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AUTHOR Bancroft, W. Jane
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ABSTRACT

In the early 1970s, American educators commenced experiments on Suggestopedia. Educational psychologists enlarged upon the relaxation and visualizations contained in the Bulgarian method and provided a solid, statistical basis to Suggestopedic research. Part I of this paper discusses the contribution of Donald Schuster, and his development of Suggestive-Accelerative Learning Techniques (SALT) ("research and relaxation"). In the later 1970s, Drs. Lozanov and Gateva visited the United States to present demonstrations of, and workshops on Suggestopedia. Innovative language teachers elaborated their own distinctive variants. "The ACT Approach," (Acquisition through Creative Teaching) by Dr. Lynn Dhority, demonstrates the possibilities for combining elements of different language-acquisition approaches and the creative side of Suggestopedic adaptations in the United States. Part II of this paper examines the ACT Approach and discusses the elements of Suggestopedia that the approach incorporates. Schuster's SALT (SALT variant of Suggestopedia), while emphasizing research statistics, does not neglect teacher and student creativity in the classroom; Dhority's ACT, which ostensibly favors subjective evaluations of the part of teacher and students, has produced research data to document methodological effectiveness. Both methods constitute very effective Americanized versions of Suggestopedia. (Contains 19 references.) (CK)

From Research and Relaxation to Combination and Creativity: American Versions of Suggestopedia

W. Jane Bancroft, Scarborough Campus, University of Toronto

Abstract

In the early 1970's, following the publication of the Ostrander-Schroeder Psychic Discoveries behind the Iron Curtain, educators in the United States commenced experiments on Suggestopedia. Educational psychologists - most notably Donald Schuster, Owen Caskey and Allyn Prichard - enlarged upon the relaxation and visualization elements contained in the Bulgarian method (especially its first version) and provided a solid, statistical basis to Suggestopedic research. The results of their scientific investigations can be seen in their books on the subject of Suggestive-Accelerative Learning and Teaching (or SALT) as well as in their articles in the Journal of the Society for Accelerative Learning and Teaching. The leader in SALT research is generally acknowledged to be Dr. Donald Schuster, retired professor of Psychology at Iowa State University, and Part I of this paper discusses the Schuster/SALT contribution ("research and relaxation") and examines the SALT Method (or SALT variant of Suggestopedia) as it is described in the Schuster-Gritton teacher's manual, Suggestive-Accelerative Learning Techniques.

A second, parallel development occurred in the 1970's, especially following the visits of Dr. Georgi Lozanov and Evalina Gateva to the United States in the latter part of the decade to present demonstrations of, and workshops on Suggestopedia. Inspired, in particular, by the artistic qualities of the second (or Gateva) version of Suggestopedia, innovative language teachers elaborated their own distinctive variants. With his book, The ACT Approach (for Acquisition through Creative Teaching), Dr. Lynn Dhority, professor of German at the University of Massachusetts, best demonstrates not only the possibilities for combining elements of different language-acquisition approaches but also the creative side of Suggestopedic adaptations (or applications) in the United States. Part II of this paper examines the ACT Approach and discusses the elements of Suggestopedia I and 2 which it incorporates.

While it may be said that SALT emphasizes scientific research whereas ACT focuses on creativity, the two methods are nonetheless complementary. SALT relaxation techniques are a part of the ACT Approach and Total Physical Response strategies (which, among other communicative-based strategies, are incorporated into ACT) are also a part of SALT. Schuster's SALT, while emphasizing research statistics, does not neglect teacher and student creativity in the classroom and Dhority's ACT, which ostensibly favors subjective evaluations on the part of teacher and students, has produced research data to document methodological effectiveness. In the final analysis, it may be said that both methods constitute very effective "Americanized" versions of Suggestopedia.

From Research and Relaxation to Combination and Creativity: American Versions of Suggestopedia

W. Jane Bancroft

Part I: Research and Relaxation

In the early 1970's, following the publication of the Ostrander-Schroeder Psychic Discoveries behind the Iron Curtain, a number of knowledgeable researchers and educational psychologists in the United States - most notably Donald Schuster, Owen Caskey and Allyn Prichard - expressed interest in, or commenced experiments on Suggestopedia. The circulation of an unofficial English translation of the Lozanov thesis, Sugestologiia, as well as the publication of a number of articles by myself and others on what was called the Lozanov Method, also stimulated interest and research. Early pilot studies which were published in the newly founded Journal of Suggestive-Accelerative Learning and Teaching (which then became the Journal of the Society for Accelerative Learning and Teaching and now the Journal of Accelerative Learning) showed that Suggestopedia (or what was known of it at the time) held promise. My 1975 article, "The Lozanov Language Class," [1] providing details on the first (or Novakovian) version of Suggestopedia served as the basis for controlled experiments conducted by researchers affiliated with the Society for Suggestive-Accelerative Learning and Teaching. (The name was changed in 1980 to the Society for Accelerative Learning and Teaching and in 1994 to the International Alliance for Learning). In addition to conducting his own research at Texas Tech University, Owen Caskey supervised theses such as that of Elizabeth Robinett, "The Effects of Suggestopedia in Increasing Foreign Language Achievement," which showed Suggestopedia had a positive effect on language learning. ("Individual analysis of achievement revealed that the Suggestopedic approach helped students in the lower

grade point average ranges more than those with higher grade point averages").[2] In their investigation of the influence of a suggestive atmosphere, synchronized music and breathing on the learning and retention of Spanish words, Ray Bordon and Donald Schuster found that, "at a practical level, these variables when present resulted in learning 2.5 times better than when these same variables were absent."[3] In the 1975-76 remedial reading experiments conducted by Jean Taylor and Allyn Prichard in Atlanta, 75-80 percent of the pupils gained a year or more on the Spache oral and silent reading sub-tests after fourteen weeks in the program, only twelve of which were devoted to the actual teaching of reading.[4] Researchers generally concluded that three elements of Suggestopedia were essential for the system to work effectively in an American setting: I) an attractive classroom (with soft lighting) and a pleasant classroom atmosphere; 2) a teacher with a dynamic personality, able to act out the material and motivate the students to learn; 3) a state of relaxed alertness in the students.[5]

