Adiaphoretic

ACTIVITY: 'ADIAPHORETIC'

TIME: 10+ minutes
SIZE: Small groups
SPACE: For small groups to sit
RESOURCES: Dictionaries, pens, paper

The aim is to have students use flexible thinking to create amusement for themselves and others.

The result should be an understanding that a strong Sense of Humour relies on our looking at events in creative, open-minded ways and from different perspectives.

1. Break the class into small groups of four to six students.

2. One at a time, every student in each group will flick through the dictionary and find a word that they believe their group mates will not know the meaning of (e.g. Adiaphoretic: preventing or reducing perspiration). (NB: The student doesn't reveal the meaning of the word yet.)

3. The other members of the group must now come up with entertaining and at least slightly plausible definitions for the mysterious word. Write down the definitions that result in the most laughter.

4. When everyone in the group has had the chance to find a word, and a list of the funniest definitions has been written, come together as a class and have each group share it's funniest definitions with the wider class. They should conclude with reading the correct dictionary definitions.

5. Commence discussion.

DISCUSSION SUGGESTIONS

- Were the correct dictionary definitions ever funny?

- Why did the made-up definitions make people laugh? Was it because of surprising associations? Absurdity? Witty rhymings?

- What thinking skills did creators of funny definitions employ?

- Everyone in the group had the same word to work with, yet everyone came up with different interpretations. How is this like the application of the A-B-C-D Model to life events?

- Discuss how none of this activity's laughter could have occurred if students simply took words at face value. Having a Sense of Humour sometimes requires effort and the application of thinking skills including perspective-taking.