

The effects of watching funny videos on student performance

Can watching a funny video during the school day help improve a student's work? It just might.

At this year's annual Experimental Biology conference, scientists found that when people laugh, their brains are used in almost the same way as when a person is meditating peacefully. The study was conducted by researchers at Loma Linda University. They measured the brainwaves and activity of 31 people when they watched a funny video, and again when they watched a more serious or stressful video. The scientists measured activity in nine parts of the brain and noticed that when watching the funny videos, people used all parts of their brain.

The device used to measure brain activity in this experiment is called EEG. EEG, or electroencephalography, measures electrical activity along the scalp. Gamma wave activity is associated with increased dopamine levels, and also putting the brain's cognitive state at its most alert level. While watching funny videos, gamma waves are abundant. These gamma waves are proven to cause a feeling of reorganization and awareness. That's why, after people meditate or are relieved of stress through comedy, they feel it is easier to solve problems or do work that they originally thought was difficult.

Not only can laughing help increase awareness, but scientists think it would have similar benefits to health that meditation has. These include reducing stress, blood pressure, and pain.

Most importantly for students like us, this study shows that laughing can help us increase our ability to effectively apply ourselves in school. For seniors, this is crucial especially

in these final days of the school year. If you find yourself struggling, take a minute to watch a funny video or read a funny article online, you may find that it helps you out.

A Guide to the island of Saint John

Saint John is a tiny island, approximately 20 square miles in size, that is a part of the U.S. Virgin Islands, a territory of the United States. The smallest of the inhabited islands (the other two being Saint Thomas and Saint Croix) of the U.S. Virgin Islands in both size and population, Saint John may still be the most desirable of the three. With only a few seedy sections of town and a couple spooky locals out in the countryside, Saint John is relatively safe and one of the most beautiful islands in the Caribbean that will satisfy both those looking to relax and those looking for adventure. Should you decide to travel there for the first time, let this be your rudimentary guide to the island.

First and foremost is getting there, which is no easy feat. Those hoping to travel to Saint John will have to fly into Saint Thomas, a relatively small airport with flights in from locations in the southern United States. Because of this, multiple flights are necessary if coming from the northeast. Once on Saint Thomas, one must take a taxi to a ferry boat on the other end of the island. This ferry boat will travel to Saint John and once there a car may be rented or another taxi taken to one's resort. It should be noted that driving is done on the left side of the road on the islands and things operate much slower than back at home. To make it to the islands requires patience, but once there it is well worth it.

The main attraction of Saint John is its white sand beaches and crystal blue water. These beaches are certainly fabulous but just know they are very different than the beaches on the mainland with no waves or surf and a very small strip of sand to make camp on. Many visitors, and perhaps rightly so, flock to the north shore beaches on the western end of the island, as they resemble what we think of as beaches with sand as opposed to rocks and coral. The beaches of Hawksnest, Trunk, Cinnamon, Maho, and Francis Bay fill up relatively quickly and can be crowded. These beaches are great for relaxing and swimming and also offer fairly decent snorkeling with shallow reefs where sea turtles and rays can be spotted as well as plenty of tropical, colorful fish.

One of the greatest things Saint John has to offer is snorkeling. To find the best snorkeling on the island, to see larger fish and bigger coral, one must venture off the beaten track. As a rule of thumb, the harder to locate or get to that the spot is, the better snorkeling it will be as less people snorkel it and potentially ruin it by stepping on coral or scaring off wildlife. Much of the island's best snorkeling can be found on its sparsely populated east end. Leinster Bay, which takes a ten minute hike to get to, offers a small island, Waterlemon Cay, off its east point which is full of large coral and starfish. Haulover Bay is another great spot to check out, with a little rock scrambling required to get to it, it is rarely visited and you are likely to get the beach to yourself. Kidder Bay, located on the east end, is another great spot for snorkeling as its west side is characterized by rocks and canyons under the sea where just about anything can be expected, even nurse and reef sharks. This is a rock and corral beach and is only reachable via dirt road, but well worth the adventure to find it. Furthermore, if you are snorkeling on the east end, you can hit Vie's chicken shack for lunch, a fried chicken joint also serving conch fritters that is run by a local Saint Johnian.

