



# To Study the Effect of Humour on the Teaching of Secondary and Senior-Secondary Grades

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## Abstract

*"Humor and Laughter are universal and fundamental human experiences, occurring in all cultures and virtually all individuals throughout the world, and in nearly in every type of interpersonal relationship."*

Humor has long been recognized as a potent tool in education, yet its specific effects on secondary and senior-secondary students remain underexplored. This study aims to fill this gap by investigating the influence of humor on teaching effectiveness and student engagement in these critical educational stages. Employing a mixed-methods approach, the research will involve both quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews to gather comprehensive data. The study will focus on examining how the integration of humor into teaching methodologies affects students' academic performance, motivation, and overall learning experience. Furthermore, it will explore the perceptions of both educators and students regarding the use of humor in the classroom, identifying potential barriers and best practices. Findings from this research will provide valuable insights for educators, curriculum developers, and policymakers seeking to enhance the quality of secondary and senior-secondary education through innovative pedagogical strategies.

## Introduction

“A sense of humor is part of the art of leadership, of getting along with people, of getting things done”

-Dwight.D.Eisenhower

School time has always been very special to students. It is reminisced the most once they enter college/university and begin venturing on the career path. It is often missed for the more carefree life, friends, small duration classes, but what is to be pondered about is that a very less percentage of students miss school because of studies or the way certain things were taught. This is an absolute food for thought. There are close to no studies which indicate the way of teaching/learning methods at school are a factor contributing to the students willing to go back to school. This occurs mostly because of how their experience has been at the secondary and senior-secondary grades, when there is immense pressure on how to choose the apt subjects in order to be what they want to be in the future. There was a time when students enjoyed going to the school because learning and playing were synonymous to each other, but the tables turned as the students grew up. The humor factor vanished in thin air, thereby giving students monotonous years which led them to not miss school once they entered college.

The aim of this study is majorly to find out the loopholes that exist in the teaching-learning process so that they can be fixed and a new way is paved for the students of high school.

*“Humor is somewhat elusive partially because it changes over time with each new generation.”*

-Peter.M.Jonas

Jonas rightly quoted this as the way humor is perceived has continuously changed and should keep changing. What appealed to someone a decade ago, may not be humorous enough in the present time. Hence, evolving and staying put with it is a crucial process to connect with your people. The education system has observed numerous changes in itself because of the trends in order to suit the needs of the students and ease out the burden on them. But what actually makes this a success is the teachers and their way of teaching. No amount of change in the education system, policies will prove beneficial if it is not imparted in an interesting way.

The students tend to lose interest after a certain grade at school because the focus primarily remains on mugging up and blurting out the answers on a sheet of paper at the time of evaluation, leading to not giving them learning for life. It has been believed that making someone laugh is a blessing not everyone possesses,

but in the opinion of this paper's writer, the teachers own and know this magic more than the comedians themselves. Teachers are always the second parent to any child who have the ability to either make or break a child.

Hence, whatever they do with the child, for the child shapes a greater part of his/her personality. Psychology says that a person who left even the slightest mark on you because of anything, is the one you end up remembering the most. If one likes a particular subject, s/he ends up thanking the teacher for teaching it in such a way that they ended up adding the subject in their MY LIKES list, but if the subject ends up being hated, then also the teacher is thought about.

To put it in short, the teacher becomes the sole reason why one would continue learning and why one would not.

### Research Objectives

- 1) To analyze student psychology
- 2) To study the Psychology of Humor
- 3) To find out the reasons behind the lack of humor in the teaching-learning process
- 4) To uncover the impact of humor on the students' learning
- 5) To formulate strategies to integrate humor and teaching

### Research Questions

- 1) To what extent does humor play a role to impact the motivation of a student?
- 2) What strategies can be adopted in order to improve the teaching-learning process at the senior level?
- 3) What are the potential challenges that are faced by the teachers with regards to the students?

## Methodology

“Every student can learn, just not on the same day, or in the same way”

-George Evans

As quoted by Evans, every child is unique. Every child has his/her own way of comprehending lessons and grasping it. At the primary level, the students are taught using play-way method as the goal of teaching is to build the foundation so that they do not face any issues once they reach the middle/senior school. However, what is often forgotten that even after the base is built, the structure should constantly be beautified i.e., the teaching-learning process should be interactive at the later stage too so that the end product is good.

