

## Teacher as a Communicator: Blending Formal and Informal Communication through Humour in a Higher Education Classroom

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### Abstract

This paper discusses some of the benefits of using humour in the classroom in a formal teaching-learning process. It is every teacher's dream to extend student interest and participation during a classroom. Here comes tried and tested method of using humour classroom every day. There are many benefits of using wit with humour in your day-to-day teaching. Higher education in India and its future direction are not simple and straightforward. The focus is usually on volume and rarely on quality. Some important factors like the national agenda or a collective consciousness amongst all the stakeholders are sometimes overlooked. The multicultural environment of Indian institutions adds to its complexity. It is always a delicate balance for any teacher to maintain in a classroom pedagogy requires a formula, but the softer aspect of the profession requires an informal approach. This dilemma usually happens when as an educator there are many strategies we use to interact with students and keep their motivation up.

**Keywords:** Teacher as a Communicator, Formal and Informal Communication, Humour in a Higher Education Classroom

### Introduction

It is proven that the use of fun and humour, for both students as well as teachers, can increase enthusiasm and confidence in the class. It increases joy and happiness in the students, it maintains optimism about learning in the class. It also increases the willingness to take the risk in the class. Finally, it reduces the stress of teaching-learning standard classroom. The use of humour by teachers during classroom interventions with young students with social-emotional or behavioural difficulties helps to connect well with them. Sometimes analysis and mechanism of humour are complex and deeply rooted in subjective standards like society religion or culture. (Oza,2019) But it is seen that the use of humour is a binding factor in a wider context of inclusive education in higher education classrooms. But education classrooms in colleges and Universities are somehow lacking this especially useful personality trait in both students and teachers.

Here are some suggestions and to try to things which will help the load and dissipate the clouds in your classroom.

- One of the best strategies is to laugh at yourself first even as a teacher, when you do something silly, or something goes wrong, just mention it and just laugh at it.
- You can create your own set of humorous anecdotes specific to each class, concerning the subject you teach or the type of students who attend your class.
- You can also use some ready-made quotes every day to start your lecture and sometimes you can post them for your lecture starts to encourage your students also to share something humorous about the subject before the actual teaching starts in the class.
- If you are dealing with a smaller classroom in the tutorial, you may use a cartoon file or a slap book where students can write before or after the lecture about experiences to add some humour.
- You can also have one specific lecture every week or every fortnightly in which can bring out some real-time jokes or can comment and parody of the other classmates or a teacher.
- One of the best ways to add humour in a classroom is to Train your students to build creative and humorous thinking.

### **Physiology of Laughter in the Class**

It is observed that in educational institutions the utilization of humour dilutes the seriousness of the study or teaching-learning. But it is not true. Some prominent theories of humour are successfully used in higher education classrooms, and you will rate a good result. Spencer's explanation in his essay "On the Physiology of Laughter" (1911) is predicated on the thought that emotions take the physical sort of nervous energy.

Some of these theories are the theory of superiority, the theory of incongruity, and the relief theories.

#### **1. Theory of Superiority**

Our laughter expresses feelings of superiority over other people or a former state of ourselves.

#### **2. Theory of Incongruity**

While the Superiority Theory says that the cause of laughter is feelings of superiority, and the Relief Theory says that it is the release of nervous energy. The Incongruity Theory says that it is the perception of something incongruous—something that violates our mental patterns and expectations.

#### **3. Relief Theory**

The Relief Theory is an explanation in which laughter does in the nervous system what a pressure-relief valve does in a steam boiler. The theory was

sketched in Lord Shaftesbury's 1709 essay "An Essay on the liberty of Wit and Humour." (Shaftesbury,1999)

Think back to the last time you laughed hard. What were you doing? What triggered your laughter? What did it feel like to laugh that way? Laughter is such a real and authentic human reaction to finding something funny, and it is also how to feel enlivened and excited. Feeling excited is a crucial part of curiosity, and curiosity is one of the foremost significant aspects of learning. Humour keeps us engaged and interested; it also can help we desire we are a part of a community, and it can help us maintain perspective when something feels hard. For all those reasons, humour is often a tremendous tool within the classroom.