Another great thing to do on Saint John is to hike. A large part of the island is a part of the Virgin Islands National Park, and as such the park service maintains many trails throughout the entire island. Trails generally either take you to remote stretches of beach, scenic overlooks on the mountainous island, or ruins from the island's sugar and rum plantations. Some great ruins and overlooks can be hiked to from both Leinster and Cinnamon Bay. There is a hike to Bordeaux Mountain, the island's highest point at 1,200 feet above sea level, and the National Park Service offers a guided trip down the Reef Bay trail, which passes through the jungle, waterfalls, and petroglyphs in the rocks etched in by the island's first inhabitants hundreds of years ago. The hike ends on a secluded beach and the park offers a boat trip back to its headquarters from there. Any hike really is worth it as it gives one a new perspective of and way to view the island. It is also worth checking out the Annaberg Plantation, another old slave plantation that has been restored beautifully.

The beauty of a place like Saint John though is, while there may be plenty of opportunities to get out and be active, there is also the option to lounge in a hammock or at a beach bar all day. One can do one, the other, or both. There is a great variety of people to be found on the island from natives to tourists to people staying for one or two year long stints to work and enjoy the tropics.

If you do decide to visit Saint John, be sure to be prepared to spend lots, simply because it costs a lot to get things to the island (gas is five dollars per gallon). As mentioned before, things often operate on island time, or much slower than we are accustomed to. However, driving is somewhat of a dangerous undertaking with winding and narrow mountain roads that are steeper than one would think possible for a car to drive up. Four wheel drive is an absolute necessity, and jeeps and other similar open-aired vehicles make up a majority of the automobiles on the island.

All in all, Saint John is a wonderful place to vacation. It is great for those seeking adventure as well as those looking to relax. The sea breeze and warm sun generally have a calming effect on all those exposed to it. Worries slip away within a few days of arrival and before you know it you too are on island time. I recommend to you and to anyone looking to get away the island of Saint John.

Final Quarter Sessions of 2014 school year

April 11 was everybody's favorite half day, quarter sessions. It began like all the others, with an opener, a prayer, and the presentation of colors. Then Mr. Murnock announced who got first and second honors from each class. That was followed by the always dramatic reveal of the percentages of each class that received honors, which the junior class won with 48 percent of its students earning honors for the third quarter. Following this, Prep honored some people who got very high scores on their standardized tests, including *The Rambler's* own Sean Taylor.

A new addition to the ceremony at Cathedral Prep was to honor faculty, staff, and administration for their hard work and time spent here. The awards started at 5 years of service to the school in this historic building and continued in this pattern all the way through to recognizing the likes of some of Cathedral Prep's finest for 35+ years of service: Mr. Achille, Mr. Alexa, Mr. Czytuck, Mr. Daeschner, and Mr. Scharrer.

The speaker was Dr. Brian Stark, a Cathedral Prep and

University of Notre Dame alum and father of current and future Prep and Villa students. He opened his speech in the form of a prayer and gave examples of how the school's mission of "creating men of vision in spirit, mind, and body" has truly shaped his life. When he finally said amen and closed his speech, he put on his gift, and tried to dismiss the school, something he said he'd always wanted to be able to do. However, we had to remain in our seats for the traditional closing of the quarters sessions ceremony, the singing of the school song.

Check out photos from the final Quarter Sessions of the school year below:



Several students injured in stabbing at Franklin Regional High School

On the morning of April 9, 2014, a 16-year-old male student at Franklin Regional High School located outside of Pittsburgh, went on a stabbing rampage, stabbing 21 students and one faculty member before being subdued by the vice principal. The suspect has been identified as Alex Hribal. Although he is

only 16, he was charged as an adult with four counts of attempted homicide and 21 counts of aggravated assault.

