

Laughter in Class: Humorous Memes in 21st Century Learning

Baysac, Paulo Emmanuel G.

Abstract

Humorous memes are trending phenomena that the students are very much aware of. With the advent of e-technology teachers are fast exploiting this trend to spice up their lectures. The humorous memes and technology therefore are two important component of this study.

The study made use of psychological phenomenology that aimed at describing the lived experiences of the teachers in using humorous memes in the 21st century class of learners and how they face the challenges of using humorous memes in their classes.

Based from the findings of the study, the teachers' lived experiences emerge. Theme 1 zeroed in on teachers' edge in determining the students' readiness to learn. Theme 2 focused on the realization of the 21st century class learning environment. Theme 3 highlighted the reduction of anxiety and stress for both teachers and students alike. There are two themes prevailed as to how the teachers faced the challenges brought about of using humorous memes in their class. Theme 4 looked into the innovation and commission that teachers undertake that is making their own humorous memes and soliciting others to help coming up with humorous memes. Theme 5 underscored the observation and reaction of both the teacher and students with the set-up and each other. Observation that enables both of them to see what is relevant in the class and their subsequent reaction to what is relevant for both of them.

Keywords: Humor, Memes, 21st Century Class Learning

Introduction

Classroom activity can be stressful as it is and teacher put up a lot in order to make learning happened in spite of this. According to Stebbings (1980), in classroom, any form of humor, whether introduced by the teacher or the pupil, could potentially provide social comic relief. Humor appropriately used has the potential to humanize, illustrate, defuse, encourage, reduce anxiety, and keep people thinking (Torok, McMorris, & Lin, 2010). Humor can create a positive learning environment, reduce the stress of both teachers and students, improve communication between students and the teacher, and can increase the amount of information

absorbed by students (Friedman, Friedman & Amoo, 2002). Research has revealed that humor plays a significant role in building a harmonious relationship between teachers and students (Ashipaoloye, 2013).

Garner (2005) argues for the use of humor as a pedagogical tool that enhances learning and creates a more positive classroom atmosphere. Analogy and metaphor improve understanding and retention of material. Humor as a pedagogical tool can be like walking on a tightrope. If done well, it could enhance learning or at the very least make learning more fun (Poirer & Wilhelm, 2014).

The study of Rosegard and Wilson (2013) provided empirical support that implementing a hook, trigger, attention getter/grabber, and/or anticipatory set enhances learning and memory through increasing arousal (decreasing boredom) and focusing attention. Research suggests that humor produces psychological and physiological benefits that help students learn (Stambor, 2006). Research also establishes that humor helps individuals cope with stress as it relaxes them (Weimer, 2011).

According to authors Lei, Cohen and Russler (2010), the most effective instructors are those who engage their students in creative and interesting ways. One way to engage students is to incorporate humor into the college classroom. Humor has psychological, social, and cognitive (educational) benefits. Humor has the power to make instructors more likable, approachable, facilitate comprehension, increase attentiveness, improve creativity, and promote social relationships. Humor is an appreciated teaching tool for instructors to facilitate student learning if using it appropriately, constructively, and in moderation.

Researchers have identified that educators who use humor in their instruction are more positively rated by their peers and their students; others have suggested that humor may enhance learning (Garner, 2012). The group studying with humor had higher scores on the final exam (Ziv, 2014). Curiously enough, studies indicated that high school teachers generally use less humor than college teachers, perceive college teacher humor as appropriate, and use humor as a learning facilitator rather than a learning strategy (Neulipa, published online: 18 May 2009)

Kaplan and Pascoe (published online by American Psychological Association, 2015) studied the effect of humor and humorous examples on the comprehension and retention of lecture material. Intact classes of university students ($N = 508$) viewed either a serious lecture or 1 of 3 versions of a humorous lecture. The 3 versions of the humorous lecture included humorous examples related to the concepts in the lecture (concept humor), unrelated to the concepts (nonconcept humor), or a combination of concept and nonconcept examples (mixed humor). A test of comprehension and retention was given twice: immediately after the lecture and 6 wks later. Immediate comprehension was not facilitated by the use of humorous examples. Upon retesting, however, retention of concept humor material was significantly improved by viewing a lecture with humorous examples illustrating concepts.

In the test and survey made by Henderson (2015), results showed that retention was strongest in the lectures with content-related humor, and that students reported more enjoyment in the experience. In the study made by Wanzer and Frymier (2009), results indicated that a high humor orientation (HO) was associated with increased student perceptions of learning. Perceived teacher humor orientation was also examined in relation to nonverbal immediacy and socio-communicative style. Additionally, we examined the interaction between teacher humor orientation and student humor orientation on learning. It was found that high HO students

reported learning more with a high HO teacher. In a similar study by Alkhatab (2012), suggest that using humor in nursing classrooms increases nursing students' information retention and increases their attention.

These indicate that humor, provided it is not used to excess, can increase attention and interest and help to illustrate and reinforce what is being taught (Powell & Andresen, 2006). Consistent with IHPT, related humor, an appropriate form of instructional humor, was positively associated with student learning, while other-disparaging and offensive humor, inappropriate forms of humor, did not correlate with student learning (Wanzer, Frymier & Irwin, 2009).

Verbal humor such as wordplays, funny stories, puns, and content related jokes play an important role in L2 learners' development of sociolinguistic and sociocultural competence. It has been suggested that humor can serve as a formidable tool that can be used for sensitizing students to phonological, morphological, lexical, and syntactic differences within a single language or between a student's L1 and the target language (Deneire, 1995; as cited by Ziyaeemehr, Kumar and Abdullah, 2011).

The study of Gorham and Christophel (2009), investigated the teachers' use of humor in relationship to immediacy and learning. The amount and type of humor recorded by 206 students as observations of things teachers did to show "a sense of humor" were analyzed and correlated with overall immediacy and perceived cognitive and affective learning outcomes. The results indicated that amount and type of humor influenced learning, that students were particularly aware of tendentious humor, and that an overdependence on tendentious humor diminished affect.

Humor and Technology

Rosegard et.al, (2013), suggests introducing a lecture with external stimulus increases information retention. The external stimulus in the form of humor that is ingrained in technology such as e-learning tools maybe use. Technology plays one of an important aspect of everyday life. Computer laptop, notebook, ipad and cellphones are but some of the tools that are being used by students in their everyday activities such as communication, entertainment, purchasing and even selling and to include learning.

