



2018

# Student Perceptions of Instructor Humor as a Predictor of Student Intellectual Stimulation, Academic Interest and Engagement

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STUDENT PERCEPTIONS OF INSTRUCTOR HUMOR AS A PREDICTOR OF  
STUDENT INTELLECTUAL STIMULATION, ACADEMIC INTEREST, AND  
ENGAGEMENT.

by

Tiffany Ellington

A Thesis submitted to the

Graduate School

In partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

College of the Pacific

Communication

University of the Pacific  
Stockton, California

2018

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## DEDICATION

First, I would like to dedicate this thesis to my husband, Carson Ellington. He has continued to motivate, and support me throughout this entire process. I would not have been able to reach this goal without him, and I feel extremely blessed to have such a supportive partner in life. Second, I would like to dedicate this thesis to my family for always believing in me, even when I doubted myself. I love you all, thank you for your unconditional encouragement and support.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First, I would like to acknowledge the Communication Department at California State University, Stanislaus. The faculty at CSU Stanislaus inspired me to pursue my Masters degree, and even though I was no longer a student there, they continued to encourage and help me achieve this goal. Second, I would like to personally acknowledge each and every Communication faculty member at the University of the Pacific. I have thoroughly enjoyed learning from, and getting to know every single individual in the department. They continuously pushed me to be my best, and for that I cannot thank them enough. More specifically, I want to thank my thesis chair, Dr. Qingwen Dong. Without all of his help and motivation, I would have never gotten this thesis completed. Throughout my time at Pacific, he has continued to support my research interests, as well as help expand my knowledge, and appreciation of the discipline as a whole. Dr. Dong, I cannot thank you enough for all of your help throughout this entire process. My goal is to become a professor that inspires students to be their best and pursue their dreams just as all of these wonderful professors did for me. Thank you all for modeling greatness, which is something that I hope to mirror one day. Last, I would like to give a shout out to my cohort; Reed Ramsey, Johnathan Bruce, and Thalia Bobadilla. You all have been extremely supportive and helpful in the thesis completion process. We (finally) got it done!

Student Perceptions of Instructor Humor as a Predictor of Student Intellectual Stimulation,  
Academic Interest, and Engagement

Abstract

by Tiffany Ellington

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2018

Student intellectual stimulation, interest, and engagement within the college classroom is of great importance when attempting to heighten learning, both cognitively and affectively. Although scholars have examined predictors of student interest and engagement within the classroom setting, it has yet to be examined in correlation with an instructor's use of humor. More specifically, student intellectual stimulation is rarely studied on its own, especially in relation to an instructor's humor orientation. This study seeks to determine if an instructor's humor orientation acts as a predictor of student intellectual stimulation, engagement, and interest within the college classroom setting. This study obtained data from a sample of 337 full-time college students at two Northern California Universities. Data was collected through a self-administered paper and pencil questionnaire. Six sections of the questionnaire subsequently measured students' perceptions of an instructor's humor orientation, student intellectual stimulation, student interest, student engagement, demographic information on the participant, as well as the instructor that they were reporting on. The Humor Orientation scale was used to

measure the dimensions of the instructor's humor use within the classroom. The Student Intellectual Stimulation Scale (SISS) was used to examine the instructors use of intellectual stimulation within the classroom. Last, the student Interest and Engagement scales were utilized to measure the how interested and engaged students were within the reported course. This study found a statistically significant positive relationship amongst an instructors use of humor orientation and their ability to intellectually stimulate, engage, and interest students within the course. More specifically, an instructors use of humor within the classroom acted as a predictor to students being more intellectually stimulated, interested, and engaged within that given course. Furthermore, this study is of significance because it suggests that an instructor that uses humor within the classroom setting, will not only help intellectually stimulate their students, but they will also help enhance their interest, and engagement within the course, which can possibly lead to heightened cognitive and affective learning. Thus, instructors that are perceived to be funny within their respective course, are more likely to have students that are intellectually stimulated, interested, and engaged which enhances learning.

*Keywords: Humor Orientation, Student Intellectual Stimulation, Student Engagement, Student Interest*

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## **Chapter 1: The Problem**

Student interest, engagement, and intellectual stimulation within a course have been positively correlated with students' affective and cognitive learning. In conjunction with student intellectual stimulation, interest, and engagement, instructor humor has been identified as a positive communication trait that increases both cognitive and affective learning. However, when students lack engagement, interest, and intellectual stimulation, it has a negative effect on their learning. Furthermore, it is also known that when an instructor demonstrates immediacy behaviors it can enhance student interest, and engagement. However, humor orientation which is often identified as an immediacy behavior, has not been measured as a predictor of student engagement, interest, and intellectual stimulation. If an instructor employs humor within the instructional setting, it not only can increase students' interest, engagement, and stimulation within the course, but it can also heighten cognitive, and affective learning. This is of importance because it can help instructors understand the effect of their humor use within the college classroom setting.

### **Purpose of Thesis**

This study seeks to understand the implications of an instructor's humor orientation within the classroom, as a predictor of students' intellectual stimulation, interest, and engagement.

### **Significance of Study**

Examining an instructor's use of humor orientation as a predictor of student interest, engagement, and intellectual stimulation has yet to have been researched. Intellectual stimulation was specifically chosen because there is minimal research conducted on this variable. Furthermore, these variables are somewhat new to the instructional field, meaning that they are still worth examining. Within the instructional field of communication, many of the variables have reached saturation, meaning that they have been studied as much as they can be without providing new insight in the field. However, the variables within this study were chosen specifically in opposition to that statement. Booth-Butterfield and Booth-Butterfield (1991) identified humor as a positive communication attribute, one that generates support, approval, and goal-attainment (p. 206). When humor is used within the instructional setting, it can act directly as a milieu for the instructor to generate support, approval, and student goal achievement. Furthermore, without fully understanding what communication or behavioral traits humor can predict, one's humor can act as a negative trait. Overall, understanding an instructor's use of humor orientation in relation to students' intellectual stimulation, interest, and engagement, can lend further insight to the instructional field of communication research. By conceptualizing the correlation of the chosen variables, one can better understand how to enhance students' learning within the classroom.

