



INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGY OF HUMOROUS METHOD OF TEACHING

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Abstract

Humour is as old as mankind. Our ancestors were quite aware of the beneficial effects of humour. Humour is generally unquestioned as a useful aid in the learning process. Exemplifying the comments of Ball & Bogatz (1971) & Earls (1972) about its facilitative instructional effects humour has been systematically incorporated both in specific teaching method (e.g., Davis, 1976) & in the writing of textbooks (e.g., Le Francois, 1973). Normally students tend to value and appreciate teachers who can effectively use humor in their instruction (Garner, in press). Lowman (1994) found that effective college teachers were often described by their students as “enthusiastic” and those who use humor in their instruction were rated more highly. When asked to describe the positive attributes of quality teachers, frequently students mention a “sense of humor” (Brown & Tomlin, 1996; Kelly & Kelly, 1982). A review of the teaching philosophies of highly-rated teachers finds the use of humor as an important component of their teaching strategies. Humor can increase (Civikly, 1986) and sustain (Dodge & Rossett, 1982) student interest in learning and provides a means to engage in divergent thinking. Instructors’ use of effective humor in the classroom can foster mutual respect (Kher, Molstad & Donahue, 1999), provide commonalities and connections between the instructor and students (Pollio & Humphreys, 1996) and even increase class attendance (Devadoss & Foltz, 1996; Romer, 1993; White, 1992). According to Bergan (1992), “teachers who use strategies that promote the connection between humor and learning usually provide students with their best school experiences” (p.106). The instructional strategy of Humorous Method of Teaching (HMT) developed by the author follows different steps- (a) Creation of Mind Set, (b) Teaching Learning Work/ Topic Transaction/ Synchronised Presentation of Learning Material , (c) Consolidation & Recalling (d) Evaluation & Feedback

Key Words: *Humorous Method, Instructional Strategy, Creation of Mind Set, Topic Transaction, Consolidation & Recalling and Evaluation & Feedback*



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Introduction: Humour is a complex cognitive function which often leads to laughter. The psychological benefits of humour are supported by several theories. The Anxiety Reduction Theory purports the level of humour arousal is directly associated with the anxiety level of students (Herbart, 1991). Joyful and stress free learning is an emerging trend in the area of

education . Passi and Prabhu (1999) in their research paper on stress free learning gave a strong advocacy on the success of stress-free learning in developing academic achievement . Humorous Method of Teaching (HMT) is one way of making learning stress free and pleasurable and amusable . Like other method of teaching HMT follows certain steps of teaching . So far as institutional strategy is concerned HMT uses the following steps for optimum output in instructional process:-

- First Session:- Creation of Mind Set (5 minutes)
- Second Session:- Topic Transaction / Teaching-Learning Work/ Synchronised presentation of Learning Material (30 minutes)
- Third Session:- Consolidation & Recalling (5 minutes)
- Fourth Session:- Evaluation and Feedback Session. (5 minutes)

❖ **Creation of Mind Set (First Session)–**

Creation of mind- set is prerequisite condition for learning . Body-mind relaxation is a paramount factor in creation of mind-set. According to the Mental Health Expert, Prof . C . K . Rastogi (2009) , problems such as mental stress , insomania and depression are on the increase these days . Stress has become a common things now a days . Excessive tension in central nervous system produces wired sensations in all parts of the body . Irritability , impatience , bad temper , lack of interest in learning or any other work , disclination for bodily exertion , depression , dyspepsia , quick palpitation of heart , headache etc. are accompanied by the symptoms of tensions and stress which impairs efficiency and happiness .Humorous approach can repair the depressed , repressed and suppressed minds of the learner . The humour or laughter brings body-mind or external-internal coordination and relaxation . This session aims at bringing calm , peace and tranquillity to the mind of the learner. Customary or traditional approach to introduce a lesson is just to ask some questions on previous topics and to say , Dear students today we will teach this topics . Sometimes the novel ways of introducing the lesson creates better mind –set for learning . But most of the teachers fails to do so .

Here the role of teacher is something different . Teacher should enter into the class with a gentle smile (Smita hasya according to Bharat muni) and should welcome learner with a soft and sweet voice . His main moto should be “learn with fun “ and “ Learning by laughing “ . After entering into the class teacher has to say or utter or exhibit first any humorous item or he may say a related joke to draw the attention of learners . Whatever he does must be humorous in nature .