Humor can also pique students' interest outside the classroom. Shatz and LoSchiavo (2005), found that when a professor inserted self-deprecating jokes, psychology-related cartoons and top 10 lists in an online introductory psychology course, their students more often logged on to the online system Blackboard and were more likely to enjoy the class.

Technology and memes

An Internet meme is an activity, concept, catchphrase or piece of media which spreads, often as mimicry, from person to person via the Internet (Schubert, 2003). A meme is "an idea, behavior, or style that spreads from person to person within a culture" (Merriam-Websters, 2016). An Internet meme may take the form of an image, hyperlink, video, website, or hashtag. It may be just a word or phrase, including an intentional misspelling. These small movements tend to spread from person to person via social networks, blogs, direct e-mail, or news sources. They may relate to various existing internet cultures or subcultures, often created or spread on various websites, or by Usenet boards and other such early-internet communications facilities. Fads and sensations tend to grow rapidly on the Internet, because the instant communication facilitates word-of-mouth transmission (Wikipedia, 2016).

Technology is also an important component of the 21st century learning environment.

The 21st century learning environment incorporate six major objectives and these are: 1) Create learning practices, human support and physical environments that will support the teaching and learning of 21st century skill outcomes. 2) Support professional learning communities that enable educators to collaborate, share best practices and integrate 21st century skills into classroom practice. 3) Enable students to learn in relevant, real world 21st century contexts (e.g., through project-based or other applied work). 4) Allow equitable access to quality learning tools, technologies and resources. 5) Provide 21st century architectural and interior designs for group, team and individual learning. 6) Support expanded community and international involvement in learning, both face-to-face and online (P21.org, 2007).

Technology went a long long way and this can be seen in a simple tool in classroom such as LCD projector which is being used for PowerPoint presentation. The use of PowerPoint as a tool in teaching virtually replaced the over-head projector (OHP) more so the white board and blackboard teaching. Teacher would be placing the topic in a format that is visually stimulating by adding designs and animations. Anecdotes, quotations, comic cartoons and memes are usually added by teachers for extra cognitive and sensory stimulation. These make the lessons interesting as it brings novelty, depth, and humor in a lesson.

PowerPoint, when effectively planned and used, can enhance instruction and it can be an effective tool to present material in the classroom and encourage student learning (Northern Illinois University, 2006).Alley, Schreiber, Ramsdell and Muffo (2006, p. 233) suggest that PowerPoint slide headlines design affects audience retention, and conclude that succinct sentence headlines are more effective in information recall than headlines of short phrases or single words.

Problems of establishing humor's value

Humor is understood to reduce anxiety and stress, build confidence, improve productivity, heighten interest, reduce boredom and encourage divergent thinking, yet it has been difficult to establish positive value for humor in helping student learning (Ziegler, 2009). Thus the present study explored the lived experiences of teachers in the use of humor in a class of 21st century, particularly in the use of memes.

Methods

This design used in the study was Psychological Phenomenology which according to Moustakas (1994) as cited by Creswell (2007), focuses less on the interpretations of the researcher and more on the experiences of the subjects or participants. Specifically, the researcher utilized phenomenological procedures which involved bracketing, a suspension of her own experience, and collecting data from 5-25 individuals who have experienced the phenomenon (Polkinghorne, 1989 as cited by Creswell, 2007). In this study, the lived experience of teachers in using humorous memes and technology was the focus of the phenomena concern. The data were then analyzed by highlighting and reducing information into important statements which were then pooled into themes. A textural and a structural descriptions of the participants experiences were then developed, and finally proceeded with the combination of these descriptions to convey the essence of the study.

Participants of the Study

The participants of the study were five (5) teachers who are teaching various subjects in University of Perpetual Help System Laguna for the school year of 2015-2016. The respondents had been teaching for at least five (5) years. Purposeful Criterion Sampling strategy was used

through which the researcher chose the participants and the locale as they could in all intent provide an understanding of the research problem from the phenomena concern and therefore could give quality assurance (Huberman & Miles, 1994) as cited by Creswell (2007).

Instrumentation and Validation

This study used in-depth interviews through interview schedule which determined the teachers' lived experiences regarding the challenges and of value of using humorous memes in the 21st century class learning. The interview was composed of two (2) major questions with sub-questions undertow. The questions were none-directed as much as possible and the participants were allowed to express their experiences. The research tool was self-constructed and was shown to experts in the field of phenomenological research, administration and supervision area as well as guidance and counseling for validation. To establish research rigor, verification, validation and validity were applied (Meadows & Morse, 2001). The researcher achieved verification through in-depth literature readings, sticking to the phenomenological method of inquiry, suspending past experiences, keeping research notes and journals, utilizing a sufficient sample of participants (Polkinghorne, 1989 as cited by Creswell, 2007), and conducting multiple interviews, as well as clarifying the responses of the participants, until data were refined. Validation was reached through multiple data collection (observations, in-depth interviews), data analysis utilizing Moustakas' approach and coding by the more experienced phenomenological researcher. To attain validity, the researcher presented the study to competent researchers for external review to establish trustworthiness of research work. After describing the overall "essence" of the phenomenon under study, the researcher met again with the participants to verify the synthesis of their responses. This was the last step taken so that the participants

themselves could clarify and rectify their responses so the validity of the essence was obtained thus establishing the study's credibility.

The researcher asked permission from the teachers if they could be interviewed and upon securing their permission, the researcher assured them of confidentiality. The researcher then recorded the transcript of the conversations *envivo* via paper and pen for analysis.

Data Analysis

The first step that the researcher went through is bracketing, here the researcher set aside all preconceived thoughts and experience he had to best understand the experience of teachers in facing the challenges in using memes and technology in their classes. The data gathered from the multiple interviews were processed through horizontalization by going through them via transcriptions and highlighting significant testimonials that provided an understanding of how the participants faced the challenges from their classes. Again, from the same, themes were derived to finally come up with a textural description of what the participants experienced. Also significant statements to write a description, called imaginative variation or structural description, of the context or setting that influenced how the participants experienced the phenomenon under study. From the structural and textural descriptions, the researcher documented the composite description that presents the "essence" called the overall essence or invariant structure of facing the problems of students' behavior today as experienced by high school teachers , This paper followed the phenomenological framework of Moustakas (1994) as expounded by Creswell (2007) because it has systematic steps in the data analysis and procedures and guidelines for constructing the textual and structural descriptions.