More than the syllabus completion, it's the output that should be focused on. There are certain reasons why

humor ceases to exist in the senior grades:

- 1) **Perceived Seriousness:** Senior-level education is often seen as more serious and focused on academic rigor. There might be a perception that humor detracts from the seriousness of the subject matter or undermines the students' ability to focus on complex topics.
- 2) **Pressure for Results:** With high-stakes exams, college applications, and career aspirations looming, there can be pressure to cover a lot of material in a short amount of time. Teachers may feel that they need to prioritize content delivery over incorporating humor, especially if they believe it could be perceived as wasting valuable instructional time.
- 3) **Maturity of Students:** Senior students are generally older and more mature compared to younger students. There may be a belief that they prefer a more serious and professional atmosphere in the classroom.

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4) **Respect and Authority:** Some educators may feel that humor could compromise their authority or professionalism in the eyes of senior students. They might worry that using humor could lead to a loss of respect or control in the classroom.

5) **Cultural and Individual Differences:** Humor can be subjective and culturally dependent. What one person finds funny; another might not appreciate. Teachers may be hesitant to use humor out of fear of offending or alienating students.

Hence, in order to understand the student perspective better, a questionnaire was circulated amongst a few college/university students which had numerous questions about their student life at school. The aim of this questionnaire was to investigate the effects of a lack of humour on learning experiences among high school students. The study explored how the absence of humour in educational settings might impact students' engagement, motivation, and overall academic performance.

The study involved 43 college/university students from diverse academic backgrounds, and they were administered a structured questionnaire designed to gather information about their study interests during high school and the ways they believe can be adapted in order to improve the teaching-learning process at the senior level.

The questionnaire included items related to how learning was at the primary level and how it changed as they entered secondary and senior-secondary grades, if they ever lost interest in a subject because of the teaching style, the importance of humor in the learning process, ways that can be incorporated in order to make teaching humorous and to make students look forward to the forthcoming sessions.

## Analysis and Interpretation of the Data

The data obtained from the questionnaire was analyzed using statistical methods, including correlation analysis and regression analysis, to identify any significant relationships between high school study habits and university academic performance.

The co-relation analysis indicated significant positive correlations between maintaining interest in a particular subject and the humor technique of teaching.

Regression analysis further confirmed the predictive validity of secondary and senior- secondary study habits on their interest in various subjects. Factors such as lack of interactive set-inductions, constant attempt to lighten the mood of the students leads to students losing their confidence, thereby not making an effort to regain their lost interest.

The findings of this study underscore the importance of cultivating effective study habits during high school for long-term academic success in university. Students who develop disciplined study routines, utilize resources effectively, and manage their time efficiently during high school are more likely to excel academically in university settings. These findings have implications for educational interventions aimed at promoting positive studyhabits among high school students to enhance their academic outcomes in the future.

Participants reported diverse experiences regarding the presence of humor in high school classrooms. Some described instances of humor from teachers or peers, including jokes, anecdotes, or lighthearted interactions, while others recounted environments characterized bya lack of humor and a more serious tone.

The analysis revealed that the absence of humor in high school settings was associated with decreased levels of engagement, motivation, and enjoyment of the learning process.

Participants expressed feelings of boredom, disconnection, and disinterest in subjects or lessons perceived as lacking humor.

While direct correlations between humor perception and academic performance were not always evident, several participants noted indirect effects on their learning outcomes. Those who experienced humorless

classrooms reported lower levels of motivation, reduced willingness to participate, and decreased overall satisfaction with their high school education.