By the time Dr. Lozanov came to lecture to the members of the Society for Accelerative Learning and Teaching in the late 1970's, the Suggestopedic method had changed. Instead of presenting the Novakov version (Suggestopedia 1) which was largely based on yoga, Lozanov and his new assistant, Evalina Gateva, presented a somewhat different version, one that was more artistic, but which was deprived of many of the earlier, yogic memory-training and relaxation elements. Researchers subsequently took up elements of the Gateva version (Suggestopedia 2) but also retained elements of the former version (as it had been described in my article "The Lozanov Language Class"). More importantly, however, they greatly enlarged upon the relaxation and visualization elements as well as the positive

suggestions for pleasant learning contained in the two versions of Suggestopedia, modified Bulgarian language programs to appeal to an American audience and created "suggestopedic" programs for a wide range of school and college subjects. In addition (and in contrast to Lozanov himself), they provided a solid, statistical basis for Suggestopedic research. The results of the research of Owen Caskey, Donald Schuster and Allyn Prichard can be seen, not only in their articles in the Journal of the Society for Accelerative Learning and Teaching but also in their books on the subject: Caskey's Suggestive-Accelerative Learning and Teaching; Schuster's Suggestive-Accelerative Learning Techniques; Prichard's Accelerating Learning: the Use of Suggestion in the Classroom.[6]

While the work of all three researchers in Suggestopedia and/or SALT has been important, the leader in Suggestive-Accelerative Learning and Teaching (or SALT) research is generally acknowledged to be Dr. Donald Schuster, retired professor of Psychology at Iowa State University, founder and longtime editor of the SALT journal and trainer of hundreds of teachers in SALT strategies. Let us now focus on the SALT Method (or SALT variant of Suggestopedia) as it has been described in Dr. Schuster's many articles and, most particularly, in the book which he co-authored with Charles Gritton, Suggestive-Accelerative Learning Techniques. (An earlier version was the SALT manual of classroom procedures based on the Lozanov Method)

Suggestive-Accelerative Learning and Teaching (or SALT)

In the introduction to the Schuster-Gritton book, we find the following definition of the Suggestive-Accelerative Learning Techniques (or SALT) Method:

> [It] uses aspects of suggestion similar to advertising and unusual styles of presenting material to accelerate classroom learning. The essence of this technique is using an unusual combination of physical relaxation exercises, mental concentration and suggestive principles to strengthen a person's ego and expand his

or her memory capabilities while material to be learned is presented dynamically with relaxing music. [7]

According to Schuster, Dr. Lozanov was the first to put all of these component elements together in "an integrated and highly effective learning procedure," viz. Suggestopedia (p. 1).

The SALT Method incorporates (and, indeed, elaborates upon) the basic theoretical elements of Suggestopedia 1 (authority, infantilization, double-planeness, intonation, rhythm and concert pseudopassivity) as well as the three principles of Suggestopedia 2: joy and absence of tension and concentrative psychorelaxation; the unity of conscious and paraconscious and integral brain activity (i.e., whole-brain learning); the suggestive link on the level of the reserve complex. (Suggestion is used to tap the normally unused reserves of the mind for increased learning). The suggestopedic means of version two (psychological, didactic and artistic) are also a part of the SALT Method.

In addition to providing more detailed information on the ways of using suggestion in the classroom, the Schuster-Gritton book, influenced by Milton Erickson, goes into greater depth than Lozanov's on the theoretical aspects of suggestion. As opposed to the commonly accepted technical definition of suggestion, i.e., the transmission or influence of ideas and their uncritical acceptance by the recipient, Schuster prefers a "humanistic" definition, viz. suggestion as indirect communication, indirection, hinting or intimating. Suggestion in the SALT Method is closer to suggestion as used in advertising or in the arts. In the SALT classroom, suggestion may be direct or indirect; verbal or nonverbal. Verbal suggestion may be direct (as in "learning will be easy for you today") or indirect (as in a question such as "Are you willing to find that out [with respect to today's lesson]?" or a truism such as "Sooner or later you are going to do

extremely well in class") (pp. 63 ff). Direct nonverbal suggestion comprises gestures and mime to get students to imitate the teacher; indirect nonverbal suggestion includes eye contact, manner of speaking, physical posture and location while talking in class (with reference to the teacher); peer success and peer pressure (with reference to the students); and the environment (with reference to the classroom). Regarding environmental nonverbal indirect suggestion, such elements as a semicircular arrangement of chairs, light colors, soft lighting and relaxing background music are important as they make the classroom more inviting for the students.

Suggestion in both Suggestopedia and the SALT Method also involves *de*-suggestion and the overcoming of barriers that interfere with teaching and/or learning. Lozanov's barriers to communication, teacher-student interaction and accelerated learning (viz. moral-ethical, rational-logical and intuitive-emotional) are expanded by Schuster to include: 1) socially or culturally accepted patterns; 2) body language signals that are culturally instinctive; 3) subliminal communication; and 4) verbal confusion due to images generated by the recipient in interpreting the sounds received (p. 13). The teacher has (or may have) barriers or psychological characteristics that interfere with successful teaching; the students have barriers that interfere with learning. Suggestion in its various forms (including auto-suggestion) can be used to work around student barriers to accelerated learning as well as teacher barriers to improved teaching. "The teacher's goal is to integrate all types of classroom suggestions with conscious and paraconscious elements skillfully combined to lead the students to expect that learning will be easy, fun, efficient and long-lasting" (p. 74).

The Schuster-Gritton book is also more detailed and straightforward than Lozanov's when it comes to the theoretical (as well as the practical) aspects of whole-brain learning. "Linguistic symbols such as language are generally associated with

slightly increased cortical activity in the left cerebral hemisphere, while listening to music and visualizing a picture are associated with increased right hemisphere activity" (p. 74). Generally speaking, schools emphasize verbal or so-called left brain activities and neglect activities that appeal to or stimulate the right brain. According to Schuster, "research on teaching wherein more than one area of the brain is involved shows that both learning rates and retention can increase dramatically" (p. 75).

