

A STUDY OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF HUMOUR BLENDED INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGY IN THE ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT OF STUDENTS IN HINDI GRAMMAR

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Abstract

Humour is used in teaching and it is being considered as an effective and appreciated tool for teaching. Studies in this area indicate the importance of using humour in the process of capturing and maintaining students' attention, in creating a positive relationship between teachers and students, in reducing stress and tension in the classroom, facilitating learning and supporting good retention, developing creativity and in streamlining teaching in general. Humour can act as a strong retrieval cue, as humorous information is remembered well. Humour activates deeper processing which leads to a stronger association between the humorous content and the material that has to be remembered. Creation of favourable environment for learning and creating pleasant social climate are the additional positive aspects of humour. In this study experimental method was used to test the effectiveness of humour in the academic achievement of students in Hindi grammar. The Sample selected was 60 students from VIIIth standard. In the experimental group there were 30 students and the other 30 in the Control group. Pre-Test, Post-Test method was adopted for the study. The result of the study shows teaching method blended with humour is more effective than the conventional way of teaching,

Key Terms

Humour, pedagogic strategy, humanising effect, self esteem.

Introduction

Ever since the educational paradigm shift from teacher-centred to learner-centred instruction in the past century, there has been a continuous debate among educators on how to enhance the teaching and learning processes in order to make them more effective. Consequently, teachers have been urged to explore better and alternative ways of teaching to improve their practice and break away from traditional methods of instruction, which are commonly understood to be counterproductive for the development of skills and practices that enable learner autonomy and independence. Another variable, which researchers have often studied in terms of its impact on both teaching and learning, is the use of humour in the classroom. Although research on humour is quite interdisciplinary, there have been many empirical studies conducted in classroom settings which identify humour as an effective strategy for the teacher to put students at ease, as an important ploy to get students' attention and as a suitable way of keeping the classroom less formal. Humour has not been

widely used as a tool for instruction in the classrooms earlier because humour was considered as a deviation from the main track of classroom interaction. This is due to the fact that teachers are not aware of the importance and usage of humour in the classroom.

It is generally noted that in Schools, language and Social science teachers are using humour more than Science and Mathematics teachers. Humour can be used as an effective teaching tool in all subject areas. In western countries much research has been conducted in this area and the results suggest the use of more humour by teachers in order to make teaching learning process an interesting experience. Use of humour reduces stress, helps to capture and retain student attention, builds healthy teacher-student relationship and promotes long- term retention of the subject being taught.

Humour can play an important role in our classrooms as it has a humanizing effect on teaching. It has physiological, psychological, social and cognitive benefits. Some of the physiological benefits include muscle relaxation, stimulated circulation, improved respiration (Berk, 1998). The course designed in schools is stressful for most of the students as they have to complete lot of works within the stipulated time. Students undergo a great amount of pressure in and out of the school, and stress can lead to mental disorders such as anxiety and depression and it has an adverse effect on learning. Humour is a major psychological tool that can help students cope with fear and stress, enhance their sense of well-being, boost self-image, self-esteem, self-confidence, as well as alleviate anxiety and depression.

In relation to negative effect of such an effect in the class, Oxford (1999) indicated that anxiety damages language learners' achievement indirectly through worry and self-doubt and directly by reducing participation and creating overt avoidance of the language. In Gregerson (2005) opinion, anxious learners often find it difficult to respond effectively to their own mistakes. Such learners may find their study less enjoyable. Ziv (1988) investigated the effect of humour on students' learning and reported that students appreciate and enjoy learning process with a teacher who uses humour in the classroom.

Studies regarding benefits of humour indicate other benefits of using humour in the classroom. It is highly useful in retrieving information from previous lessons, retaining information more easily. Humour is a smart way to stimulate students to attain knowledge, and it acts as a catalyst between students and teachers.

According to Chiason (2002), humour is as human and as authentic as the need to communicate, A teacher who effectively uses humour in the classroom will find that teaching is more fun and enjoyable. Students tend to love and appreciate teachers who can effectively use humour in their teaching. It has been found that when people have more fun on their job, they perform better. Humour can keep the students energized and excited. Though humour is not considered as an essential teaching tool in schools, it has been found that teachers with high inter personnel intelligences usually use humour in teaching. Humour mixed with the use of analogy and metaphor provides students with added positive associations and they are more likely to remember the information (Hill, 1988). Humour can be used as a powerful tool to put students at ease and make the overall

learning process more enjoyable. This can be achieved when teachers integrate humour with content and use both planned and spontaneous humour.

