

Establishing a Positive and Enjoyable Teaching and Learning Atmosphere Using *Humor*: A Case Study

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COURSE: CROSS-CULTURAL PSYCHOLOGY

Culture and Attractiveness

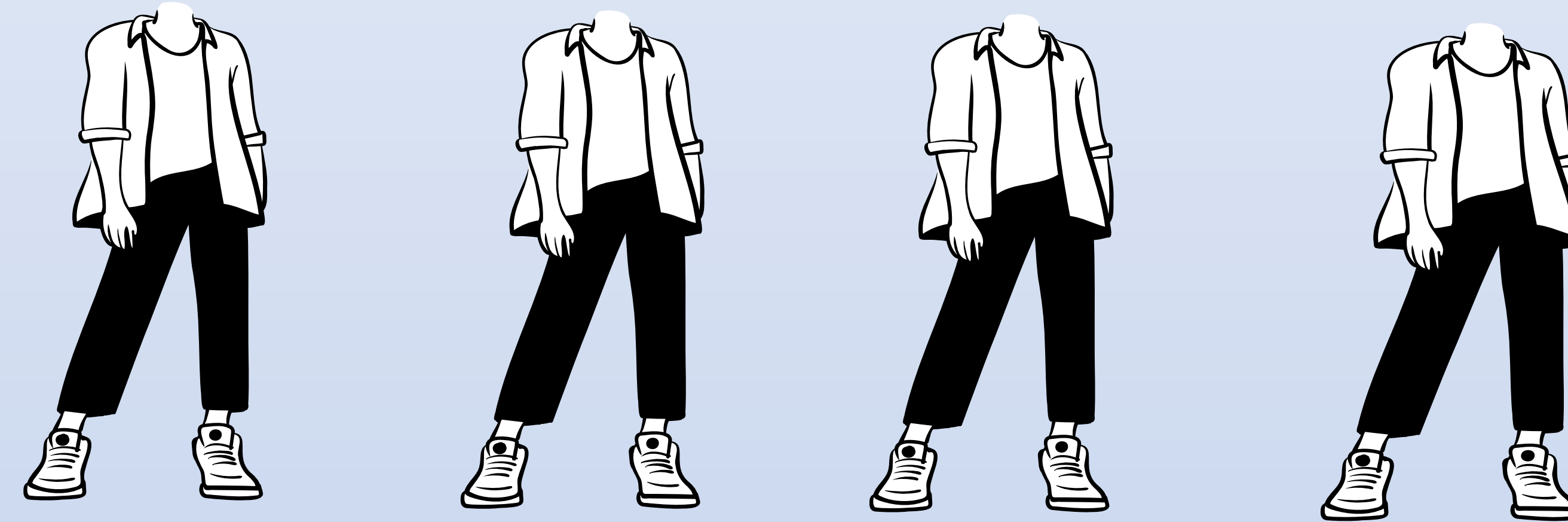
Subtopics:

Food Culture

My strategies

1 Self-deprecating humor:

“comments used in an affiliative manner which invite the audience to share in the laughter at their [shared] self-targeted foibles”
(Stewart, 2011, p. 205)



Scenario 1: During a tutorial session focused on culture and attractiveness, a group of 35 students were tasked with assessing the degree of attractiveness exhibited by four selected male celebrities known for their good looks.

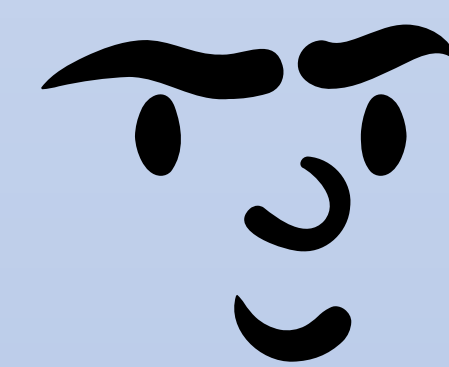
2 Read more jokes.

Do's ✓

- Remind yourself that a sense of humor is a skill, not a talent
- Be vigilant
- Find the right tone, pace, and suitable topic
- [Try] to be funny

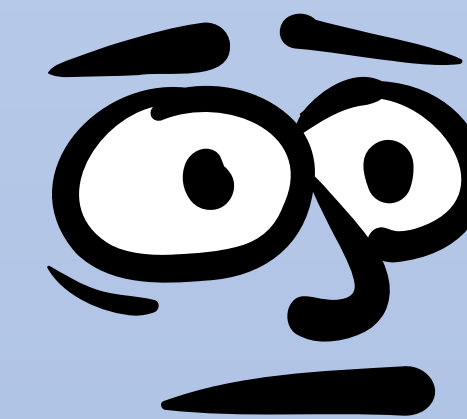
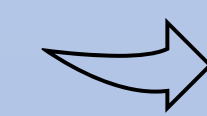
Don'ts ✗