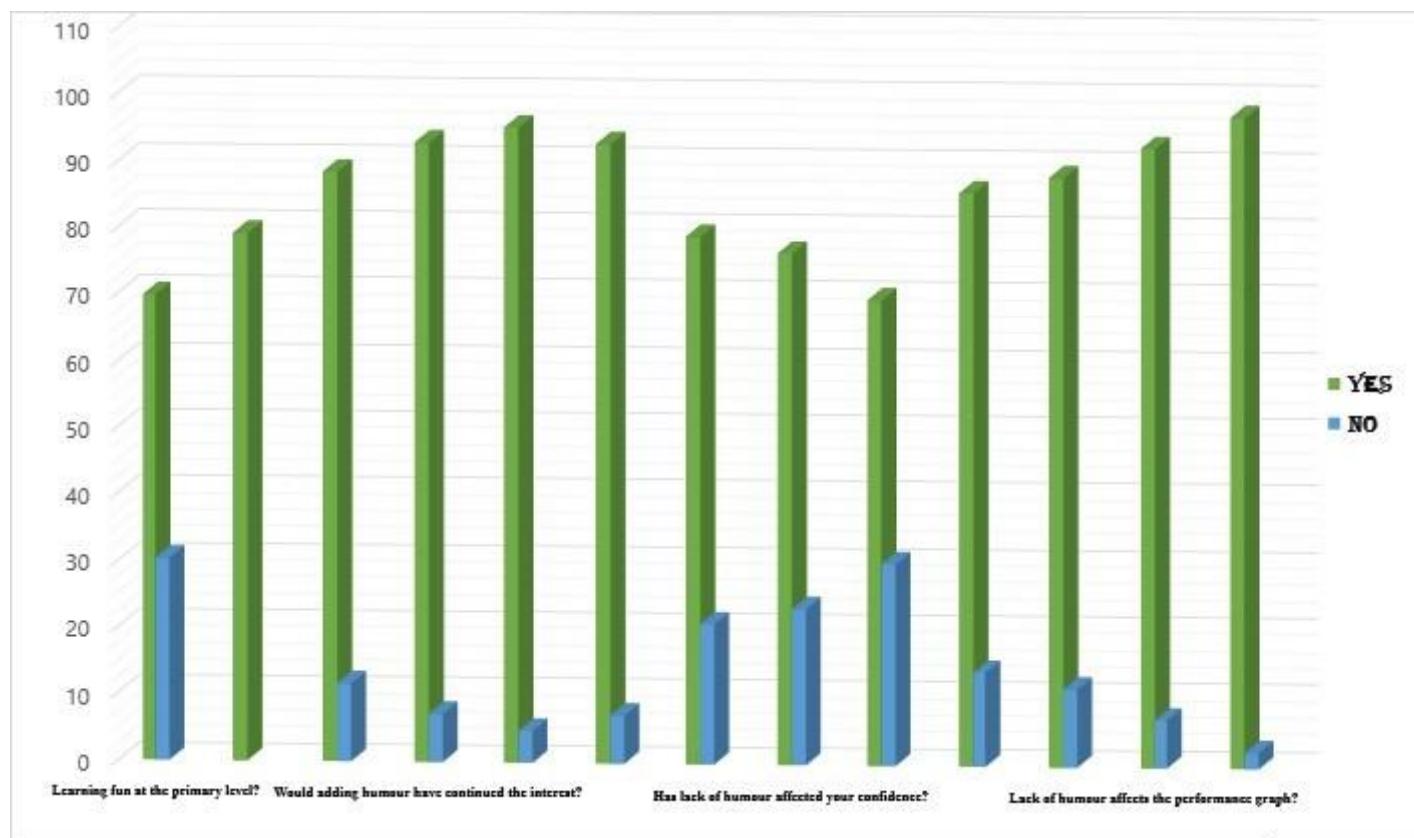
The findings of this study underscore the potential importance of humor in educational settings for promoting student engagement, motivation, and overall learning experiences. The absence of humor in high school classrooms may contribute to feelings of disengagement, boredom, and decreased academic satisfaction among students. These findings highlight the need for educators to consider the role of humor in fostering positive learning environments and enhancing students' educational experiences.

Longitudinal studies tracking students' experiences of humor and its effects on learning across different educational contexts could provide deeper insights into the long-term implications of humor in education.

In conclusion, this study highlights the potential impact of a lack of humor on learning experiences in high school settings. The absence of humor may contribute to decreased engagement, motivation, and satisfaction among students, ultimately influencing their academic performance and overall educational outcomes. Educators and policymakers should consider the role of humor in promoting positive learning environments and enhancing students' educational experiences in high school and beyond.



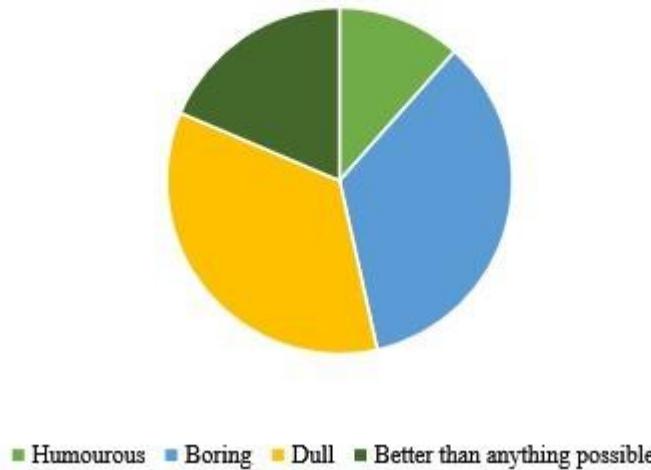
The graph below represents the responses of the 43 university level students to the Yes/No questions that were asked in order to know their experience and view on the topic. It can be clearly seen that the majority feels that adding humor in the teaching-learning process can certainly affect the confidence, interest, performance graph of a student, and that learning should be no less fun at the senior level, if not equal or more than the junior level.



