation of a strained expectation into nothing."¹⁹ In other words, a person reaches out after something, is expecting a particular thing, and then finds that the expected is not there at all or something entirely different is in its place.

In his book Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious, Sigmund Freud analyzes the techniques, purposes, and causes of basic forms of humor. He considers two types of jokes, verbal and conceptual, which may be nontendentious (innocent, complete in itself) or tendentious (serves some purpose beyond the mere form of the joke). The techniques of jokes range from word play and repetition to faulty thinking, displacements, absurdity, representation by the opposite, and rediscovery of what is familiar. According to Freud there are four purposes for jokes: (1) exposing or obscene jokes; (2) aggressive (hostile) jokes; (3) cynical (critical, blasphemous) jokes; and (4) sceptical jokes.²⁰

¹⁸Max Eastman, Enjoyment of Laughter (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1937), p. 9.

¹⁹Ibid.

²⁰Sigmund Freud, Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious (London: The Hogarth Press, 1960), pp. 90-98.

These four "purposes" are usually found in tendentious jokes. Freud states that a tendentious joke must have three people involved. First there is the person telling the joke; second, the person whom the joke is about; and third, the person listening to the joke. The listener confirms the purpose of the joke whether it is obscene, aggressive, cynical, or sceptical through his laughter.²¹

Freud further explains that the amount of pleasure derived from jokes corresponds to the psychical expenditure that is saved and is a result of overcoming an internal or external inhibition or obstacle. This gives satisfaction through recognition, thus pleasure, thus laughter. Since he believes that laughter is a result of overcoming an inhibition and that children do not have inhibitions, children, therefore, cannot have any feeling for the comic.²²

The above can only begin to touch the surface of Freud's complex theories; the information included above may, however, serve to help understand some of the research which will follow.

In her book Children's Humor, Martha Wolfenstein draws her own parallels with Freud's theories. She considers the basic motive of joking to be the wish to transform a painful experience and extract pleasure from it. Children produce original jokes to help themselves out of distressing situations, and they often, in their joking, attempt to free themselves from impossible wishes by picturing their fulfillment as ridiculous. For example, one little girl, desiring to be pregnant (thus large) like her mother, made up an impossible story about a woman who was so huge she couldn't get out of her house, and if that wasn't bad enough, water started pouring into the house. She asked the

²¹Ibid., p. 100.

²²Ibid., p. 118.

water man to help, but he couldn't; he just went away. At this point the story ended.²³

Another theorist, Henri Bergson, asserts that laughter is purely intellectual, that the slightest gleam of feeling kills it, that people never laugh at things, and never at animals unless they remind them of people. He also asserts that people only laugh at other people when they behave like things--when they behave mechanically and without the flexibility that implies "soul" or intelligence.²⁴

A. M. Ludovici, another follower of the derision theory, rests his theory on the idea that "the animals" are ferocious as compared to man. He says that man's laughter is a spiritualized manifestation of the crude snarl, or "showing of teeth," with which "the animals" express their feelings of superiority and hostility.²⁵

There have been many others who have theorized about humor, but each tended to follow some form of what has already been discussed. No discussion of the theories of humor, however, could be complete without a mention of Max Eastman, who refutes many of the above theories and then explains his own theory of humor.

Eastman says that if anyone, such as Ludovici or other proponents of the derision theory, is going to identify humorous laughter with egotistical cruelty, he must prove that there is more egotism and more cruelty in humorous laughter than in the general behavior of man. Even Mark Twain commented,

²³Martha Wolfenstein, Children's Humor (Glencoe: Illinois: The Free Press, 1954), pp. 18-31.

²⁴Eastman, op. cit., p. 30.

²⁵Ibid., p. 32.

"Of the entire brood he (man) is the only one--the solitary one--that possesses malice... He is the only creature that inflicts pain for sport, knowing it to be pain."²⁶

Eastman describes a joke as the feeling of creeping toward an object and then being pulled back. For example: A housewife opens the window and calls to the iceman, "Have you the time?" (You expect 10 o'clock, 10:30, etc.) And the iceman calls back, "Yes, if I can find somebody to hold the horses."²⁷ (This is being pulled back from what is expected.) This seems to be in agreement with Kant's theory.

Eastman agrees with Aristotle in that every comedian such as Jimmy Durante, W. C. Fields, and Charlie Chaplin, has had something the matter with him. Ed Wynn was unusually clumsy, lisped, had a bad speaking voice, couldn't sing, yet he insisted on appearing in public.²⁸ Having "something the matter" could apply today to the whole range of comedians from Phyllis Diller to Buddy Hackett.

In refutation to William McDougall who said, "Man is the only animal that laughs,"²⁹ Eastman agrees that man is the laughing animal, but many other animals such as the dog also laugh. He says:

Dogs laugh, but they laugh with their tails. And a tail is an awkward thing to laugh with, as you can see by the way they bend themselves half double in extreme hilarity trying to get that rear-end exuberance forward into the main scene of action. What puts man on a higher stage of evolution is that he has got his laugh on the right end...³⁰

Eastman seems to find humor in serious theorizing of humor, but he acknowledges that someday laughter, thus humor, may be understood through physiological terms, but as for now a number of people are looking at humor

²⁶Ibid. ²⁷Ibid., p. 39. ²⁸Ibid., p. 69. ²⁹Ibid., p. 34.

³⁰Ibid.

through a very narrow groove. The following thought seems to be quite sensible:

All of us, I suppose, have experienced at some time in our lives a feeling of superiority or "sudden glory." Few certainly have never felt a pleasure in the debasement of others. It takes but a moment of honest recollection to establish the difference between these feelings and the feeling that something which has happened is funny.³¹

This completes a very brief, hopefully not superficial, summary of the psychological theories of humor. The following section reviews some of the research that has been conducted in this area.

III. REVIEW OF RESEARCH

The following review of research pertains specifically to the proposed unipac series, and some are based upon the theories recounted above.

