

THE MOST ESSENTIAL OF SUGGESTOPAEDIA FROM THEORY AND PRACTICE

Suggestopaedia has been interpreted in many various ways. Now, after 45 years of theoretical and practical development of Suggestopaedia I would like to focus the attention of those who are interested in Suggestopaedia as well as those who are practicing it, on the following most significant points, part of which have already been mentioned in previous publications and part of which have not yet.

First of all, it is important to be aware that:

1. Suggestopaedia is based on three laws:

Golden Proportion

Love, and Freedom.

The golden proportion was taken into consideration not only in the process of developing the methodology itself in proportion to the separate parts, which I have already explained in the book, but in the use of different means as well. For example, the music we use has been selected according to the principle of golden proportion. Not all music is suitable for use. What about the paintings in the textbook? So have they. The whole aesthetics in the methodology is, of course, in accordance with the golden proportion. The teacher himself/herself has to abide by the same law, especially in elaborations. In case the teacher has not estimated in advance the duration of a certain activity then the effect is reduced and fatigue is observed. At that moment the pace of work should be quickly altered.

Love is present at the very beginning when the teacher delicately involves the students in a game in which he/she acts together with them, just as a mother plays with her children. That game will continue through all the stages, in different forms, to the end of the course. It is also to be sensed in the calm and patient attitude of the teacher, which has to be spontaneous, not acted, because the students and pupils can feel that. A teacher who does not possess this kind of inclination would better give up working in the field of Suggestopaedia either temporarily or forever. The reserves of a personality can be discovered and activated only by means of love.

The freedom of the students is also evident in the repeated question "Would you like?" when activities are being changed. If somebody's answer is "No", then he/she will be only an observer in that particular activity, while later he/she will again participate. We have had such cases very rarely, perhaps two or three times in the whole world. Then, if a student has some urgent tasks he/she is free to leave earlier. Nobody has ever been programmed in terms of time and activity. Everybody has their own free and conscious self control.

2. There is no Suggestopaedia if an amount of learning material of 5 to 10 times bigger has not been acquired without fatigue, with a positive impact on the learners' and teachers' health, and with joy. Life has to be joy, and Suggestopaedia is one of the ways to achieve that. Suggestopaedia will be able to change the century-old concept that our abilities are limited on a lower level, only when this change is accompanied by joy.
3. In case your teaching proves to be not very effective, do not reduce the amount of the learning material in any way because in this way you will further emphasize the social suggestive norm of learning and acquiring the material, which Suggestopaedia is changing. Have a close look at the methodology or consult Dr. Lozanov or a trainer trained by him.
4. Suggestopaedia has nothing in common with hypnosis. On the contrary: with hypnosis the hypnotized person has no freedom of will, and cannot take a decision on one's own to stop hypnosis without being allowed by the hypnotist even if the former has something to do. He/she cannot change a single element of the programme that he/she has been indoctrinated with. He/she cannot even have his/her own negative opinion of hypnosis. There is a huge and

prestigious reference in literature about the harmful impact of hypnosis and its effects on the development of personality, despite the seemingly positive results in certain cases. Moreover, in a number of countries hypnosis has been banned outside a clinic or hospital, beyond curing purposes or practiced by non-specialists, by means of law, for example, in Bulgaria, according to Art. 31 of the Law of Health /1973/. Any guided or commanding procedures restricting freedom, e.g. guided relaxation, are the beginning of hypnosis, because the restriction or lack of freedom for students or patients is the most essential characteristic feature of hypnosis.

As you know, with Suggestopaedia things are just the opposite. That is why, never give orders, never command either verbally, or with intonation or movements. The students and pupils have to be happy and unnoticeably absorb knowledge of many times greater size and without fatigue.

5. Do not have doubts about the positive effects of Suggestopaedia because the students can sense that and it will affect your results. The 40-year old practice in the whole world has proved the positive effects of Suggestopaedia. Of course, you can have an entire trust in the mentioned above administrative evaluation and proposals of big national and international commissions of experts, including UNESCO, about the results of Suggestopaedia and the expansion of its application. It was only the 10-year house arrest with a sudden complete isolation from the world imposed on Dr. Lozanov in 1979 lasting up to the political changes in 1989 that discomfited the realization of their proposals and created conditions for a number of imitators' groups to set up in the world. And the effect of their activities most often leads to deviation of the focus from what in fact Suggestopaedia is, due to the lack of proper qualification.
6. The jocular and playful beginning in Suggestopaedia is not an "unserious beginning". This is a "serious jocularity". According to the modern theories of "homo ludens" /the playing man/ game can cultivate plenty of positive characteristics in human beings. However, this is a game of recreation and cultivation of certain merits. And the specific Suggestopaedic jocularity unnoticeably involves the students into a pleasant meditateness on the huge amount of knowledge that they acquire. This is an unperceivable and pleasant concentration, which due to the huge material to acquire will be carried on into meditation leading happily to incredible learning, educational and curing effects confirmed and published by the national and international commissions mentioned above. That is not the meditation applied by some untrained imitators of Buddhism and other eastern schools. Their meditation, which cannot be interrupted earlier than the estimated time, resembles auto-hypnosis. That dangerous kind of meditation was never instructed by Buddha and the great religious and philosophical teachers of the East and the West, as well as a number of prominent Bulgarian occult teachers with domains in many European and Asian countries, priest Bogomil /10th century A.D./ and Peter Danov /19th and 20th centuries A.D./.
7. Initially, at the dawn of mankind people used to think globally but with the development of sciences they indulged more and more in perceiving the partial. That led to an opposition of the parts and the whole in education. In Suggestopaedia those two are acquired simultaneously. Never acquire first the elements, and then their union in meaningful units. Acquire simultaneously the element and its place in the meaningful units, at the same time.
8. Do not use Suggestopaedia only as a means of experience. Think of the cultural mission of Suggestopaedia. In some cases you must have a flexible strategy. If this is not the case the students can sense it and that will affect the results too.
9. What is the most important thing in the Suggestopaedic methodology? Is it the introduction? Or the concert sessions? Is it the reading on the second day or the elaborations? And so on, and so forth. Everything is important because it has been devised to have effect in all cases, not only learning effect, but educational and health effects, too. Remember how the first experiments had started long before the Institute of Suggestology was set up. A part of those first experiments were observed by the Bulgarian Ministry of Health, and a part of them were

observed by the Institute of Pedagogy in Sofia. They all have been published in my books. Here are some of the experiments:

1. The experiment with my patient Doushko who had not learned a poem by heart, had only listened to it once in class a few days earlier. I told him that he would be able to remember it because he had heard it once in case he was examined. And indeed, this thing did happen.
2. The experiment with memorizing the meanings of 1000 French words after reading them once, without any additional, any music, etc.
3. The experiment with memorizing the meanings of 1200 Greek words after reading them once, without any additional, any music, etc.

All those and a number of other experiments are a firm proof that the reserves of personality do exist, even in the sphere of memory. However, we wanted to invent a methodology not only for memorizing, but for the development of creative abilities and at the same time for educational and positive health impact as well. Why am I giving those examples now? Which factors led to super-memorization?

Those are the prestige of the teacher, his/her belief in the effect, the lack of pathologic and commercial interests, the too delicate communicative approach in terms of the weakest and not fully conscious of signals, the so called peripheral perceptions, and the most important thing: LOVE.

These important element, though not easily noticed, do exist by all means in the modern variant of the methodology.