The motives for this attack were not immediately known; however, new evidence shows that a fight was arranged the day before between Alex and another student. Alex apparently brought two knives to school for the fight, but ended up using them to injure as many students as he could. The mental state of the attacker is not yet known. At approximately 7:13 a.m., the attacker, armed with a pair of knives and wearing all-black clothing moved through the schools crowded hallways, stabbing and slashing as many students as he could. Initially, no one knew what was happening and there was mass confusion and panic. In the frenzy of the situation, one student pulled the fire alarm to evacuate the building. Shortly after, a security guard who was positioned in the school attempted to subdue the attacker, but he himself was stabbed. Finally, the vice principal of the school was able to disarm and subdue the attacker. Only five minutes later, police arrived and secured the school.

Eight of the victims were immediately rushed to the hospital, four of whom were in very serious condition with deep wounds to the abdomen. Luckily, no one was killed during the attack, but a few of the victims are still in serious condition. Although this is a tragedy, I think we can be thankful that knives were used instead of a gun. If the attacker could injure so many people with a knife, imagine what could of happened if he used a gun. This incident brings up many question about violence in schools and school security. After the attack, many people were calling for increased security in schools through the use of metal detectors and security cameras. However, I don't think that this will solve the problem. The problem lies with society, and cannot be fixed merely with more security precautions.

If one good thing can be seen in this incident, it's the courage that was shown by the numerous heroes of the day. Many

students refused to leave the sides of their classmates, caring for their wounds and comforting them until help arrived. The vice principal who subdued the attacker is also a hero. And we certainly can't forget about the law enforcement and EMS personnel who arrived promptly on the scene. Many of these victims would have died if it wasn't for the courage and care shown by these people. This event is very tragic and reminds us of the other attacks that have claimed numerous lives in schools throughout the U.S. However, we can be thankful that no one was killed and that a lesson was learned from this incident.

Snow in April becomes a harsh reality for Erie, but hope looms in Easter break forecast

Everyone thought that we were in the clear. They thought that one of the worst winters was finally put behind us and we could finally start enjoying a much anticipated and deserved spring. Sadly, we were all wrong. Tuesday, only two days after the temperature hit 80°, Mother Nature decided to play a late, cruel April Fool's joke on those who inhabit the North East region of North America. She dropped around an inch and a half of a disgustingly white substance also known as snow. One thing is for sure, Erie has received more than its fair share of snow this season. For those of you who don't know it yet, Erie once again won the title for snowiest city in America. This is one title that those who inhabit Erie wish not to have won.

It is very depressing to witness such chilling temperatures and accumulation of snow this far into the month of April. The citizens of Erie understand that we will receive snow during the month of March and the months leading up to it. But receiving snow midway through the month of April is heartbreaking and cruel. Hopefully this is last of what feels like a punishment that old Mother Nature deals to us.



For as far as our trusty weather men can predict the weather, it seems to be not as warm as we all want, but it is starting to warm up. Things are also looking good because there is no snow in the forecast for the near

future. For as awful as our winter was this year hopefully we have equally as long and glorious summer where the warm weather reaches long into the fall months of September, October, and maybe even parts of November

XStat syringe has capacity to stop bleeding from gunshots in 15 seconds

Yet again, a few great things have been invented and released to active use in such little time. There are people that believe that science is actually moving quite slow compared to how it used to be. However, looking at the trends of things being released, it can be confidently said that this is not true.

Researchers have recently released something which goes by the

name of XStat. It is a simple syringe; however, with the sponges that it's loaded with, it has the capacities to stop bleeding from gunshots in only 15 seconds. This allows medics to pay attention to people who need more dire help, rather than spending time on people who are bleeding out as that is quite a large cause for death on the battlefield. The technology is simple enough; however, this little device has the ability to save hundreds of soldiers on the field, while perhaps also being open for use in hospitals for those who need emergency support.