George C. Rosenwald begins his investigation of "The Relation of Drive Discharge to the Enjoyment of Humor" by stating:

It is an incomplete test of Freud's theory of wit to expect jokes to be amusing to someone merely because the joke situation is relevant to one of his psychological conflicts, or because he reports himself as suffering from neurotic anxiety symptoms, or because he does not readily exhibit the sort of behavior illustrated in the joke. Rather, we expect that most people in our culture share certain elementary conflicts about aggressive and sexual impulses, but differ in the readiness with which they confront taboo themes when they are suggested to them by someone else and in the ease with which the obviated inhibitory energy is discharged. One may, therefore, suppose that the intensity of a person's enjoyment is a good index of the amount of energy he had previously set aside for inhibition, but it does not follow that the greater the inhibition, the more resounding the laughter will be. A great deal depends on the flexibility of the inhibition.³²

With this preface Rosenwald begins his description of his experiment with the subjects being twenty-nine male high school juniors and seniors. The author wanted to investigate the subjects' reaction to hostile cartoons. He,

³¹Ibid., p. 33.

³²George C. Rosenwald, "The Relation of Drive Discharge to the Enjoyment of Humor," Journal of Personality, 32:685, December, 1964.

therefore, chose seven hostile cartoons conveying directly destructive themes (Example: a group of ghouls on a roof pouring the liquid contents of a vat onto a group of jolly Christmas carolers below) and seven neutral cartoons without such themes. This is a modified version of the MRT (Mirth Response Test). Rosenwald had first administered parts of the TAT (Thematic Apperception Test) to assess each male's drive discharge. Then in individual sessions he told the subject to look at the group of cartoons and decide which ones he thought to be funny. The subject was instructed to sort the cartoons into three different piles: (1) those he liked; (2) those to which he was indifferent; and (3) those he disliked.³³

Rosenwald took into consideration that the tension between hostile impulses and the defenses against them is known to be particularly acute during adolescence. The attainment of physical maturity and the simultaneous confrontation of adult restraints and standards of behavior, including socially regulated modes for the management of aggression, are the occasion of revived infantile conflicts and demand a novel resolution. This resolution needs to be all the more viable because it will serve as the basis for a far-reaching psycho-social definition of ego-identity. In the adolescent male, a subtle resolution is required because aggression is not totally condemned; physical violence, not to speak of more sublimated aggressive affects and attitudes, is to be held in abeyance rather than totally repressed. That adolescence is a relatively unstable period of human development needs to be taken into account in extrapolating the present findings to adults' more crystallized sense of humor.³⁴

³³Ibid., p. 688.

³⁴Ibid.

The results of this experiment revealed that subjects with constricted TAT patterns were more frequently indifferent to hostile cartoons than the other subjects. Subjects with balanced TAT patterns reacted most positively to hostile as compared with neutral cartoons; subjects with constricted patterns reacted with increased indifference and dislike, and subjects with impulsive patterns reacted ambivalently--showing increments of both like and dislike responses to hostile as compared with neutral cartoons. Subjects who appreciated hostile humor the least differed from those who enjoyed it the most in that their TAT records contained more numerous instances of drive discharge, a relatively large proportion of which denoted cautious overcontrolled discharge patterns.³⁵

Another modified form of the MRT was employed by Seymour Epstein and Richard Smith in their investigation of "Repression and Insight as Related to Reaction to Cartoons." These authors also think that much of the research that propounds to endorse Freud's theory of humor actually fails to deal directly with the Freudian hypothesis. They feel that the research actually reveals that (1) individuals show a consistent preference for certain types of humor; (2) preference for certain types of humor can be related to other personality variables; and (3) preference for certain types of humor can be related to adjustment.³⁶

Sixteen hostile and sixteen non-hostile cartoons were independently and unanimously selected by five judges. In individual conferences each of thirty-two fraternity members were asked to place each cartoon in a bin designating

³⁵Ibid., p. 697.

³⁶Seymour Epstein and Richard Smith, "Repression and Insight as Related to Reaction to Cartoons," Journal of Consulting Psychology, 20:391, October, 1956.

his preference as to whether the cartoon was "funny," "mediocre," or "not funny." The facial and verbal reactions of each subject were noted. The final part of the experiment involved personal interviews seeking to find what each subject thought of his fellow fraternity members, especially those who might be considered to have hostile tendencies.

The results of this study failed to support the hypothesis that repression of hostility is related to a general preference for hostile cartoons. In other words, those who were considered to have hostile tendencies did not necessarily enjoy hostile cartoons, and some who apparently did not have hostile tendencies did enjoy hostile cartoons.³⁷

The authors state that the validity of the experiment was somewhat supported by the fact that the reaction to the cartoons was meaningfully related to insight and that the measure of repression was inversely associated with overall expressiveness. This led the researchers to hypothesize that a relationship between repression and humor may become apparent only when repression reaches pathological proportions.

The researchers then quote G. W. Allworth from his book Personality, a Psychological Interpretation as stating, "The most striking correlate of insight is the sense of humor."³⁸ Allworth then cites one study in which a correlation of .88 was found between ratings on insight and ratings on sense of humor.

Epstein and Smith hypothesize that insight and humor are related only when humor involves an ability to accept the self as its object. Presumably the person who is able to laugh at his limitations should be low in defensiveness and, accordingly, should be insightful.³⁹

³⁷Ibid., p. 394. ³⁸Ibid. ³⁹Ibid., p. 395.

Using still another modified form of the MRT, Rudolf Grziwok and Alvin Scodel investigated "Some Psychological Correlates of Humor Preferences."⁴⁰ These men chose 140 male college students who were given the following sequence of procedures: (1) a series of forty cartoons on which ratings of funniness were made; (2) the TAT (Cards 4, 6BM, 7BM, 13MF, 14, 18BM, 16); and (3) the Allport-Vernon-Lindzey Study of Values. The cartoons had all originally appeared in The New Yorker magazine and fit into one of the following five categories: (1) humorous effect based on aggression, either explicit or deliberately understated; (2) humorous effect obtained by a parody on sex; (3) humor based on the exaggeration or paradoxical use of social stereotypes; (4) humorous effect based on obvious and striking logical incongruity; and (5) no category was applicable or two or more categories were equally applicable. Categories (1) and (2) can be called "orectic humor," and categories (3) and (4) can be called "cognitive humor."⁴⁰

The TAT stories were scored according to specially constructed scales for degrees of aggressiveness, sexual content, intraception, and extraception. In the evaluation of results the ratings of funniness were converted to standard scores and then ranked. The TAT and Allport-Vernon-Lindzey scores were dichotomized and then compared on the basis of humor scores by the use of the Mann-Whitney Test.