In his discussion of general theories of brain functioning, Schuster elaborates on Lozanov's idea that multiple sensory inputs (auditory, visual, motor) improve memory and accelerate memorization. Teachers should emphasize the "interactive contributions of the right and left hemispheres to the mastery of any given skill" (p. 81) and use various modes of presentation in the classroom. Vocabulary, for example, should be taught orally, visually and through physical movement (such as that used in Total Physical Response).

As far as practical applications are concerned, Schuster's SALT follows the general outline of Suggestopedia 1 and 2 in that the lesson is divided into three parts: review of previously presented material; dynamic presentation of new material; repetition of new material to be learned during a "concert session" while the students are in a passive, but nonetheless receptive state. Students in a SALT language class (SALT is used, however, for all subjects and not just language) engage in role-playing, games, songs and a final play; attractive, colorful postures and pictures decorate the classroom and/or present lesson points peripherally. During the "review" or "activation" phase, however, in addition to strategies taken from Suggestopedia, SALT uses techniques taken from American approaches such as Asher's Total Physical Response and Galyean's Confluent Education. The first, or "active" concert of Suggestopedia 2 is optional; if used, however, the students are encouraged to visualize images, whether teacher-prepared or their own (p. 125). The second concert

over baroque music, preferably the slow movements in 4/4 time as in Suggestopedia 1, is considered essential for accelerated learning. (SALT students use rhythmic breathing during this concert). SALT makes use of different kinds of music in the classroom: classical, baroque and "subject-appropriate" (e.g., German folk songs in a German class), thus following the dictates of Suggestopedia; however, in contrast to Suggestopedia, meditative music (or mood music) is used as a background for mind-calming exercises and guided imagery trips in a SALT class. According to Schuster, the use of appropriate types of music helps learning. Music is a placebo, a relaxant but it provides another association to stimulate memory.

According to the SALT approach, the teacher should create a favorable atmosphere for learning through suggestions in the form of positive statements as well as suggestions which appeal to the unconscious mind in the form of body language, attitude and expectations. In everything the teacher does and says, there should be a harmony between the conscious and unconscious, the verbal and the nonverbal levels. Guided imagery (for example, goal setting imagery) and visualization are incorporated into the lesson presentation. Through word and gesture, the teacher establishes and sustains a suggestive, positive atmosphere in which the students understand that effective learning will take place. While the teacher must teach, the students, however, must be in a mental and physical state which enables them to learn. Unlike many educational methods which stress the importance of the teacher and/or various kinds of audio-visual aids and equipment but which neglect to take into account student receptivity, the SALT Method lays great stress on the students. To prepare themselves prior to the presentation of didactic material (for example, just before the lesson begins or just prior to the "concert session"), they perform various types of physical and/or mental relaxation exercises. The teacher's suggestions will be more effective if the students' minds are calm and if they are physically relaxed.

According to the Schuster-Gritton teacher's manual, students learn better when they are relaxed and when they are in a non-threatening, secure situation. Learning is difficult when students are restless or tense and nervous.

In addition to transforming a Bulgarian system designed for teaching intensive language courses into one suitable for the teaching of various subjects in a normal American school situation and to providing a statistical basis for research into accelerated learning, the Schuster/SALT contribution is one of providing a precise and valuable outline of relaxation procedures for use in the classroom. The preliminary preparation phase, considered so important for accelerated learning, is divided into three parts: I) physical relaxation; 2) mental relaxation or mind-calming; 3) suggestive set-up (pleasant learning [re]stimulation). The sequence of these exercises is important: physical relaxation should precede mental relaxation. (Physical relaxation exercises are considered especially necessary for restless and anxious students). A state of physical relaxation makes it possible for students to relax their minds with mind-calming exercises which are either teacher-directed or self-directed (following upon teacher-given instruction) . Suggestion, in turn, is more effective when a student is mentally relaxed. An exercise of pleasant learning (re)stimulation convinces the physically and mentally relaxed students that learning will be easy, efficient and long lasting.

As outlined in the original SALT manual of classroom procedures based on the Lozanov Method and in Suggestive-Accelerative Learning Techniques (pp. 109 ff.), exercises include (but are not limited to) the following:

1) Physical relaxation exercises.

a) Reach and stretch. While standing, raise and stretch one arm as much as possible and hold this position for two to three seconds, return the arm to the side, then reach and stretch with the other arm. (Students may also be requested to stand

up, bend over and try to touch their toes).

b) Tension waves. Divide the body into six sections, tense one section at a time and hold, progress from the feet, to the calves, to the thighs, to the lower abdominal muscles, to the upper abdominal area, to the chest. Hold, then relax the body parts in reverse order. It is possible to do the contractions in a wave-like motion after a little practice.

c) Three turtle exercises: i) Tense one side of the neck, then the other side and the front. ii) Let the head flop forward and touch the chest, then lift the shoulders behind the head, then pull the head up with the neck, tighten the back of the neck, let the head flop forward again. iii) Lift the shoulders and rotate the head, with neck tensed, three times in one direction, then three times in the opposite direction; turn the neck once or twice without tension.

d) Side bends. Standing straight with the hands to the side, slide the hand down the side of the leg below the knee while bending the body sideways as much as possible. Repeat the other side.

e) Eye rotation. First look upward to the maximum extent possible. Then rotate the eyes so as to look to the upper right as high as possible, then to the right horizontally as far as possible. Continue down to the lower right, then straight down, lower left, extreme left, upper left. Rotate the eyes slowly 2 -3 times to the right in a clockwise direction, then do the reverse 2 - 3 times. Next imagine holding something a foot or so in front of the eyes and focusing on it. Then imagine looking at something far off on the horizon. Focus your eyes back and forth several times. Finally, rub your palms together briskly several times and place your palms over your open eyes, imagining energy flowing into your eyes to relax and energize them. Hold this position for I - 2 minutes.

