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Every episode of the 10-minute Teacher has a transcript and show notes. At the end of the show I'll tell you how you could get them in your inbox.

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The Ten-minute Teacher podcast with Vicki Davis. Every week day you'll learn powerful practical ways to be a more remarkable teacher today.

VICKI: Hello remarkable teachers, it's remarkable but this is the 50th episode of the 10-Minute Teacher and I'm so excited. So I decided to try a solo episode talking about something I love, and that is laughter in the classroom. So today, we're going to talk about five ideas to get a laugh in the classroom. And if you let me know what you think about having a solo episode, I'm going to put a lot of links in the show notes and that sort of thing.

So my first way to get a laugh is I keep a dress-up box in my classroom. And I'm going to include a link in the show notes of how I use drama to teach in the classroom. <http://www.coolcatteacher.com/drama-in-the-classroom-activities/> But I know that I create a bell ringer where the kids have to dress up to teach each other, so think jigsaw but with hats and bowties and silly stuff. And I'll never forget seeing the Cajun chef explaining hypersonic technology. So they're actually having to research some pretty sophisticated technology but they're having to do and it is so much fun to have kids dress up and pretend.

So I've even had them pretend if what would happen if an EMP pulse went off and do a dramatic piece there. And that even can be funny too when they realize, "Oh, my cell phone doesn't work." So have kids dress up and do drama and be different.

Okay, so my second is I use the in-flipped method of teaching. So I'm always recording videos. (See my 5 methods of blended learning - <http://www.coolcatteacher.com/effective-blended-learning/>) And I have found that, especially if it's a tough topic or difficult that I love at the beginning and in some random place in the middle to do something funny. So for example when I was teaching Wikis, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4C3nnnSmXvk> I dressed us a simple Hawaiian attire and on my big InFocus board at the front of my classroom, I put surfing and Hawaii scenes coming out behind me and I was like, "Hula, hula, hula, wiki, wiki, wiki." And I was teaching like that and they're like, "What are you doing?" And I'm like, "Well, I don't want you to be bored." And then right at the middle I'll do something silly and they'll go, "Did you just do that?" And I'm like, "Yeah." And the other kids are like, "Well, what did she do?" And they'll say, "You have to play it forward."

Believe it or not kids do skip some videos that's why I always have them take notes. But if I put funny things in there they're always watching and it does take a little bit of being willing to make fun of yourself. But I do not have a problem being awkward. I've always been a little bit awkward. So I just am awkward for a cause.

My third is kind of related to the second which is laugh at yourself or tell a funny story. So I know that if kids are struggling to not really paying attention if I can pull a story from of my trips, like when I climbed the Great Wall of China and somebody is selling a Coca-Cola and a Snicker bar. Or when I get on the back of a camel and I feel like I'm going to fall off when I'm in Qatar. And it was like, "Oh my goodness, I'm going to fall of this camel." And how when you try new things sometimes it takes you a while to get your balance or you feel like you're going to fall but you're really not.

So in telling these funny stories – and I've got far funnier stories than that.

When I was on stage in a bathing suit in a beauty pageant, the Georgia Peanut Princess Pageant, I was the Georgia Peanut Princess of 1987, and my 4-inch heel gets stuck in the stage. And I'm sitting there and I'm just wiggling the heel, wiggling the heel kind of standing around a little bit longer than I should have. And then I just kind of slowly pull that heel out of the stage and then I keep walking. And my point with that is if you don't show it on your face, most of the time, people will never know. And I even relate that to – I was speaking one time in Arkansas and the same thing happened. They had put the podium right in the middle of the stage, they had duct taped together and literally my heel was stuck in the stage for about half of the speech I gave. And I kept remembering that former thing that had happened.

Well, when you tell funny stories, it helps kids remember that you were young once – even though it's hard to believe sometimes. But I just love telling these stories that can relate to whatever we're talking about, whatever it is. Whether it was using y TRS-80 when I was seven or eight and we called it the trash '80 and I'd have to press the button and type "c load" and go eat dinner and come back and then I could play a lovely little game of pong or whatever. But just tell them funny stories laughing at yourself and that sort of thing.