The significant results indicated that subjects high in TAT aggression prefer aggressive humor while those low in TAT aggression prefer social commentary humor. With respect to value orientations subjects high on the aesthetic scale prefer logically incongruous cartoons whereas those who are low

⁴⁰Rudolf Grziwok and Alvin Scodel, "Some Psychological Correlates of Humor Preferences," Journal of Consulting Psychology, 20:42, February, 1956.

on the same scale prefer aggressive humor. Also, subjects high on the social scale prefer aggressive cartoons, and those low in the theoretical value show a preference for sexual cartoons. In more general terms a preference for orectic humor, as opposed to cognitive humor, seems to be characterized by more fantasy aggression, more gregariousness or outgoingness, less preoccupation with intellectual values, and less psychological subtlety or complexity.⁴¹

Three researchers, Edward Zigler, Jacob Levine, and Lawrence Gould, have experimented with "Cognitive Processes in the Development of Children's Appreciation of Humor." In this experiment a children's form of the MRT consisting of twenty-five cartoons was constructed and administered to sixty-four children of average intelligence in the second, third, fourth, and fifth grades. Both mirth response and comprehension were assessed.⁴²

The overall significance of this experiment indicated a general positive relation between comprehension and mirth response. The mirth response continued to increase in the second, third, and fourth grades, but there was a significant decrease found in the mirth response between the fourth and fifth grades. The authors hypothesized that cartoons which make few cognitive demands elicit a lower mirth response than those that are in keeping with the complexity of the child's cognitive apparatus.

These researchers feel that the cognitive aspects of humor have been largely ignored or overlooked in deference to the thematic qualities of the humor stimulus and the emotional aspects of the mirth response. Zigler et. al. state that "cognition not only mediates the humor process but, as Freud has

⁴¹Ibid.

⁴²Edward Zigler, et. al., "Cognitive Processes in the Development of Children's Appreciation of Humor," Child Development, 37:507, September, 1966.

noted, contributes to the experienced gratification."⁴³ People enjoy discovering the point of a joke, and the more subtle and indirect it is, the greater the pleasure in "getting it." A person must be able to use a variety of cognitive processes such as condensation, awareness of incongruities, and the ability to comprehend unusual verbal representations if he is to understand many jokes. A person gets the same type of pleasure from cognitive activity when he is solving a puzzle or brain twister or decoding mysteries.⁴⁴

The next research also concerns children, but instead of specifically being interested in cognitive processes, Leo Graham wanted to see what maturation had to do with a sense of humor. He used sixty pupils from the first, third, and fifth grades. In this experiment each child was given eleven sets of cartoons with four cartoons in each set. The child was to choose the one cartoon out of each set that he thought to be the funniest. If he thought none were funny, he didn't have to choose any. Each child was also asked to relate why he thought the chosen cartoon was funny.⁴⁵

The results showed that the older the subject, the more cartoons he thought to be funny. The authors believe that the additional experience and/or maturation which takes place between the different grades increases the number of objects or situations which will be perceived as humorous. The researchers also found that it was very difficult for the children to explain why the cartoon was funny, and their answers revealed the perplexity and lack of insight commonly associated with an attempt to explain why anything is funny.⁴⁶

⁴³Ibid., pp. 508-510. ⁴⁴Ibid.

⁴⁵Leo R. Graham, "The Maturation Factor in Humor," Journal of Clinical Psychology, 14:326-328, July, 1958.

⁴⁶Ibid.

Ewart E. Smith and Helen L. White used 156 airmen to test their hypothesis that wit and creativity are positively correlated; that defensiveness and creativity are negatively correlated; and that wits are effective leaders. The effects of sarcastic versus nonsarcastic wit were also explored.⁴⁷

The researchers noted that wit and creativity have been linked by a number of writers like Koestler who called a successful witticism a creative act, and Getzels and Jackson who found that children who were highly creative but only moderately high in I. Q. valued and used humor more than those high in I. Q. alone. Torrance has also inferred that clowning, or humor, is one of several adaptive techniques which the creative person uses to remain in groups, or possibly to fend off, to some degree, group pressures toward conformity.⁴⁸

The airmen in this experiment were divided into groups and given different types of problems to solve as a group. These problems ranged from types of mathematical problems to decision-making under stress. Certain members from each group were chosen to set up the stress situations and to use sarcasm as a humorous tool.⁴⁹

As a result of this complicated experiment wit and creativity were found to be positively correlated and defensiveness and creativity to be negatively correlated. Witty persons were not effective leaders but were associated with less defensiveness and more effective group problem-solving.

Groups which contained wits generally were more efficient in solving a group arithmetic problem, showed less defensiveness in the situation, and were higher in group satisfaction than groups not containing wits or in which there

⁴⁷Ewart E. Smith and Helen L. White, "Wit, Creativity, and Sarcasm," Journal of Applied Psychology, 49:131-134, April, 1965.

⁴⁸Ibid. ⁴⁹Ibid.

was less joking. The wits were also quite likely to participate more highly than nonwits.

Most of the positive relationships with wit were found, interestingly enough, to be associated with sarcastic wit, and the authors feel that the negative correlation between defensiveness and creativity probably explains what limits creativity, rather than what produces it.⁵⁰

Three categories of tenth graders: (1) underachievers according to GPA; (2) underachievers according to standardized achievement tests; and (3) achievers, were chosen by Ralph Pippert to examine the imaginative and humorous qualities of these students on creative writing assignments.⁵¹

Each of the students was asked to write a short response (200 words maximum) to the following situations:

1. A sixth grade teacher had just announced to the class that the answer to the problem 22×33 was 66. A small boy raised his hand to speak.
2. The rocket engines sputtered and died. With increasing speed the helpless vehicle was drawn by the gravitational force of the moon.
3. The tall man with four sturdy arms was first to reach the shore. Recognizing his advantage, he plunged recklessly ahead.