## Chapter 2: Review of Literature

### *Humor Orientation*

An instructor's use of humor within the classroom has been proven to be a positive communication trait in multiple instances. Booth-Butterfield and Booth-Butterfield (1991) conceptualized humor orientation as, intentional verbal and nonverbal messages which elicit laughter, chuckling, and other forms of spontaneous behavior taken to mean pleasure, delight, and/or surprise in the targeted receiver (p. 206). When this type of humor is used in the classroom setting it can be beneficial to students' cognitive, and affective learning. Gorham and Christophel (1990), found that humor use within the classroom context not only increased instructor immediacy, but it also increased student learning outcomes. Garner (2006), also noted that humor had a positive effect on student enjoyment and content retention (p. 179). Although, humor is often perceived as a positive communication trait, when humor is not used it can have a negative effect on the classroom environment. Stuart and Rosenfeld (1994) conducted a study that assessed students' perceptions of instructor humor, and classroom climate. They determined that the amount of humor and the type of humor used within the classroom is extremely important when assessing humor's effect on the classroom climate. They found that if an instructor used no humor, the students' perceived the classroom to be low in supportiveness and innovation. Darling and Civikly (1987) also identified that instructors who used no humor within the classroom were perceived as more neutral and detached

than instructors that utilized humor (p. 28). However, when an instructor's humor use is perceived to be high, students' felt that the classroom was supportive and innovative (Stuart & Rosenfeld, 1994). Furthermore, adding to Stuart and Rosenfeld's (1994) study, Wanzer, Booth-Butterfield, and Booth-Butterfield (1995) determined that there were three different levels of humor orientation that an instructor could be perceived having. They identified these levels as, high humor orientation (HO), medium humor orientation (MO), and low humor orientation (LO). Within their research students' often perceived an instructor with high humor orientation as more funny than an instructor with low humor orientation. When an instructor was perceived as more funny (HO), the students were more engaged with the material, and had a higher sense of affect toward the instructor and the course. Furthering the study by Wanzer et al. (1995), Frymier and Wanzer (1998), examined this notion of HO, MO, and LO humor orientation in correlation with student learning. They found that when students' felt an instructor demonstrated high humor orientation (HO) within the course, they were also more likely to learn. Frymier and Wanzer (1998) also determined that when students demonstrated high humor orientation (HO) within the classroom, it had a positive correlation with their learning. Another notable finding by Frymier and Wanzer (1998), was that instructors who were perceived by students to have high humor orientation (HO), were also more likely to be perceived as immediate, more appropriate, and responsive. Although, Booth-Butterfield and Booth-Butterfield's (1991) scale has always proven to be reliable, some scholars believed it was dated and a new measure needed to be created.

Wrench and Richmond (2004), created the humor assessment (HA), in contrast to Booth-Butterfield and Booth-Butterfield's (1991) humor orientation scale. Wrench and Richmond wanted to see if this new scale that they created could be used as a replacement for Booth-Butterfield and Booth-Butterfield's (1991) scale. They found that this scale could, in fact, be used to obtain similar findings as Booth-Butterfield and Booth-Butterfield's (1991) humor orientation scale. One of the major findings within Wrench and Richmond's (2004) study was that the (HA) scale actually measured the communicative use of humor in general, which accounted for both verbal and nonverbal communicated behavior. Although, this humor assessment was validated, this study along with most other research within the field, still utilize the Booth-Butterfield and Booth-Butterfield's (1991) humor orientation scale.

Claus, Booth-Butterfield, and Chory (2012) utilized the humor orientation scale and conducted a study that examined the relationship between instructors' misbehaviors, and students' antisocial BATS (behavior alteration techniques). More specifically, they identified the roles of instructor attractiveness, humor, and relational closeness in correlation with the students' antisocial behaviors. They found that an instructor's humor orientation was negatively related to students' likelihood of communicating antisocial BATS within the classroom setting. Therefore, an instructor's use of humor within the instructional setting decreased these student BATS. Claus et al. (2012) also found that humor orientation was positively correlated with relational closeness. Thus, the more an instructor used humor in the classroom setting, the students felt closer and more connected to that instructor. Humor orientation, when used consistently and appropriately in the classroom setting ultimately yields a positive response from students.

Although humor may increase relational closeness amongst students and faculty, White's (2001) study determined that students and faculty perceive some types of humor differently. Furthermore, White (2001) found that both students and faculty thought that humor within the classroom should be used to gain attention, create a healthy learning environment, and relieve stress. Even though both students and faculty agreed on this notion of how humor should be used, the two groups varied when humor was used to handle unpleasant situations. Students felt that humor was appropriate to alleviate certain tensions within the class, although faculty believed it was not (White, 2001).

Following White's (2001) study, Lei, Cohen, and Russler (2010), examined the notion of instructors' perceptions of humor use within the classroom setting along with its benefits and drawbacks. Lei, et al. (2010) determined the benefits of humor being; Psychological (student) (i.e., mental health, stress relief, well being, self-esteem, self-image etc.), Social (relationship with students) (i.e., student morale, sense of trust, diminished fear/tension, reduces social status gap, etc.), and Cognitive (educational) (i.e., captures interest, increases attention, increases motivation, inspires creativity, etc.). Some drawbacks to humor that Lei, et al. found were; Degrading remarks of students (unrelated to course) (i.e., embarrassing stories, intelligence, religion, gender, etc.), Offensive Humor (types) (i.e., sexual, morbid, sarcasm, vulgar, etc.), and Excessive Humor (i.e., undermines credibility of instructor, lose focus of instructional objectives, etc.). Although Lei, et al. found that some forms of humor can actually have a negative impact on an instructor and student, Torok, McMorris, and Lin (2004), determined that students actually appreciated an instructors' use of humor within the classroom setting. This reinforces the notion that students appreciate an instructor's use of humor within the



classroom. Furthermore, they examined sarcasm and students' perceptions of an instructor's use of sarcasm, which Lei, et al. (2010) flagged as offensive. Although Torok et al. (2004) also noted that sarcasm was perceived by students as a negative form of humor in the open ended portion of their questionnaire, they found that students determined that they would use sarcasm to teach if they were college professors. Surprisingly enough it was one of the top three listed forms of humor that students said they would use if they were in a teaching position (Torok et al., 2004). Therefore, even though students perceived sarcasm as a negative form of humor they still were likely to use it within their own forms of teaching, if in that position. Thus, depending on the perceived type of humor (i.e., offensive, related, unrelated, etc.), its overall effectiveness may vary within the classroom setting. It can be concluded that humor, when used appropriately can yield positive classroom outcomes for all involved.

Although humor orientation within the classroom setting usually is linked to studies demonstrating positive results, Wanzer, Frymier, and Irwin (2010) developed the humor processing theory (IHPT) to further knowledge on humor use within the instructional setting. Wanzer et al., (2010), conceptualized the humor processing theory as how instructors' humorous messages are cognitively and affectively processed in the classroom to affect student retention. More specifically, they examine why certain types of instructional humor facilitate learning although others do not. Essentially Wanzer et al. (2010), developed this concept of the IHPT to determine whether or not an instructor's humor use helped students' retention of material in the classroom. The IHPT also indicates that students must be able to understand and decode an instructor's humor use, for the benefits of it to be reaped. If students cannot decode the humor, they will end up

confused and will not be able to retain the information. So if an instructor is using humor that a student does not understand, they will not gain any academic benefits from it.