The study was based on the idea that humor, memes and technology when properly used or handled can produced positive impact on 21st century class learning. The representation

shows (Fig. 1) that these three entering a funnel and being filtered for its essence. The essence would be that of learning.

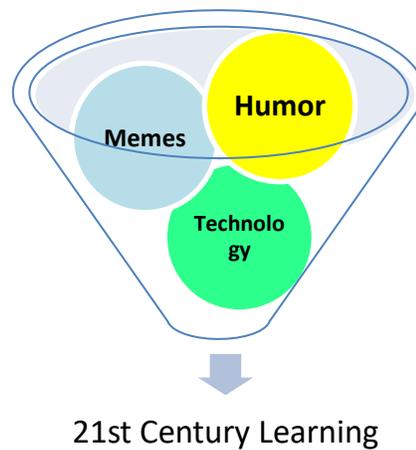


Fig. 1 The conceptual model

This study sought answers to the following problems:

1. What is the lived experience of the participants in using humorous memes in 21st century class learning?
2. How do the participants face the challenges of using humorous memes in 21st century class learning?

Results and Discussion

To ensure unsaturated result of the study, **bracketing** was undertaken. The study was conceptualized as the researcher was curious with the lived experience of the teachers in using memes in their class. With all purposes and intent the researcher remove all his preconceived ideas regarding the experiences of the participants so as not to bias the outcome of the study.

The disclosures of the preconceived ideas given by the participants' verbatim transcriptions from the in-depth interviews constitute the **horizontalization** which highlights the

significant statements from the same. These are the protocols that were read and re-read to extract answer for the two central questions. From the raw protocol the researcher came up with significant statements presented in the table below:

Table 1

Sample of significant Statements of Teachers' experience in using memes in their lessons

- Arouse students' attention
- Appropriate the value of the course I teach
- Promote global consciousness
- It makes the class happy
- Set the mood of the class
- Determining the readiness of the students
- Had their undivided attention
- Could sparks moments of laughter
- Filter the affective domain
- Sustainer of learning interest
- Concretely visualize an idea or concept
- Making the setting a very light atmosphere

From the horizontalization of significant statements, rose the cluster of themes that considered the research problem which identify with the lived experience of teachers in using humorous memes in the 21st century class learning. After the thorough analysis of the significant statements, the researcher was able to identify five (5) theme clusters focusing on two groups which answer the two central questions of the study: the what (textual description) and the how (structural description). Table 2 synthesizes the groupings of clustered themes based on the significant statements and their respective ideas.

Table 2

Five Theme Clusters Divided into Two Groups

Group A: Textural Themes

Theme 1: An edge in determining students' readiness to learn

- Filter the affective domain
- Arouse students' attention and set the mood
- Had their undivided attention and sustain their learning interest

Theme 2: A realization of the 21st class learning environment

- Concretely visualize an idea or concepts
- Sustainer of learning interest
- Appropriate the value of the course I teach
- Promote global consciousness

Theme 3: A reduction of anxiety and stress

- Making the setting a very light atmosphere
- Could spark moments of laughter
- It makes the class happy

Group B: Structural Theme

Theme 3: innovation and commission

- I make my own
- Browsing
- Ask students, my children, relatives
- Solicit the aid of others

Theme 4: observation and reaction

- Let learners make sense of it
- Understand and relate
- responsive thinking

1. What is the lived experience of the participants in using humorous memes in 21st century class learning?

Theme 1: An edge in determining students' readiness to learn

It is revealed by the participants that humor is a very good gauge in finding out whether the students will be ready for class or not, it is some sort of barometer to gauge the weather condition of the class if they are ready for the lesson. It set the mood of the students making them

ready for the subsequent order of the class. Humor helps students to be awake and attentive in class especially when the course is very “philosophical”, “scientific” or laden with unfamiliar terms (Ashipaoloye, 2013).

“In one of my class, one time when it was very noisy and students were very restless, what I did is to turn on the LCD projector and the images I flashed were memes of people planking. There were about 10 pictures and the series showed people doing it in the most odd situation and location, each picture would be much odd than the one that preceded it, the final picture is so comic that everyone laugh. I then knew that I already got their attention and seized the moment to jump directly to my topic that day.”

“These usually set the mood of the children in my class. The atmosphere becomes more relax because of the humors I inject in my lectures since it makes the class happy.”

The focus of the learners needed be directed toward what is existing in front of them, what is happening in front of them, that is, the teacher in front or sometimes the classmates in front (perhaps called upon to recite or do something on the board). The students’ readiness to respond is therefore valuable and this requires readiness. Readiness should also be emotional rather than plain cognitive since learning can pass through this domain as well. Therefore, mood setting is as essential as the physical and cognitive perks. The improve classroom atmosphere as a result of humor (Garner, 2005) can pave a way for good mood of the class and therefore readiness to take on the challenges of everyday activity of the class.

“Definitely. I consider humorous memes as totally a part of the lesson. It can actually set the mood as well as deepening the lesson.”

“Aside from they are proper means to arouse the interest of the students to the lesson, funny stories may also be a spring board for students to reflect on the subject discussed and their realization of the impact of the lesson in their personal and professional life.”

Theme 2: A realization of the 21st class learning environment

The 21st century class environment for one is characterized by the amount of technology one put up with. These means using electronic devices and electronic media is an important component of the 21st century class learning. This couple with humor in the form of memes that can be readily available in the internet form a very strong environment for a technology based learning. Also based from the study of Berk (1996), humor tends to be more effective when two or more of the senses, especially visual and aural (in the form of memes such as pictures or videos and oral), are involved rather than just one sense. From the disclosure of the participants, the researchers found that these two elements of sensation were indeed part of their learning environment.

“Technology is a vital part of my teaching strategy. I use social media in encouraging students to be more involved in valuing the lessons. Video presentation is also an important tool in lessons. Students are also required to use the net in researching relevant topics.”

“The class is actually bored if they will have *plain lecture*. You will find that some students are not listening, some are talking, some are texting and some are

either sleepy or sleeping already. But when you started showing them some memes, they will become lively again.”