Moving more into the extra-planetary discoveries, observers have been paying special attention to a certain moon orbiting Saturn which goes by the name of Enceladus, an icy moon which has amazing jets of water spurting off the satellite's south pole. After a few flybys by a probe, it was quickly found that there is nothing on the surface to account for the stronger gravitational tug it exerted. This was perceived as almost certainly a subterranean ocean of liquid water which was causing anomalies on the sensor arrays aboard the probe, as this was outside the estimated values which it was looking for.

Nothing can be said for certain with the current data. There are a few other explanations such as heating within the moon as the core stretches and flexes to create the images. Needless to say, within a month or so, scientists are hoping to figure out the question of "Is there water on other planets?" that has been asked so often throughout history.

Prep junior selected to travel to Germany



While Cathedral Prep has plenty of exchange students who come to study abroad here, it is not very often that a student from Prep gets the opportunity to experience studying abroad. That is just the case for Prep junior Nicholas Ng.

Ng ('15) took the National German Exam along with the other German classes at Prep. He scored in the 99th percentile of students taking the test across the country and was selected for the trip by the chapter testing chairman. Ng and 43 other students won the trip out of 21,000 students who entered.

In order to qualify for the trip, Ng had to go through an interview process that required him to speak in both English and German. Nick has been in the German program at Prep since he was a freshman and has excelled since he started. He took the National German Exam in his sophomore year as well, and did exceptionally well too, missing only one question.

The trip is in June and July of 2014 and runs for 25 days. All the students on the trip will be living with host families and going to school, since schools in Germany run late into the summer. The trip will be taking place in the Fraconia region of Germany and Ng says the students will be going to either Nuremberg or Kulmbach.

Nick says he is very excited to be going to Germany. He has wanted to go on this trip for some time in order to gain an even better understanding of the German language and learn more about German culture.

This is kind of opportunity is not something that happens very often at Prep, and it is great that Nick's hard work of learning the German language is paying off in such a great way. There is no doubt Nick's trip will be unforgettable. It is things like this that show that hard work can lead to fantastic opportunities.

Legacy Gala 2014 fundraiser a definite success



On Saturday, April 5, one of Erie's biggest fundraisers, the Legacy Gala, took place. The Legacy Gala is held by Prep and Villa to raise money for the school for scholarships, updates on the school, balancing the budget, and for the benefit of all the students. However, it is mainly to honor two outstanding people from the two schools' history.

The honorees of the night were Prep alumni Jack Bertges ('68) and Matt Minnaugh ('83) and Villa alumni Sr. Mary Drexler and distinguished faculty member Adrianna Hagerty (posthumous). All four of these people have made an incredible impact in Cathedral Prep and Villa history and their own history.

The night started very well. As the guests walked in the

doors, they were greeted by the student ambassadors only then to see the brand new blue prints on the upgrade to the Cathedral Prep Events Center (CPEC) and the Prep library renovations. All people seemed to be very impressed by the basketball court and swimming pools. In addition the library will now have two group study areas and a computer lab, and the books from the old library are being donated to Sudan as part of a project by Albert Oduho ('03).



As people proceeded into the giant room filled with amazing decorations, delicious food, and fantastic auction items, they realized that this was going to be a good night no matter what. Even if you had to fight a few mothers to win the front row for

baccalaureate or the Prep parking lot spot in the teacher lot. A few items in the silent auction that were won that everyone seemed to want were as follows:

- Front Row Baccalaureate Seats: The Bretz Family
- Teachers Parking Lot Spot: The Chase Family
- Prep Lockers: The Traegaser Family
- Prep Corn Hole Set: The Scutella Family
- The Lawn Mower: Mrs. Kim
- Cooking Classes with Cirillo: Frank Mezler (Learning how to make Raviolis)