There are multiple factors that play into students' ability to decode the instructor's humor. Frymier, Wanzer, and Wojtaszczyk (2008), determined that cultural and behavioral norms greatly affected students' perception of an instructor's humor. This finding by Frymier et al. (2008) helps explain Torok et al.'s (2004) findings on sarcasm. An individual's cultural or behavioral norms can greatly influence the way in which they perceive sarcasm and its appropriateness. If a student is from a culture that does not use sarcasm in the classroom or even in everyday life, they are not going to understand the true meaning behind it. The IHPT not only helps scholars identify students' ability to decode humorous messages, but it also aids in determining other influencing factors.

The IHPT can also be utilized to examine differences amongst student learning types. Goodboy, Booth-Butterfield, Bolkan, and Griffin (2015) examined the IHPT within their study in relation to grade-oriented students (GO) and learning oriented students (LO). They determined that both LO and GO reported higher levels of cognitive learning with humorous instructors who made the material engaging and motivational for either type of oriented student. Sidelinger (2014), also determined that the IHPT aided in student learning and helped decrease inappropriate conversations. This, in turn, led to higher communication satisfaction for students within the classroom. Overall, as long as students can decode an instructor's use of humor within the classroom setting and perceive it as appropriate, humor use is a positive communication behavior as multiple identified studies indicate. Although humor orientation has proven itself to be a positive

communication behavior, it has not been measured alongside how effective it is in predicting students' intellectual stimulation within the instructional setting.

### *Intellectual Stimulation*

Within the classroom setting, instructors act not only as facilitators of knowledge, but they also act as leaders. Burns (1978) defined transformational leadership as a style of leadership that transforms follower attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors, to a higher realm of motivation where the leader inspires followers to be motivated to rise above and beyond current levels of achievement and performance to even higher levels of achievement and performance (p. 69). Bass (1999) also defined the term transformational leadership as referring to the leader moving the follower beyond immediate self-interests through idealized influence (charisma), inspiration, intellectual stimulation, or individualized consideration (p. 11). Furthermore, multiple characteristics were identified that made up an instructor who was perceived to demonstrate transformational leadership qualities within the classroom. Charismatic Leadership, Individualized Consideration, and Intellectual Stimulation are all faucets of transformational leadership. Charismatic leadership can be displayed when the leader envisions a desirable future, articulates how it can be reached, sets an example to be followed, sets high standards of performance, and shows determination and confidence (Bass, 1999). Individualized consideration is displayed when leaders pay attention to the developmental needs of followers and support and coach the development of their followers (p. 11). Last, intellectual stimulation as being displayed when the leader helps followers to become more innovative and creative

(Bass, 1999). Therefore, the more a leader encourages creative independent thought, the more intellectually stimulated their followers will be.

Congruent to Bass' (1999) identification of transformational leadership qualities, Noland and Richards (2014), examined transformational leadership within the classroom setting. They concluded that transformational teachers focus not only on learning outcomes, but also they can achieve them (p. 15). These types of instructors are constantly trying to help their students achieve their academic goals. Noland and Richard (2015) further this concept by examining transformational leadership as servant teaching. What they concluded within this latter study was that behaviors such as organizational skills, selflessness, and out-of-class behaviors were linked more consistently with students' engagement versus affect and motivation (Noland & Richards, 2015, p. 27). Thus, being an instructor that was perceived as organized, selfless, and available for help outside of class, had students that were more engaged and motivated for that course. Furthermore, Harvey, Royal, and Stout (2003), examined this notion of transformational leadership within the classroom setting in relation to students' attitudes and ratings. They concluded that an instructor's ability to stimulate students intellectually might have an important relationship to students' involvement and their overall evaluation of the instructor's performance (p. 400). Thus, the more intellectually stimulated students felt by their instructor the more likely they were to positively evaluate their instructor's performance within the classroom. The previous literature on transformational leadership/teaching indicated that intellectual stimulation within the classroom setting is arguably one of the most important things an instructor can do to engage and motivate students in learning.

To further this notion of understanding intellectual stimulation Bolkan and Goodboy (2010) decided that they needed a way to measure intellectual stimulation separate from transformational leadership. Since intellectual stimulation is a dimension of transformational leadership, Bolkan and Goodboy (2010) created a separate measure for student intellectual stimulation. Within the validation of their newfound scale, results suggested that students felt empowered by and perceived that they learned more from professors who got them excited and involved in the learning process, challenged them to be the best students that they could be, showed them that hard work is worth it, and helped them think deeply and critically about course concepts (p. 103). Chowdhry and Osowska (2017) also utilized the student intellectual stimulation dimension within their study. They determined that for an instructor to be successful in intellectually stimulating their students, they needed to develop encouraging learning activities that engaged deep thinking, as well as, challenging course content to ensure that the students were reflecting deeply and able to draw their own conclusions about the content.

Bolkan, Goodboy and Griffin (2011) wanted to determine if student intellectual stimulation affected their approaches to learning and motivation within the course. They found that when instructors influenced students' intrinsic motivation through the use of intellectually stimulating behaviors, students approached their learning in deep and strategic ways, and were less likely to adopt a surface-level approach to their studies (pp. 343-344). Last, Bolkan (2015) furthered the validity of this measure by examining, intellectually stimulated students' intrinsic motivation that in correlation with affective learning and student engagement. Results suggested that affective learning acted as a mediator of the relationship between student intellectual stimulation and intrinsic

motivation. In other words, students appreciated and valued being asked to critically analyze their learning. Overall, Bolkan's research discovered that when students became engaged in the classroom and enjoyed their coursework they worked harder in their classes with the goal of mastering the material instead of simply working for a grade (2015, p. 87). Although student intellectual stimulation is a variable that scarcely studied on its own, the previous literature on it determines that it can in fact lead to students being more engaged within the classroom setting.

### *Student Interest & Engagement*

Student interest and engagement within any given course is key for students' cognitive and affective learning. Mazer (2012) conceptualized student engagement and interest within his study. He noted that student engagement could be fostered by effective teacher communication behaviors and stimulated by student interests (p. 100). Each of these learning behaviors are usually studied as one item however, both contain multiple dimensions. Student engagement contains four dimensions operationalized by Mazer (2012); *Out-of-class* behaviors refer to studying, talking to other students about course material and reviewing notes. *Silent in-class* behaviors involve students listening attentively and giving the instructor their full attention throughout the course. *Thinking about course content* refers to how students think about the material and can relate it to their own lives. The last dimension is *Oral in-class* behaviors refer to students participating and sharing their thoughts and opinions during class (pp. 108-109). Frymier and Houser (2016) also examined this dimension of oral participation in student engagement. They found that if an instructor is trying to gauge the level of student

engagement, they should rely more on students' nonverbal behaviors rather than their oral participation. Frymier and Houser also noted that oral participation may be much more useful for students in certain types of classrooms with certain types of learning outcomes (2016, p. 100). Therefore, depending on the classroom, students' oral participation may vary.