“It is very common for me to start my lesson with jokes, funny remarks or stories and when I present my lecture with PowerPoint presentation I always incorporate funny cartoons, funny quotes, memes and funny stories.”

Humor can create a positive learning environment, improve communication between students and the teacher, and can increase the amount of information absorbed by students (Friedman et.al. 2002).

“Humorous memes are suitable means to promote 21st century learning which highlights innovative and technological approach.”

Theme 3: A reduction of anxiety and stress

The teachers’ disclosure explicitly stated that the use of jokes, funny stories, funny quotes or memes for that matter was given to have significant effects to students’ performances (Alkhatab, 2012: Garner, 2012: Friedman et.al. 2002: Berk, 1996) as it reduces the stress of both teachers and students. These stress and anxiety are given to play a negative role in the students’ focus and therefore in turn their learning.

“I always incorporate funny cartoons, funny quotes, memes and funny stories. In times of tension filled days when there are so many stress producing activities such as deadlines to beat, examinations, thesis and so on. Students have so many things in their minds and they cannot fully concentrate during lectures. In these instances that humor becomes very useful. To set the mood of the class I usually

start with a humorous statements, jokes, quotes and or show them video or ppp of some memes. This is sure fire to dissipate their stress and perks them up once more as if there are no pending deadlines before them. Even my stress dissipate upon seeing them comes alive again. The effect is equally beneficial to my students and me.”

“Moreover, using humorous memes is an attention catcher and a sustainer of learning interest while also developing the analytical and critical thinking skills of my students since memes could spark moments of laughter while also pondering.”

Humorous memes effectively show positive emotion that the teachers could have a good time as it also makes the students happier in class since stress and anxiety are being reduced (Ziegler, 2009: Stambor, 2006: Friedman, et.al. 2002) Humor as a pedagogical tool enhances learning and creates a more positive classroom atmosphere (Garner, 2005). Forty (40) years of educational humor research indicating that humor increases the strength of human connections, and that non-aggressive, relevant, appropriate humor appears to be a helpful learning tool (Henderson, 2015).

“I enjoy injecting humor in my lesson. I sometimes tell funny stories and sometimes I include humorous memes and or other funny quotes or jokes in my PowerPoint presentation. These usually set the mood of the children in my class. The atmosphere becomes more relax because of the humors I inject in my lectures since it makes the class happy.”

“It makes me filter the affective domain of my learners in terms of their motivation, confidence, as well as anxiety.”

“Aside from they are proper means to arouse the interest of the students to the lesson and funny stories may also be a spring board for students to reflect on the subject discussed and their realization of the impact of the lesson in their personal and professional life.”

2. How do the participants face the challenges of using humorous memes in 21st century class learning?

Theme 4: innovation and commission

Teachers use a lot of imagination in order to come up with vital materials or tools for learning. This alone is a big challenge for teachers since effective tools can be utilized in effective teaching. As disclosed by the participants, humorous memes and technology (PowerPoint presentation) can be an effective tool. As humor is considered as a good pedagogical tool (Poirer et.al., 2014; Garner, 2012) and technology an important component of the 21st century class learning (P21.org, 2007). Ready to use memes are already available through the internet and only one has to do is to Google them up. However finding the proper memes for a certain lecture may prove to be difficult as the participants may be using already “shop worn” memes that can no longer elicit humor and therefore looked up into as something old or corny. The participants faced these challenge by coming up with their own tools by researching through the net. With the ready materials found in the net the participants can now innovate.

“I sometimes make my own memes using photos of my students in some other major school activities. The custom made memes are sure hit to the students since the pictures used are very familiar to them. Most of the times the pictures need no

editing at all as the picture can speak for itself. There are times that the pictures are meaningless but given meaning based from cues that is inherent in the picture to make it hit with the students. Sometimes additional elements are placed in the picture to make it funny, some apps can already do this such as distorting the face, exchanging the faces of two people with pictures taken side by side, making the face into a vampire or animals. Sometimes Photoshop can be used to modify the picture which is fun to do. All of these can be useful in customizing your own memes.”

However, some disclose that they are not computer savvy and therefore have difficulty using the computer let alone making their own memes. They disclosed that they don't know how to use different applications and how to upload them more so to find them in the internet.

“I don't know how to place humorous memes using apps in my lectures (PowerPoint presentation). What I do is call for students who know how and ask for their help to get memes from those apps.”

Other participants find it difficult to have relevant memes for the students. Relevant meaning memes that is current, trending and therefore funny for the students. Relevant meaning, it is appropriate for the class in terms of relation of the memes to the subject proper. They solve this problem by commissioning students to come up with a project of coming up with memes taken from the internet.

“Injecting humor in class in itself is not difficult to do. It's a second nature that I am blessed with so really it is not a problem for me. However, the challenge is more technical or should I say technological in nature. This means finding ready

memes, funny quotes and stories in the internet. The problem in that is students are very much into internet browsing and many of them already have knowledge or already familiar with the memes that is in the internet, thus, may already missing some element of surprise when used in classes.”

“I solve this by having my students come up with the memes that they can understand and use this in my lesson on the other class. This proved to be very useful and effective since the submitted memes are the ones they could understand and relate with. I can also come up with a memes that can be useful in a sense that they can be effective in eliciting humor in my class. My students have all the time to watch all these *telenovelas* so I depend on them when coming up with the latest trend. Also they are the ones who browse so much the internet and therefore know more about what is trending in social media. The trends in social media are good materials to use in coming up with a humorous memes. I don’t want to use something that is funny for me that doesn’t somehow or in any way funny for the students.”

Theme 5: observation and reaction

From the disclosed protocols another theme sounds clear and this is the gap between two generations. This is the generation gap between the teacher and the students. This is evident in how they view the world. The movie and TV program they watch the music that they listen into, the gadgets they use and the new era that they live in is far different from the participants. Therefore what is being enjoyed and found funny by them doesn’t seem to fit the idea of funny for the participants.

“I am a product of an old school in the dawning of new era so I know the value of the old school and yet I know the relevance of the modern (new) ways which during my college life deemed unconventional. These include of course the incorporation new system of teaching and technology.”

“Memes that doesn’t connect with the students is not a good memes simply because it failed to fulfill its purpose if the students will just find it incomprehensible or corny. Most of my students see me as “old” and therefore my choice is something that they can’t relate with like music, movies and interest and of course memes. So finding relevant memes that will interest them is a big challenge as well.”

