

Suggestopedia: A Relaxed and Immersive Language Learning Environment

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Doi: 10.23918/ijsses.v10i2p278

Abstract: Suggestopedia is based on the idea that learning is most effective in a relaxed, and comfortable environment with music. It employs a range of techniques such as music, drama, and visualization to create learners an immersive and engaging learning environment. Suggestopedia uses the power of suggestion to eradicate negative feelings that hamper learning. Positive affirmations and suggestions are significant tools not only for the development of self-confidence but also their belief in their ability to learn which is a key factor for success. This review paper attempts to explore the advantages of employing Suggestopedia in language learning.

Keywords: Suggestopedia, Relaxation, Receptive, Immersive Learning Environment

1. Introduction

Suggestopedia is a language learning method which is based on an idea that new information can be easily absorbed in a relaxed and positive learning environment. This method uses music, drama, and role-play activities to create learners a supportive and engaging learning environment. It also emphasizes the significance of emotional and psychological factors in language learning. As learners are actively engaged with activities, Suggestopedia is effective for the development of vocabulary knowledge and listening skills. The use of these activities can create a learning environment in which learners can practice the target language in a fun and engaging way. The creation of a relaxed learning environment is considered an advantage for the enhancement of listening and speaking skills. Speech is given priority in language learning (Mart, 2013; Altun & Hussein 2022). Music, drama, and role-play activities are useful tools for developing a more intuitive understanding of a language. Moreover, positive suggestions and constructive feedback can encourage learners for more effective communication.

2. Literature Review

Suggestopedia is a teaching method that was developed by Bulgarian psychiatrist and educator Georgi Lozanov in the 1970s. This method uses the power of suggestion to eradicate negative feelings that hamper learning because the power of suggestion can be used to help learners sustain the expectation of success

Received: January 12, 2023

Accepted: February 24, 2023

Altun, M. (2023). Suggestopedia: A Relaxed and Immersive Language Learning Environment. *International Journal of Social Sciences and Educational Studies*, 10(2), 278-281.

(Villamin et al., 1994). Lozanov tried to increase learning through a technique that combines relaxation and memory expansion. Suggestopedia incorporates a variety of techniques that aim to create a positive and relaxed learning environment to help students learn a new language more effectively. This method tries to break through the barriers of mind and increase the capacity of the brain to foster learning. Suggestopedia is based on the idea that learning is most effective in a relaxed, comfortable environment with music. The method employs a range of techniques such as music, drama, and visualization to create learners an immersive and engaging learning environment. The use of music is one of the key principles of suggestopedia to help students relax and enter a receptive state. Usually slow and calming music is used with a rhythm that helps to induce a relaxed state of mind. With its potency to reduce discomfort of learners music is effective for relaxation and enables learners to become more open to learning which is an advantage to make progress.

The use of drama and role-play is another technique used in suggestopedia. These tools can create a learning environment in which learners can practice the target language in a fun and engaging way. The use of drama and role-play activities allow learners to practice their language skills because they have an opportunity to use the target language in real life situations and scenarios during these activities. Furthermore, learners have the chance of developing their speaking and listening skills while they take on different roles and characters in these activities. These skills are crucial for effective communication. While listening skills are fundamental to understand new information, speaking skills are significant to convey messages to others. In addition, learners experiment with the language and overcome their fear of making mistakes. The implementation of these tools “bring about relational interaction between the teller (teacher) and the listeners (learners), which help the learners to participate actively in the teaching-learning activities” (Fasuba, 2022, p.121).

Engaging in the learning process through role-play activities, learners are more comfortable and can easily build their self-confidence in speaking. Usually role-play activities are performed with music; thus, communication happens in the conscious and subconscious of learners. Learners pay attention to linguistic rules in these activities while music is played as a background. It is believed that learning becomes easy in such a learning setting. Friday (2022) supports the use of music in learning and argues that “listening to music while engaging written texts places unprecedented demands on students’ attention and learning (p.113)”. Grammar rules and new words are not presented to learners thoroughly. Moreover, the implementation of native language translation allows learners to learn the precise meanings of words in the target language. In addition, visualization is also an important technique to be employed in suggestopedia. The creation of mental images makes it easy for learners to remember grammar and vocabulary rules. At the same time, visualizing the new words in context can facilitate their usage in real-life situations (Mart, 2012).

The use of a relaxed and comfortable learning environment is one of the key features of this method. Classroom is designed to promote relaxation. It is true that the creation of a comfortable and confident learning environment can increase effectiveness in learning. It goes without saying that a relaxed learning setting is essential for effective learning. When learners are less stressed, their concentration towards learning increases and, they develop their creativity and thinking skills. A relaxed environment enhances the positive relationship between teacher and learner. This positive relationship increases engagement of

learners in class discussions and group activities which results in better learning. When learners have increased interest, learning is facilitated.

Another important aspect of suggestopedia is the use of positive suggestion. Positive affirmations and suggestions are significant tools for the development of self-confidence. Furthermore, these tools foster their belief in their ability to learn which is critical to achieve success. Having faith in one's ability to learn not only develops motivation but also improves progress. It should be noted that receiving positive feedback and encouragement leads to motivation and confidence. Also, learners stay on track when they receive constructive feedback and gentle reminders. Motivated learners take more risks in the learning process, embrace new opportunities and endeavor to achieve more. Motivation has a key role in language learning. Motivation has the potential to drive learners to achieve their goals, easily overcome the challenges, and to be actively involved in the learning process (Limbo & Viva, 2021). Thus, motivation has a central role in learning.

Suggestopedia has been employed to teach a range of languages, including English, French, and German. The method has been found to be particularly effective for adult learners, who may have inhibitions and fears about learning a new language. Due to lack of exposure to a foreign language, cognitive changes, and experiencing difficulties while forming patterns in the target language, it is challenging for adults to learn a new language. However, through creating a relaxed and supportive learning environment with the help of suggestopedia, adult learners can overcome their fears and become more confident in their ability to learn.

Despite its benefits, suggestopedia has also been criticized by some educators for being passive. It has been also criticized that the method heavily relies on teacher to create a positive learning environment. It has been also stated that the use of music can be distracting for some students. Despite these criticisms, suggestopedia remains a popular and effective method for teaching languages. Suggestopedia requires active participation of learners in activities. Although it is less structured than some other methods, the use of music, drama and role-play activities create a supportive and engaging learning environment for learners. This method is based on the idea that learning can be conducted more easily and effectively when learners are in a relaxed and receptive state. The emphasis of the method on creating a positive and supportive learning environment can help students to overcome their fears and build their confidence in speaking a new language. By incorporating a range of techniques such as music, drama, and visualization, suggestopedia can create an immersive and engaging learning experience that can help students to learn a new language more effectively.

3. Conclusion

Suggestopedia is a teaching method that uses the power of suggestion and creation of a relaxed learning environment to eradicate negative feelings that impede learning. Suggestopedia implements a great number of techniques that aim to create a positive and relaxed learning environment to encourage learners to learn a new language more effectively. The use of music, drama, and visualization can create learners an immersive and engaging learning environment where learners can reduce their discomfort and fear. The method emphasizes creating a positive and supportive learning environment to help students to overcome their fears and build their confidence for the improvement of listening and speaking skills.

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