Student interest contains two separate dimensions. Mazer (2012) identified those dimensions as emotional interest and cognitive interest. *Emotional interest* was conceptualized as an affective response in students who are enthused, engaged, and excited by course content and the class experience (p. 104). *Cognitive interest* was conceptualized as a cognitive response in students who are interested in the material/topics because they are able to understand, recall, and remember course material (Mazer, 2012, p. 104). Although emotional interest signifies a time during the lecture or lesson that emotionally engages students, cognitive interest affects the readers' attention and narrows their focus. Student engagement and interest have also been examined in correlation with student learning outcomes. As stated previously, students' levels of engagement and interest within a course greatly influenced their cognitive and affective learning. Mazer's (2013a) results suggested that students' emotional and cognitive interests are associated with their engagement including silent and oral in-class behaviors and out-of-class activities (p. 136). Furthermore, the findings indicated that there is a relationship between students' emotional and cognitive interest and their tendency to think about the course content. However, there are other factors that can influence students' interest and engagement within a given course.

Linville (2014) examined students' individualized traits in relation to their interest and engagement within the course. Linville found that individual student traits had an impact on their engagement and interest in the course (p. 209). Thus, depending on a student's personality and identity development, they may in turn be more or less interested and engaged within the course. This meant that essentially no matter what the instructor did to try to increase interest and engagement, a student's individualized traits could deter that effort.

Instructors behaviors also can affect students' interest and engagement within the instructional setting. In a study done by Mazer (2013b) instructor communication behaviors were examined in relation to a student's interest and engagement within a given course. What was discovered was that immediacy and clarity, can arouse students' interest. Furthermore, immediacy behaviors such as smiling, moving close to and making eye contact with students, and using warm vocal cues and personalized examples can energize students, stimulate emotional interest, and engage students so that they pay more attention to course content and learn more (Mazer, 2013b, p. 93). Humor orientation is often noted as a form of immediacy that instructors provide their students within the classroom. Mazer (2013a, 2013b) did not specifically examine humor orientation as one of these immediate behaviors in relation to students' interest, and engagement, which is why this humor orientation was chosen for this specific study.

Instructors misbehaviors are also related to student interest and engagement within the instructional setting. Broekelman-Post, Tacconelli, Guzman, Rios, Calero and Latif (2016), furthered this concept by examining this notion of instructor misbehaviors and its effect on student interest and engagement. They found that instructor



misbehaviors impacted students interest and engagement negatively. Therefore, the more likely an instructor was to misbehave, students were more likely to be disengaged and uninterested within that course. Borzea and Goodboy (2016) advanced this concept of instructor misbehavior and its effects on student engagement and interest. They found that although an instructor self-disclosed, if they partook in any perceived misbehaviors, it not only weakened the students' perception of their self-disclosure, but it also led to a weakened sense of engagement and interest within the course (Borzea & Goodboy, 2016, p. 562). In sum, students' interest and engagement has multiple underlying contributing factors that the previously literature reinforces.

## Summary

Although previous research on humor orientation, student intellectual stimulation, student interest, and student engagement have been significant to instructional research, the combination of the chosen variables has not been examined before. Although intellectual stimulation has been validated to enhance student learning in Bolkan and Goodboy's (2010), it has not been examined in correlation with instructor humor orientation. Humor is often linked positively to learning amongst the other given variables; however, it has not been directly named as a predictor of student intellectual stimulation, interest, and engagement. Although all noted variables are validated as positive communication behaviors within the instructional setting separately, if used together, they could enhance student learning and instructor knowledge immensely. Therefore, this study will aim to answer if an instructor's humor orientation acts as a predictor of students' intellectual stimulation, interest, and engagement within a course. Thus, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H1: Students' perceptions of an instructor's humor orientation will act as a predictor of heightened student intellectual stimulation in the classroom.

H2: Students' perceptions of an instructor's humor orientation will act as a predictor of heightened student engagement in the classroom.

H3: Students' perceptions of an instructor's humor orientation will act as a predictor of heightened student interest in the classroom.

### **Chapter 3: Methodology**

This chapter explains the steps that were taken to gather data within this study. First, this chapter gives a brief description of the participants' demographics, followed by an explanation of the procedure and specific tool of measure, which can be found in Appendix A. Each variable is then described and analyzed within this section. Last, this chapter concludes with a brief description of the statistical analysis that was used to analyze the data.

#### **Participants**

Participants were 337 college students enrolled at two Northern California Universities, one private and one public, during the Spring 2018 semester. All participants were asked to report on their last attended course that they were currently enrolled in. There were 62.4% female participants and 37.4% male participants, whose ages ranged from 18 to 47 years. The participants included 17.2% Freshman, 13.9% Sophomore, 30.3% Junior, 37.4% Senior, and 1.2% Graduate Student. The participant's ethnicities included; 31.5% Caucasian, 33.2% Hispanic, 0.9% Native American, 2.7% African American, 26.1% Asian, and 5.6% indicated other. Students reported on 56.4% male instructors, and 43.6% reported on female instructors. The participants reported on several different subject matters however, the majority of the participants reported on Communication studies at 43%, 18.1% Science (i. e. , Biology, Chemistry etc. ), and 28.5% Other. Participants were asked if they had taken a course

with that instructor that they reported on; 72% indicated that they have not taken a course with that instructor and 27.4% of participants indicated that they have taken a course with that reported instructor. Participants were asked what grade they expected to receive at the end of the course, results indicated, 51.6% of participants expected to receive an A, 40.1% of participants expected to receive a B, 8% of participants expected to receive a C, 0.3% of participants expected to receive a D, and 0% of participants expected to receive an F.

### **Procedures and Data Collection**

Utilizing a paper-and-pencil questionnaire participants were recruited for data collection from any major, or course within each university. Participants were instructed to complete a series of instruments in reference to the instructor of the course they attended immediately prior to data collection. Participants were then instructed to reference the same course for their intellectual stimulation, interest, and engagement within that given course. In total, the questionnaire contained four instruments and eighty-seven questions. One of the measures, was an open-ended question that students were asked to fill in about their instructor's use of sarcasm within the course. Additionally, participants were provided a cover letter attached to the questionnaire going over their rights and confidentiality within the study. The cover letter thanked participants for their time and explained that their participation will help lend insight to the instructional field of communication research.

### **Measurement of Variables**

This section contains a detailed description for each measurement tool. Each scale that was utilized is described, and the validity/reliability is reported. All

measurements used have proven to be reliable, accurate ways to measure the selected variables in previous studies conducted.