It is important therefore that the teacher can convey their thoughts through these memes in order for the humor to be effective. How the teacher and the students observe the world they are into and finding relevance in that through their reaction shows that the challenge had been met. Observation as to age appropriateness and the kind of subject one is handling for this will spell whether the class will respond favorably to the humor that the teacher will use (Darling & Civikly, 2015; Friedman et.al., 2012). However considerations should be made such as the class strength, level and capacity so as to make humorous memes be effective.

“I usually solve this issue by browsing in the internet and looking at what is trending with the youngsters. Talking with the students work well in finding out what is hip and what is not.”

“What I do is chat with my students about what are trending memes, videos or funny pictures that they usually get from the internet and those are the things I use

in my lectures. Some of them I get from listening to my children or nieces and nephews talking about the latest trending issues from the net when we are having get together such as party and reunions.”

“The level of knowledge of the students must also be taken into account since learning differences cannot be undermined. For instance, too much use of humorous memes may not be applicable for a particular section whose learning background can be described as “below average”. This is because utilizing humorous memes also entails responsive thinking ability that will let learners make sense of what they see, that is, the social truth that is reflected by these humorous materials.”

Textural Description.

Three prevailing themes were taken from clearly analyzed and understood teachers’ lived experiences I using humorous memes. These are an edge in determining readiness to learn, a realization of the 21st century class environment and a reduction of anxiety and stress. These are positive experiences that enable them to be successful in their classes and therefore in their career. It is therefore clear that teaching is indeed a noble profession as it understands the nuances of the capacity and the needs of the students.

Structural Description.

In consideration of how the teachers faced the challenges before them, two themes emerged. The first one is the innovation and commission that enable the teachers to be creative

or innovative, thoughtful and withstanding the boundary of their skills and capacity in terms of technology. Teachers enable themselves to become and learn along with the students as each challenge was faced. The second one is observation and reaction that enable the teachers to feel or filter through the needs and understanding of the class by understanding what is relevant for both of them, thus, coming up with a system and ideas that are effective for both.

Essence.

Taken collectively, the accounts of the participants reveal the truth of the experience of using humorous memes. Despite the positive impact of the combination of technology and humorous memes that spell the difference between the 21st century class learning and the conventional class learning, the teachers were still pressed to face different challenges that these two brought to the fore. This not in any way however diminish their liberty to push through and theretofore pull through the challenges at hand.

Verification.

In securing the accuracy of the transcription, analysis and interpretation of the researcher of the participants' disclosures, the researcher met again with them. Their rectification on some parts of the treatment of data was considered prior to the writing of the overall essence to achieve its credibility.

Future Direction

Humorous memes as phenomena has a very scant literature and warrants further study. Considering that the present study is exploratory in nature and based from the findings, the researchers recommend that a follow-up study be made. The study made use of qualitative design so quantitative design with bigger number of respondents is also in order therefore recommended.

Reference

- Alkhatab, Mohamed Ahmed (2012) Humor as a teaching strategy: the effect on students' educational retention and attention in a nursing baccalaureate classroom. Nursing Master Thesis, Valparaiso University, Indiana.
- Alley, M., Schreiber, M., Ramsdell, K., & Muffo, J. (2006). How the design of headlines in presentation slides affects audience retention. *Technical Communication*, 53(2), 233. Selected Resources
- Ashipaoloye, Francis Kayode (2013) Integrating Sense of Humor as a Teaching Strategy among Students of LPU-Batangas. Graduate School, Lyceum of the Philippines University, Batangas City Philippines. *Asia Pacific Journal of Multidisciplinary Research*. Vol.1, No. 1. December 2013
- Berk. Ronald. A. (1996). Student ratings of 10 strategies for using humor in college teaching. *Journal on Excellence in College Teaching*, 7 (3), 71-92.
- Creswell, John W. (2007) *Quantitative inquiry and research design; choosing among five approaches*. 2nd Ed. Thousand Oaks, CA; Sage.
- Darling, Ann L. & Civikly, Jean M. (published online 2015) The effect of teacher humor on student perceptions of classroom communicative climate. *The Journal of Classroom Interaction*. Vol. 22, No. 1 (DEC/JAN 1986-1987), pp. 24-30. Available online at stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23884823> and http://www.jstor.org/stable/23884823?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents
- Deneire, M. (1995). Humor and foreign language teaching. *Humor: International Journal of Humor Research*, 8(3), 285-298. doi:10.1515/humr.1995.8.3.285, Retrieved from <http://dx.doi.org/10.1515/humr.1995.8.3.285>.

- Friedman, Hershey H., Friedman, Linda W. & Amoo, Taiwo (2002) Using Humor in the Introductory Statistics Course. *Journal of Statistics Education*. Volume 10, Number 3, Retrieved from www.amstat.org/publications/jse/v10n3/friedman.html.
- Garner, Randy L. (published online: 05 Oct 2012) Humor in Pedagogy: How Ha-Ha can Lead to Aha! *College Teaching*, Volume 54, Issue 1, 2006, pages 177-180. Retrieved from <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.3200/CTCH.54.1.177-180>.
- Garner, Randy L. (2005) Humor, Analogy, and Metaphor: H.A.M. it up in Teaching. Sam Houston State University. *Radical Pedagogy*, Vol. 6, No. 2, Winter 2005. Retrieved from <http://www.radicalpedagogy.org/>
- Gorham, Joan & Christophel, Diane M. (published online: 18 May 2009) The relationship of teachers' use of humor in the classroom to immediacy and student learning. *Communication Education*. Volume 39, Issue 1, 1990, pages 46-62
- Henderson, Sarrah (31 March, 2015) Laughter and Learning: Humor Boosts Retention. Edutopia. Retrieved from <http://www.edutopia.org/blog/laughter-learning-humor-boosts-retention-sarah-henderson>
- Huberman, A.M. & Miles, M.B. (1994) Data management and analysis methods. In N.K. Denzin & Y.S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 428-444). Thousand Oaks, CA; Sage.
- Kaplan, Robert M. & Pascoe, Gregory C. (published online by American Psychological Association, 2015) Humorous lectures and humorous examples: Some effects upon comprehension and retention. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, Vol 69(1), Feb 1977, 61-65. Retrieved from <http://psycnet.apa.org/index.cfm?fa=buy.optionToBuy&id=1977-26225-001>
- Lei, Simon A., Cohen, Jillian L. & Russler, Kristen M. (2010) Humor on learning in the college classroom: Evaluating benefits and drawbacks from instructors' perspectives. *Journal of Instructional Psychology*. George Uhlig Publisher. Dec, 2010, Vol37, Issue 4. ISSN: 0094-1956.
- McLeod, S.A. (2008). Case Study Method in Psychology.—Simply Psychology. Retrieved September 07, 2013 from <http://www.simplypsychology.org/case-study.html>
- Meadows, L. & Morse, J. M. (2001). Constructing evidence within the qualitative project. In J. M. Morse, J. Swanson & A. Kuzel, (Eds.). *The nature of evidence in qualitative inquiry*. (pp. 187 — 202), Thousand oaks, CA: Sage. Merriam-Webster (2015) “Meme” Copyright © 2013 AFNetworking retrieved from <http://afnetworking.com/>.
- Moustakas, C (1994) *Phenomenological research methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA; Sage.
- Neuliepa, James W. (Published online: 18 May 2009) An examination of the content of high school teachers' humor in the classroom and the development of an inductively derived taxonomy of classroom humor. *Communication Education*. Volume 4, Issue 1991, pages