The chart below represents the open-ended question that was asked to the students. The chart reveals that a good percentage of students believe that learning becomes really dull and boring as they enter the senior grades.

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As students' progress through the senior grades of school, they often undergo significant psychological and emotional changes influenced by various factors:

- 1) **Identity Formation:** Seniors typically grapple with questions of identity, trying to define who they are and what they want to become. They may experiment with different social roles, interests, and beliefs as they strive to develop a sense of self.
- 2) **Peer Relationships:** Peer relationships become increasingly important during the senior years. Adolescents may seek validation and acceptance from their peers while navigating complex social dynamics such as cliques, friendships, and romantic relationships.
- 3) **Academic Pressure:** With college admissions looming, seniors often experience heightened academic pressure. They may face stress from standardized tests, college applications, and maintaining high grades. This pressure can impact their mental well-being and decision-making processes.
- 4) **Future Uncertainty:** The transition from high school to adulthood brings about uncertainty about the future. Seniors may feel anxious about choosing a career path,

attending college, or entering the workforce. This uncertainty can lead to feelings of apprehension and self-doubt.

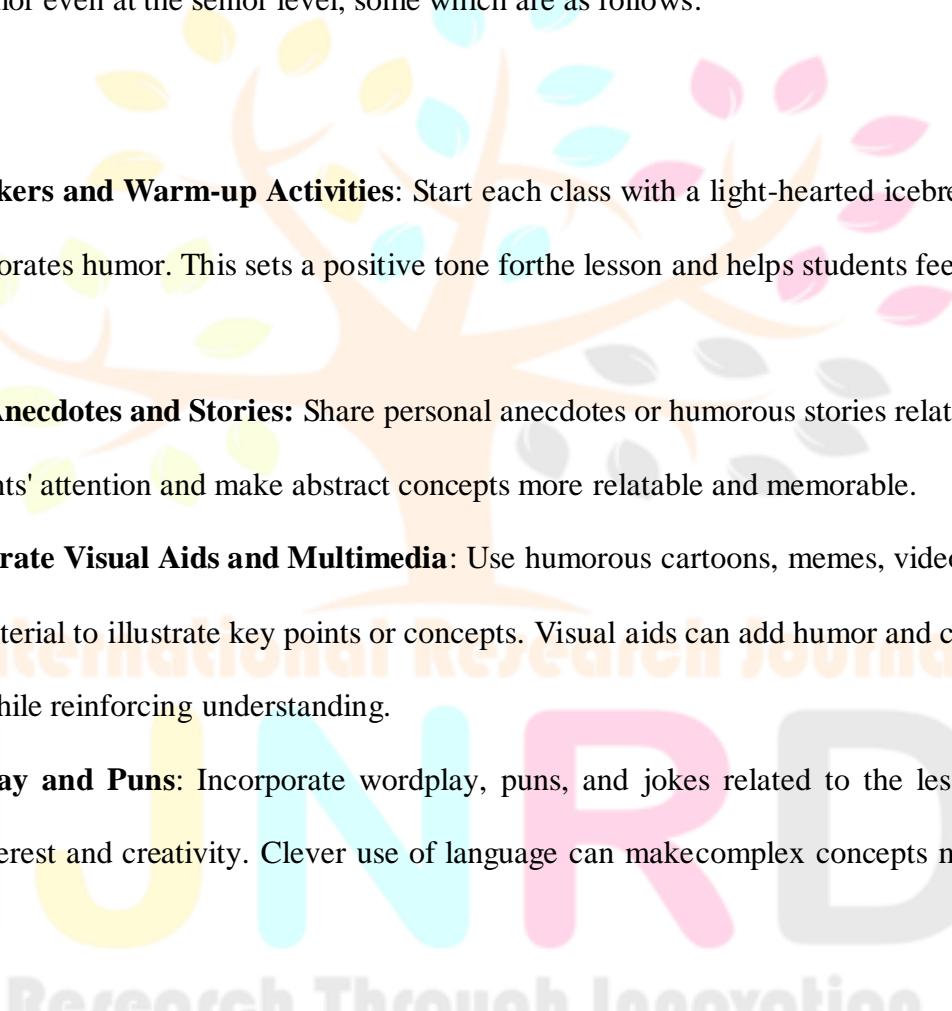
- 5) **Autonomy and Independence:** As seniors approach adulthood, they strive for greater autonomy and independence. They may desire more freedom in decision-making and seek opportunities for self-expression and self-discovery.
- 6) **Emotional Rollercoaster:** Senior year is often characterized by a whirlwind of emotions. Students may experience a range of feelings including excitement, nostalgia, anticipation, and apprehension as they prepare to leave the familiar environment of high school and embark on new adventures.
- 7) **Social Comparison and Self-Esteem:** Seniors may engage in social comparison, comparing themselves to their peers in terms of achievements, appearance, and social status. This comparison can impact their self-esteem and contribute to feelings of inadequacy or superiority.
- 8) **Role of Authority Figures:** Authority figures such as parents, teachers, and guidance counselors play a crucial role in seniors' lives. Their guidance and support can help students navigate challenges, make informed decisions, and develop essential life skills.

