

info kampus



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Konvensyen KMK (m.s. 4)



inside !



Mesej Dr Abg Ridzuan

URDC Research Workshop 1

Konvensyen KMK

American Students at UiTM Sarawak

Our Website launching

HEA Retreat

Kesatria students scale G Kinabalu

Humour in the Classroom

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ideas in education

Humour in the Classroom

Humour and laughter are areas that have not been closely studied. Their role in education and medicine has been briefly examined as far back as Wells (1974) to as recently as Provine (Dec. 2000) in, "The Science of Laughter", Psychology Today.

Loomax and Moosavi (1998) in an article on the use of humour in a university statistics class point out that anecdotal evidence in past studies consistently suggests that humour is an extremely effective tool in education. These same studies suggest that the use of humour in the classroom reduces tension, improves classroom climate, increases enjoyment, increases student-teacher rapport and even facilitates learning.

Regardless of what evidence there may be, we all have personal views on the value of humour, as depicted in the film "Patch Adams" and for years in Reader's Digest, "Laughter is the Best Medicine." Yet, there is little in literature that speaks of its pedagogical value and in particular in second language teaching and in second language teacher training.

According to Provine (2000) laughter is generally subdued during conversation. Speech will dominate and laughter serves as a phrase break creating a punctuation effect in language. Laughter therefore has a specific role in conversations and is not random. Therefore, as in authentic communi-

cation, humour in the classroom shouldn't be random. It shouldn't be used without preparation and a clear objective. It may be simple or complex in nature. It is your decision as to how, when and why you will use it.

One reason for using humour is that as a human trait it is a self-effacing behavior (Provine, 2000). It can allow the shy or timid student in your class to participate with the group. If it is used properly humour allows the student to feel a part of the class and possibly contribute without losing face, feeling exposed or vulnerable. This is of particular importance in a communicative classroom where the accent is on verbal authentic communication, participation and interaction. It's a way of reaching out to those students who are too afraid or nervous to attempt expressing themselves in their second language. Humour is as human and as authentic as the need to communicate. As with other facets of our lives it plays a major role in our every day social interaction. We should therefore not ignore it but instead make it part of our everyday classroom learning.

Laughter helps us forget about ourselves, our problems, our fears and allows us to lose ourselves momentarily. This momentary loss may be interpreted by some teachers as a loss of control, poor classroom management and therefore something to be avoided. However, humour as with

all activities in the communicative language classroom, must be well prepared and have a specific objective.

Interestingly enough, Provine (2000) also discovered that even though both sexes laugh a lot, females laugh more. It might explain why the females in our classes seem to enjoy more the humour used in the classroom. Although, as Provine points out, males appear to be the initiators of humour in any culture, beginning in early childhood.

As was stated earlier, Kristmanson (2000) stressed the importance of the affective environment in second language teaching. It can't be emphasized enough that students are more willing to participate and take risks in using their second language in a classroom that allows them to do so without fear of criticism and ridicule. It's important for the teacher to create a "positive atmosphere" for learning. Humour, by decreasing anxiety and stress can, contribute to this positive classroom, to class unity and learning.

"Indeed, the presumed health benefits of laughter may be coincidental consequences of its primary goal: bringing people together."

(part of an article by Paul-Emile Chiasson, Ph.D. downloaded from <http://www.caslt.org/research/humour.htm>)

" Reflection might sound like an obvious activity, but is actually a complex process involving association, synthesis and validation (Warner Weil and McGill, 1989, p. 248), and is the subject of considerable educational theory related to experiential learning. Effective and purposeful reflection is often deficient, weakening the quality of the learning experience (Boud et al., 1985). This theme has been developed, particularly in relation to professional education by Chris Argyris and Donald Schön, the latter of whom popularised the term 'reflective practitioner,' known to many in the built environment sector (Schön, 1983 and 1988). The LTSN Generic Centre has been carrying out research into reflective learning, linking it into PDPs (see Moon, 2001 for a helpful discussion of this)." (from an article entitled ' Development Planning in the Built Environment' by Marilyn Higgins- <http://ctiweb.cf.ac.uk/learning/pdp/docs/higgins.doc>)

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Our Own Fitness Centre (next issue)



" Berbekalkan ilmu, keazaman, ketaqwaan dan yakin segalanya boleh, kita akan lebih memahami erti kemerdekaan." Prof Madya Dr Abang Ridzuan