*Humor Orientation Scale.* A modified version of the Humor Orientation scale created by Booth-Butterfield & Booth-Butterfield (1991) was employed to measure students' perceptions of their instructor's humor orientation (HO). Participants were asked to answer 17 statements on a 5-point Likert scale with responses ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) about their instructors use of humor within the course (i.e., "this instructor regularly tells jokes and funny stories in front of the class," "Students would say this instructor is a funny person"). Previous alpha reliability obtained was .92 in a study by Wanzer, Booth-Butterfield & Booth-Butterfield (1995). In this study Cronbach's alpha reliability obtained was .96 ( $M=3.57$ ,  $SD=.83$ ).

*Student Intellectual Stimulation Scale (SISS).* The Student Intellectual Stimulation Scale developed by Bolkan and Goodboy (2010) was utilized to ask participants the frequency of their instructor's use of intellectually stimulating teaching styles. Bolkan and Goodboy (2010) created a 30-item scale that measured how intellectually stimulated students felt within a given course because of their instructors teaching style. Participants were asked to answer 30 statements on a 5-point Likert scale with responses ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The Student Intellectual Stimulation Scale explores dimensions of intellectual stimulation through three scales: interactive teaching style (i.e., "uses unique activities to get the class involved with the course material", "Has a superior teaching style compared to my other teachers"), challenging students (i.e., "assigns demanding but worthwhile assignments," "helps me come to conclusions about

what I learn through discussion”), and encouraging independent thought (i.e., “helps me think critically about course concepts”, asks for personal examples from students in class when teaching concepts”). A short 10-item form is also available for this measure however, to ensure complete validation of the instrument this study used the 30-item measure. Previous alpha reliability obtained was .96 in a study done by Bolkan (2015). In this study Cronbach’s alpha reliability obtained was .90 ( $M=3.37$ ,  $SD=.59$ ).

*Student Interest Scale.* The Student Interest Scale developed by Mazer (2012), was employed to measure students interest within the reported course. Participants were asked to answer 16 statements on a 5-point Likert scale with responses ranging from 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree) about their interest within the reported course. Students were asked to indicate the degree to which they agreed with the statement “I am interested in this class because.” The student interest scale measures two different dimensions of interest; emotional and cognitive. Examples of the types of questions utilized to measure emotional interest are “the class experience makes me feel good” and “the class makes me feel excited.” Examples of questions utilized to measure cognitive interest are “the topics covered in the course fascinate me” and “the material fascinates me.” Previous alpha reliability obtained was .96 for emotional interest and .88 for cognitive interest in a study by Linvill (2014). Cronbach’s alpha reliability obtained within the current study for both emotional and cognitive interest was .96 ( $M=3.76$ ,  $SD=.88$ ).

*Student Engagement Scale.* A modified version of the Student Engagement Scale developed by Mazer (2012), was employed to measure students' engagement within the reported course. Participants were asked to answer 13 statements on a 5-point Likert scale with responses ranging from 1 (Never) to 5 (Always) about their engagement within the reported course. The student engagement scale measures four different dimensions of engagement: silent in-class behaviors (i.e., "attended class"), oral in-class behaviors (i.e., "participated during class discussions by sharing your thoughts"), thinking about course content (i.e., "thought about how the course material related in your everyday life"), and out-of-class behaviors (i.e., "reviewed your notes outside of class"). Previous alpha reliability obtained by Linvill (2014) was .88, .94, .93, and .77. Cronbach's alpha reliability obtained within the current study was .89 ( $M=3.54$ ,  $SD=.78$ ).

*Open-ended question on sarcasm.* An open ended question portion of the questionnaire was also utilized to measure the type of humor that students perceived their instructor to use. More specifically, if they perceived their instructor to use sarcasm. The following questions were based off of Torok et al's., (2004) study. The participants were first instructed to answer whether or not their instructor used sarcasm within the given course. Then participants were asked to report whether or not they felt sarcasm was an appropriate form of humor for instructors to use and why they did or did not feel that way.

## **Chapter 4: Results**

This chapter reports the results obtained from the data collection of this study. The first section of this chapter describes the data set, which is followed by correlations, and regression analysis on the following variables; humor orientation, student intellectual stimulation, student interest and student engagement. The final section of this chapter reports the statistical analysis in relation to the three hypotheses.

### **Descriptive Analysis**

Table 1 (p. 29) demonstrates the characteristics of the data in relation to humor orientation, student intellectual stimulation, student interest, and student engagement. Table 2 (p. 30) demonstrates the relationship between means, standard deviations, correlations, and reliabilities for the study. Tables 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, & 8 (pp. 31-33) demonstrate the regression analyses amongst the independent variable and dependent variables. The tables help validate an in-depth understanding of the results. Furthermore, the tables help explain the results within the following chapter to connect implications and conclusions about the reported data.



**Table 1:** *Descriptive Analysis of Variables*

Variables	N	Mean	SD	Range
Humor Orientation	337	3.57	.83	4.00
Student Intellectual Stimulation	331	3.37	.59	3.37
Student Interest	334	3.76	.88	4.00
Student Engagement	336	3.54	.78	4.00

Table 1 demonstrates the descriptive statistics for the independent and dependent variables within the study. The highest mean score among the variables obtained was student interest ( $M=3.76$ ), followed by, humor orientation ( $M=3.57$ ), and student engagement ( $M=3.54$ ). The variable that received the lowest mean score was student intellectual stimulation ( $M=3.37$ ).

Standard deviations were also reported in the table above. As shown, student intellectual stimulation, also had the lowest variance amongst participants ( $SD=.59$ ). This assumes that there was a minor variance amongst participants reporting on their perception of intellectual stimulation use by the instructor of the reported course. This assumes that students' responses about their instructors use of intellectual stimulation did not deviate from the mean as much as the other variables of the study. Furthermore, student engagement obtained the second lowest variance ( $SD=.78$ ), followed by humor orientation ( $SD=.83$ ), and student interest ( $SD=.88$ ). Thus, in result of student interest

obtaining the largest variance, it assumes that students' interests varied more within the reported class.

**Table 2:** Means, Standard Deviations, Cronbach's Alphas, and Correlation Matrix

Variables	M	SD	$\alpha$	1	2	3	4
1. HO	3.57	.83	.94	--			
2. SISS	3.37	.59	.91	.67	--		
3. SI	3.76	.88	.96	.68	.77	--	
4. SE	3.54	.78	.89	.26	.34	.39	--

Note: All correlation coefficients are significant at the  $p < .01$  level.