343-355. Retrieved from <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/03634529109378859>

Northern Illinois University (2006) Teaching with powerpoint. Northern Illinois University, Faculty Development and Instructional Design Center Available at facdev@niu.edu, <http://facdev.niu.edu>, 815.753.0595

Poirer, Therese I. & Wilhelm, Miranda (2014) Use of humor to enhance learning: Bull's eye or off the mark. *American Journal of Pharmaceutical Education*. 2014 Mar 12; 78(2): 27. doi:10.5688/ajpe78227.

Polkinghorne, D.E. (1989) Phenomenological research methods. In R.S.Valle & S.Halling (Eds.) *Existential-phenomenological perspective in psychology* (pp. 41-60) New York: Plenum Press.

Powell, J.P. & Andresen, L.W. (published online: 05 Aug 2006) Humour and teaching in higher education. *Studies in Higher Education*. Volume 10, Issue 1, 1985. pages 79-90. Retrieved from <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/03075078512331378726>

Rosegard, Erik & Wilson, Jackson (2013) Capturing students' attention: An empirical study *Journal of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning*, Vol. 13, No. 5, December 2013, pp. 1 – 20.

Schubert, Karen (2003-07-31). "Bazaar goes bizarre". *USA Today*. Retrieved 2007-07-05.

Shatz, Mark & LoSchiavo, Frank (2005) *Teaching of Psychology*, Vol. 32, No. 4, pages 246-248

Smith, J. (2009). Interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA). Retrieved February 27, 2013 from <http://onlineqda.hud.ac.uk/methodologies.php>.

Stambor, Zak (2006) How laughing leads to learning. *American Psychological Association, Monitor in psychology*. June 2006, Vol 37, No. 6. page 62.

Stebbing, Robert A. (1980) The role of humour in teaching: Strategy and self expression. *teacher strategies (RLE Edu L): Explorations in the Sociology of the School*. Edited by Peter Woods. Routledge Library Editions: Education, Croom Helm London, Printed in Great Britain by Biddles Ltd., Guildford, Surrey. P. 87

Torok, Sarah E., McMorris, Robert F. & Lin, Wen-Chi (published online: 07 Aug 2010) Is humor an appreciated teaching tool? Perceptions of professors' teaching styles and use of humor. *College Teaching*, Volume 52, Issue 1, 2004. pages 14-20. Retrieved from <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.3200/CTCH.52.1.14-20>

Wikipedia (2016) Internet Meme. Retrieved from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Internet_meme.

Wanzer, Melissa Bekelja & Frymier, Ann Bainbridge (published online: 18 May 2009) The relationship between student perceptions of instructor humor and students' reports of learning. *Communication Education*. Volume 48, Issue 1, 1999. pages 48-62.

- Wanzer, Melissa B., Frymier, Ann B. & Irwin, Jeffrey (published online: 14 Dec 2009) An Explanation of the Relationship between Instructor Humor and Student Learning: Instructional Humor Processing Theory. *Communication Education*. Volume 59, Issue 1, 2010. pages 1-18
- Weimer, Maryellen (2011) Humor in the Classroom: 40 Years of Research, *The Teaching Professor*, 25.10 (2011): 3. Retrieved from <http://www.facultyfocus.com/articles/effective-teaching-strategies/humor-in-the-classroom-40-years-of-research/>.
- Ziegler, John B. (published online: 03 Jul 2009) Use of humour in medical teaching. *Medical Teacher*. Volume 20, Issue 4, 1998. pages 341-348. Retrieved from <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/01421599880779>
- Ziv, Avner (published online: 16 Apr 2014) Teaching and Learning with Humor. *The Journal of Experimental Education. Learning and Instruction*. Volume 57, Issue 1, 1988. pages 4-15. Retrieved from <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/00220973.1988.10806492>.
- Ziyaeemehr, A., Kumar, V., & Abdullah, M.S.(2011). Use and Non-use of Humor in Academic ESL Classrooms. *English Language Teaching* Vol. 4, No. 3. Canadian Center of Science and Education 111. Retrieved September 25, 2015 from www.ccsenet.org/elt

Appendix A

The Protocols

Teacher 1

1. What is the lived experience of the participants in using humorous memes in 21st century class learning?

Using humorous memes in the 21st century classroom is responsive to the diversity of learning backgrounds since humor is a natural phenomenon that is injected in human conversations. As a language professor, it helps me provide a learning atmosphere that is conducive to learning. It makes me filter the affective domain of my learners in terms of their motivation, confidence, as well as anxiety.

Moreover, using humorous memes is an attention catcher and a sustainer of learning interest while also developing the analytical and critical thinking skills of my students since memes could spark moments of laughter while also pondering.

As to the challenging side of using humorous memes, I experienced handling classes whose majority of the students cannot quickly, if not totally, comprehend the humorous materials I use by observing their nonverbal cues like facial expression and gestures. Responding to the issue, I would immediately relate the lesson to the humorous memes in such a way that won't intimidate those who didn't understand.