2) Mind-calming exercises.

There are several types of exercises that can be used to calm the students' minds after they have relaxed physically. These include: watching one's breathing (Zen breathing); the little white cloud exercise; walking along the beach; climbing a mountain to view a beautiful sunrise; Romen relaxation (a combination of Jacobsen's progressive relaxation and Schultz-Luthe's autogenic therapy). The little white cloud exercise has the following pattern:

> Imagine that you are lying on your back on the grass on a warm summer day and that you are watching the clear blue sky without a single cloud in it (pause). You are lying very comfortably, you are very relaxed and happy (pause). You are simply enjoying the experience of watching the clear, beautiful, blue sky (pause). As you are lying there, completely relaxed, enjoying yourself (pause), far off on the horizon you notice a tiny white cloud (pause). You are fascinated by the simple beauty of the small white cloud against the clear blue sky (pause). The little white cloud starts to move slowly toward you (pause). You are lying there, completely relaxed, very much at peace with yourself, watching the little white cloud drift slowly toward you (pause). The little white cloud drifts slowly toward you (pause). You are enjoying the beauty of the clear blue sky and the little white cloud (pause). Finally the little white cloud comes to a stop overhead (pause). Completely relaxed, you are enjoying this beautiful scene (pause)., You are very relaxed, very much at peace with yourself, and simply enjoying the beauty of the little white cloud in the blue sky (pause). Now become the little white cloud. Project yourself into it (pause). You are the little white cloud, completely diffused, puffy, relaxed, very much at peace with yourself (pause). Now you are completely relaxed, your mind is completely calm (pause), you are pleasantly relaxed, ready to proceed with the lesson.

3) Suggestive Set-up.

The suggestions contained in this section develop in the students a positive attitude toward learning. Exercises include early pleasant learning recall and lifelong learning. While "lifelong learning" is general in nature and directed towards the future, "early pleasant learning recall" is intended to bring back precise memories from the past. The purpose of the latter exercise, as outlined below, is to stimulate or bring to the fore the sensations, feeling and abilities which students had much earlier in their

lives, for example, during a period when bedtime stories were being read to them. Typical instructions follow a Gestalt pattern in which the nonverbal components of the previous situation provoke a recall of the appropriate verbal and cognitive aspects.

> Return to an experience which made you eager to learn. Get the details of this early pleasant learning experience in your mind as vividly as possible. Use your imagination to fill in the following information, if you need to, in order to put yourself in the situation once again. Where were you? (pause) W[illegible] you in a room? (pause) Were there people around you? (pause) Who were they? (pause) How did you feel about what you were reading or learning? (pause) Take a look at yourself in this learning situation. How did your hands feel then? Everyone's hands feel different when they are excited (pause). Recall that feeling and let it spread up your arms (pause). Let that feeling spread from the top of your head to the bottom of your feet (pause). Recall how your whole body felt (pause). Recall how naturally motivated you were (pause). Recall the thoughts you were thinking (pause). Take a look at the eager feeling you had that day long ago (pause). Maximize that feeling, hang on to it (pause) , bring it here today and use it to learn and enjoy learning as much as you did that day long ago (pause). With positive thoughts and feelings you will remember today as well as you did that day in the past (pause). You still have the ability to remember just as well today.

Since its beginnings in the 1970's, the SALT Method has been frequently, indeed continuously evaluated in field experiments in American public school classrooms and its individual components have been evaluated in analytic laboratory studies with college students. The subject matter in these studies has a wide range from reading, spelling, mathematics, science and art to beginning German and Spanish. Grade levels have ranged from first grade in elementary school to college freshmen. Studies consistently show that students trained with the SALT Method have significantly higher achievement scores and better attitudes than those in the control groups. The lab studies have provided significant support for the major component features of the method (p. 2). Insofar as foreign language achievement is concerned, studies with tight experimental designs have consistently shown that the SALT variant of Suggestopedia produces a two or three times greater foreign language achievement than conventional methods (p. 34).

Part II: Combination and Creativity

Educational psychologists were not the only individuals to conduct or direct scientific research into Suggestopedia in the early 1970's. Language teachers figured prominently in early research efforts and, in point of fact, Marina Kurkov is generally acknowledged to be the first person in the United States to apply Suggestopedia (or what she termed "a modification of Lozanov's suggestopedia") to the teaching of beginning Russian at the Cleveland State University in the fall of 1971. When comparing the results achieved by the two classes involved, an experimental and a control group, it was found that the experimental group covered twice as much material in the same amount of time as the control group. The results corroborated Dr. Lozanov's contention that "in a given amount of time students who are taught by his method learn more, faster, with less effort and retain their knowledge better than other students.[8] Other, early language teaching researchers into Suggestopedia such as R. W. Bushman and Elizabeth Philipov also found that Suggestopedia (or elements of Suggestopedia) improved the learning of foreign languages.[9]

A second, parallel development occurred in the 1970's, especially following the visits of Dr. Lozanov and Evalina Gateva to the United States to present demonstrations of, and workshops on Suggestopedia in the latter part of the decade. Innovative language teachers inspired, in particular, by the artistic qualities of the second (or Gateva) version of Suggestopedia, began writing their own dialogues, combining Suggestopedia with successful strategies they were already using in the classroom and/or with relaxation and visualization exercises taken from SALT or related methods.[10] Among those who elaborated their own distinctive language

teaching methodologies, one of the most creative was certainly the late Charles Schmid who founded the LIND Institute (for Language in New Dimensions) in San Francisco in 1976. [11] However, in the opinion of this writer, it is Dr. Lynn Dhority, Professor of language and literature at the University of Massachusetts and trained by Lozanov and Gateva in Suggestopedia in 1979 who, with his book on the ACT Approach (for Acquisition through Creative Teaching), best demonstrates the creative possibilities of Suggestopedic applications (or adaptations) in the United States.[12]

Acquisition through Creative Teaching (or ACT)