Teachers can use funny stories related to the topic to improve students' overall attitudes. Researchers have identified a positive relationship between teacher's use of humour and student evaluations of the teacher. Studies and interviews with students consistently rate 'sense of humour' as a highly cherished characteristic in teachers. Students often remember their favourite teachers as being those who had created funny moments and made them laugh. Teachers who use strategies that promote the connection between humour and learning usually provide students with their best school experiences (Bergen, 1992). All teachers may not be equally effective in using humour in the classrooms. However it can be advised that every teacher should have a collection of humorous stories or anecdotes which can be used in the class according to the demand of the situation.

Humour may be intervened at various phases of the teaching process. It can be used as an 'ice breaker' or to reduce stress and facilitate creativity. Humorous examples, test items or test instructions can reduce anxiety on intellectually demanding tasks. Starting each class with a touch of humour helps students relax and creates a positive atmosphere for effective learning. Short, simple jokes are most appropriate for the introduction and transitions while longer pieces are best at the end of the lesson. Studies show that humour becomes most effective when it is appropriate to the situation, especially when the jokes or anecdotes used directly related to the class at hand. Humour in the classroom can take many forms like jokes, puzzles, puns, funny stories, humorous comments and other humorous items like magical tricks. Magical tricks as well as puzzles can be effectively used at all levels of teaching.

Problem selected for the study

A Study of the effectiveness of Humour blended instructional strategy in the academic achievement of students in Hindi grammar

Objective of the study

To study the effectiveness of Humour blended instructional strategy in the academic achievement of students in Hindi

Hypothesis of the study

Humour blended instructional strategy is more effective than conventional method of teaching Hindi grammar

Sample selected for the study

The Sample consists of 60 VIIIth Standard students selected from an aided school from Kottayam District, Kerala

Method adopted for the study

Pre-test Post-test experimental method was adopted for the present study. A pre-test was conducted for both experimental and control groups. The topic selected for the experimental study was grammar. Noun and

adjectives were chosen as key area under study. Pre-test was conducted prior to the class. The question paper for Pre-test consists of total 20 items. There were 10 multiple choice questions, 5 fill in the blank type and 5 open ended questions. After Pre-test, the experimental group was exposed to humour blended instructional strategy. The power points related to grammar portions were presented along with interesting narrations. Cartoons and stories were also used to make the teaching learning process interesting. The control group was taught through traditional method of instruction. After completing the classes, a Post-test was conducted.

Tool Used for the study

Power points, learning materials and lesson plans prepared by the investigator.

Statistical techniques used

Calculation of percentages, t test of significance

Analysis of data

Table 1

The results of test of significance of the difference between the means of pre-test scores of the Control group on academic achievement

Groups	N	Mean	SD	t value	Result
Pre-test of Control	30	34.13	1.46	0.89	Not significant
Post-test of Control	30	33.88	1.47		

The table shows that the calculated t value is 0.89 which is less than the table value 1.96. Hence there is no significant difference between the pre-test and post test scores of control group in academic achievement in learning Hindi grammar through conventional method.

Table 2

The results of test of Significance of the difference between the means of pre-test and post-test scores of the Experimental group on academic achievement in Hindi

Groups	N	Mean	SD	t value	Result
Pre -test of Experimental	30	41.2	1.28	85.98	Significant
Post-test of Experimental	30	70.2	1.40		

The analysis shows achievement mean score, standard deviation and t value of the experimental group. The calculated t value is 85.98 which is greater than the table value. Hence there is significant difference between

the pre-test and post test score of students in Hindi who were exposed to the experimental strategy i.e. Humour blended teaching.

Tenablility of Hypothesis

The hypothesis of the study was humour blended instructional strategy is more effective than conventional method of teaching grammar. It is evident from the analysis that the achievement mean score of the experimental group is 70.2 which is greater than the achievement mean score of the control group. Hence the hypothesis that humour blended instructional strategy is more effective than conventional method of teaching Hindi grammar is accepted.

Conclusion

Humour has an important place in our classrooms due to its many proven psychological, social and educational advantages. It is a powerful and effective teaching tool as it develops the skill of communication, helps to lessen stress and anxiety during class hours and promotes active involvement of students which leads to higher academic achievement. The sense of humour is treated as one of the essential qualities of a teacher.. To conclude, the judicious use of humour in the classroom can contribute much for effective teaching - learning process.

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