In the danger of committing some kind of "humour-cide," a kind of logical analysis must happen if teachers are harnessing the powerful effects of humour, not only to extend 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" and being "friendly." Teachers tend to grow closer to students when we share a standard interest or work on long-term projects, but in every interaction, we must remain teacher/student, mentor/mentee, not true friend, and this is often wise.

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

## **Research**

As this would be qualitative research with a focus on a specific dimension of classroom teaching and education, the descriptive research method of research will be used. This study is classified as qualitative as the objective is primarily to describe a cross-sectional aspect concerning teaching-learning.

## **Methodology**

## **Academia**

Teachers set the tone of their classrooms, build a warm environment, mentor, and nurture students, become role models, and listen and appear for signs of trouble. The most common role an educator plays within the classroom is to show. Teaching and learning are interdependent in nature. Teachers follow students through each pivotal stage of development. At six to eight hours each day, five days every week, you as an educator are poised to become one of the foremost influential people in your students' life. After their parents, children will first learn from their schoolteacher. Then, as a secondary school teacher, you will guide students through yet one more important transition: adolescence. As children become young adults, learning throughout secondary school and into college, you will answer their questions, hear their problems, and teach them about this new phase of their lives. Teachers not only watch your students grow they help them grow.

## **Sphere**

## **Teacher as a Communicator**

These days a college classroom needs are quite different. Earlier a one-way communication and mere 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

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of student-learning and creators of productive classroom environments, during which students can develop the talents they would need at the present or within the future.

### **The Funny Bone Is Connected to the Sense of Wonder**

Humour is naturally social. The infectious nature of humour naturally builds a sense of community by lowering resistance and bringing individuals together. If the brain is faced with inconsistency, then laughter is the response when it is resolved unexpectedly. 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, humour activates our sense of wonder, which is where learning begins; so, it seems logical that humour could enhance retention.

For example, When Stephen Colbert demands, "If we don't cut expensive things like start, child nutrition programs, and teachers, what quite future are we leaving for our children?", viewers laugh, and retain the knowledge of that specific budget issue.

An important body of research explains why we remember things that make us laugh, like our favorite, hilarious high school moment or the small print of that funny movie we saw last weekend. Neuroscience research reveals that humour systematically activates the brain's dopamine reward system, and cognitive studies show that dopamine is significant for both goal-oriented motivation and Long Term Memory. While educational research indicates that correctly-used humour is often an efficient intervention to enhance retention in students from kindergarten through college.

### **Humour Improves Teaching and Learning**

Reasons for incorporating humour into your teaching:

- **Keeping your students engaged**  
When students are laughing, they are paying attention. Humour 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.
- **Showing your students that you are a person, too**  
Sometimes the teacher seems such a lot just like the wise, distant person. A little laughter shows your students that you simply have an equivalent feeling they are doing, and this causes you to more trustworthy. The ability to laugh at your own mistakes shows that you are humble and real.
- **Helping create a community in your classroom**  
Nothing feels quite as good as laughing alongside other people. Sharing jokes and funny moments also will give your students good memories to lean back on
- **Lightening the mood when things feel too hard**  
Stressful math problem? Big research paper due next week? Of course, it is important to honor your students' feelings of stress, but a good laugh helps everyone maintain perspective and remember that in the grand scheme of things, minor stressors are not such a big deal.

### **The Implication of Humour in Higher Education Classrooms**

- **Use humour to enhance classroom joy.**

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Set the category with a joke associated with the subject or self-confess your own story and make them feel it's nice to tease yourself.