The responses were then scored as to whether they were humorous or non-humorous and whether they were imaginative or non-imaginative. A humorous rating was given if a clever, surprise ending or ridiculous predicament or otherwise "funny" device was used. An imaginative rating was given if a

⁵⁰Ibid.

⁵¹Ralph Pippert, "Imagination and Humor in Creative Writing by Achieving and Underachieving Students," Peabody Journal of Education, 41:157, November, 1963.

student ended the episode or situation with a rational but different, unusual, or unique situation.

Pippert found that underachievers by both methods of identification tended to write humorously less often than achieving students. Underachieving students according to GPA wrote imaginative responses significantly more often than underachievers according to achievement test scores, and on one of the episodes they significantly exceeded the achieving students.⁵²

It might have been interesting to see if the two categories of under-achievers would have been more creative if they would have been allowed to give their responses orally since the mere skill of writing seems to inhibit this type of student.

The last research that is to be reviewed examines what sixth graders find funny in literature, but even more interesting is what social groups enjoy humor more. Elliott Landau divided the subjects into upper, middle, and lower social classes according to the father's occupation. He also noted the I. Q., sex, reading level, religion, and family background of each subject. The subjects were asked to rate on a one to six scale the funniness of twenty-six excerpts taken from popular children's literature. The excerpts were read to one half of the subjects, and the other half read the excerpts to themselves.⁵³

Landau found significant differences between the middle and both upper and lower classes. Both the upper and lower groups enjoyed the excerpts significantly more than the middle class children. The capacity to enjoy

⁵²Ibid., pp. 158-163.

⁵³Elliott D. Landau, "Some Children Can't Laugh," Childhood Education, 34:313-315, March, 1958.

funny incidents was almost totally lacking in the middle class. Of the twenty-six excerpts presented, only three were found to elicit even mild enjoyment from the middle class children. In twenty-five out of twenty-six excerpts both the upper and lower classes outscored the middle class. On twelve items the middle class children rated the excerpts no higher than 1.85 out of 6. The lower class rated only one excerpt as being "not funny at all," and the upper class only rated one excerpt as low as 1.85.⁵⁴

It is apparent that the MRT is a popular testing instrument in this field. The results of experiments using this test are always interesting even though they tend to conflict at times.

The most important aspect of reviewing any research is simply to become aware of the research that has been conducted, to see that different variables provide different results, and to discover that there is need for further research.

The teacher should use this knowledge in handling individual problems in the classroom; the knowledge should help diagnose the problem or situation even if it does not prescribe a remedy. The unipac series discussed later in this paper will hopefully provide a healthy outlet for any humorous desire.

IV. HUMANITARIAN ASPECTS OF HUMOR

Although it is not scientifically substantiated, humor is at times the "glue" of life. It is a form of expression that is generally healing rather than hurting. Blistein says that comedy creates and fosters an attitude toward life that is vigorous, corrective, and penetrating.⁵⁵ The idea that

⁵⁴Ibid.

⁵⁵Blistein, op. cit., p. 20.

humor can be "corrective" is what has made this writer set so much importance in her project; she hopes to let students explore humor and let humor help correct some of their personal ills and some of the ills of the classroom.

Max Eastman substantiates the importance of humor when he states that humor is a unique quality of feeling. It belongs with "anger, fear, hunger, lust, among the irreducible elements of our affective life."⁵⁶ Again the writer hopes to work with this "affective life" of her students, to get them to appreciate the place of humor in their lives, to get them to realize what they laugh at and perhaps why, and to urge them to use humor to help both themselves and others. A good sense of humor is one of the most desirable personality traits.

Arthur L. Bradford wrote the following wise words:

People everywhere there surely are. The first fact of life, almost, is that there are others. They can be dear, also difficult. Humor helps us to live with them in the most patient, tolerant way. It helps us too, to know how we look to others, to understand how sometimes we strain their patience, put them to the test. Humor shows us ourselves in most unflattering image without moving us to self-loathing. In the man who hates himself utterly all the humor has dried up. Humor is a powerful prophylactic against egoism and crankiness. It protects us against unhealthy introversion by continually putting us back in touch with things outside ourselves. It increases the resilience of the soul, making pressures bearable. It is an ally of faith when faith runs low, armor for the despised and abused of the earth, a certificate of life's indestructibility and worth.⁵⁷

This wisdom leads to one of the best essays ever written about humor. The essay, "The Comic Spirit in the Freedom of Man," by Horace M. Kallen is both highly informative and highly inspirational. After reading this essay, a person feels the deepest compassion for those who have needed humor in times of

⁵⁶Eastman, op. cit., p. 27.

⁵⁷Arthur L. Bradford, "The Place of Humor in Teaching," Peabody Journal of Education, 42:69, September, 1964.

distress and a deep sense of gratitude that everyone possesses the potential for this great emotion.

Kallen writes that there are always people and forces fighting to enslave others. These others will allow this conscription to take place just so long and then,

Soon or late every conscription reveals itself as the despotism it is, and everybody fights to be free, seeking his freedom perhaps in a different conscription; perhaps in the securities of friendship; perhaps in the singularity and force of his conscience alone; perhaps--in his sense of humor. I have come to believe that no salvation mankind ever turned to has proved itself so sure a liberator as this last--the spirit of comedy. Laughter advances to succeed where every other helper fails. It works both as a shield and a weapon, on every field of the human struggle, on every scale. Its psychosomatic configurations range from the smile to the belly-laugh; their meanings span the entirety of human experience--from the welcoming of food or friends, to the repelling or overthrow of every oppression--be it an accidental belittlement of the daily life, a confrontation with death, or some irresistible compulsion of fate or fortune.⁵⁸

Kallen also states that "for every man laughter is freedom's last defense against fear and death, even to the point of death."⁵⁹ He tells of Warden Clinton Duffy of San Quentin Prison in California who declares:

In Condemned Row, one of the loneliest and most depressing places on earth, humor like this is as rare as rain on the desert, and just as welcome. There is often some prankster and wise-cracker on the row; I have known some who spent all their waking hours cooking up gags, and I have seen others enter the gas chamber laughing, as though death were an enormous joke.⁶⁰

Duffy continues telling about one of the prisoners who had spent all his resources, while awaiting execution, on lawbooks. This prisoner studied these books in hopes of finding some way to get free. As he was being taken to the gas chamber, he gave the books to Warden Duffy and told him, "I've learned a

⁵⁸Horace M. Kallen, "The Comic Spirit in the Freedom of Man," Teachers College Record, 68:189, December, 1966.

