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Suggestopedia As an Important Method of Teaching Vocabulary

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Abstract: *The findings of the study revealed that suggestopedia method significantly improves the performance of the learners. Thus, suggestopedia method could be an effective method to teach vocabulary to primary school pupils*

Key words: *suggestology, experiments, authoritative course, aims, highly positive attitude, teacher behaviors, materials.*

“The influence of a good teacher can never be erased”.

Introduction

Suggestopedia is a method developed by the Bulgarian psychiatrist-educator Georgi Lozanov. Suggestopedia is a specific set of learning recommendations derived from Suggestology, which Lozanov describes as a "science ... concerned with the systematic study of the nonrational and/or nonconscious influences" that human beings are constantly responding to (Stevick 1976: 42). Suggestopedia tries to harness these influences and redirect them so as to optimize learning. The most conspicuous characteristics of Suggestopedia are the decoration, furniture, and arrangement of the classroom, the use of music, and the authoritative behavior of the teacher.

Materials and Methods

The claims for suggestopedia learning are dramatic. “There is no sector of public life where suggestology would not be useful” (Lozanov 1978:2). “Memorization in learning by the suggestopedic method seems to be accelerated 25 times over that in learning by conventional methods” (Lozanov 1978: 27). Precise descriptions of the conditions under which suggestopedia experiments were run are as hard to come by as are precise descriptions of “successful” classroom procedures. For example, Earl Stevick, a generally enthusiastic supporter of Suggestopedia, notes that suggestopedia teachers are trained to read dialogues in a special way. “The precise ways of using voice quality, intonation, and timing are apparently both important and intricate. I have found no one who could give a first-hand account of them” (Stevick 1976: 157).

People remember best and are most influenced by information coming from an authoritative source. Lozanov dictates a variety of prescriptions and proscriptions aimed at having Suggestopedia students experience the educational establishment and the teacher as sources having great authority. Lozanov talks of choosing a “ritual placebo system” that is most likely to be perceived of by students as having high authority

(Lozanov 1978: 267). Lozanov appears to believe that scientific-sounding language, highly positive experimental data, and true-believer teachers constitute a ritual placebo system that is authoritatively appealing to most learners. Well-publicized accounts of learning success lend the method and the institution authority, and commitment to the method, self-confidence, personal distance, acting ability, and a highly positive attitude give an authoritative air to the teacher.

Suggestopedia aims to deliver advanced conversational proficiency quickly. It apparently bases its learning claims on student mastery of prodigious lists of vocabulary pairs and, indeed, suggests to the students that it is appropriate that they set such goals for themselves. Lozanov emphasizes, however, that increased memory power is not an isolated skill but is a result of “positive, comprehensive stimulation of personality (Lozanov 1978: 253). Lozanov states categorically, “The main aim of teaching is not memorization, but the understanding and creative solution of problems” (1978: 251). As learner goals he cites increased access to understanding and creative solutions of problems. However, because students and teachers place a high value on vocabulary recall, memorization of vocabulary pairs continues to be seen as an important goal of the suggestopedic method.

Lozanov lists several expected teacher behaviors that contribute to these presentations.

1. Show absolute confidence in the method.
2. Display fastidious conduct in manners and dress.
3. Organize properly and strictly observe the initial stages of the teaching process- this includes choice and play of music, as well as punctuality.
4. Maintain aa attitude towards the session.
5. Give tests and respond tactfully to poor papers
6. Stress global rather than analytical attitudes towards material.
7. Maintain a modest enthusiasm.

(Lozanov 1978:275-6)

Conclusion

Materials consist of direct support materials, primarily text and tape, and indirect support materials, including classroom fixtures and music. The text is organized around the ten units described earlier. The textbook should have emotional force, literary quality, and interesting characters. Language problems should be introduced in a way that does not worry or distract students from the content. “Traumatic themes and distasteful lexical material should be avoided” (Lozanov 1978: 278).

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