- **The art of being a friendly friend coach.**

Humour features a lot of potentials to nudge students towards you and your subject. Your funny side may also make you one of their most favorite teachers. 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 must look for a balance between what to cultivate and what to limit in teacher-student relations. There are boundaries, yet we would like to be inviting to students and confirm they know they are good company. For as long because the child may be minor, however, it is not equivalent to friendships we enjoy with adults. Teachers and students can share an equal interest in local sports teams, for instance, trading team updates, re-telling great moments in legendary games, and showing souvenirs to every 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 quite another paper to grade.

Notice, though, that the teacher does not take the scholar out for coffee and vent about office politics.

Some topics are inappropriate for teachers to share with students, and such sharing can undermine learning relationships in the classroom, even when the teacher is already remarkably 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'll 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 plan to live up to its promise for the short time we've with our students.

### **Use humour to develop a way of community.**

- Assure them they're a gaggle by cracking upon and with the "whole" Class
- Use content-related humour.
- Don't use forced humour, if the teacher feels it is apt for the topic and situation, lighten the spirit of the class with content humour
- Use age-appropriate humour
- Funny side of you should sync with your dignity and age.
- "Sandwich" humour between instruction and repetition
- Remember! You are using humour as a tool to engross the class, so do not forget to edify.

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- Abstain Voting and Sarcasm
- Avoid mockery of any kind or any person to spoil the humour
- Cruel or inappropriate humour- Do not be harsh, sexist, or sadist on the pretext of being funny
- Forced humour
- Time you're well Off-topic humour
- Don't cross fences to make the class laugh.

### **Conclusion**

Teaching is considered a serious business. In almost all cultures, a teacher is someone who will not do any funny things or have casual behavior in the classroom. But many studies have shown and that we as teachers have also experienced that within the college classrooms once we use humour very smartly and as an integral part of the teaching process, students appreciate more because they feel that just by being a little bit humorous, a teacher is a human and not a machine. The process of exhibiting and implementing a good sense of humour is one of the most sought-after characteristics in the higher education classroom. Students not only learn a great deal from teachers who use humour, but they also enjoy the process of learning from them. Apart from telling jokes and funny stories, some witty remarks about the students or teachers' self can also reveal that the teacher connects well with the students. In the education classroom, an educator is perceived as a lover and therefore the opinion formed by students greatly affects the potential of the classroom being a hit. At this age, youngsters want to believe that it is possible to have fun and learn at the same time. The use of humour by the trainer or the teacher also makes him far more approachable even outside the classroom and students are more likely to hunt for help from their instructor if the classroom has regular use of humour as a part of teaching-learning.

But at the same time, it is a very delicate balance to be maintained while using humour in the college classroom. One of the worst fears for any instructor is to mess up a joke and to be completely shut down in the classroom. It is always difficult to come to pick open ground with the students to use commonly accepted humour because if it is not understood, he looks like making a deliberate attempt at hiding his incompetence in teaching.

When the sense of humour is not aligned with most of the student's tastes and sensitivity, it turns out as a failed joke, and it can make the teacher look like a complete fool. It is always risky to make fun of any specific subject. For example, in Maths class when the teacher uses a joke that only Math students would understand, which will work well, but in the other subjects if the teacher uses the same joke, it does not look funny.

It is also especially important not to use offensive, rude or sarcastic humour. For example, during a mixed class of a cosmopolitan college having a multicultural background of scholars, if a history teacher tries to inform a joke involving an ethnic genocide of history it cannot be enjoyed by specific culture or religion. Sometimes rude jokes like comparing female body parts with some shapes and sizes Just to draw and make some examples in the class also cannot be appreciated as humour.



Every teacher's goal is to be effective within the classroom and help students learn. Educators want their students to be eager and engaged. Humour has the power to fuel that engagement. "Humour must be utilized in the classroom," "Joke, laugh, dance, sing, shout and be friendly. Create an environment with the foremost important fertilizer of mind, Humour and luxury. Comfort them by hearing to them sort of a friend. It helps the students enjoy their academic 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.

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