

USING HUMOR IN TEACHING: DOES IT IMPROVE LEARNING

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Abstract

This study explores the effect of humor-included methods in teaching and how effective this can be. While humor is used to make the lessons and the atmosphere more engaging, the way it affects the comprehension, retention, and engagement still remains a topic of debate. The research investigates the influence of humors in psychological and emotional sides of learning by the help of analysis that was gained from both teachers and students. According to findings, humor is able to affect the quality of learning positively only if it is applied in a proper way, it also motivates a student, aiding in information retention. Nevertheless, using the humor more than enough or inappropriately in lessons, it can have contradictory effects. This paper makes conclusions with recommendations for educators on the strategic usage of humor to benefit those who are engaged in teaching maximally. In addition, it studies the cultural implications of humor in different classrooms and provides an in-depth discussion on the theoretical settings supporting the use of humor in teaching.

Key words: *humor, teaching, learning, student engagement, education, pedagogy, motivation, classroom atmosphere, instructional strategies*

Introduction

Humor has been considered a part of education for centuries, yet what role it has in a modern teaching has been explored completely. The feature of humor to appeal to students, alleviate stress, and increase retention is widely recognized, but questions still remain in term of its real effect on learning. Some educators believe that humor can make lessons more enjoyable and memorable, while others disapprove that it may be a distraction or even interrupt the learning process unless used appropriately. This study aims to explore whether humor is an effective pedagogical tool by analyzing how it influences students' cognitive and emotional engagement.

Several theories support the inclusion of humor in teaching. Constructivist learning theory suggests that humor can help students build connections between new

and existing knowledge. The cognitive-affective theory of learning proposes that positive emotions, such as those elicited by humor, enhance learning and retention. Social learning theory also highlights how humor can facilitate a sense of belonging and participation in the classroom.

This study seeks to answer the following research questions:

How does humor impact student engagement and participation?

Does humor improve knowledge retention and academic performance?

Are there specific types of humor that are more effective in different subjects?

Methodology

This study uses a mixed-method approach, merging both qualitative and quantitative research methods. A survey was conducted among 100 students and 20 teachers across different groups of UzSWLU to assess their perceptions of humor in the classroom. Additionally, classroom observations and interviews with selected teachers were conducted to gather insights on the practical application of humor in teaching. The study aims to identify the extent to which humor contributes to student engagement and academic performance.

The research was carried out in three phases:

Survey Distribution: Students and teachers were asked to complete questionnaires regarding their experiences with humor in the classroom. The surveys included both closed and open-ended questions to gain quantitative and qualitative insights.

Classroom Observations: Teachers were observed in their natural teaching environments to assess the frequency, type, and impact of humor used in their lessons.

Interviews: In-depth, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 10 teachers to discuss their views on the benefits and challenges of using humor in teaching.

Data Collection Tools: The study utilized the following data collection tools:

Questionnaires: Distributed to students and teachers to collect their views on the use of humor in teaching.

Classroom Observations: Conducted in various classrooms to analyze the types and frequency of humor used by educators.

Interviews Semi-structured interviews with teachers to explore their perspectives on the advantages and challenges of incorporating humor into their lessons.

Student Performance Analysis: Examined test scores and participation rates in classes where humor was actively incorporated versus those where it was not.

Results and Findings

Enhanced Engagement: 85% of students reported that humor made lessons more enjoyable and engaging. Since the lessons were intriguing enough, it was not as difficult to attract students as it used to be. It could also improve retention: 70% of students stated that they could recall information better when humor was used. They

started to pay attention to the lesson with more interests. Also, even somehow passive students participated in the process.

Teacher's Perspective: 90% of teachers agreed that humor helped in reducing student anxiety and encouraged participation.

Potential Pitfalls: 30% of students indicated that excessive humor or unrelated jokes distracted them from the lesson content.

Subject-Specific Impact: Humor was found to be more effective in subjects like literature and social sciences compared to technical subjects like mathematics.

The results suggest that humor plays a significant role in enhancing student engagement and comprehension. When humor is used effectively, it can reduce anxiety, create a welcoming classroom environment, and make complex topics more accessible. However, the type of humor used is crucial. Sarcasm or humor that targets individuals negatively can have the opposite effect, creating discomfort and reducing student participation.

Furthermore, humor appears to be more effective in subjects that allow for creative expression, such as literature, history, and social sciences. In contrast, subjects with rigid structures, such as mathematics and physics, may require a different approach, where humor is used sparingly to break the monotony rather than as a central teaching tool.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The findings suggest that humor, when applied thoughtfully, enhances student engagement, improves memory retention, and fosters a positive learning environment. However, it is crucial for teachers to strike a balance and ensure that humor aligns with the lesson's objectives. Recommendations for educators include:

Using humor that is relevant to the subject matter. Avoiding humor that may be offensive or distracting. Incorporating humor as a pedagogical tool rather than a form of entertainment. Training teachers in effective humor usage to maximize its educational benefits.

Further research is recommended to explore the long-term effects of humor on academic achievement across various educational levels and disciplines. Future studies may also investigate cultural differences in humor perception and how they impact its effectiveness in diverse classrooms.

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