2. How do the participants face the challenges of using humorous memes in 21st century class learning?

Being able to utilize and make sense of various social media platforms is primary to making sure that "humorous memes" are relevant to the lessons. It goes without saying that the preponderance of modern technology should be aligned with our skill to utilize it appropriately in terms of carefully choosing what is relevant content and the otherwise.

The level of knowledge of the students must also be taken into account since learning differences cannot be undermined. For instance, too much use of humorous memes may not be applicable for a particular section whose learning background can be described as "below average". This is because utilizing humorous memes also entails responsive thinking ability that will let learners make sense of what they see, that is, the social truth that is reflected by these humorous materials.

Teacher 2

1. What is the lived experience of the participants in using humorous memes in 21st century class learning?

Humor is part of my everyday dealing whether in professional dealings. In class, I usually crack jokes and or when using videos or ppt include funny pictures, quotes and or memes.

It gives me a certain freedom to explore and feel the emotion of my students. This gives me an edge in determining the readiness of my students to participate and learn. In one of my class, one time when it was very noisy and students were very restless, what I did is to turn on the LCD projector and the images I flashed were memes of people planking. There were about 10 pictures and the series showed people doing it in the most odd situation and

location, each picture would be much much odd than the one that preceded it, the final picture is so comic that everyone laugh. I then knew that I already got their attention and seized the moment to jump directly to my topic that day.

I know the power of humor as I have experienced using them in many instances. The results for me are always the same, an undivided attention of the students. I can see in their eyes the craving to hear from me more. So when I already had their undivided attention, it is a signal for me to start the lecture already.

It is very common for me to start my lesson with jokes, funny remarks or stories and when I present my lecture with powerpoint presentation I always incorporate funny cartoons, funny quotes, memes and funny stories. In times of tension filled days when there are so many stress producing activities such as deadlines to beat, examinations, thesis and so on. Students have so many things in their minds and they cannot fully concentrate during lectures. In these instances that humor becomes very useful. To set the mood of the class I usually start with a humorous statements, jokes, quotes and or show them video or ppp of some memes. This is sure fire to dissipate their stress and perks them up once more as if there are no pending deadlines before them. Even my stress dissipate upon seeing them comes alive again. The effect is equally beneficial to my students and me. Our spirit will be lifted once and therefore creating a learning ready environment for the students and me. A simple laugh even a reflective smile goes a long long way and normally last up to the end of the class or even a bit beyond since their giggles and laughter echoes outside the classroom along the corridors while moving to their other class. It excites mo to see that the class are engaged in lecture and actually having fun learning.

I am a product of an old school in the dawning of new era so I know the value of the old school and yet I know the relevance of the modern (new) ways which during my college life deemed unconventional. These include of course the incorporation new system of teaching and technology.

2. How do the participants face the challenges of using humorous memes in 21st century class learning?

Injecting humor in class in itself is not difficult to do. It's a second nature that I am blessed with so really it is not a problem for me. However, the challenge is more technical or should I say technological in nature. This means finding ready memes, funny quotes and stories in the internet. The problem in that is students are very much into internet browsing and many of them already have knowledge or already familiar with the memes that is in the internet, thus, may already missing some element of surprise when used in classes.

In order to solve this, I sometimes make my own memes using photos of my students in some other major school activities. The custom made memes are sure hit to the students since the pictures used are very familiar to them. Most of the times the pictures need no editing at all as the picture can speak for itself. There are times that the pictures are meaningless but given meaning based from cues that is inherent in the picture to make it hit with the students. Sometimes additional elements are placed in the picture to make it funny, some aps can already do this such distorting the face, exchanging the faces of two person with pictures taken side by side, making the face into a vampire or animals. Sometimes photoshop can be used to modify the picture which is fun to do. All of these can be useful in customizing your own memes.

The next challenged I face is finding relevant memes. Relevant meaning that is something that the student can relate with. A memes that doesn't connect with the students is not a good memes simply because it failed to fulfill its purpose if the students will just find it incomprehensible or corny. Most of my students see me as "old" and therefore my choice is something that they cant relate with like music, movies and interest and of course memes. So finding relevant memes that will interest them is a big challenge as well. I usually solve this issue by browsing in the internet and looking at what is trending with the youngsters. Talking with the students works well in finding out what is hip and what is not.

Teacher 3

1. What is the lived experience of the participants in using humorous memes in 21st century class learning?

“Oo ako nagamit ako ng mga memes sa aking mga lectures.”

[Yes I use memes in my lectures.]

“Ako nageenjoy akong iinject sa lesson yung mga humor. Minsan nagkukuwento ako, minsan naman ay isinasama ko sa mga powerpoint presentation ko yung mga jokes o kaya memes. Sineset niya kase yung mood ng mga bata. Nakakarelaax pati ng atmosphere yung humor na ikinakabit o inilalagay ko sa mga lectures kasi nagiging masaya ang mga lectures kapag may ganoon.”

[I enjoy injecting humor in my lesson. I sometimes tell funny stories and sometimes I include humorous memes and or other funny quotes or jokes in my PowerPoint presentation. These usually set the mood of the children in my class. The atmosphere becomes more relax because of the humors I inject in my lectures since it makes the class happy.]

“Kapag puro lecture lang kase ay nagiging boring yung klase. Makikita mo na may nagkukuwentuhan na habang nagkklase, yung iba ay nagtetest at yung iba ay nakakatulog na. Nako kapag nagpakita ka na ng mga memes ay nabubuhayan na ng mga dugo ang mga bata.”

[The class is actually bored if they will have *plain lecture*. You will find that some students are not listening, some are talking, some are texting and some are either sleepy or sleeping already. But when you started showing them some memes, they will become lively again.]

2. How do the participants face the challenges of using humorous memes in 21st century class learning?

“Mahina ako sa pag-gamit ng technology so hirap akong maglagay o gumamit ng mga modern o mataas na level ng technology aps sa ppp ko.”

[I am not good in using technology so I have difficulty in using or including aps in my lectures.]

“Hindi ko alam kung paano ilalagay ang mga nakakatuwang memes sa mga lecture ko. Kaya ang ginagawa ko ay tumawag ng estudyante na marunong maglagay ng mga memes galling kung saan-saang aps.”

[I don't know how to place humorous memes using aps in my lectures (PowerPoint presentation). What I do is call for students who knows how and ask for their help to get memes from those aps.]