I think the fourth is changing the environment. So this week I wanted to talk about the physiological and neurological aspects of adventure. Because they're programming apps and I kind of felt like they were doing the same old, plain old boring apps that everybody else in the world has created. And I have to jump them out of thinking in that way. So I took them outside, I had a bunch of blankets – and I always leave a little bit of extra time when we have a change of scenery. So I had talked to them about the neurological aspects of adventure (*info from @JonLevyTLB*) and what makes an adventure and how sometimes changing the

scene will do that. But every time we have a little adventure – even if it’s a mini adventure – on campus something always happens.

So I finished and we had the last five minutes, I had left a little extra time, and then all of sudden I hear *I see trees of green, red roses too* and I’m like, “What?” In three of my loudest most boisterous boys are singing *It’s a wonderful world* and one of them had put their phone and had it playing. I’m just looking over there and I’m just watching, I kind of felt like I was in a movie. I’m like, “What on earth is happening?”

But when they were done we had a belly laugh and I’m just like – you know, those moments, you can’t really orchestrate them but sometimes when you get out of your routine and change your environment you can have those crazy, silly moments.

And I think the fifth is just to enjoy the moment. So very first- Flat classroom project, <http://flatclassroomproject2006.wikispaces.com/> this has been 11 years ago, a wonderful student named Colin, we were so tired – it was a Saturday. We were literally trying to learn how to create a video and send our video to Bangladesh. And we were a little bit above 5K on the internet speed but not much. Like, it was 128 or 256, something crazy.

So it would take us like three hours to send our video to Bangladesh. And we were so tired, we were so frustrated and then something will go wrong right in the middle and you have to start over. So the student, Colin, he’s so tired and he just kind of looks at me and he says a in a very guttural noise and I can’t understand what he said so I called him “caveman”, like, okay you sound like a caveman. Well eventually he said, “Okay, it bothers me, don’t call me Caveman.”

Well, fast-forward two years and I am teaching away, it’s the spring, I’m teaching like crazy trying to get everything in. I hear a knock at the door, somebody opens the door and I see this thing at my door and it’s like a thing in a Bamm-Bamm costume with really long hair and a big huge Bamm-Bamm bat. And he walks in the room, he positions himself, feet wide apart, Bamm-Bamm bat way up and he looks at me and he goes, “Ugh.” And stands there for about three minutes and he walks out.

And my students were looking at me and I’m just sitting there and I’m sitting there, and I’m sitting there and I’m sitting there. And took about 10 or 15 seconds. And I just burst out laughing. And I was laughing so hard because I had promised so long Colin I wouldn’t call him Caveman anymore but he had actually come full circle all the way back around, matured, become a senior, and he had literally dressed like a caveman and come in my room and said, “Ugh” and just went out. And it was so completely preposterous. Now that was 11 years ago.

But this week we’re learning lines for our Christian movie we’re making called *Unspeakable*, the screenplay I’ve written with my students. And I did not know

that I was actually writing lines for myself. When I wrote a certain part the kids wanted me to be on there and I'm like, "Okay, I'll do it" even though memorizing is really hard for me. So we're sitting there getting ready to do a take and in order to do a take you have to get the light set. So it's three point lightning, it's very hard to do, and when you're acting you have to literally sit there for a while for them to get the lights just right.

So they're like, "Okay, look at Cassidy." I'm like, "Okay, I'm looking at Cassidy." So I start making faces and crossing my eyes and sticking my tongue out and making all these hilarious faces and everything. And then she starts making them back. And we were just in the moment.

So I would challenge you, if your funniest things are 11 years ago that's great. But do you have something funny this week and are you in the moment and can just laugh and find that things are humorous. So I would just encourage you, we can teach, we can cover so much but we've got to have a great relationships with those kids and part of teenagers do it laugh and it is personally okay to bring laughter in your classroom and to be just a little bit – not take yourself so seriously.

I take myself seriously, I take my subjects very seriously – ask my students, they're like, "Ms, Vicki, don't you ever give us a break?"

And I really don't, I do teach bell to bell. But I will say that we have a great time and we do love to laugh.

So I hope that I've brought a little bit of laughter to your Friday and I hope that you'll turn around and bring some laughter to somebody else's'

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