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interventions and focused efforts to enhance learners reading skills, a substantial improvement became evident. The multifaceted approach employed in the intervention involved a diverse array of reading tasks, ranging from multiple-choice questions to true/false/not given statements, matching information, and classifying exercises. Through consistent practice and exposure to authentic reading materials, students developed essential skills, including the ability to summarize information, extract key details, and draw logical conclusions from texts. The incorporation of multiple task types not only enriched their vocabulary but also boosted their analytical and critical thinking skills. Students were encouraged to interact with the content actively, fostering a deeper understanding of the texts and promoting effective reading strategies.

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STAND-UP COMEDY IN HIGH SCHOOL EDUCATION: A CROSS-CULTURAL JOURNEY TOWARD INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE

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Introduction

Several scholarly studies indicate that employing strategies of humorous communication in instruction has proved beneficial (for review, see Wanzer, M. B., Frymier, A. B., Wojtaszczyk, A. M., & Smith, T., 2016). It has even been claimed that humor serves as an educator's "most powerful resource" to achieve optimal learning results (Cornett, 2016). Further, Kher, Molstad, and Donahue (2019) and Check (2017) share the understanding that pleasant classroom atmosphere and positive teaching approach advance learning and learning outcomes. In addition to humor being an integral part of educational setting, humor also has important roles with targeted purposes in social interaction (Wagner & Urios-Aparasi, 2011). Drawing from our personal experience as teachers, boredom might be the most challenging pedagogical obstacle to teaching. Despite possible negative functions, the socially positive functions of humor are undisputable ranging from enhancing social cohesion to facilitating cooperation and undermining power.

As Martin (2017) has adopted a psychological approach by introducing a classification system of humor based on three major functions, viz. cognitive and social benefits of mirth, uses of humor for social communication and influence as well as tension relief and coping. Research indicate that positive affect has an impact on problem solving, cognitive organization and creativity (Isen, 2017). Cognitive benefits of this kind are of great significance since they may improve learning abilities.

Furthermore, in a pedagogical setting this could entail a host of positive factors in a form of

a more laid-back classroom resulting in lower student anxiety together with increased student motivation as reviewed by e.g. Banas et al. (2011). Thus, humor has a potential of creating both emotionally and socially positive environment with the element of humor serving, as stated by Martin (2017), as a bridge between educators and students. This would constitute to a learning environment in which students are more inclined to concentrate on learning.

Quite a few scholars are in support of teachers incorporating humor into the classroom setting (for review, see Banas et al., 2011). The rationale behind this is that humor has the potential to promote supportive social climate in classroom. Kher, et al. (2019) argue that with such a climate created by an instructor, students are more prone to be open to instruction and learning. This applies to all classrooms, even to foreign language classrooms in which the use of humor makes the learning context more relaxed. In fact, Schmitz (2012) has suggested that it should be a component of foreign language classrooms as it can make classes more enjoyable and contribute to learning. According to some studies, the playful use of language may be a contributory factor to facilitating foreign language learning (Bell, 2019). On the other hand, Davies (2013) claims that it is possible for a foreign language learner to collaborate with a native speaker in a humorous situation only under certain circumstances. This implies that it is very challenging to learn the sociolinguistics of L2 (second language) humor in language classroom.

Schmitz (2012) recognizes the need for further research on the use of humor in educational settings to be better informed of the appropriate kind of humor to be practiced in classrooms but until then, he says, we need to settle for recommendations based on educators' practical experiences of humor. Related to this, Garner (2013) states the following: the effective use of humor does not equal telling jokes but for an academic setting, it needs to be specific, targeted and subject related. Schmitz (ibid.) also suggests the use of humorous materials in classrooms should be planned. The idea behind this seems to be that premeditation might make a favorable contribution towards a successful effect of humorous material in classroom. Still, it needs to be remembered that a lot of humor and laughter simply arise in a spontaneous manner (Martin & Kuiper, 2019). Some researchers have implied that there is a connection between the use of humor and learning. The following studies serve as examples of the kind of results obtained in various studies. Garner (2016), for instance, found that subjects who were shown something humorous during lectures recalled and retained significantly more information about the topic than the control group. Hackathorn et al. (2011) also discovered that using humor increased students' overall exam scores, especially on comprehension level. Other studies report a connection between successful humor and motivation (Goodboy et al., 2015), or between humor and students' recognition of lecture content (Suzuki & Heath, 2014).

