

தொடக்கவிழாவும்
விருது வழங்கும்
நிகழ்ச்சியும்

நம் மொழிகளின் அதிசய உலகில்
திளைத்திருப்போம்

FLOURISH IN THE WONDERLAND OF OUR LANGUAGES
在母语乐园中茁壮成长
MEKAR BERSERI DALAM ALAM AJAIB BAHASA KITA

தாய்மொழிகளின் கருத்தரங்கு 2023

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பகிர்வரங்கள்களும்
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முதலில் வரும் 5000
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அன்பளிப்புப்பை!

மையப்பகுதியும்
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முனைவர் சித்ரா சங்கரன்
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வணக்கம்



Humour as a Tool of Teaching and Learning in the classroom and at Home

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Laughter has been identified by researchers (Provine, 2001) as a primary form of human communication.

Laughter is the visible face of humour. It involves almost all facial features, the crinkling of the eyes, the stretching of the lips, the creasing of the cheeks, and also the lighting up of the eyes.

Beyond this, it involves the body. The entire body is relaxed during laughter and it communicates warmth and comradery.



Paediatricians tell us that a babies learn to laugh around 4 months of age.

Science Daily reports that infants as young as 5 months can distinguish human relationships through the nature of shared laughter.

[In other words, they can distinguish whether their parents are laughing with their friends or with strangers]



What is the importance of all this information?

It establishes the importance of laughter as a human tool of communication.

This is the reason why psychologists assert that laughter should be considered a very important tool for teaching and learning both at school and at home.

Teachers, especially language teachers, can elicit interaction and conversation through humour.

Parents too can make their children less anxious through the use of humour.



In the classroom...

- Many teachers, however, are afraid to use humour in class.
- They feel that this might make them lose authority in front of their students.
- They are afraid that they may lose control of the class and that they may be made to look foolish.

For example, witty students can be quick with comebacks:

ஆசிரியர்: ஐந்தில் வளையாதது ஐம்பதில் வளையுமா?

மாணவன்: வளையும் ஆசிரியர்.

ஆசிரியர்: எப்படி?

மாணவன்: எங்க தாத்தாவுக்கு ஐந்து வயசில முதுகு

வளையவில்லை. ஆனால் 50 வயசில

வளைஞ்சுட்டு, ஆசிரியர்!

- An important task of the teacher is to make the learning process easier.
- If humour can make the learning process more enjoyable and can arouse students' interest and attention, why not use it in the class?
- Using humour and allowing laughter in class, does not mean that teachers need to be comedians.

- Momentarily losing control does not equate to perennially losing authority in the classroom.
- In higher classes (secondary school or junior college) humour is a way of equalizing power.
- It establishes a level of freedom and openness that encourages students to engage and to participate without fear of being reprimanded or being made to appear foolish.
- Also, humour can help traverse difficult subjects such as grammar.

At home...

Many parents forget or never learn to engage humorously with their children.

The hierarchy between a parent and child is so firmly established at home that parents find it hard to bridge that gap.

From the time a child is young, the ability to laugh with your child needs to be cultivated.

Parents often believe that if you get too 'friendly' with your child, you will lose authority over them.

But, in fact, humour can help the child get closer to the parent and indeed respect them more.

Humour can reduce anxiety at home.

அப்பா: OHMS Law என்றால் என்ன?

மகன்: எனக்கு OHMS Law முழுமையா தெரியாது, கடைசி பாகம் மட்டும்தான் தெரியும்.

அப்பா: சரி பரவாயில்லை. அதையாவது சொல்லு.

மகன்: மேலே சொல்லப்பட்டதுதான் OHMS Law.

Watson and Emerson (1988) believe that **teachers, and indeed, parents, should not be worried about generating laughter**. No doubt it makes them vulnerable, but it also makes them popular and approachable.

Often, the removal of formality brings out the native intelligence [இயற்கை அறிவு] of the child.

அப்பா: தமிழில் முதல் வசனமில்லா மெளனத் திரைப்படம் எது?

**மகன்: அதில் வசனமில்லை என்றால் தமிழ்ப் படம் என்று
உங்களுக்கு எப்படித் தெரியும்?**

- ✓ Cracking jokes equalizes the power structure in the classroom and at home and establishes a level playing field.
- ✓ In class, this technique will increase the educator's popularity and in the long run, this will mean that students will look forward to attending their classes.
- ✓ Unlike a tightly controlled class, **more learning** will take place in a humour-filled class.

However, it is important for the teacher to learn to maintain her/his equilibrium and equanimity under all circumstances.

The levelling out of authority between teacher and student will lead to the reduction of nervousness on the part of BOTH teacher and students.