In the preface to, and the first chapter of his book, The ACT Approach, Dhority states that his method, Acquisition through Creative Teaching, seeks to provide a holistic, whole-brain model for language acquisition in a positive and relaxed atmosphere and a multi-sensory learning environment. [13] Dhority's approach is "heavily indebted to Lozanov" (p. 18) and to Lozanov's belief that students have extraordinary, untapped learning capacities which can be brought out by a competent, personable teacher skilled in the proper use of suggestion in the classroom. ACT is based on the principal theoretical elements of Suggestopedia 1 (viz. authority, infantilization, double-planeness, intonation, rhythm and concert pseudo-passivity) as well as on the three principles (joy and absence of tension; the unity of conscious and paraconscious [or subconscious]; the suggestive link [or the use of suggestion to tap non-conscious resources]) and the three means (psychological, didactic, artistic) of Suggestopedia 2. As we shall see, in practice, ACT also combines elements of both versions of Suggestopedia. However, Dhority's approach in both theory and praxis also incorporates "many invaluable contributions" (p. 18) made by American educators

and researchers: Leslie Hart and his theories of brain function and brain-compatible education; Schuster and SALT; Bandler and Grinder and Neuro-Linguistic Programming; Robert Rosenthal and Pygmalion in the Classroom; Stephen Krashen and his hypotheses about language acquisition; James Asher and Total Physical Response (TPR); Tracy Terrell and his communicative-based Natural Approach (or NA).

Dhority uses his ACT Approach to teach German at Levels 1 and 2 at the University of Massachusetts[14] in an intensive format and with small classes (12 to 16 students). Classes meet for three sixty-minute periods (from 9 to 12:30 with breaks), five days a week for six weeks (90 hours total). Regular attendance is a must but the fear of failure is removed in Level 1, in particular, in that the course is graded on a pass/fail basis, with attendance guaranteeing a pass.

Following the example of Lozanov (and Rosenthal), Dhority lays great stress on the role of the teacher and on his/her ability to motivate the students in the classroom through the creation of a positive psychological atmosphere. The teacher must be competent in his/her field and must manifest a genuine enthusiasm for his/her subject area (p. 46). While projecting a natural sense of authority and self-esteem, the teacher must also show genuine interest in, and concern for the students as a group and for each individual student. Student-teacher rapport should be easy and relaxed. Group dynamics should be positive and supportive. In the cultivation of a positive presence in the classroom, the "evocative power" of words and images chosen by the teacher is very important (pp. 59 ff.), but so, too, are such factors as attitude and mood, facial expressions, voice quality, intonation (for example, "anchoring" as used in Neuro-Linguistic Programming [or NLP]), rhythm of speech, body language (such as NLP physical "mirroring"), and even dress. According to Dhority, the "messages contained in such unconscious forces can literally create success or failure in our classroom(s)"

(p. 45). First impressions are critical when it comes to establishing good teacher-student rapport as well as a positive student attitude toward the subject that is to be taught and Dhority stresses the importance of welcoming the students to the class and of giving them, from the beginning, positive suggestions for pleasant learning. (These positive suggestions may be in the form of images and affirmations; guided visualizations; the story-as-metaphor; relaxation fantasies; SALT early pleasant learning recall).

In accordance with the theory of Suggestopedia, Dhority emphasizes the importance of the physical environment in which the language learning is to take place. The classroom should be esthetically pleasant, attractive, colorful, comfortable, "engaging to the senses" (p. 44). Full-spectrum (as opposed to fluorescent) lighting should be utilized. To soften acoustics and provide a comfortable surface for games and relaxation exercises, the floor should be carpeted. Pictures (ethnic landscapes and cultural scenes) , charts, maps and colorful posters hang on the walls. These peripheral stimuli are both esthetic and instructional and change regularly so that they are integrated with the lesson content. (Following Suggestopedia 2, ACT makes great use of posters which blend language paradigms with decorative, visual shapes and colors. Remarkable learning results have been achieved when visual stimuli are integrated into the instructional environment without the instructor's drawing conscious attention to them [p. 77]).[15] Living plants and/or fresh-cut flowers grace the room. The students are seated in a semi-circular or crescent-shaped arrangement in comfortable chairs (with head and arm support) and to promote greater student-student contact, they are encouraged to change seats every time they enter the room ("fluid seating" [p. 78]). The classroom has good ventilation, windows and plenty of natural light. Easels, flip charts and/or white boards with color markers are used instead of the traditional blackboard. A good-quality stereo music system is used to

provide the various kinds of music used in the ACT Approach. (These include: baroque fanfares to introduce the class; classical and baroque music for the concert sessions; the music of Mozart and other great composers for low volume background music during the class itself; [16] "subject-appropriate" music for songs and dances; mood or "New Age" music for relaxation and guided fantasies or visualizations). Video equipment is available for the taping of classes. When the students enter the room before the class begins and/or during breaks, they have at their disposal a refreshment area with hot water for tea, coffee and chocolate. All elements of the physical environment in the Dhority ACT Approach are meant to suggest a new, different and positive learning experience.

In accordance with Suggestopedia 2, the Gateva version of Suggestopedia, the ACT Approach accords great importance to the text and, more specifically, to a text specially written for the course. The beginning language manual, which introduces 1,500 to 2,000 new words during the 90-hour Level 1 course, is written as a series of approximately nine "Acts" and comprises a coherent dramatic story with authentic characters and situations. The Acts are some 500 to 700 words long; the first, which is the longest, introduces some 500 new words. The Acts are written in a dialogue format, in parallel columns, with the target language in the left column and the native language equivalent in the right column. Following the precepts of the Natural Approach, there is no formal sequencing of grammatical concepts although earlier Acts are written with simpler, though nonetheless authentic language. Basic grammatical structures and paradigms with examples are presented in appendices and are used as reference materials by the students. The text is amply illustrated with images and photos designed to suggest and reinforce the content being presented. Unbound, the ACT text is contained in an attractive three-ring binder. Because new

material can be withheld, suspense and interest in Acts yet-to-come is heightened. With this format, It is also possible to revise and supplement the text on a regular basis.

