

Employing a Systematic Humour Pedagogical Approach to Increase Student Engaging

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Abstract

The use of humour as a pedagogical approach to increase student engagement in higher education in the Hong Kong context has been under-explored in previous literature. Applying the instructional humor processing theory, relational process model of humor and self-determination theory, this research study aimed to incorporate a planned humour pedagogical approach into teaching and learning activities, and the specific objective of this study was to examine the impact of planned humour on students' engagement and learning in the classroom. Appropriate types of humour (i.e. wordplay, analogy, and absurdity/exaggeration) and a certain frequency of incorporation of humour were systematically integrated into the lessons of eight courses, including two courses on humanities, and six courses on biomedical and life sciences in five universities in Hong Kong. 859 retrospective pre-post questionnaires were distributed to participants and 45 individual semi-structured interviews with participants were conducted to examine how humor was used and its impact. Pearson correlation analysis of the questionnaires and thematic analysis of the interviews showed that the planned humour pedagogical approach increased student engagement while enhancing learning and motivation in class. No significant difference was observed in terms of the impact of humor used in

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different courses on student engagement, learning, and motivation. The pedagogical implications of this study for teaching and learning will be useful for educational researchers, teachers, and lecturers.

Keywords: pedagogical approach; humour; higher education; student engagement