

HUMOR AND BEING FRIENDLY: A STUDY OF TEACHERS' VERBAL COMMUNICATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION.

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ABSTRACT

Think back to the last time you laughed really hard. What were you doing? What triggered your laughter? What did it feel like to laugh that way?

Laughter is such a genuine and authentic human reaction to finding something funny, and it's also a way to feel enlivened and excited. Feeling excited is an important part of curiosity, and curiosity is one of the most significant aspects of learning. Humor keeps us engaged and interested; it can also help us feel like we are part of a community and it can help us maintain perspective when something feels hard. For all of these reasons, humor can be an amazing tool in the classroom.

At the risk of committing some sort of "humor-cide," a type of logical analysis must take place if teachers are harnessing the powerful effects of humor, not only to increase joy and enhance the classroom environment, but also to improve learner outcomes.

Teachers should be friends with their students, but then there is a thin line between being a "friend" being "friendly." Teachers tend to grow closer to students when we share a common interest or work on long-term projects, but in every interaction, we must remain teacher/student, mentor/mentee, not true friend, and this is wise.

The purpose of the study is to provide an understanding regarding the use of certain verbal behaviors manifested by college teachers'. This paper will focus on the why and the how of teaching with humor helps in a college classroom and suggest some good strategies for incorporating humor into teaching.

Keywords: *Laughter, curiosity, learning, verbal communication, classroom environment, learner outcome, friendly*

Academia sphere

Teachers set the tone of their classrooms, build a warm environment, mentor and nurture students, become role models, and listen and look for signs of trouble. The most common role a teacher plays in the classroom is to teach. Teaching and learning are interdependent in nature. Teachers follow students through each pivotal stage of development. At six to eight hours a day, five days a week, you as a teacher are poised to become one of the most influential people in your students' life. After their parents,

children will first learn from their school teacher. Then, as a middle school teacher, you will guide students through yet another important transition: adolescence. As children become young adults, learning throughout middle school and into college, you will answer their questions, listen to their problems and teach them about this new phase of their lives. Teachers not only watch your students grow they help them grow.

These days a college classroom needs are very different. Earlier a one way communication and a mere a chalk and duster would be sufficed. Students these days want interaction. That is the reason a 'lecture' is christened to a 'session'. Teachers are facilitators of student learning and creators of productive classroom environments, in which students can develop the skills they might need at present or in future.

The Funny Bone Is Connected to the Sense of Wonder

Humor is naturally social. The infectious nature of humor naturally builds a sense of community by lowering resistance and bringing individuals together. If the brain is faced with an inconsistency, then laughter is the response when it is resolved in an unexpected way. This sentence, "Memorization is what we resort to when what we are learning makes no sense," may make us smile as our brains resolve its inconsistency.

Essentially, humor activates our sense of wonder, which is where learning begins, so it seems logical that humor could enhance retention. A Pew Research poll showed that viewers of humorous news shows such as *The Daily Show* and *The Colbert Report* exhibited higher retention of news facts than those who got their news from newspapers, CNN, Fox News, or network stations. When Stephen Colbert demands, "If we don't cut expensive things like Head Start, child nutrition programs, and teachers, what sort of future are we leaving for our children?", viewers laugh and also retain the knowledge of that specific budget issue.

An important body of research explains why we remember things that make us laugh, such as our favorite, hilarious high school moment or the details of that funny movie we saw last weekend. Neuroscience research reveals that humor systematically activates the brain's dopamine reward system, and cognitive studies show that dopamine is important for both goal-oriented motivation and long-term memory, while educational research indicates that correctly-used humor can be an effective intervention to improve retention in students from kindergarten through college.

Humor Improves Teaching and Learning

There are at least four good reasons for incorporating humor into your teaching. These reasons include:

1 Keeping your students engaged

When students are laughing, they are paying attention. Humor keeps students on their toes, and if they know something funny is coming, they are more likely to remain on the same page as you.

2 Showing your students that you're a person, too

Sometimes the teacher seems so much like the wise, distant person. A little laughter shows your students that you have the same feelings they do, and this makes you more trustworthy. The ability to laugh at your own mistakes, in particular, shows that you are humble and real.

3 Helping create community in your classroom

Nothing feels quite so good as laughing alongside other people. Sharing jokes and funny moments will also give your students good memories to look back on.

4 Lightening the mood when things feel too hard

Stressful math problem? Big research paper due next week? Of course it's important to honor your students' feelings of stress, but a good laugh really helps everyone maintain perspective and remember that in the grand scheme of things, minor stressors are not such a big deal.

Implication of humor in higher education class rooms.

1. Use humor to enhance classroom joy

Set the class with a joke related to the topic or self confess your own story and make them feel it is nice to laugh at your own self.

2. Use humor to develop a sense of community.

Assure them they are a group by cracking up on and with the "whole" Class

3. Use content-related humor.

Don't use forced humor, if the teacher feels it is apt for the topic and situation, lighten the spirit of the class with content humor

4. Use age-appropriate humor

The funny side of you should sync with your dignity and age.

5. "Sandwich" humor between instruction and repetition

Remember! You are using humor as a tool to engross the class, so don't forget to edify.

Abstain Voting

1. Sarcasm

Avoid mockery of any kind or any person to spoil the humor

2. Cruel or inappropriate humor.

Don't be harsh, sexist or sadist on pretext of being funny

3. Forced humor

Time your well.

4. Off-topic humor

Don't cross fences to make the class laugh.

5. Too much humor

Too much of anything can be damaging, Remember you are a teacher and not a clown.

The art of being a friendly friend coach

Humor has a lot of potential to pull students towards you and you subject. Your funny side may also make you one of their most favorite teacher. And while using this innovative tool of being witty, you may make a lot of students believe you are their 'Friend' and just like them.

In higher education a professor has to look for balance between what to cultivate and what to limit in teacher-student relations. There are boundaries, yet we want to be inviting to students and make sure they know they are good company. For as long as the child is a minor, however, it's not the same as friendships we enjoy with adults.

Teachers and students can share an equal interest in local sports teams, for example, trading team updates, re-telling great moments in legendary games, and showing souvenirs to each other. These are acts of human connection that are valuable to both parties. Students mature when adults extend these connections, and teachers enjoy the camaraderie and seeing students as more than one more paper to grade.

Notice, though, that the teacher does not take the student out for coffee and vent about office politics. There are topics that are inappropriate for teachers to share with students, and such sharing can undermine learning relationships in the classroom, even when the teacher is already very familiar with the student and his family. There are other dynamics at work, too.

Social media these days is turning the word "friend" into a superficial commodity. True friendship seems diminished and uncertain. In an increasingly connected world, we can't afford a policy of, "Teachers may never be friendly with students," but we can help teachers and students recognize clear boundaries rightfully established in successful teaching-learning relationships.

We forget sometimes that, while different from an adult friendship, the teacher-student relationship is not a lesser connection. It is often more meaningful and special, with tremendous value to both parties. We try to live up to its promise for the short time we have with our students.

Conclusion

Every teacher's goal is to be effective in the classroom and help students learn. Educators want their students to be eager and engaged. Humor has the power to fuel that engagement.

"Humor must be used in the classroom," "Joke, laugh, dance, sing, shout and be friendly. Create an environment with the most important fertilizer of mind; Humor and comfort. Comfort them by hearing to them like a friend. It helps the students enjoy their academia journey and stay focused on the lecture, and sometimes it even helps them remember ideas and motivates them. So stand up on that desk and crack up a joke while you give instructions, talk in a funny accent or sing the answers to a homework assignment. Make your sessions have a blueprint on their young minds FOREVER.