⁵⁹Ibid., p. 193. ⁶⁰Ibid.

lot, and I'd like to give these to some guy who really needs 'em. Send 'em to my lawyer." Duffy says that another, who went to the gas chamber after eleven reprieves, made his last request "a little bicarb because I'm gonna get gas on my stomach tomorrow."⁶¹

Man is unlike all living things
Being afraid, he laughs
Over the bitter bowl he quaffs
In his despair, he sings.⁶²

Humor has played an important part in the sufferings and triumphs of people throughout history. Students may respond to this knowledge that even though humor is commonplace, it is perhaps one of the greatest forces in life.

Hazel Fox says that opponents of using humor in the classroom argue that humor leads to behavior problems with a consequent breakdown of the student-teacher relationship. Her reply implies that the superior teacher has the ability to exercise full control regardless of the teaching technique used.⁶³

The "sick jokes" that are so often told by teenagers may be one of the aspects of humor that has been of concern in some classrooms. Blistein has commented that "the sick joke represents an attempt to attain a superior, sophisticated attitude toward violence, sex, physical deformity, revealed religion, and death."⁶⁴ This view of the "sick joke" would definitely make one believe that humor is a disruptive force in the classroom, but Gerald Raftery defends this type of teenage humor ("Daddy, why is Mommy running so fast?" "Shut up and reload!") by recognizing that teenagers can joke about death,

⁶¹Ibid. ⁶²Ibid.

⁶³Hazel Fox, "Humor: A Teaching Aid," Arizona Teacher, 51:13, March, 1963.

⁶⁴Blistein, op. cit., p. 68.

disease, and any number of other similar experiences because nothing could be further from their own experiences. Raftery states that he (the teenager) will get "older and wearier soon enough and start worrying about the international situation, mortgages, ulcers, and his sense of humor will change. He won't laugh very much at anything anymore; he'll only smile wryly at satire and irony, which Archibald MacLeish called, 'The humor of the beaten man.'"⁶⁵

The final comments in this section concern the actual use of humor as a humanitarian force in the classroom. John Erskins has stated,

It is usually thought that the sense of humor is a gift, not an art. Perhaps wit, like any other form of expression is to some extent a gift, but it would be sad if we had to believe that the understanding of life is natural to some of us and withheld from others. Humor can be learned and taught.⁶⁶

At least one other person thinks that it is possible to teach humor, but does he simply mean in the cognitive domain or might he include the affective domain also?

Professor W. Taliaferro Thompson makes this comment about humor:

Humor, a sense of humor, makes for effectiveness in speaking and teaching. It not only stabs people awake, and captures their attention; it makes an idea clear, and fastens it in the mind.⁶⁷

An even more profound comment about humor and education comes from Arthur L. Bradford:

Humor makes the educated mind a safer mind. The humorless intellectual is of all personality cripples one of the most handicapped and most disagreeable. He can be dangerous, too, an any force out of balance is dangerous. Though he prides himself upon his advanced mind and disdains the commonality, he is a poor exhibit of intellectualism. He is known for his

⁶⁵Gerald Raftery, "In Defense of Teenage Humor," The Clearing House, 34:547-548, May, 1960.

⁶⁶Fred B. Dixon, "Humor and School Activities," School Activities, 38:2, April, 1967.

⁶⁷Ibid.

uncritical partisanship, his acceptance of slogans--those he favors--for truth, his handiness at subordinating life to doctrine. He lacks any magnanimity of spirit and, although he is interminably contentious, he is never the happy warrior.⁶⁸

⁶⁸Bradford, op. cit., p. 70.

CHAPTER III

PROPOSED PROGRAM

Preliminary preparation. After finding that students seldom found the material under the humorous section of the literature textbook to actually be humorous, this writer decided to try to find out what tenth grade students actually did consider humorous. In order to devise some instrument that could allow students to indicate their reaction to the degree of humor to a number of excerpts from supposedly humorous literature, discussions were held in three classes of tenth graders. Upon being asked verbally what they read that they considered humorous, the students gave as examples Playboy, Mad Magazine, and National Lampoon. They said that they "enjoyed" reading such things as science fiction and mysteries.

With this meager amount of information with which to start searching for excerpts, the writer soon found a number of problems arising. For example, the humor of many selections depends upon the total effect of the story, essay, etc., and much of the real humor is lost when just an excerpt is taken from it. Then if the entire selection is given, it cuts the amount of time left to test the range of humor. Besides this, research has proved that the longer people are evaluating the "funniness" of humor, the less funny the humor is. It seems that humor cannot be forced upon people. The problem of cartoons, jokes, and the many other types of humor which the students surely enjoyed but had failed to mention should also be included on such an instrument if it were really to assess what was humorous to these students.

After these discussions with the students, various students began bringing books that they thought enjoyable. The range of interests seemed to be enormous,

which, after all, is only natural. Reading about former research and general ideas about humor, therefore, became the next phase of the project.

During this time the writer volunteered to work with tenth graders with reading problems. A humanities approach to the English class will be used, and the reading teacher will help provide a unified and comprehensive reading program for these students.

The next important step in the formulation of this final form of the project came with a unipac workshop. During this two day workshop the main concepts of unipacs and how to make and use a unipac were presented.

Slowly the interest in the need for a new approach to humor in the classroom and the use of unipacs seemed to merge. Thus the idea of presenting humor individually to each student on a "do-it-when-you-want-to" basis evolved.