However, this wasn't even the biggest event of the night. There was still the live auction, which was needless to say eventful and the time to donate money specifically to the scholarship foundation. These two events are the biggest fundraisers for the event. During the live auction there was plenty of excitement, shock, and back-and-forth bidding for the priceless items in store for the night. The always anticipated item is the "Master's tickets," which broke a new record for the highest final selling price. Mr. Minnaugh and

Mr. Britton were going back and forth constantly trying to beat the other out, but in the end Mr. Minnaugh wound up victorious. The next item to go were the soccer tickets to see Man. City vs AC Milan in Pittsburgh. The normal value price was \$6,000 dollars. However, the Hilbert family had the steal of the night taking home the tickets for exactly \$2,000. Here are a few other items that were up for auction and their winners:

- Tickets to the Masters: Mark Minnaugh (New Record Buy: \$9,000)
- Tickets to The Man. City vs. AC Milan game: The Hilbert Family
- Grad Party at the CPEC: The Dill Family
- Front Row Graduation Seats: Britton, Mezler, Hilbert Families
- Library Table: The Miller Family



Now as part of the night there is the annual scholarship fund donation. This is where anyone can donate in increments of \$500 to the fund to help the school. Before the donating even began, the fund already had \$37,500 in it from alumni not present at the event but who love their alma mater. By the last \$500 donation no one had any idea how much money was donated, but it turns out that the request Mr. Hagerty hoped for was accomplished with a total of \$86,000. That right there is true Prep-Villa faith, giving back to the school that built their futures.

As the night came to a close there was no doubt every person enjoyed their night. The night totaled an all new high as well on fundraising with a total of \$361,000. However, this is all thanks to the Prep-Villa Advancement office and company, especially Kathy Grisier. Without her this fantastic night

never would have happened. Sadly though after four great years of hosting the event she will be retiring, but she will surely be there again next year but bidding on all the best items because I'm sure she will have the inner scoop.

“Legacy Gala 2014 was a bittersweet night for me,” Grisier said. “This was the fourth time I ran this event for Prep and Villa, and since my son Kevin is a senior, I had made the decision to step down after this year’s Gala. Organizing Legacy Gala is one of the most exhausting things I have ever done, but when I walk into the room that evening and see how we have transformed a vast, empty space into a classy and beautiful party, it really makes me happy. I am honored to have had the opportunity to not only host this event, but to have worked with so many people, and to have raised funds that helped students have the ability to afford a Prep or Villa education. The theme for Legacy Gala this year was “Achieving Excellence”, and I can honestly say that with breaking some records this year...for attendance and dollars raised, that I can retire knowing that I achieved my own personal level of excellence.”

Connecticut holds off Kentucky to finish a fabulous surprise run and win 2014 NCAA championship

All in all, this year’s NCAA tournament was a great one. It was full of upsets, like Mercer over Duke. It had Cinderella stories like Dayton’s run to the Elite Eight. There were

freshmen trying to impress the NBA scouts and seniors trying to get that beloved national championship before their time was up.

The last four teams remaining consisted of Florida, the number one overall seed in the tournament; UConn, the underdog out of the bunch, led by great guard play from Shabazz Napier and Ryan Boatright; Kentucky, the freshmen-led team with arguably the most raw talent; and Wisconsin, the squad that played perfect team ball. UConn's guard play was too much for Florida to handle, and the Gators went down in the Final Four. The freshmen of Kentucky were able to oust Wisconsin in a close one that came down to the buzzer.

Kentucky and UConn then squared off for the championship. Kentucky was the only team since the "Fab 5" of Michigan in the early 90s to start five freshmen in a championship game. Kentucky's freshmen looked rattled all game, but rightfully so because the kids are only 18-19 years old and playing on one of the biggest stages in the world. Another big factor was free throws. Connecticut was able to stay perfect from the line making all 10. After 40 minutes of play, UConn's experience paid off, and they won the tournament.