Stand up as an educational tool

In recent years, the intersection of humor and education has expanded to include stand-up comedy as an innovative and effective educational tool. Beyond its primary role as entertainment, stand-up comedy exhibits unique attributes that make it a powerful medium for fostering learning and engagement. Stand-up comedy demands active cognitive engagement from the audience. As comedians navigate through various topics, they often employ wit, satire, and observational humor, prompting listeners to critically analyze and reflect on the presented ideas. This cognitive engagement can enhance learning retention and stimulate intellectual curiosity. Comedy, by its nature, challenges societal norms and taboos [6].

Stand-up comedians often tackle sensitive topics, providing a platform to discuss and dissect complex issues. This approach helps break down barriers in communication and encourages open dialogue, creating a conducive environment for exploring diverse perspectives within an educational setting. Stand-up comedy relies heavily on effective communication, requiring comedians to master the art of timing, tone, and delivery. Integrating stand-up techniques into educational practices can help students refine their communication skills, fostering confidence and adaptability in expressing ideas [6].

Stand-up comedy often reflects the cultural zeitgeist, offering a lens through which societal norms and trends are examined and critiqued. Utilizing stand-up in education allows for the

exploration of contemporary issues, fostering cultural relevance and encouraging students to connect their learning to the world around them. The inclusive nature of comedy ensures that diverse voices are heard and appreciated. Incorporating stand-up as an educational tool can contribute to creating a more inclusive learning environment, where different perspectives are acknowledged and celebrated, promoting a sense of belonging among students. As educators continue to seek innovative methods to engage students and enhance the learning experience, stand-up comedy emerges as a promising avenue. By leveraging the inherent qualities of humor and wit, educators can transform traditional learning environments into dynamic spaces that inspire creativity, critical thinking, and a deeper understanding of the world [7].

One of the key strengths of stand-up comedy in enhancing intercultural competence lies in its ability to facilitate cognitive engagement. As students grapple with the humor embedded in diverse cultural references, they are compelled to critically analyze and reflect on the intricacies of different societies. This active cognitive participation creates a fertile ground for deepening cultural understanding, encouraging students to question stereotypes, challenge assumptions, and appreciate the rich diversity that defines our globalized world [8].

The emotional resonance created through humor is another facet that contributes significantly to intercultural competence. Comedy has a unique ability to forge emotional connections, transcending cultural and linguistic boundaries. Stand-up comedians expertly traverse the emotional spectrum, using humor as a universal language to connect with audiences. In the classroom, this emotional connection can bridge gaps, making lessons more relatable and memorable. Students are not just learning about different cultures; they are experiencing them on an emotional level, fostering a genuine appreciation for diversity [6].

Stand-up comedy emerges as a laughter-infused odyssey toward intercultural competence, offering a transformative approach to education. Through the exploration of cultural nuances, the challenging of societal norms, and the celebration of diversity, stand-up comedy becomes a dynamic pedagogical tool that transcends the boundaries of traditional learning. In a world that increasingly demands cross-cultural understanding, educators embracing stand-up comedy pave the way for students to not only appreciate the richness of diverse cultures but also to become adept navigators of our interconnected global society [7].

Analyzing Intercultural Competence in Stand-Up Comedy

15 stand-up transcripts are chosen according to components of intercultural competence. The main components of intercultural competence are, respect for different culture, cultural sensitivity, cultural curiosity, cultural awareness.