Understanding these aspects of student psychology can aid educators, parents, and policymakers in providing appropriate support and resources to help seniors thrive academically, emotionally, and socially during their final years of high school. Since a lot goes through a child's mind at this stage, it is all the more important for the teacher to turn into a facilitator and guide the students through the rocky path with less seriousness and more fun so that learning and other assignments can be dealt with utmost ease.

## Strategies for Integration of Humor in Teaching

“Teaching with humor is like adding spice to a dish; it enhances the flavor and makes the experience more enjoyable for everyone involved.”

For anyone taking up a teacher’s role, it is important for him/her to wrap up the syllabus within the stipulated time. Such kind of a burden majorly impacts the teaching methods of the teachers, thereby affecting the output of the students. However, certain very basic, less time-consuming ways can be adopted by the teachers in order to introduce humor even at the senior level, some of which are as follows:



- 1) **Icebreakers and Warm-up Activities:** Start each class with a light-hearted icebreaker or warm-up activity that incorporates humor. This sets a positive tone for the lesson and helps students feel more relaxed and open to learning.
- 2) **Use of Anecdotes and Stories:** Share personal anecdotes or humorous stories related to the lesson topic to capture students' attention and make abstract concepts more relatable and memorable.
- 3) **Incorporate Visual Aids and Multimedia:** Use humorous cartoons, memes, videos, or GIFs that relate to the lesson material to illustrate key points or concepts. Visual aids can add humor and creativity to the learning experience while reinforcing understanding.
- 4) **Wordplay and Puns:** Incorporate wordplay, puns, and jokes related to the lesson content to stimulate students' interest and creativity. Clever use of language can make complex concepts more accessible and enjoyable.

5) **Create a Positive Classroom Culture:** Cultivate a classroom environment where laughter and humor are encouraged and celebrated. Encourage students to share jokes, funny stories, or humorous observations (within appropriate boundaries)

Students themselves feel that adding humor to the lesson increases engagement, motivation. Further, they are of the opinion that-

- 1) Rote-learning should not be promoted
- 2) The session can start with a fact
- 3) Puzzles, riddles, storytelling, role-plays, discussions can be incorporated
- 4) Travelling can also help in such cases
- 5) Use of ICT tools

Therefore, it can be understood that integrating humor and teaching can lead to better learning, better intrinsic motivation, and better thought process.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, the integration of humor in the teaching of senior grades can yield multifaceted benefits for both educators and students. Through humor, educators can cultivate a positive and engaging classroom environment that fosters student motivation, participation, and retention of course material. By leveraging humor strategically, educators can enhance student-teacher relationships, facilitate peer interactions, and create a conducive atmosphere for effective learning. Additionally, humor can serve as a powerful tool for reducing stress, promoting mental well-being, and instilling a lifelong love for learning among senior students. However, it is essential for educators to exercise sensitivity, cultural awareness, and professionalism when incorporating humor into their instructional practices. Future research should continue to explore the nuanced effects of humor in senior-level education, identify best practices, and offer practical strategies to maximize its potential as a pedagogical tool in fostering holistic student development. Ultimately, the judicious use of humor has the capacity to transform the senior classroom into a dynamic and vibrant learning community where students are not only academically enriched but also inspired to embrace the joy of learning.

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