Active pedagogies in math classes can be new and unsettling for students, who are asked to risk sharing unformed ideas that often will be wrong. Students’ past experiences with wrong answers in math classes may have involved fear, humiliation, punishment, and doubts about their intelligence and potential; however these bad experiences also create openness to math classes that are structured in new ways.

A strong classroom community enables students to take intellectual risks together, no matter their past experience. As in other areas of life, respectful humor can foster trust, good will, and connection, especially when people are feeling vulnerable and facing challenges. This talk will include examples of humor as a community builder in introductory, inquiry-based classrooms, with examples chosen primarily from Math for Elementary Teachers and Quantitative Reasoning. (Received September 12, 2014)