Shabazz Napier, the senior guard from UConn, quickly became a household name due to his play this postseason. Napier was one of only four players ever to get 125 points, 25 assists, and 25 rebounds in one tournament. The last to do it, Kemba Walker, was also a guard from UConn, who led them to their championship in 2011. "You're looking at the hungry Huskies," he said in a post game interview pertaining to their persistence. "This is what happens when you ban us." However, he isn't the only one that deserves some credit. This was coach Kevin Ollie's second year at Connecticut. He spent his first year as an interim coach after the future Hall of Fame coach Jim Calhoun retired. Steve Fisher is the only coach to win it all his first year coaching at Michigan in 1989. Technically, Ollie did it in his first chance as they were

banned from the tournament last year due to academics.

Villa's Kayla McBride leads Notre Dame to championship game appearance

Four years after she was leading the Villa Maria Academy Victors to their second straight state championship in basketball, Kayla McBride was back in another championship game last night. This time, however, the game was a much bigger than the state championship game, being played out on a national stage. McBride helped lead the Notre Dame Fighting Irish to the 2014 NCAA Women's National Championship game in Nashville, Tennessee.

McBride was one of the leaders of the Fighting Irish the entire year. She helped overall number two Notre Dame get to an unprecedented 37-0 going into the championship game against the top seed and 39-0 Connecticut Huskies.

Notre Dame breezed through their first three games against 16 seed James Madison, 9 seed Arizona State, and 5 seed Oklahoma State. In the Elite 8 the Fighting Irish met their toughest opponent yet, the 2 seed Baylor Bears.

Notre Dame looked relieved not to have to go up against Brittney Griner, who graduated from Baylor in 2012. McBride did not have her best game against Baylor, but other players from Notre Dame, namely Jewell Loyd, stepped up and knocked out the Bears 88-69. Notre Dame lost one of their leaders during the game, however, when Natalie Achonwa went down with a knee injury.

Losing Achonwa fueled Notre Dame to compete even harder to win the championship. It was evident in the Final 4 game against the 4 seed Maryland Terapins. The Fighting Irish played an emotion-filled game, led by McBride's 28 points in one of the best games of her career. Notre Dame looked like a national champion against Maryland and continued on to the championship game convincingly, winning 87-61 over Maryland.

After rolling through their tournament, Notre Dame came up against the Connecticut Huskies in the finals. It was the first time in history for both men and women that two undefeated teams were in the championship game. Notre Dame felt the hole that Achonwa left as UConn crushed them on the boards and in the paint with their duo of 6'5" Stefanie Dolson and 6'4" Breanna Stewart.

Connecticut controlled the game from the opening tip, overpowering Notre Dame in every facet of the game. Notre Dame was able to get within 5 points before halftime but that was the closest they got the rest of the game. The Huskies surged ahead and kept a comfortable lead the entire second half and claimed the championship 79-58. Breanna Stewart led Connecticut in points, and Kayla McBride led Notre Dame, each scoring 21.

It was an emotional game for both teams, and tears were flowing when the final buzzer sounded. Even Connecticut coach Geno Auriemma was teary-eyed in his post-game interview after winning his ninth women's championship.

Connecticut celebrated twice as much after winning the men's championship the night before, a 60-54 win over the Kentucky Wildcats. The Huskies dominated the tournament and became the first ever 7 seed to win the championship. The feat of both men and women's basketball teams winning the championship has been done only two other times in college basketball, and only once before in Division 1, when UConn did it in 2004.

Notre Dame was heart-broken after getting so close to a championship, losing in the finals in 2011 and 2012 and in the Final 4 in 2013. Despite no championships, Kayla McBride has made Villa proud with her achievements as a part of the Fighting Irish. She rose to stardom this season as one of the best players in the country and finished in the running for player of the year. There is no doubt she will continue her career in the pros and become what Bob Sanders has become at Prep: a legend.