The ACT text combines language content with "embedded suggestions" at many levels to help the students learn (p. 87). (When the text is musically introduced to the relaxed and receptive students during the concert session, the "suggestions" will have considerable impact). Direct suggestion is embedded in the text - for example, in introductory and instructional statements. Students are encouraged to enjoy the drama, the humor and participate fully in the proceedings. Indirect suggestions are also embedded in the text; characters in the drama encounter similar challenges and obstacles to the ones the students encounter. Lively, dramatic, filled (in accordance with the Krashen hypotheses) with a large volume of natural, authentic input and situations for conversational reenactment as well as positive suggestions for pleasant learning, the ACT text has as its purpose to promote language acquisition in every way possible.[17]

The beginning German course in the ACT Approach begins with a "cocktail party" during which the new roles and identities are distributed to (or rather, chosen by) the students. A list of professions or roles is presented on colorful charts and each student is offered a prop to accompany his or her choice (dancing shoes for a dancer, for example). Before the cocktail party begins, students are led through their first of many musical experiences by singing an identity song: "Ich bin ich." During the imaginary cocktail party itself, students make the rounds introducing themselves briefly in German. As in Suggestopedia 1 and 2, a playful, relaxed atmosphere is established but one which has important psychological (or psychotherapeutical) implications: the students leave behind their old, "limiting" identities and assume new roles, ones which are "limitless" in possibilities for learning.

Normally, however, the ACT Approach follows the precepts of Krashen and Terrell in the Natural Approach as well as Asher in Total Physical Response in that comprehension should precede production and production should be allowed to emerge in stages. According to Dhority, the reason for encouraging students to venture speech production within the first hour of the course has to do with the group bonding process and the building of teacher-student and student-student rapport as well as with the affirmation of the newly assumed student roles. Apart from the initial "party," ACT uses TPR strategies, NA picture files and other listening comprehension activities during the first 10-15 hours of the beginning language course. (Words, phrases and diagrams are, however, written or sketched on easel pads with color markers and gradually, single sheets of illustrated vocabulary and phrases are given to students to supplement classroom activities). Following a "silent period," student speech production is then allowed to emerge in stages. (This is in direct contradiction to Suggestopedia but, following the theories of Krashen, Terrell and Asher, Dhority says he has experienced "even better results" by delaying the introduction of the text [or language manual] and the first real invitations for oral production until at least after the tenth hour of class [p. 84]).

Following the opening "cocktail party" and an initial period of listening comprehension activities based on TPR and NA during which considerable linguistic material is introduced, the ACT Approach generally follows the format of Suggestopedia in that the class is divided into three parts: presentation of new material; concert presentations; activation phase (or period of review). Dhority calls the formal presentation of text material before the concert session the "global prelude" and says that it has two purposes: 1) to give a rapid preview of material and create a context for what is to follow; 2) to suggest indirectly to the students that what is coming is interesting, engaging and comprehensible (p. 98). During the global prelude, the

teacher acts out the content of the text using gestures, props, peripheral aids in the room (including posters with key phrases from the lesson material).

When discussing the concert session, Dhority proclaims his agreement with Lozanov's theory that music creates a relaxed state and carries the material to be learned into the brain. (The ACT Approach is also in agreement with contemporary theories of whole-brain learning in which music is generally considered a "right-brain" activity and language an activity which appeals to or engages the brain's left hemisphere). In his intensive language classes, Dhority uses the two concerts of Suggestopedia 2 (but not, however, every day; concert sessions are offered about every eighth hour of the course and are always structured to end that particular day's class). For the first or "active" concert, which he shortens (and quite rightly, in the opinion of this writer) from 50 minutes to 30, he prefers such classical composers as Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven to such romantic composers as Brahms, Tchaikovsky and Rachmaninoff. Insofar as the second or "passive" concert is concerned for the reading of the same lesson material, Dhority follows the dictates of Suggestopedia 1 in using only the slow movements from such representative baroque composers as Bach, Corelli, Handel, Telemann and Vivaldi. In a note, he says that "in my own experience, the slow movements seem to sustain the relaxed atmosphere better" (p. 216). Dhority appears to have no "coming out" phase during which allegro music may be played; the adagio music of the "passiv ncert (which lasts about l0 to 15 minutes, i.e., a shorter period than in Suggestopedia) merely continues playing for several minutes after the teacher has finished reading the dialogue. In accordance with Lozanovian theory, the concert presentations constitute for Dhority a kind of "ritual" (p. 101) and great importance is attached to their preparation and performance.

In his discussion of the activation phase (or review of previously presented material), once the period of listening comprehension is completed, Dhority essentially

follows Suggestopedia 2 although he provides a better organizational framework than his Bulgarian sources of inspiration. Dhority divides the activation activities into two categories: primary and secondary (pp. 106 ff). Used for a block of text approximately 250 words in length, primary activation activities are:

1) whole group choral echo/antics in which the students echo the teacher's model reading of the text, complete with expressive gestures and a vivid imagining of the images in the text as they speak;

2) role reading in twos or threes (the number reading depends on the number of roles available in that particular section of the text-dialogue);

3) individual or small group role reading for the class with costume props (which help keep the focus off the "real" personality of the readers);

4) comprehension check in which students, as a group, answer the question, "What does that mean in English?" (Although this activity is translation under another name, an exercise-like quality is avoided by the teacher's expressiveness and tone of voice).