Table 2 demonstrates correlations, standard deviations and means amongst the variables. As shown in table 2 above, all of the variables were significantly positively correlated at the  $p < .01$  level. Student intellectual stimulation and student interest obtained the most significant positive correlation amongst the variables ( $r = .77$ ,  $p < .01$ ). This assumes that when a student feels intellectually stimulated by the instructor, the more interested they will be in the reported course as well. Humor orientation and student interest were also significantly positively correlated ( $r = .68$ ,  $p < .01$ ). This suggests that when an instructor is perceived to use humor within their instruction, students will also be more interested within the given course. Humor orientation and student intellectual stimulation were also significantly positively correlated ( $r = .67$ ,  $p < .01$ ). This assumes that when an instructor is perceived to use humor within their instruction, they are also perceived as having a course that is also intellectually stimulating for their

students. Although all of the given variables are significantly positively correlated, the three listed had the highest positive correlations amongst the group.

### Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis 1 stated, “Students’ perceptions of an instructor's humor orientation will act as a predictor of heightened student intellectual stimulation”. Results of the linear regression analysis deemed a significant positive relationship amongst perceived instructor humor within the course and student intellectual stimulation. This means that when students perceive an instructor to use humor within a given course, it acts as a predictor for student intellectual stimulation within that course as well. Therefore, Hypothesis 1 is supported.

**Table 3:** *Regression Analysis Student Intellectual Stimulation*

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	1.67	.11		15.74	.00
Humor Orientation	.48	.03	.67	16.39	.00

**Table 4:** Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig . F
1	.67	.45	.45	.44	.45	268.71	1	329	.00

Note:(constant), Humor Orientation. \*Dependent Variable: Student Intellectual Stimulation

A simple linear regression was calculated to predict student intellectual stimulation based on students' perceptions of instructor humor. A significant regression equation was determined ( $F(1, 329)=268.71$   $p<.00$ ), with an  $R^2$  of .45. If humor orientation has a 1-unit change, there is a .48-unit increase in student intellectual stimulation.

Hypothesis 2 stated, “Students’ perceptions of an instructor’s humor orientation will act as a predictor of heightened student engagement”. Results of the linear regression analysis deemed a significant positive relationship amongst perceived instructor humor within the course and student interest. This means that when students perceive an instructor to use humor within a given course, it acts as a predictor for students to be more interested in the course. Therefore, Hypothesis 2 is supported.

**Table 5:** *Regression Analysis Student Interest*

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
3 (Constant)	1.18	.16		7.52	.00
Humor Orientation	.72	.04	.68	16.86	.00

\*Dependent Variable: Student Interest

**Table 6:** Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig . F
2	.68	.46	.46	.64	284.10	284.10	1	332	.00

Note:(constant), Humor Orientation. \*Dependent Variable: Student Interest

A simple linear regression was calculated to predict students' interest based on their perceptions of instructor humor use within the classroom. A significant regression equation was determined ( $F(1, 332)=284.10$   $p<.00$ ), with an  $R^2$  of .46. If humor orientation has a 1-unit change, there is a .72-unit increase in student interest.



Hypothesis 3 stated, “Students’ perceptions of an instructor’s humor orientation will act as a predictor of heightened student interest.” Results of the linear regression analysis deemed a significant positive relationship amongst perceived instructor humor within the course and student engagement. This means that when students perceive an instructor to use humor within a given course, it acts as a predictor for students being more engaged within the course as well. Therefore, Hypothesis 3 is supported.

**Table 7:** *Regression Analysis Student Engagement*

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
4 (Constant)	2.67	.18		14.67	.00
Humor Orientation	.24	.05	.26	4.90	.00

\*Dependent Variable: Student Engagement

**Table 8:** Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig . F
3	.26	.07	.06	.75	.07	24.04	1	334	.00

Note:(constant), Humor Orientation. \*Dependent Variable: Student Engagement

A simple linear regression was calculated to predict students' engagement based on their perceptions of instructor humor use within the classroom. A significant regression equation was determined ( $F(1, 334)=24.04$   $p<.00$ ), with an  $R^2$  of .07. If humor orientation has a 1-unit change, there is a .24-unit increase in student engagement.

## Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusion

### Implications

The current study lends substantial insight to the instructional field of communication by identifying students' perceptions of instructor humor and the predicted outcomes of; student intellectual stimulation, student interest, and student engagement. This study is noteworthy because of its use of student intellectual stimulation. Student intellectual stimulation is rarely examined as a singular dimension. Oftentimes, student intellectual stimulation is measured as a dimension of transformational leadership. However, within the current study, since student intellectual stimulation is measured on its own, it can be fully understood and validated as its own separate construct. A student's perception of their instructor's humor orientation was utilized to determine whether or not it acted as a predictor of student intellectual stimulation (SISS), student interest, and student engagement within the instructional setting.

The first major implication of the current study was that students' perceptions of an instructor's humor orientation acted as a predictor to student interest within the given course. This is of significance because when students perceived an instructor to use humor within the classroom, they were more likely to be interested both emotionally and cognitively within that course. Furthermore, by students being more emotionally and cognitively interested within the course, their affective and cognitive learning is increased

within the course. As a result, instructor humor not only acts as a predictor to student interest within the classroom, but it also can help heighten student learning both cognitively and affectively.

The second major implication of the study was that a student's perception of an instructor's humor orientation acted as a predictor to student intellectual stimulation within the reported course. This is of significance because it demonstrates that the more an instructor was perceived to use humor within the course, the more intellectually stimulated students were within that course. Furthermore, instructor humor within the course can be linked directly as a predictor of the three dimensions of student intellectual stimulation outlined by Bolkan and Goodboy (2010). The first dimension is *interactive teaching style*. This can be demonstrated by an instructor that uses unique activities to get the class involved within the course material etc. Therefore, when an instructor uses humor within their instruction, they also may use more unique activities to get the class involved with the course material. It is fair to assume that humor use can actually be utilized within these unique class involvement activities.

The second dimension is *challenging students*. This can be demonstrated when an instructor assigns coursework that is demanding but worthwhile. Therefore, an instructor that is perceived to use humor within their course may also be foreseen as someone who assigns demanding yet worthwhile coursework. Students affect toward the instructor perceived as humorous within the classroom may also aid in this dimension. Thus, if students have a high affect for this instructor because of their perceived humor use, they may view the coursework as more worthwhile versus an instructor that is perceived to have no humor use within the reported course.

Last, *encouraging independent thought* is the third dimension of student intellectual stimulation that perceived instructor humor can act as a predictor of. Encouraging independent thought can be demonstrated when an instructor asks for personal examples from students when teaching concepts, etc. Therefore, perceived instructor humor use within the classroom setting can actually help predict this teaching style. An instructor that is perceived to use humor within the classroom also is perceived to encourage independent thought amongst students. An assumption as to why instructor humor is a predictor of this dimension is that humor orientation is foreseen as a form of immediacy. Immediacy creates relational closeness amongst students which allows them to feel secure in sharing personal stories and examples within a given course. Thus, as perceived instructor humor acts as an immediacy behavior, it can encourage students to feel comfortable enough to share personal stories that relate to the course content.