Table 1 The components of intercultural competence in stand-up transcripts

<i>Component of intercultural competence</i>	<i>Author/n ame of the show</i>	<i>Link</i>	<i>Quote</i>
1. Respect for different culture	Trevor Noah: Where was I (2023).	https://vk.com/video-210945081_456239923	“Dude, Germany?” “Do they even laugh?” I’m like, “What do you mean? They’re human beings.” “I don’t know, man. Do they laugh?” People got to me. At a point when I was heading to Germany, I was like, maybe Germans just sit in the audience, like, [in German accent] “Uh-huh. Ja, ja, uh-huh.” “That was a comedy show.” But they don’t. They laugh. They’re actually great audiences. I had an amazing time in Berlin. It’s a city that sneaks up on you, because it’s... It’s so culturally diverse. You know? It has a

			<p>burgeoning art scene. Fantastic music. The history... The history in Berlin is truly deep and rich.</p>
2. Respect for different culture	Shane Gillis: Beautiful dogs (2023)	https://vk.com/video-53358766_456246202	<p>Australia might be number two. That's a good country, dude. Just a whole country doing nothing. That's what I like about 'em. They're just down there, zero exports. Creating nothing, dude. The only export I've seen come out of Australia is just that YouTube video of that guy punching that kangaroo in the face.</p>
3. Cultural sensitivity	Mike Epps: Ready to sell out (2024).	https://vk.com/video-210945081_456240033	<p>And the Mexicans are taking over. I'm telling you, they're taking over right now. I went to a Jamaican restaurant the other day. Something told me, "Look in the back." [crowd laughs] I said, "Oh, hell no." It was two Mexicans back there making the Jamaican food. [crowd laughs] I said, "Pow, pow, pow!" [laughter continues] [Jamaican accent] Lick shot of a Mexican making Jamaican food. [crowd cackles, howls] People back there talking about...I had a jerk burrito that night, man. I went on.</p>
4. Cultural awareness	Norm Macdonald: Nothing special (2022)	https://vk.com/video-182833429_456239706	<p>But, anyways, I prefer the Indian casinos. That's what I like. You know? Because I don't want to give my money... If I'm gonna lose money, and I'm gonna lose money, I don't want to do it in Las Vegas to a bunch of corporate businessmen. I would rather go to an Indian casino and lose it to the Native Americans. You know? On account of my forefathers systematically murdered them years ago. Which looking back on it... way out of line. Way out of line.</p>
5. Cultural curiosity	Jimmy O Yang: A good deal (2020).	https://vk.com/wall-53358766_111896	<p>I was born in Hong Kong. Any Hong Kong people? A couple of us—awesome, man. For you guys that haven't been following the news, Hong Kong is a part of Japan. I'm joking, obviously. But I said the same shit in Kansas City, and people were like, really? Wow, we learned something new today, Bill.</p> <p>I did a show in Kansas City. I don't know why either. People are very nice in Kansas City. I'm not gonna say, like, they're racist or anything like that,</p>

			but they're just, like, curious. Like they're watching me like they're watching an episode of National Geographic. And a pack of giraffes just ran by, and they're like, oh, I've never seen one of those in real life. It looks majestic.
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In the table each transcript is shown as representers of the main components of intercultural competence. The table showcases different comedians discussing cultural topics such as respect for different cultures, cultural sensitivity, cultural awareness, and cultural curiosity in their stand-up routines. The comedians touch on stereotypes, cultural differences, and personal experiences related to various cultures, showing the importance of understanding and appreciating diversity in a humorous and thought-provoking way. Each comedian brings their unique perspective and comedic style to address these cultural themes. Consequently, it is not unimportant to mention the fact of value of stand-up speeches in the development of intercultural competence.

Conclusion

In conclusion, stand-up comedy in high school education enhances intercultural competence by creating engaging and dynamic learning environments. It promotes positive social climates, reduces anxiety, and fosters student motivation. Cultural sensitivity and prudence are crucial in utilizing humor effectively in education. Stand-up comedy serves as a catalyst for breaking down cultural barriers, encouraging open dialogue, and fostering intercultural competence among students. Leveraging humor and wit in education can inspire creativity, critical thinking, and deepen students' understanding of the interconnected global society. The components of intercultural competence are portrayed in the stand-up transcripts in the table, proving the validity that stand-up is a magnifying and multilayered pedagogical tool for developing knowledge of different cultures.

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