When a class is filled with laughter, then fear and anxiety, natural in a new and unknown situation, becomes less of a threat, as a partnership between the students and the instructor develops.

Ideally, therefore, humour can create a situation of mutual trust.

When there is trust

- Persons on either side of the power equation – **be it a parent and child or the teacher and the student** – both sides relax.
- They are both prone to be less judgmental of each other. Studies show that in a home where humour has become normalized from young, teenage frictions are less.
- They also feel a keener interest in interaction .
- They are also more willing to motivate each other.
- This brings out the best in both a home and a classroom situation.

The use of humour for regulating authority is supported by many learning theorists.

Theorists assert that it even has affective and cognitive benefits

For example, Colwell and Wigle (1984) have argued that the value of humour should be understood especially in second-language learning environments.

When a parent teaches a child, interlacing the teaching with jokes can actually aid the cognitive abilities of a child.

Immersion is a very important aspect of language-learning.

It has been proven that humour can play a very active role in immersive learning.

What is immersive learning?

Immersive Learning Environments (ILEs) are distinguished from other learning methods by their ability to simulate realistic scenarios.

Immersive Learning environments give learners the opportunity to practice their language skills in a variety of ways.

It is believed that humour is an important way of establishing an ILE at home and in a classroom.

- ❑ At the root of immersive learning is conversation.
- ❑ Conversation encourages not only formal interaction but also, casual, colloquial and idiomatic use of language.

Self-confident teachers often actually encourage jokes in the classroom in order to nurture students' ability to engage in banter. This creates an 'active' learning environment.

ஆசிரியர்: நீ எதுவரைக்கும் படிக்க ஆசைப்படுற?

மாணவன்: பள்ளிக்கூட மணி அடிக்கற வரைக்கும், ஆசிரியர்.

Language-learning theorists suggests the humour humanizes a teacher and it increases the child's wish to be bonded more closely to the parent.

In the class, it bridges the gap between learner and instructor and creates a safe learning atmosphere.

Studies have shown that in a home learning situation, the humorous parent can actually get the child to heed him or her better than the more angry parent.

Ronald Berk says:

- the psychological and physiological benefits of laughter can have a direct impact on teaching and learning,
- This is especially true in five significant areas:
 - classroom atmosphere,
 - teacher-learner rapport,
 - student responsiveness,
 - test performance &
 - student attendance.

Students like attending classes filled with laughter and humour.

Teacher: எண்டா 20நாளா ஸ்கூலுக்கு
வரல..?..

Student: எங்கப்பாதான் சொன்னாரு
ஒரே எடத்துக்கு அடிக்கடி போனா
மரியாத கெடைக்காதுன்னு.. ;)

At home too...

The psychological and physiological benefits of laughter are manifold:

- It can stave off anxiety in a child
- The home becomes a safe space the child is eager to return to
- Children thrive in homes where laughter abounds
- Teaching and learning between parents and children is most successful when parents are able to laugh **with** the child at its mistakes.
- This is an important ingredient to alleviate depression in the child.

- Now, let's talk about the '**immediacy construct**'
- This was first developed and introduced by Mehrabian (1969) as a description for those communication behaviours that improve the physical or psychological closeness between two or more individuals.
- Arising from this, 'affective' behaviour that impacts learning in the classroom is generally referred to as ***immediacy behaviour***.
- Psychologists have focused on **humour as a componential element of a larger set of affective behaviours**.
- In other words, it has been established that **humour affects a whole set of attitudes of a child** in positive ways.

- Group affective behaviour is a very important component of learning.
- It establishes the **collective dynamic** in a classroom.
- This means that if one or more students enjoy the humour in the classroom, their mood affects their classmates' and this generates general good humour in the classroom.
- Similarly, at home, laughter shared among parents and children or between siblings establishes a positive dynamic.

- Collective dynamic is important since it can exert either a deeply beneficial effect conducive to learning, or it can deter learning.
- Even when a teacher who is identified as humorous is imparting serious knowledge, the level of attention in the classroom has been established to be higher than in a classroom where the teacher is uniformly serious.
- It is very similar at home. A humorous parent who is seriously imparting knowledge has a more eagerly attentive child.
- This is because the students/children are constantly anticipating the next joke.

Theorists like Gorham and Christophel (1990) believe that when a teacher has successfully alleviated boredom through his jokes, s/he has created an active-learning environment in the classroom.

We live in the age of millennials.

Their attention span is short. They have a million gadgets to distract them.

Therefore, as teachers and parents, we need to learn every trick in the book to keep their attention.

Happily for us, humour is one of the most ancient tools in the human handbook that can still be used most effectively.

As teachers and parents, let us therefore make use of this extremely effective tool in order to enhance the learning atmosphere in the classroom and at home.



நன்றி!

