

Exploring Positives and Negatives of Humor in the Collegiate Classroom

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The most effective instructors are those who can engage their students in creative and interesting ways. One such way to interact with students is to incorporate humor into the college classroom. Humor can have psychological, social, and cognitive benefits. Furthermore, humor has the power to make instructors amiable, welcoming, facilitate stronger learning, increased concentration during lectures, and promote social relationships. While humor is not an end-all tool in teaching, it can be a valuable inclusion to promote a healthy learning environment.

However, when used improperly humor can be detrimental, both to retention of material and mental health. Understanding and acknowledging that students' life experiences, social background and/or cultural history can vary from those of the instructor can help ensure that attempts of humor are not degrading, offensive or excessive.

This poster explores both the positive and negative effects of humor in the collegiate classroom. This work investigates these concepts by first exploring prior studies in which undergraduate students shared their preferences of humor. To increase the scope of this work, the results of a questionnaire directed at graduate students and professors (primarily in Engineering departments) are presented.