



## Humour and the Quirky Nature of Online Teaching

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### Abstract

Humour is a matter of perception. Like beauty it is in the eye of the beholder – its very nature is unique to the conveyor and receiver. While one person can be highly amused by a trigger for humour another sitting beside may completely miss its meaning or interpretation. Humour is also highly contextual, cultural and often mysterious in its effect on people.

Using humour as a teaching tool in both traditional classrooms and in an online teaching environment is fraught with complexity, subtleties, dangers and delights but applied correctly can also add to student's participation and learning.

As teachers we tread a fine line. The classroom is not generally perceived as a place for jokes and humour, teachers do not have a licence to generate humour and cause amusement.

However we do know and have for many years, the value humour has to teaching. Even in prehistoric times before the internet its importance had been recognised as a way of improving student learning, participation and enjoyment of the subject they are aspiring to learn. It is important to examine these aspects of teaching prior to online learning to clearly understand just how relevant and critical it is to our learning and knowledge acquisition.

Online teaching is a relatively recent phenomena and presents teachers with new and challenging issues in their teaching practice. This presentation explores the many quirks and quandaries of using humour in such an environment and draws on what is already known about the value of humour in classroom teaching and examines this uneasy transfer to online teaching.