“Ang pangalawang challenge ay ang pag-gamit ng tama o akmang memes para sa mga topic na ituturo ko na kung saan maiintindihan o matutuwa ang mga estudyante ko.”

[The next challenge is to get a good memes for a particular topic that the student can relate with.]

“Ang ginagawa ko ay nakikipagkwentuhan ako sa mga studyante tungkol sa mga trending na memes, video o mga nakakatawang litrato at yun ang ginagamit ko sa aking mga lecture. Yung iba ay nakukuha ko sa mga usapan ng mga bata tulad ng mga anak ko at mga pamangkin kapag sila ay nagiipon-ipon at nagakakakwentuhan, halimbawa ay sa mga party o reunion.”

[What I do is chat with my students about what are trending memes, videos or funny pictures that they usually get from the internet and those are the things I sed in my lectures. Some of them I get from listening to my children or nieces and nephews talking about the latest trending issues from the net when we are in get together such as party and reunions.]

Teacher 4

1. What is the lived experience of the participants in using humorous memes in 21st century class learning?

I see memes as a good means to arouse students' attention aside from being the trends nowadays, memes are considered as a mode of expression.

Humor is a way of looking at life on a brighter perspective.

Yes.

In introducing the lesson and encouraging students to appropriate the value of the courses I teach.

Technology is a vital part of my teaching strategy. I use social media in encouraging students to be more involved in valuing the lessons. Video presentation is also an important tool in lessons. Students are also required to use the net in researching relevant topics.

Humorous memes are suitable means to promote 21st century learning which highlights innovative and technological approach.

Aside from they are proper means to arouse the interest of the students to the lesson, funny stories may also be a spring board for students to reflect on the subject discussed and their realization of the impact of the lesson in their personal and professional life.

Also meme could be a means to keep students up to date to current issues trending worldwide this promoting global conscientiousness.

I usually get my memes to 9 gag.aps.

2. How do the participants face the challenges of using humorous memes in 21st century class learning?

There are issues in memes, subjects, pictures or actual pictures not within my era or time. I have no idea if these particular pictures used in memes are trending for them or not, simply because its within their time or era, that I might not be able to relate with it. Sometimes I can see this to my child Archie, sometimes he would find some memes really funny that I don't saying " Mommy this is trending" and my students would also comment that that particular memes are trending and funny and again I don't. So this is the challenge that I could see. Probably this is suitable for them to understand things but I have no idea how deep their understanding of these to them for me to incorporate the memes in my subject. Like in Cartoons that we usually watched in our era is something that we can understand while they may not relate to this simply because its not within their era. So the difficulty of choosing memes is there simply because I cannot relate to them and I have no idea whether students may be able to relate to them. Let us face it, we are not that focus in what is currently trending the way they knew since they are the ones who have more time in browsing the internet. We don't have that much time compared with the students. That there may be more that we can incorporate in our lessons that are useful, albeit we are not aware of that, that it doesn't really interest you, and we simply have no more time to spend more of it in browsing the internet.

The way I see it, there is generation gap and limited time. So I feel we need to spend more time with them socially so we would be able to know what is trending for them and therefore can be useful in including in the lessons. We have to take advantage of the trending issues so we would be able to use them in our lesson. The way I see it, memes are very good way to arouse the students' interest the fact that you will have your lesson and you are the professor there is already a boring factor in lecture, so if you will be using funny memes, funny stories those that you can find in 9 gag aps it will in a way make your lecture become more interesting. I downloaded 9 gag aps, I have that and I'm sure there or more aps that can give you good memes that are currently trending. It has many features that men could understand, funny videos, and more. Like one trending video is eating corn cobs place into a drill in such way when you eat the corn it will rotate readily and you don't have to manually rotate the corn cob to eat it. A lot of people did the same thing and one female have had an accident when her hair was caught in the rotating corn cob and had her hair pulled out of her scalp creating a bald spot on her head, which a lot of people found to be tragically funny.

Teacher 5

1. What is the lived experience of the participants in using humorous memes in 21st century class learning?

Humor for me is a way of "entertaining", making the setting a very light atmosphere.

Yes.

I use it for concept mapping, completing stories as well as sequencing events.

It can be used as a spring board to the lesson. At times for them to concretely visualize an idea or concept.

It is significant in class learning because it can help in developing not only the comprehension skills/ability of the students but in formulating ideas/concept.

21st century learning is the so called “technology generation”.

Definitely. I consider humorous memes as totally a part of the lesson. It can actually set the mood as well as deepening the lesson.

2. How do the participants face the challenges of using humorous memes in 21st century class learning?

I find it challenging to use memes in my class. I include memes in planning my lessons and imagine how would my students react with the lessons. Getting memes I thought is easy with internet just one click away. The problem however is finding appropriate memes for my subjects, some memes are quite good but in most cases they are not suited in some of my lectures. I think the problem is I cannot relate with most of the memes that are given in the net since the pictures are based on current American TV series such as Games of Thrones, Pretty Little Liars and so on. I don't watch these TV series nor other series such as Koreanovelas and pinoy teleserye, therefore, I cannot relate to any of it. I simply don't have time to watch these and therefore I cannot relate to most of the memes that are based on these TV series.

I solve this by having my students come up with the memes that they can understand and use this in my lesson on the other class. This proved to be very useful and effective since the submitted memes are the ones they could understand and relate with. I can also come up with a memes that can be useful in a sense that they can be effective in eliciting humor in my class. My students have all the time to watch all these telenovelas so I depend on them when coming up with the latest trend. Also they are the ones who browse so much the internet and therefore know more about what is trending in social media. The trends in social media are good materials to use in coming up with a humorous memes. I don't want to use something that is funny for me that doesn't somehow or in any way funny for the students.

The second challenge perhaps is knowing where to find these memes. I am not an internet browser and have no ideas where to find them in the net. I tried looking for memes in the net and I ended up discovering memes that I don't understand so again I ask students to look for what I need from the net. I also ask my children for the materials I need, some I ask from my nieces and nephews and even my sister or cousins. In short I solicit the aid of almost anyone who knows computer or internet more than I do.

Appendix B
Sample Memes





Audrey

Khaleesi at Starbucks



- Can I get uh...venti caramel macchiato for daenerys stormborn khaleesi liberator of astapor queen of meereen and the seven kingdoms mother of dragons?

MAKE REACTION GIFS AT MEMECENTER.COM