Curriculum ideals. At this time it is necessary to regress a bit and pick up some missing pieces. First, the writer must express her zeal and dedication to actually individualizing in the classroom. There, surely, is no teacher who is not aware of the many areas and degrees of interest in any concept that is presented, and, hopefully, there is no teacher who believes that he can reach these many areas and degrees of interests of the students by standing at the front of the classroom and lecturing or by so-called "independent study" or even by any form of individualized study that does not have a sound basis.

Second, the writer is a firm believer in the formulation and use of behaviorial objectives. The use of behaviorial objectives always keeps the desired behavior change of the student apparent, and these objectives do not generalize. They specifically point out the desired end behavior; there is no groping in the dark. But behaviorial objectives are still basically infertile

if a student himself does not work from the very first day of a unit with his behavioral objective in mind. Behavioral objectives are not to be written neatly in a lesson plan book and hidden from the students.

Third, a multi-media approach to education is also a necessity if each student is going to be allowed to learn and to express himself in his own unique way or in a number of ways. Thus, every possible use of the senses along with all three learning domains: psycho-motor, cognitive, and affective, must be employed to their utmost.

Fourth, and last, the writer has found through experience that single-concept teaching is a great advantage for each student. If a student is sharp and can work rapidly, he easily grasps the single concept being presented and can quickly move on to an entirely different concept or to a more complex one. At the same time the single concept approach is simple and direct so that the slower, less motivated student can work until he has the concept mastered.

All of these "golden tools," individualized instruction, behavioral objectives, a multi-media approach, and a single-concept approach, are tied together in the concept of a unipac.

Unipacs for humor. There is a national bank of unipacs under the direction of Dr. Gardner Swenson of Salt Lake City, Utah, but anyone knowing the basic concepts of a unipac can employ these concepts to one degree or another in his teaching. The following is an outline of the contents of a unipac which the student receives:

1. Title
2. Pretest
3. Major idea or concept of unipac
4. Behavioral objective
5. Learning activities
6. Self-test
7. Post test
8. Quest

The title of the unipac should be clever, but it should also reveal something about the contents of the unipac. During this discussion examples from the "Riddle" unipac which is included in the Appendix will be used.

Since this project with humor is to be a motivational, self-discovery, fun device, there will be a series of single unipacs. The entire series will be titled A PACK OF FUN, and each single unipac will have another subtitle designating what aspect of humor is to be investigated. The entire series will consist of the unipacs outlined on the following page.

Not all of these single unipacs are complete at this time. The art teacher is going to help construct the unipac on drawing cartoons, and the drama teacher and his classes are going to cooperate in producing the unipacs concerned with comedy. The students themselves will be encouraged to ask for unipacs to be made on some aspect of humor that they discover (for example sick jokes, shaggy dog stories or practical jokes). Eventually a student may even want to write a unipac for the other students. It is for these expansion purposes that the numbering of the unipacs appears to leave gaps.

It might be noted here that as each of these unipacs is constructed, it will be placed in a folder. On the outside of this folder will be the title and subtitle of the unipac and some examples of the subtitle. The student can then browse through the folders and choose the one which he wants from the examples on the outside.

Each student will be provided with a check sheet to keep track of what unipacs he has successfully completed. Either a check mark or the date of completion can be recorded in the space provided. The series is specifically constructed so no prerequisites are needed for any of the unipacs. This allows a student to follow his own inclination. A student will be guided to basically

A PACK OF FUN

	<u>Title</u>	<u>Unipac No.</u>
An Investigation of Humor	What Do You Laugh At?	1
	What Do You Do That Is Funny?	2
	Just What Is Humor?	3
	The History of Humor	4
Humorous Devices	Cartoons	10
	Riddles	11
	Jokes	12
	Gags	13
	Anecdotes	14
	Puns	15
	Wisecracks	16
	Epigrams	17
	Spoonerisms	18
	Caricature	19
	Tongue Twisters	20
	Tall Tales	21
Humor vs. Wit	How Do Humor and Wit Differ?	40
Humor of Ideas	Satire	50
	Irony	51
	Parody	52
	Sarcasm	53
Comedy	The Difference Between Comedy and Humor	60
	Comedy - Drama	61
	Comedy - Short Story	62
Levels of Humor	Levels Of Humor	70
	Obscenity (Burlesque)	71
	Physical Mishaps (Pie In Face)	72
	Plot Devices	73
	Verbal Wit	74
	Inconsistency Of Character	75
	Comedy Of Ideas	76
Producing Humor	Drawing Cartoons	80
	Writing Jokes	81
	Writing Tall Tales	82
	Presenting A Skit	83

follow the series through from first to last if he questions the design of the plan, but the moment the teacher starts recommending any type of guideline, he must remember that there may be one student who wants to write or tape an original tall tale first and find out about puns five months later (or not at all). If the students are finally going to be allowed to individualize, the teacher must force himself to also be very flexible and to individualize his thoughts as to how each student can best utilize the unipac series.

After the title the student should find and take a pretest, according to Dr. Swenson, and then read what the main concept of the unipac is. In the unipacs in this series, however, these two components will be switched around. The student will first read the basic concept of the unipac. This will be a short description that will tell the student what the unipac is about and will be written interestingly enough so that the student will be invited to sample that particular unipac. It is very important that the language and vocabulary be appropriate for the students. The language of the unipacs in this project, therefore, will be relatively simple since the students will all have reading problems.

An example of the introduction of a concept might be similar to the one used in the "Riddle" unipac:

In this unipac you will learn the history of the riddle, just what a riddle is, and how it is constructed. If you enjoy reading mysteries, enjoy "Mannix" on television, or like to work crossword puzzles, you should enjoy this unipac.

This single concept of the riddle actually has three components: (1) history of the riddle; (2) definition of the riddle; and (3) construction of the riddle. Each component can be handled separately with its own learning activities or the learning activities can be combined under one heading. No matter how the components are handled, the post test reverts back to the

behaviorial objective which will include all components.