The third major implication of the current study was that students' perceptions of an instructor's humor orientation acted as a predictor of student engagement within the reported course. Although an instructor's humor orientation was a significant predictor of student engagement shown by the current regression analysis, it was the least significant amongst the other dependent variables. An assumption as to why student engagement was the lowest predicting variable can be directly linked to the open ended question on sarcasm. Sarcasm was foreseen as both a positive and negative form of humor. Participants stated that in order for sarcasm to enhance engagement, it had to be clear that it was, in fact, sarcasm and non-offensive. Others within the current study noted in the open-ended question portion that sarcasm was not appropriate for instructors to use within the instructional setting because it can be used to exclude or poke fun at certain

students. Others within the open ended portion of the questionnaire determined that they did not appreciate sarcasm because they thought that it was not necessary to help with understanding of the course content. Therefore, it can be assumed within the current study that the instructors that students reported on did not use sarcasm clearly or appropriately, which could be a reason why engagement was the lowest predicted variable of humor orientation. Thus, student engagement being the lowest predicted variable from perceived instructor humor orientation can be directly linked to the varied responses that sarcasm elicits within the study. The current findings lend significant insight to the realm of instructional communication research.

### **Limitations**

The findings of this study did not go without a few limitations. One of the major limitations of the study was the scarce amount of previous research examining student intellectual stimulation. Oftentimes, student intellectual stimulation was examined as a dimension of transformational leadership versus a singular variable. Another limitation within the study was the length of the student intellectual stimulation scale (SISS) (Bolkan & Goodboy, 2010). A shortened form is available; however, the current study utilized the 30-item scale to ensure complete validity of all measurable dimensions of student intellectual stimulation. At times, this led to participant fatigue, which resulted in a lack of 73 incomplete surveys. Last, it would have been beneficial, if time allowed, to gain participants from various universities across the country. This may have helped enhance understanding on how students' perceptions of instructor humor vary across multiple universities around the country.

## **Future Research**

To contribute more to this area of study, instructor perceptions of student humor is worth examining. Oftentimes, students' perceptions of an instructor's behavior such as humor are primarily the focus of a study. However, by understanding how an instructor is affected by student behaviors such as humor orientation, one can better identify what instructor behaviors are motivated by these particular student traits. Examining an instructor's humor orientation as a predictor of student humor orientation would also be a significant study within the instructional field. It would be interesting to understand whether or not an instructor's humor use affects students' willingness to also use humor. Lastly, sarcasm is a form of humor worth exploring more within the field of instructional research. Sarcasm often has mixed reviews amongst students. Although some students report sarcasm as a negative form of humor used by instructors, others report it as appropriate as long as it is clearly sarcasm. Due to variation amongst responses for appropriateness of sarcasm, it would be beneficial to further explore an instructor's use of sarcasm within the instructional setting.

## **Conclusion**

Perceived instructor humor use within the classroom can act as immense benefit to cognitive and affective learning when used correctly. However, it is of great importance to understand what behaviors instructor humor orientation predicts within the classroom context. This study aimed to examine whether or not perceived instructor humor orientation was a predictor of heightened student intellectual stimulation, interest, and engagement within the instructional setting. Although all findings were proven to be

significant, it was found that instructor humor orientation was the greatest predictor of student interest within the given course, followed by student intellectual stimulation. An instructor's humor orientation was also a predictor of student engagement within the classroom. However, engagement had the smallest predicting value amongst the dependent variables. It is fair to assume that this can be because the type and clarity of humor that the instructor used (i.e., sarcasm). Thus, it is of importance to fully understand the implications that deviate from instructor humor as a predictor of student intellectual stimulation, interest, and engagement within the instructional setting.



## APPENDIX OF SCALES

FIGURE 1: Humor Orientation Scale (Booth-Butterfield &amp; Booth-Butterfield, 1991)

1. This instructor regularly tells jokes and funny stories in front of the class.
2. Students usually laugh when this instructor tells a joke or story.
- 3. This instructor has no memory for jokes or funny stories.**
4. This instructor can be funny without having to rehearse a joke.
5. Being funny is a natural communication style with this instructor.
- 6. This instructor cannot tell a joke well.**
- 7. Students seldom ask this instructor to tell stories.**
8. Students would say that this instructor is a funny person.
- 9. Students don't seem to pay close attention when this instructor tells a joke.**
- 10. Even funny jokes seem flat when this instructor tells them.**
11. This instructor can easily remember jokes and stories.
12. People often ask this instructor to tell jokes and stories.
- 13. Students would not say that this instructor is a funny person.**
- 14. This instructor doesn't tell jokes or stories even when asked to.**
15. This instructor tells stories and jokes very well.
16. Of all the people I know, this instructor is one of the funniest.
17. This instructor uses humor to communicate in a variety of situations.

\*Items in bold were reverse coded.

FIGURE 2: Student Interest Scale (Mazer, 2012)

I am interested in this class because...

1. I feel enthused about being in class.
2. The class makes me feel excited.
3. The class causes me to feel energized.
4. The topics covered in the course fascinate me.
5. Being in the class is enjoyable.
6. The class experience makes me feel good.
7. The material fascinates me.
8. I like the things we cover in class.
9. The class experience feels very positive.
10. I can remember the course material.
11. I feel like I am learning topics covered in the course.
12. I can understand the flow of ideas.
13. I understand the course material.
14. The information covered in the course is making me more knowledgeable.
15. The information in the course is useful.
16. I realize what is expected of me.

FIGURE 3: Student Engagement Scale (Mazer, 2012).

1. Listened attentively to the instructor during class.
2. Gave your teacher your full attention in class.
3. Listened attentively to your classmates' contributions during class discussions.
4. Attended class.
5. Participated during class discussions by sharing your thoughts/opinions.
6. Orally participated during class discussions.
7. Thought about how you can utilize the course material in your everyday life.
8. Thought about how the course material related to your life.
9. Thought about how the course material will benefit you in your future career.
10. Reviewed your notes outside of class.
11. Studied for a test or quiz.
12. Talked about the course material with others outside of class.
13. Took it upon yourself to read additional material in the course topic area.