In the early stages of the language course, as the major source of "comprehensible input," the teacher does most of the talking. As student comprehension increases, so, too, does student confidence and a desire to speak. The goal of the secondary activations in an ACT class is to provide authentic opportunities for communication, rather than drills and exercises. According to Dhority, this phase is characterized by "playful, imaginative, spontaneous ways of encouraging full and authentic receptive and expressive communication" (p. 109). The secondary activation phase, in contrast to the primary one, does not attempt to stay too close to the text. As described in The ACT Approach, secondary activation activities are:

1) appeals to the imagination in the form of students' new biographies and "stories" as well as guided fantasies in the target language (for example, an imaginary trip to a foreign country) which utilize embedded positive suggestions and images;

2) props (including costume articles [especially hats]); physical objects (these are used also during the early stages for TPR activities); pictures (picture files are taken from the Natural Approach), slides, videotapes ; puppets (especially the humorous Onkel Fritz [inspired by Suggestopedia 2] with whom the students are able to communicate more freely than with a real person such as the teacher);

3) singing, miming and dancing (these activities are used for linguistic purposes [for example, hand clapping for learning numbers, mime for learning verbs]); to create a German (or ethnic) atmosphere in the classroom; and to encourage spontaneity on the part of the students;

4) dramatizations (the dramatization of language material in interesting and humorous situations is basic to the ACT Approach); as in other communicative-based approaches, short skits such as arrival in a foreign country, phone calls, changing money, a café scene, a taxi ride, a bus trip and so on, are frequently used;

5) games (which create a play like atmosphere but which also facilitate linguistic performance); these include "playing ball" (from Suggestopedia), card games, Simon says, and so on. During the secondary activation phase, students bring to life the material they have received and encoded during the receptive, musical presentations. Although most of the new vocabulary is presented in the concert sessions, the activation phases (the secondary one, in particular) continue to offer new input. In addition to vocabulary, through authentic communication experiences and activities which "playfully stimulate the imagination" (p. 113), students learn intonation, timing and gestures - so important for true communicative competence.

While the ACT Approach is primarily interested in fostering language acquisition (as opposed to language learning) and Dhority states in his book that he is opposed to the current obsession with "testing, judging, measuring, evaluating and demonstrating" (p. 176), an obsession which he sees as having a negative impact on

both students and teachers, Acquisition through Creative Teaching does not neglect such elements of the traditional language course as error correction, grammar, homework, evaluation and testing. Dhority's (and the students') subjective evaluations of very positive course results are backed up by videotaped records, results of the MLA exam in German and the ACTFL Oral Proficiency Interviews.

Like other acquisition-focused approaches, ACT tends to minimize direct correction of student errors in speaking, especially in the beginning stages. Errors which would interfere with comprehensibility are corrected, but softly. In accordance with the Krashen idea that the conscious study of grammar has only modest value in the language acquisition process, ACT gives much less formal attention to grammar than traditional methods. However, Dhority states that he is not totally "anti-grammar" (p. 117) and that his method seeks a balance between learning and acquisition strategies. As in Suggestopedia 2, grammar is presented passively in the form of attractive, colorful posters which display structures and paradigms. The posters are put up before the forms (of the past tense, for example) are emphasized in class. The students are allowed to "register abstracted grammar peripherally and semi-consciously". Following Lozanov, Dhority believes that the "powerful semi-conscious level can be activated for the teaching of grammatical material, a task which is traditionally conducted almost exclusively at the conscious, memorization level" (p. 117). However, even in the beginning course, students are assigned a moderate amount of grammar study and practice exercises at home using a supplementary or auxiliary text. While there is no demand for "active mastery" and Dhority is aware that his students are not able to perform as well on discrete-point grammar tests as members of regular, traditional classes, ACT students are nonetheless given exposure to a comprehensive range of grammatical forms and structures in the beginning course. Dhority's Level 2 intensive course in German makes increasing use of

language-learning (as well as language-acquisition) strategies.

In Dhority's view (as in Lozanov's), homework and the language laboratory are associated with exercises and drill. To avoid the negative aspects of mechanical and boring work at home, ACT homework activities include the following: listening to tapes of the second (or baroque) musical concert readings as well as the readings of other texts; the writing (or transcribing) of short sentences or paragraphs from tape listening (this activity fosters a visual connection to auditory comprehension); filling in the missing words in exercises of the Cloze type (in the early stages of the course, grammatical manipulations are not required); reading over the texts studied in class just before going to sleep while listening to a tape of the second concert presentation of the material. [18]

Dhority points out in his book that conscious learning tools become increasingly appropriate later on in the beginning course as the skills of reading and writing receive greater attention. After 25-30 hours of concentrating on listening and oral skills, student motivation and interest is usually high enough to sustain a certain amount of conscious attention to grammar and syntax. Level 2 of the ACT program focuses increasingly on conscious, learned mastery, especially in the areas of reading and writing. However, to sustain student interest, care is taken at Level 2 to avoid suggesting that this is a traditional, drill-and-exercise-oriented course.

In the MLA exam in German, designed for students who have completed two semesters of college study, ACT students scored "excellently" in listening comprehension and speaking (and this in spite of the artificial contexts). On the discrete-point grammar section and in the writing section, quite understandably, they did not score nearly as well. Since 1985, Dhority has used the ACTFL Oral Proficiency Interview (or OPI) to evaluate ACT students after Level 1 and then again

after Level 2. (The OPI, in his opinion, is at present "the best tool" for the evaluation of students' abilities to speak a foreign language in a "closely approximated authentic communication context" [p. 132]). The majority of ACT Level 1 students achieve an ACTFL Speaking Proficiency Level of Intermediate-Mid. (Occasionally a student is ranked as Intermediate Low and occasionally one may achieve Intermediate High). Insofar as Level 2 is concerned, the majority of students in this course achieve the Intermediate High Level on the OPI. (About 15% reach Intermediate-Mid and an occasional student reaches the Advanced Level).[19] Although Dhority admits to being uncomfortable with our society's "test" mentality and believes that the success of his ACT language classes lies in "phenomena [he] will never be able to test empirically" (p. 173), he demonstrates in his book that it *is* possible for the ACT teacher, not only to be creative but also to test, produce data and prove methodological effectiveness.