After the discussion of the single concept to be presented in the unipac, a short pretest will be given. This pretest must fulfill two objectives. It must see if the student has knowledge of any prerequisites needed for the unipac, and it tests to find out if the student already knows everything that is to be presented. If the student lacks the prerequisites, he needs to do whatever is necessary before starting the unipac. If he already knows everything in the unipac, it would probably be a waste of his time and stifling to his interests to work through the unipac.

As mentioned before, the unipacs in this series have been constructed with only a few having prerequisites. The only aspect of the pretest, therefore, is to see if the student can benefit from what the unipac has to offer. This pretest can either be checked quickly by the teacher or teacher aide, or the student can rely on an answer key provided in his unipac. The instructions as to which he is to do are included in the directions before the pretest.

Next is the behaviorial objective. The programmed paperback, Preparing Instructional Objectives, by Robert Mager is an excellent source on how to write behaviorial objectives. It will serve here to simply explain that each objective tells the condition given (given an oral or written examination, ten objective questions) the student (you) will be able to perform in a certain way (answer, list, make, etc.) with a certain degree of accuracy (80%) the main concept of the unipac (or lesson). The behaviorial objective for a unipac about the riddle could read like this:

Given an oral or written examination consisting of ten objective questions, you will be able to answer with 80% accuracy questions about the history of the riddle, what a riddle is, and how it is constructed.

The learning activities are the next part of the unipac with directions preceding these activities. These directions should state what activities the

student should complete and what the student should do once he completes the learning activities. For example:

Do only those activities that you think are necessary to pass the post test. After completing the desired learning activities, take the self-test to see if you are ready for the post test.

There is one danger in the learning activities. Sometimes the students may become so interested in just doing the activities that they actually "overdo." This is only a danger when the main objective is to cover a wide range of material; therefore, completing a unipac as quickly as the student understands the main concept is a prime goal.

There should be a minimum of five learning activities, and these activities should allow a student a wide range in ways to learn the concept of the unipac. This is where the multi-media approach reaches its zenith. Tape recorders, filmstrips and film loops, records, overhead projectors, bulletin boards, books, etc. are all prime targets for the learning activities. Conversations and small group discussions in the classroom and out (maybe even Mom and Dad at home) are utilized. This is the section in which the teacher can show and needs to show his creativity. Here he can try to provide something for each individual and many things for the individual who needs several exposures to reinforce the main concept.

Refer to the learning activities section of the "Riddle" unipac for examples.

After the student makes his own decision as to whether he has completed enough learning activities to proceed, he takes a self-test. This self-test is included in his unipac. He completes it and checks it himself with the answers in his unipac. It is easy to see that he could cheat on this test, but there is no reason for him to cheat; the test will not be graded, and if he cheats he still won't know if he is ready for the post test. For the self-

test the student may want someone who has already completed that unipac to ask him questions to determine if he is ready for the post test. Again the directions for the self-test are important. The student should always understand just where he is in relation to the entire unipac.

The final step is the post test. This simply fulfills the behavioral objective. Since the student first started on this unipac he has known exactly what was expected of him in the evaluation. He has had a chance for many types of exposure to the concept, and now he is ready to see if he actually can fulfill the behavioral objective to see if his "behavior" has changed. This test is graded and graded by the teacher or teacher aide.

A teacher would be wise to have at least three forms of any post test. This helps prevent the passing of answers, and if a student should not pass the post test, the teacher will need a second form for the retest.

Once the student has successfully completed the post test, a quest activity is suggested. The student may or may not pursue a quest. He may even pursue a quest without the teacher knowing it or maybe even months after completing the unipac. This is to let a student know that no concept is limited. Each concept spreads out and joins with others. For example: Try a unipac approach in your classroom and see if it works!

CHAPTER IV

RECOMMENDED GUIDELINES

As with any proposal or plan, each teacher must take the ideas and adapt them to his own particular situation. It is the teacher who must decide whether to grade unipacs on humor, and if they are to be graded, how much should they count in comparison to other learning activities. The writer plans to give as much credit for the completion of a unipac on humor as she does for the completion of a unipac on the "Correct Uses of the Comma" because she is convinced that humor is as important (if not more important) as any comma.

The writer also plans to use this unipac series as a backdrop for her classroom, a continuous thread for the entire year. Since she plans to use a humanities approach, she'll implement humor from different countries, different ages, and different disciplines.

She will also use humor to help a student adjust and to understand himself whenever possible, and there are usually plenty of opportunities if only a teacher is willing to watch for them. Perhaps she will even be able to help some of the students with the inhibitions that Freud has so carefully analyzed.

The best guideline is that if a teacher believes in any aspect of his curriculum enough to have it in his curriculum at all, it should be treated with respect and hard work. If some aspect of the program begins to fail, find out why it's failing and correct the problem.

Any teacher who is trying to individualize or trying to innovate knows that no plan or technique is a panacea. Thus it is with this proposal. Some students won't have much of a sense of humor; they will have to be prepared and motivated to even get them mildly interested in this unipac series that the

writer is convinced is the greatest thing since Wheaties. How could a student

not enjoy trying to figure out what has:

- Two hookers,
- Two snookers,
- Two lookers,
- Four dilly-danders,
- Four stiff-standers,
- Two flip-flops,
- One fling-by.

But someone will actually decide that riddles are quite a bore! (Why, it's a cow, of course!) Some students will not have enough self-discipline to choose a unipac, even though they might be interested, and follow it through. Some may even jump over those highly important, carefully explained directions and be so thoroughly confused that they will grow to hate unipacs. Just like anything else, therefore, the teacher, the guide (mother hen), must keep a careful and constant watch on his (a mother hen?) brood, but hopefully he'll never give up hope on individualization in some form. Hopefully he'll retain his sense of humor and see all sides of the problem and let the welfare of his students win out. After all, it's just as important for the teacher to have a sense of humor as it is for the students. If the teacher cannot pass the post test, he should go back to the learning activities!

CHAPTER V

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

This project has opened many doors and questions. Far more time needs to be spent learning about the psychology of adolescents on the part of researchers and especially on the part of teachers. How can a teacher really individualize if he does not understand at least a few of the many, many facets of the teenager's psyche?