Teacher may use one or more techniques with humorous flavour for introducing a topic. But he has to remember one thing that before introducing a topic some humorous items (Jokes, Cartoons, Funny story, Video, Photo etc.) either verbal or non-verbal/ either behavioural or pictorial or any kind of humorous punch should be displayed before students to create laughter or funniness among students. This act will be helpful to capture the fragmented minds of the students. Another point is not to utter the exact name of the topic or words used in the name of the topic. So, teacher's main focus is on creation of mind set. He may try to correlate his activities during this session with the new knowledge to be imparted. Creation of mind set aims at :-

- To create a pleasurable & happiness environment
- To draw the attention of learners
- To arouse a stress free bodily & environmental condition
- To bring body-mind relaxation & co-ordination
- To make learner more enthusiastic
- To vanish fear & phobia from the mind of the learner
- To create a natural learning situation
- To make class discipline & learning conducive
- To help learner to feel encouraging
- To create a receptive mind for new knowledge
- To develop curiosity for new learning
- To improve attitude & boost morale
- To create a positive environment
- To enhance learner motivation & engagement
- To increase creative & divergent thinking

❖ **Teaching – learning Work/ Topic Transaction (Second Session) –**

Humour has been defined as “ the mental faculty of discovery expressing or appreciating something that is comical , amusing, or absurdly incongruous “ (merriam- websters 2001) . Humour creates a relaxed atmosphere where dialog can be enhanced . Humour neutralizes serious situation , a person feels open and accepted by the group . Humour makes the atmosphere more sociable and can be used as an ice-breaker as lessons learn to know one another better . It reduces tensions in the class . Absenteeism is not experienced where humour is integrated to the teaching content . Humour makes lessons to feel at home . Learners feel relaxed can converse freely without being intimidated or threatened .”

(Chabelli ,2006) . Providing laughter and play for learner is important because it helps learners to think creatively , stretch their limitations and enable them to experience learning with enjoyment (Kelly , 2005) .Garner (2003, in press) found that participants who are exposed to a series of lectures containing course-specific humour demonstrated increased retention of the course contained information as compared to those who received the same material without the infusion of humour. In addition to increase retention this approach resulted in higher overall ratings of the course and better instructor evaluation. Other researchers have found that humour can result in better information recall (Hill, 1988) & can increase long term retention (Glenn, 2002). According to Glenn (2002) humour may physiologically help to connect left-brain activities with the right-brain creative site. This connection may allow students to experience a “refreshing pause” (Glenn) & better assimilate the information presented. Cousins offers the humour can reduce anxiety, help relieve stress & increase mental sharpness; characteristics that can improve learning (Glenn, 2002) & are desirable in a pedagogical setting.

Humour is most effective when it is appropriate to the audience, targeted to the topic and placed in the content of the learning experience . Thus a teacher should be very careful in his approach while dealing with content in this session. The teaching-learning session includes following sub steps :-

- a) *Breaking / Splitting of Topic into Major and Minor Learning Points:-* The sub steps of teaching learning session is to break the topic into major themes and sub themes . These themes and sub themes should be presented before students through power point presentation or should be written on the blackboard diagrammatically for clear-cut understanding of topic . This sub step will help the students to develop a holistic mind frame about the topic to be taught to them.
- b) *Synchronised Presentation of Learning Themes Accompanied by Discussion :-* With the help of multiple Teaching – Learning material topic should be presented in the class . After every bit of point, discussion with the students should be made for easy understanding and long term retention , sufficient humorous examples with illustration should be employed to sustain the interest and enthusiasm of students . Complex teaching points should be simplified with due care . Points which deal with higher mental activities should be dealt categorically with humorous approach .

❖ **Consolidation and Recalling (Third Session)-**

After presentation of topic , the next task is to consolidate the knowledge of the learners already gathered or accumulated . It has direct link with the sub step – that is breaking of topic . The only difference is former task is done before presentation of topic and later task is done after presentation of topic . During this session teacher ask some important consolidation questions to the students and students will answer by recalling from their own memory . The process of recalling should be helped, assisted & facilitated by the teacher . The focal point should be written on the black/white board. After this step teacher will exhibit a smile and tell the students that your topic is over now and now I will ask some questions to know what extent you are benefited from my teaching learning activities.

❖ **Evaluation & Feedback (Fourth Session) –**

At the end evaluation is conducted to know the effectiveness of teaching learning activities and of teacher . Evaluation is based on teaching learning points and Expected Learning Outcomes (ELOs) stated by the teacher beforehand . Different variety of (recognition / selection type) objective type questions are normally asked to the learners. BB Cloth is not barely required if teacher is competent enough, he can ask verbal questions without taking help of any devices . If teacher uses power point presentation mode , he can show one or two slides for evaluation purpose. On the basis of evaluation teacher himself get feedback and also provide feedback to students for improvement .

Conclusion :- The use of humour as a pedagogical tool has been shown to reduce classroom anxiety, create a more positive atmosphere, as well as facilitate the learning process (Berk, 1996, 1998; Garner, 2003, in press; Glenn, 2002; Hill, 1988; Pollio & Hunphreys, 1996). Humorous Method of Teaching (HMT) is the brain child of Author . Author has already conducted some research works on it and gained positive results . In most of the countries of the world initiations have already been started to use” humour ” in the classroom for its multifarious benefits. To prove the effectiveness of this method, more & more research work is needed.

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