FIGURE 4: Student Intellectual Stimulation Scale (Bolkan &amp; Goodboy, 2010)

1. Uses unique activities to get the class involved with the course material.
2. Uses exciting teaching techniques in class.
3. Has a boring teaching style.
4. Uses an innovative teaching style to get students excited about learning.
5. Presents course material in a novel way.
6. Plays games in class to help students learn.
7. Helps students get excited about learning through classroom activities.
8. Uses the same sort of activities that any other teacher would use.
9. Has a superior teaching style compared to my other teachers.
10. Stimulates students to help us get involved in the learning process in a variety of ways.
11. Challenges me to be the best student I can be.
12. Assigns demanding but worthwhile assignments.
13. Helps me see things we learn about in new perspectives.
14. Does not challenge me to see course content in new ways.
15. Challenges me to support my ideas in class with evidence and examples.
16. Encourages me to look into course concepts in a meaningful way.
17. Helps me come to conclusions about what I learn through discussion.
18. Makes me work hard to ensure that I really know the material well.
19. Helps me realize that my hard work is worth it.
20. Pushes me to produce quality work.
21. Helps me think critically about course concepts.
22. Encourages independent thought from students.
23. Does not get me to think through problems in class.
24. Helps me think deeply about the concepts taught in class.
25. Encourages me to come to my own conclusions about course materials.
26. Asks for personal examples from students in class when teaching concepts.
27. Wants me to think critically about what we are learning.
28. Would appreciate a student who expresses his/her own opinion, even if it's not exactly right.
29. Does not help me think in an analytical way about what we learn.
30. Wants me to form my own conclusions about the course content.

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## APPENDIX: COMMUNICATION SURVEY

Thank you for taking part in this survey. Your participation is significant to this area of study. Please answer the following questions as completely and truthfully as possible. This survey is voluntary and all information is completely confidential.

Please read each of the following statements carefully. For each of the statements, complete these items in regard to the course you attended **immediately prior** to receiving this questionnaire.

Identify this course by its **subject matter (e.g., Biology, Math, Psychology)**

\_\_\_\_\_

What is the sex of the instructor? (Circle one.)            Male            Female

Have you taken any other courses with this instructor other than the class you are reporting on?

now?            YES            NO

**Directions:** Below, please indicate the extent to which your instructor from the reported course does the following things.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

\_\_\_\_\_ This instructor regularly tells jokes and funny stories in front of the class.

\_\_\_\_\_ Students usually laugh when this instructor tells a joke or story.

\_\_\_\_\_ This instructor has no memory for jokes or funny stories.

\_\_\_\_\_ This instructor can be funny without having to rehearse a joke.

\_\_\_\_\_ Being funny is a natural communication style with this instructor.

\_\_\_\_\_ This instructor cannot tell a joke well.

\_\_\_\_\_ Students seldom ask this instructor to tell stories.

\_\_\_\_\_ Students would say that this instructor is a funny person.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

\_\_\_\_\_ Students don't seem to pay close attention when this instructor tells a joke.

\_\_\_\_\_ Even funny jokes seem flat when this instructor tells them.

\_\_\_\_\_ This instructor can easily remember jokes and stories.

\_\_\_\_\_ People often ask this instructor to tell jokes and stories.

\_\_\_\_\_ Students would not say that this instructor is a funny person.

\_\_\_\_\_ This instructor doesn't tell jokes or stories even when asked to.

\_\_\_\_\_ This instructor tells stories and jokes very well.

\_\_\_\_\_ Of all the people I know, this instructor is one of the funniest.

\_\_\_\_\_ This instructor uses humor to communicate in a variety of situations.

**Directions:** Below, please indicate the extent to which the instructor from the course you just identified does the following things.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

\_\_\_\_\_ Uses unique activities to get the class involved with the course material.

\_\_\_\_\_ Uses exciting teaching techniques in class.

\_\_\_\_\_ Has a boring teaching style.

\_\_\_\_\_ Uses an innovative teaching style to get students excited about learning.

\_\_\_\_\_ Presents course material in a novel way.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

- \_\_\_\_\_ Plays games in class to help students learn.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Helps students get excited about learning through classroom activities.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Uses the same sort of activities that any other teacher would use.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Has a superior teaching style compared to my other teachers.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Stimulates students to help us get involved in the learning process in a variety of ways.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Challenges me to be the best student I can be.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Assigns demanding but worthwhile assignments.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Helps me see things we learn about in new perspectives.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Does not challenge me to see course content in new ways.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Challenges me to support my ideas in class with evidence and examples.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Encourages me to look into course concepts in a meaningful way.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Helps me come to conclusions about what I learn through discussion.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Makes me work hard to ensure that I really know the material well.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Helps me realize that my hard work is worth it.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Pushes me to produce quality work.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Helps me think critically about course concepts.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Encourages independent thought from students.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Does not get me to think through problems in class.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

\_\_\_\_\_ Helps me think deeply about the concepts taught in class.

\_\_\_\_\_ Encourages me to come to my own conclusions about course materials.

\_\_\_\_\_ Asks for personal examples from students in class when teaching concepts.

\_\_\_\_\_ Wants me to think critically about what we are learning.

\_\_\_\_\_ Would appreciate a student who expresses his/her own opinion, even if it's not exactly right.

\_\_\_\_\_ Does not help me think in an analytical way about what we learn.

\_\_\_\_\_ Wants me to form my own conclusions about the course content.

**Directions:** Below, please indicate the extent to which you are interested in the reported course.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

I am interested in this class because. . .

\_\_\_\_\_ I feel enthused about being in class.

\_\_\_\_\_ The class makes me feel excited.

\_\_\_\_\_ The class causes me to feel energized.

\_\_\_\_\_ The topics covered in the course fascinate me.

\_\_\_\_\_ Being in the class is enjoyable.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

\_\_\_\_\_ The class experience makes me feel good.

\_\_\_\_\_ The material fascinates me.

\_\_\_\_\_ I like the things we cover in class.

\_\_\_\_\_ The class experience feels very positive.

\_\_\_\_\_ I can remember the course material.

\_\_\_\_\_ I feel like I am learning topics covered in the course.

\_\_\_\_\_ I can understand the flow of ideas.

\_\_\_\_\_ I understand the course material.

\_\_\_\_\_ The information covered in the course is making me more knowledgeable.

\_\_\_\_\_ The information in the course is useful.

\_\_\_\_\_ I realize what is expected of me.

**Directions:** Below, please indicate the extent to which you do the following things within the reported class.

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Very Often	Always

\_\_\_\_\_ Listened attentively to the instructor during class.

\_\_\_\_\_ Gave your teacher your full attention in class.

\_\_\_\_\_ Listened attentively to your classmates' contributions during class discussions.

\_\_\_\_\_ Attended class.





**Please respond to a few additional items about yourself.**

1. What grade do you expect to receive in the class you attended immediately prior to receiving this questionnaire? (Circle one. )

A      B      C      D      F

2. Sex (Circle one.): Male      Female

3. Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Years

4. What year in school are you? (Circle one.)

Freshman      Sophomore      Junior      Senior      Graduate

5. Which of the following best describes your racial/ethnic background? (Please check one. )

\_\_\_\_\_Caucasian      \_\_\_\_\_Hispanic      \_\_\_\_\_Native

American

\_\_\_\_\_African American      \_\_\_\_\_Asian      \_\_\_\_\_Other

**THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING!**