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The punchline: Better teaching Comedian gives educators a few classroom tips

BY ADRIANE HOPKINS TRIBUNE

Comedian and performance coach Tim Davis is taking his show on the road.

He believes so strongly that there is a link between a standup comedian performing in front of a live audience and a teacher before a classroom of students that he offers a seminar for teachers.

Davis, a professional comedian for 20 years, gave a oneday seminar Wednesday at Paradise Valley Community College to show teachers some skills comedians use as they perform before an audience.

The comedian said he hopes his performance techniques will help teachers facing students bored in the classroom and high dropout rates.

"By injecting certain techniques of live performing into the classroom, teachers will be better equipped to achieve the goal of engaging and fostering learning for all students not just those eager to learn," Davis said.

Once voted the funniest cab driver in New York, Davis shared some techniques that teachers can use to overcome stage fright and to connect better with their students. He urged teachers to use not only verbal communication when teaching but place more emphasis on those students who are visual or tactile learners.

He shared words many teachers are not familiar with in the classroom — timing, pausing and riffing, which is the art of improvising.

"I enjoy teaching and wanted to learn more techniques," said Virginia McGregor, who teaches fifth grade at Scottsdale's Anasazi Elementary School. "The students really entertain me most of the time."

Bill Lundquist, an art teacher at the Scottsdale Artist School, took the class to learn better ways to conduct his beginning art class.

"Art can be very intimidating to adults and I'm looking for a more soft-handed approach to conducting the classes," he said.

Tim Davis speaks Wednesday to educators at Paradise Valley Community College.