- Create jokes that hurt or humiliate people
- Force people to laugh
- Use self-deprecating humor if it hurts you

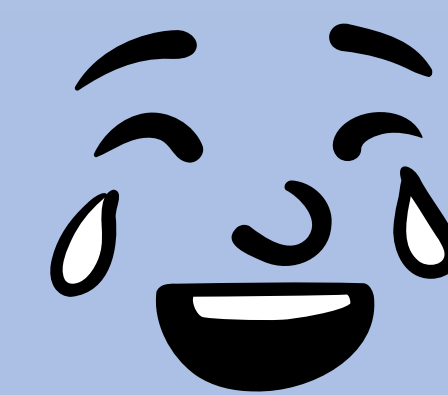


A few of them asked: “Sir, why you didn't put your picture?”

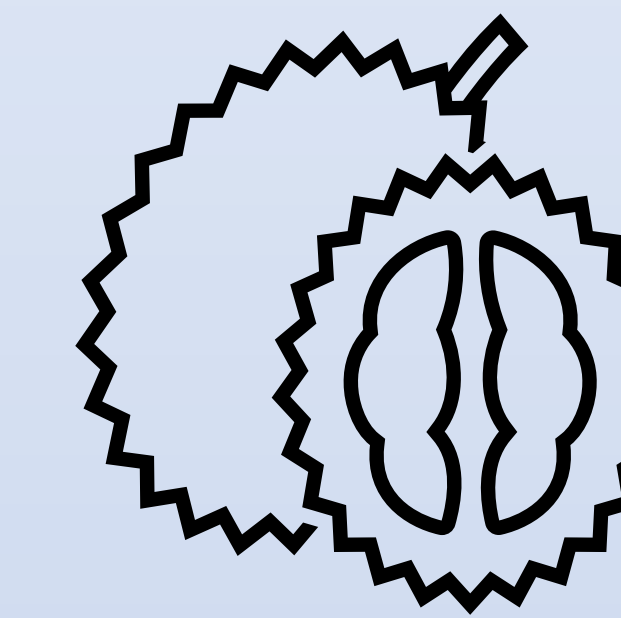
Me: “I did actually... [after a few seconds pause], but my conscience changed my mind...”



Students and I: We all laughed. Students have better attention and motivation to learn (Target outcomes)

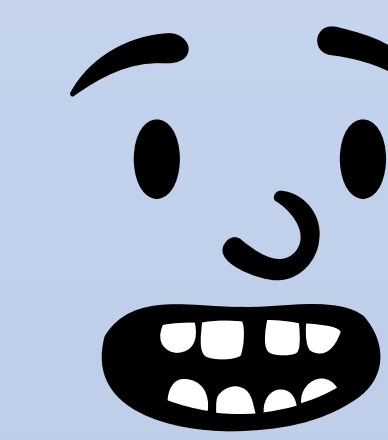


[Note: I am confident with my look 😊 and the student knew that it was a joke!]



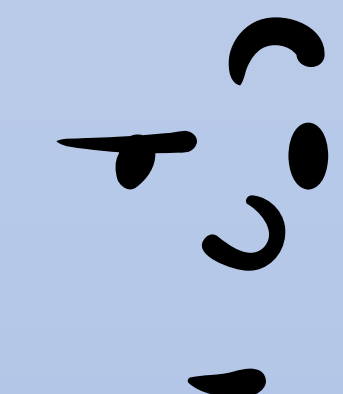
Durian: an edible fruit, also known as the “King of fruits”

Scenario 2: I asked whether two of my Caucasian students were familiar with the term ‘durian’. They appeared uncertain initially, but later admitted to having tried it in the past and finding its scent and taste unappealing. To add some levity, I conjured up a witty joke.

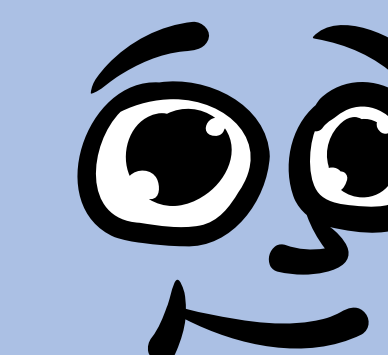


Me: “Hey guys, do you know why the durian is always sad?”

International Student A: “Nah... maybe a lot of people hate his smell and taste?”



International Student B: “Yea...maybe that is why he is sad?”



Me: “Nope, ‘cos no one wants to hug him...”

International Student A & B: They both laughed (Target outcome)



What I have gained: (i) Enjoyment, (ii) a sense of accomplishment, (iii) better teaching motivation, and (iv) Reduced power distance