

## **Managing the “Class Clown”**

**©copyright by Robert (Bob) W. Lucas**

In many groups, you will encounter one or more people who are fun-loving and seek attention through practical jokes or humorous words or actions. While such behavior can help liven a session, it can also distract if carried to an extreme. It can be compounded when friends of the Clown continue to encourage the behavior or contribute their own. As with any other type of behavior described in this book, before fixing blame for the behavior on learners, ask yourself if there is something that you are doing or not doing that is contributing to the learner’s behavior. To address Clowns, try the following strategies.

### **Strategy #1 – Ignore the behavior**

Ignore the behavior or comments if possible. This eliminates any psychological reward of the person being recognized before the group. People who use humor to get attention in public settings often have learned that behavior as children. In order to get the attention of parents and others, they likely acted out in humorous ways as children.

### **Strategy #2 – Appeal to the learner**

Appeal to the learner’s serious side by asking session-related questions or opinions of them. Many times a humorist is making an attempt to make a point in a roundabout funny manner.

### **Strategy #3 – Separate disruptive participants**

If friends in a small group are contributing to and encouraging the behavior, separate them in a random manner. Use some of the techniques described the Creative Strategies for Grouping Learners section in the back of the book.

### **Strategy #4 – Discuss the behavior privately**

If the Clown’s behavior is really a problem, call a short break, meet with the Clown and discuss the need to remain on task.

-----  
**Bob Lucas** B.S., M.A., M.A, CPLP is an internationally-known author and learning and performance professional. He has written and contributed to thirty-one books and compilations. He regularly conducts creative training, train-the-trainer, customer service, interpersonal communication and management and supervisory skills workshops. Bob can be reached at [blucas@robertwlucas.com](mailto:blucas@robertwlucas.com) or through his website [www.robertwlucas.com](http://www.robertwlucas.com). Follow his blog at [www.robertwlucas.com/wordpress](http://www.robertwlucas.com/wordpress) and like him at [www.facebook.com/robertwlucasenterprises](http://www.facebook.com/robertwlucasenterprises)