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Humor in Education: Valuing the Invaluable

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Joanna Messineo

Humor in education has long been deemed an added, but unnecessary bonus. Humor isn't a topic broached in pre-service classrooms and is even generally left out of conversations about setting an environment or tone for a classroom — critical skills for a teacher. In the face of this limited position, students overwhelmingly prefer teachers who know how to use humor, professionals who incorporate humor in their work are found to be more psychologically healthy and happy, and humor has proven an effective interaction strategy for peers and students. Throughout my time student teaching in preschool and second grade, I investigated humor's influence through journaling/mood tracking, student reactions, content absorption, and peer interviews. Throughout these studies, I found humor to have a significant impact on my mental health and positivity as well as create a positive environment for my students that better fostered learning. For this reason, I think humor should be taught explicitly in pre-service classrooms so teachers can strategically and appropriately integrate humor into their future classrooms.