CONTEXT

OF THE SUGGESTOPEDIC FRAMEWORK

FOR DEVELOPING TRAINING COURSES AND MATERIALS

A. Introduction to Suggestopedia

Suggestopedia is a teaching method based on the power of suggestion in learning, the notion being that positive suggestion makes the learner more receptive and, in turn, stimulates learning. Dr. Lozanov holds that a relaxed but focused state is the optimum state for learning. To create this relaxed state in the learner and to promote positive suggestion, Suggestopedia makes use of music, a comfortable and relaxing environment, and a relationship between the teacher and the student that is akin to the parent-child relationship. Music is central to the approach, as well.

The prime objective of Suggestopedia in foreign language teaching is to release most of students' unused physiological capacity to learn, to accelerate the process by which they learn to understand and use the target language for communication. Four factors considered essential in this process were the provision of a relaxed and comfortable learning environment, the use of soft Baroque music to help increase alpha brain waves and decrease blood pressure and heart rate (i.e. to increase relaxation), "desuggestion" in terms of the psychophysiological barriers learners place on their own learning potential, and "suggestibility" through the encouragement of learners assuming "child-like" and/or new roles and names in the target language.

Here are some of the key features of Suggestopedia:

1. Learning is facilitated in an environment that is as comfortable as possible, featuring soft cushioned seating and dim lighting.
2. "Peripheral" learning is encouraged through the presence in the learning environment of posters and decorations featuring the target language and various grammatical information.
3. The teacher assumes a role of complete authority and control in the classroom.
4. Self-perceived and psychological barriers to learners' potential to learn are "desuggested".
5. Students are encouraged to be child-like, take "mental trips with the teacher" and assume new roles and names in the target language in order to become more "suggestible".
6. Baroque music is played softly in the background to increase mental relaxation and potential to take in and retain new material during the lesson.

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7. Students work from lengthy dialogs in the target language, with an accompanying translation into the students' native language.
8. Errors are tolerated, the emphasis being on content and not structure. Grammar and vocabulary are presented and given treatment from the teacher, but not dwelt on.
9. Homework is limited to students re-reading the dialog they are studying – once before they go to sleep at night and once in the morning before they get up.
10. Music, drama and "the Arts" are integrated into the learning process as often as possible.

The authentic version of Suggestopedia presented by Dr. Lozanov in the mid 70s consists of the use of extended dialogues, often several pages in length, accompanied by vocabulary lists and observations on grammatical points. Typically, these dialogues are to be read aloud to the students to the accompaniment of music. The most formal of these readings, known as the "concert reading", typically employs a memorable piece of classical music.

A second, less formal reading employs a lighter, less striking piece of music, such as a piece of Baroque music, and this would take a less prominent role. During both types of reading, the learners sit in comfortable seats, armchairs rather than classroom chairs, in a suitably stimulating environment in terms of décor and lighting. After the readings of these long dialogues to the accompaniment of music, the teacher then makes use of the dialogues for more conventional language work.

The dialogues are internalized by the learners during the readings due both to the relaxed and receptive state of the learners and to the positive suggestion created by the music.

The use of music both in the background and as an accompaniment to certain activities is motivating and relaxing. Perhaps most importantly of all the ideas, creating conditions in which learners are alert and receptive can only have a positive effect on motivation. There is no doubt that Suggestopedia has raised some interesting questions in the areas of both learning and memory.

B. Project summary

Basic skills (literacy, numeracy, science, technology, English as a second language) are the foundation for further learning and are a gateway to employment and social inclusion, according Europe 2020 - the EU's strategic growth strategy. A key factor for achieving smart, sustainable, and inclusive growth is to implement policies, programmes and projects aimed at raising attainment levels and improving attitudes, with a particular emphasis on low-achievers. A special focus is needed to the

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achievements of adult learners and to their need of adaptation to the dynamic needs of the labour market and social inclusion.

One of the main objectives of the project IGETADAPT is to respond to the needs of adult learners of short-term and effective method for acquiring knowledge and skills contributing to their professional realization regardless of the field of career.