An attempt should still be made to devise an instrument to see what tenth graders really do find humorous. Since each student will be free to use any type of humor through the unipacs, the only real value of this is perhaps to make the materials they consider humorous more easily accessible in the classroom. More exacting research in this area might prompt textbook editors to change their formats to reach the interests of the students.

The writer also plans to devise her own Mirth Response Test to test for hostility. Even though the experiments involving this test were generally highly complicated and often conflicting in results, it would be interesting to try this test in classes composed of students with reading problems since hostility seems to be a prevalent emotion among this type of student.

The words of Robert R. Updegraff should also be heeded in any further study of humor:

Most of us use our conscious minds entirely too hard, and as a result our thinking and our decisions are not as good as they should be. The trouble is, we are working with only half our minds, and with less than half of our accumulated experience and judgment. And as a consequence, we cheat ourselves of many hours of recreation which in themselves, add to the effectiveness of our thinking. For relaxation is the key to the door of the subconscious mind. The subconscious mind works best when we are doing

what we like best to do. A happy mind is a healthy mind, and it puts drive back of a man's activities. As Henry David Thoreau put it, "A really efficient laborer will be found not to crowd his day with work."¹

¹Don Herold, Humor in Advertising (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1963), p. 53.

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APPENDIX

The following is the material found in the unipac "Riddles." The material is given for information purposes, therefore, it will not necessarily be in the same format that the student will receive it. For example, humorous comments in the margins, drawings to enhance the visual acceptance of the unipac, and similar attention attracting devices have been excluded. Each teacher should use his imagination to make the pac itself as attractive as possible.

PACK OF FUN

RIDDLES Unipac #11

MAIN CONCEPT

In this unipac you will learn the history of the riddle, just what a riddle is, and how it is constructed. If you enjoy reading mysteries, enjoy "Mannix" on television, or like to work crossword puzzles, you should enjoy this unipac.

PRETEST

This little test will simply see if it's worth your time to go through this unipac. It will not be graded. When you have completed the test, take it to the teacher for her advice as to whether you should go ahead with this unipac.

1. Relate any history you know about the riddle.
2. Tell what you think a riddle is and what it consists of.
3. Ask the teacher five riddles.

BEHAVIORIAL OBJECTIVE

Given an oral or written examination consisting of ten objective questions, you will be able to answer with 80% accuracy questions about the history of the riddle, what a riddle is, and how it is constructed.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Do only those activities that you think are necessary to pass the post test. After completing the desired learning activities, take the self-test to see if you are ready for the post test.

1. By yourself or with someone else read the handout about the history of the riddle.
2. Listen to the tape that tells about the history of the riddle.
3. Listen to the tape that tells what a riddle is and how it is constructed.
4. Complete the worksheet that explains what a riddle is and how it is constructed.
5. Ask the teacher any questions that you do not understand about the history or construction of the riddle.
6. Read some of the riddles from the riddle and humor books on the shelf.
7. Talk with your Mom and Dad about what you've learned about riddles. Can they figure out the one about "Fire"? Do they know any old riddles?
8. Ask your friends some riddles to see if they can answer them.
9. Make up some riddles about things you smell. Bring the smells to class and ask some of the kids the riddles.
10. Do the same with sounds. (You can take the tape recorder home overnight if you want to. Just remember to check it out with the teacher.)
11. Make up a game that depends upon answering riddles and questions about riddles in order to win.
12. Anything new you find about riddles, make a copy and add it to the file.
13. Read some of the riddles that are in the file. Find any new ones?
14. Can you "draw" a riddle? Or draw something that will be part of a riddle you've made up?

15. Put an original riddle or an "old" riddle on the bulletin board.
16. Record a riddle on the Language Master. Leave the card so that the kids in the other classes can try to answer your riddle.

SELF-TEST

This test is to see if you are ready for the post test (which will be graded). When you finish this test, get the key from the folder and check to see how you did. If you do well, ask for the post test; if you think you need more work, go back to the learning activities.

*Note: the following are some examples of questions that would be on both the self-test and post test. The exact questions would not be used on both tests, but the types of questions would be similar.

TRUE or FALSE

- _____ 1. Riddles were first asked by your grandparents' generation.
- _____ 2. At one time riddles were used to pass knowledge from one person to another.
- _____ 3. Most old riddles are very logical and easy to figure out.
- _____ 4. The riddle was the highest form of wit in ancient times.
- _____ 5. At one time the success or failure in solving a riddle served in foretelling the future.

MULTIPLE CHOICE

- _____ 1. Riddles used to be a part of (a) marriage ceremonies, (b) war, (c) rain making, (d) puberty rites, (e) all of these.
- _____ 2. The Puritans of England disliked riddles because (a) they made people laugh, (b) they were obscene, (c) people would rather tell riddles than work, (d) they were used to send secret messages.
- _____ 3. Some people think that riddles were the early forms of (a) the short story, (b) the novel, (c) plays, (d) poetry.
- _____ 4. Who answered the riddle of the Sphinx? (a) Hermia, (b) Zeus, (c) Oedipus, (d) Jocasta.
- _____ 5. Who supposedly killed himself because he could not answer a riddle? (a) Homer, (b) Richard the Lion Hearted, (c) Elmer (d) Socrates.

QUEST

Since riddles are so much fun, read a mystery story and try to decide what riddles and mysteries have in common.

THE USE OF UNIPACS IN THE STUDY OF HUMOR

by

CHARLOTTE ANN DOYLE

B. S., Kansas State Teachers College, 1965

AN ABSTRACT OF A MASTER'S REPORT

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Department of Curriculum and Instruction

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ABSTRACT

After establishing through research and theory a need for the teaching of humor, the writer discussed the ideals of individualized instruction, behaviorial objectives, a multi-media approach, and a single concept approach to education. She then merged the need for the teaching of humor with her educational ideals in a proposed series of unipacs. The unipacs are designed to teach humor in all three domains: psycho-motor, cognitive, and affective. Examples are given of the final product.