Conclusion

From an examination of SALT and ACT we can see that Suggestopedic applications in the United States have taken two different, but nonetheless complementary paths. SALT emphasizes scientific research whereas ACT focuses on creativity. However, SALT relaxation techniques are a part of the ACT Approach and Total Physical Response strategies (which are incorporated into ACT) are also a part of SALT. Schuster's SALT, while emphasizing research statistics, does not neglect teacher and student creativity in the classroom and Dhority's ACT, which ostensibly favors subjective evaluations on the part of teacher and students, has produced research data (albeit not too extensive). In the final analysis, both methods constitute very effective "Americanized" versions of Suggestopedia.

Scarborough Campus, University of Toronto

Notes

[1]ERIC Documents on Foreign Language Teaching and Linguistics, 1975. 53 pp. in microfiche. ED 108 475.

[2]Owen Caskey, "On-going Suggestopedic Research in Texas," Journal of Suggestive-Accelerative Learning and Teaching, 1 (1976), 353.

[3]R. Benítez-Bordón and Donald H. Schuster, "The effects of a suggestive learning climate, synchronized breathing and music on the learning and retention of Spanish words," Journal of Suggestive-Accelerative Learning and Teaching, 1 (1976), 27.

[4]Allyn Prichard and Jean Taylor, "Adapting the Lozanov method for remedial reading instruction," Journal of Suggestive-Accelerative Learning and Teaching, 1 (1976), 111.

[5]See my article, "The Lozanov Method and its American Adaptations," Modern Language Journal, 62 (1978), 172.

[6]Owen Caskey, Suggestive-Accelerative Learning and Teaching (Englewood Cliffs, N.J: Educational Technology Publications, 1980); Donald Schuster and Charles Gritton, Suggestive-Accelerative Learning Techniques (New York: Gordon and Breach, 1986); Allyn Prichard, Accelerating Learning: The Use of Suggestion in the Classroom (Novato, CA: Academic Therapy Publications, 1980).

[7]Donald Schuster and Charles Gritton, Suggestive-Accelerative Learning Techniques (New York: Gordon and Breach, 1986), p. 1. All succeeding references to this book will be indicated, in brackets, within the text.

[8]Marina Kurkov, "Accelerated learning: An experiment in the application of suggestopedia," Journal of Suggestive-Accelerative Learning and Teaching, 2 (1977), 27.

[9]For an account of early language research into Suggestopedia, see: Donald Schuster and Charles Gritton, Suggestive Accelerative Learning Techniques (New York: Gordon and Breach, 1986), pp. 34 ff.

[10]This trend persisted into the 1980's, as can be seen by the ERIC Documents on Foreign Language Teaching and Linguistics. See, for example, Audrey Cullen et al., "Accelerated Learning 1985-86," (ERIC Documents, 1987. 31 pp. in microfiche. ED 280 276), where Suggestopedia in its SALT and ACT variants is combined with Total Physical Response.

[11]For a description of an early version of the LIND method, see: Charles Schmid, "Language in new dimensions," Journal of Suggestive-Accelerative Learning and Teaching, 3 (1978), 181-96.

[12]In Western Europe, in addition to excellent language teachers, such as Jean Cureau who, before his retirement, taught English at the Lycée Voltaire in Paris using his own unique adaptation of Suggestopedia (see, for example, his article, "Approches suggestopédiques en milieu scolaire," Le Français dans le Monde, 175 [1983], 30-35), there are a number of language professors and linguists who have created their own suggestopedically-inspired systems. In Germany, for example, Rupprecht Baur has transformed Suggestopedia into Psychopädie (Die Psychopädische Variante der Suggestopädie [Munich: Goethe Institute, 1984]); in the Netherlands, Wil Knibbeler has combined the Silent Way with Suggestopedia to create the Explorative-Creative Way (The Explorative-Creative Way [Tubingen: Gunter Narr Verlag, 1989]). In the former Soviet Union, Suggestopedia 1 (the Novakov version) has been combined with other elements and rebaptized "Intensive Teaching." (See, in this regard, Galina Kitaigorodskaya et al., Intensive Language Teaching in the U.S.S.R. [Moscow State University], trans. O. Samarova et al. [Brighton: The Language Centre, Brighton

Polytechnic, 1991]; and Rupprecht Baur, "La Didactique des Langues Etrangères en URSS: Fondements, Recherches, Tendances," Annales Littéraires de l'Université de Besançon [Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1985], pp. 33 - 63).

[13] Lynn Dhority, The Act Approach: the Use of Suggestion for Integrative Learning (New York: Gordon and Breach, 1992), p. xv and p. 8. All succeeding references to this work will be indicated, in brackets, in the text.

[14] In The Act Approach, Chapter 12 is devoted to the ACT courses at the University of Massachusetts. Chapter 13, however, is devoted to an account of a successful experiment using the ACT Approach to teach German to American military personnel at Fort Devens, Massachusetts in 1982.

[15] See, for example, Lawrence Hall, "Reading Russian: A strategy for rapid mastery of the Russian alphabet (Lozanov approach)," Russian Language Journal, 36 (1982), 211-20.

[16] Dhority confirms in his book what other teachers have found, namely that trained musicians find background music distracting (p. 95). However, in his experience as well as in the experience of other instructors, suitable background music helps create a positive, pleasant environment and relaxed and cooperative students.

[17] Supplementary materials in the form of a grammar text and readings are also part of an ACT course and they are introduced when and where appropriate to promote language learning (in the Krashen sense of the term).

[18] An interesting parallel arises here with the work of Alfred Tomatis who emphasizes that a very effective technique for learning foreign languages is the combination of audio and visual elements. (See, for example, Léna Tomatis, L'Intégration des Langues Vivantes [Paris: Editions Soditap, 1970], p. 32).

[19]In the experimental ACT program conducted at Fort Devens, Massachusetts in the early 1980's for the United States army, more controlled evaluative measures were used than would be possible in a college or university language course. The results point to the superiority of the ACT pilot program over previous classes regarding the achievement of the language program's objective: achieving a level 1 or better on the Defense Language Institute Rating Scale. Most noteworthy is the fact that the pilot program's results were obtained in slightly less than 1/3 the time spent in the regular program (p. 168).