The project IGETADAPT is not only based on the implementation of the suggestive approach and its adaptation to the methodologies used in trainings and education on Basic skills for adults, but that being the innovation at the same time, since often teaching occurs in a compromised environment due to a gap between the trainer and the trainees. That gap being of different origin – either the trainees underestimate the importance of the knowledge they are given, its practical use or prefer to lose motivation and form barriers not allowing them to acquire new competencies and benefit from those.

That being said, the Suggestive approach is mostly used in foreign language teaching, but since we speak of methodology, the suggestive approach can be used to teach anything. In the last 5 years the methodology is applied experimentally with high success rate in Bulgaria also for trainings and education on literacy and numeracy. With this project the system of Suggestopedia will serve as a basis for development of innovative methodology for Basic skills education of adults.

Moreover, the IGETADAPT project will have a direct impact on the local communities that benefit from the project, but it will also have an indirect impact at national, and European level by developing and promoting an innovative effective system for Basic skills adult learning.

In fact, people who do not master their basic skills can benefit, as well, from the project's tools, which will help them to gain access to further education and labour market - the level of unemployment in these communities could decrease because of the increase in the level of skills.

It is therefore crucial to note that the impact of the project on a long term basis and if recognised for its value will be as follows:

- Increase in the level of skills of those isolated communities (rise in qualifications);
- Stopping the increase of the levels of exclusion;
- Reduction of the level of unemployment in population categories;
- Increase of the general feeling of well-being and quality of life.

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C. Interested parties and Target group

The identified project target groups are low-skilled adult people with basic training needs. The main objective of the trainings organized by the institutions is to provide a qualification for a specific basic training – e.g. foreign languages (English predominantly), IT courses, assistance courses, marketing and so on.

The main interested parties regarding implementing of Suggestopedia methods for training activities are:

1. Students, Trainees and particularly project target groups;
2. Ministries of Education and other educational institutions;
3. School administrations;
4. University administrations;
5. Vocational Training Centres and other learning organizations;
6. Teachers, Lecturers and Trainers;
7. Parents;
8. Society;
9. Business.

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D. SWAT Analysis of the internal and external issues

Strengths	***Weaknesses***
- less stress learning approach - high level of effectiveness and efficiency - a humanistic approach, with a positive psycho-therapeutic side effect on students - better control of learning/training process - high quality and long-term sustainable results - better understanding and enhanced memory formation - accelerated learning with shortened training cycles compared to other education methods	- higher technical requirements for teachers and lecturers - interdisciplinary professional requirements - lack of adequate suggestopedian education programmes for teachers - Lack of enough suggestopedian guides, books and manuals and less access to suggestopedia tools - additional investments and resources and requirements of specific training environment - need more time for training programmes preparation
Opportunities	***Treaths***
- innovative approach - potential for future recognition from various training and educational organizations - more adequate method regarding new innovative training tools - suitable method for large learning formats and models - more flexible for future improvement regarding dynamic learning needs - based on human physiology, the methodology can serve as a framework for everyday communication - Suggestopedia generates better prepared students i.e. better quality human resource capacity - low or absence of legal framework regulations	- distrust from educational organization administrations, lectures and parents - negative impact and influence from parents - more expensive approach - conservative and slowly process of changing of educational programmes from Ministries of education

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E. Understanding the Needs and Expectations of Interested Parties

Interested Parties	*Needs and Expectations*
Students, Trainees and particularly project target groups	- Better quality education - Less stress and fatigue - Speed learning process - Sustainable knowledges
Ministries of Education and other educational institutions	- Efficient and effective education - Adequate education to the modern dynamically changed society needs - Adequate human resource - Competitive and experienced education staff - Respecting of legal framework and state policies
School administrations University administrations Vocational Training Centres and other learning organizations	- Adequate to the needs educational programmes and policies - Efficient and effective learning process - Fully responding to society needs and expectations - Competitive education - Improving of HR potential - Implementing of innovative and modern learning approaches - Improved and enlarged expertise of learning staff
Teachers, Lecturers and Trainers	- Using of modern and innovative learning approaches - New approaches, tools and instruments - Improvement of learning capacity and knowledges - Sharing good practices - Satisfaction of results
Society Business	- Educated, expertise and quality HR - Competitive HR - Adequate to the dynamic needs educational system - Healthy, enthusiastic, inquisitive and ready-made young generation - Adequate opportunities to requalification needs

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