

#### **IV. SUGGESTOPEDIA: Introduction by Diane Larsen-Freeman**

Learning is facilitated in a pleasant, comfortable environment. The more confident the students feel, the better they will learn. Communication takes place on two planes. When there is a unity between them, learning is enhanced. The means of activating the material should be varied and playful.

**Video Presentation: Suggestopedia**, the first lesson you will see on this videotape, has been developed by Georgi Lozanov. Lozanov believes that we set up psychological barriers to learning: we fear that we will be unable to perform, that we will be limited in our ability to learn, or that we will fail. One result is that we do not use the full mental powers that we have. In order to make better use of our mental reserves, the limitations we think we have need to be “desuggested.” **Suggestopedia**, the application of the study of suggestion to pedagogy, has been developed to help students believe that they can be successful and, thus, to help them overcome the barriers to learning. Watch how direct and indirect suggestions are made in lesson. Suggestopedia will be demonstrated by my colleague, Lisa Sparrow.

**[Video Presentation of Suggestopedia by Lisa Sparrow:  
See Suggestopedia Materials following Commentary.]**

**Video Commentary:** The first thing you may have noticed in the demonstration is the atmosphere the teacher sought to create with the music, the posters, and the plants. This is done because learning is facilitated in a pleasant, comfortable environment. The teacher also speaks in a reassuring tone of voice, suggesting implicitly that learning the target language will be relaxing and enjoyable. The more confident the students feel, the better they will learn. With the words she uses, she also seeks to activate the learners’ imagination, which will also aid their learning.

A major step in the learning is the “concert” phase during which the teacher acts out the reading with a musical accompaniment. This step is in keeping with Lozanov’s observation that communication takes place on “two planes”: on the one, the linguistic message — the narrative — is encoded; and on the other are factors which complement the linguistic message; for example, the teacher’s actions and the music. When there is a unity between the two planes, learning is enhanced. A pseudo-passive state, such as the state one experiences when listening to a concert, is ideal for overcoming psychological barriers and for taking advantage of learning potential.

The material the students are learning needs to be activated as well, however. The means of doing this should be varied so as to avoid as much repetition as possible. Dramatization is one way of doing this and a particularly valuable way of playfully activating the material; fantasy reduces barriers to learning. Other means of activating the material used by the teacher were the game with the ball and dictation. The game helped to create a playful atmosphere, thus indirectly suggesting that learning can be fun.

**[End of Commentary]**

## **VIDEO DEMONSTRATION LESSON PLAN**

### **Teaching Points**

1. Language: past tense  
pronunciation of past tense forms  
vocabulary relating to the house
2. Culture: aspects of moving  
packing concept of females living alone  
roommates early morning routine

### **Objectives**

1. Students will develop a positive attitude toward learning.
2. Students will develop a positive attitude toward the English language.
3. Students will learn past tense verbs (including both regular and irregular forms) related to actions which may be performed in a house.
4. Students will gain familiarity with vocabulary of the house: bed, floor, cupboard, chest of drawers, teakettle, dishes, calendar, etc.
5. Students will gain the ability to aurally discriminate between the /d/ and /t/ final consonant sounds of past tense verbs.

## **Video Lesson Steps in Sequence**

### **[Relaxing Preparation]**

1. The teacher greets the students and gives them an overview of the lesson.
2. The teacher turns on some slow classical music (the "Pachelbel Canon") on a cassette recorder. She mentions that it reminds her of the early morning and suggests that the students should relax and imagine themselves at home on a lazy Saturday morning.
3. The teacher plays Concert I (slow, reflective music) on the cassette player. She slowly reads and acts out the reading passage she has prepared for the lesson. The students listen and watch.
4. The teacher changes the cassette tape and plays Concert II (more upbeat baroque music). She rereads the passage at normal speed.

5. The teacher hands out copies of the passage to the students and asks them to stand, read the passage aloud, and act out the meaning wherever possible. She tells them that acting out the words will help them remember the meaning.

**[Practice with Regular/Irregular Verb Endings]**

6. The teacher introduces a chart with regular past tense verbs listed in two columns: one column includes words that end with the /t/ sound and the other with /d/.
7. The teacher asks the students to listen as she reads the initial pair. She asks them to distinguish the difference in the words, then to read the words aloud with her, list by list.

**[Final Consonant Discrimination]**

8. The teacher asks the students to open envelopes previously placed at their seats. The envelopes contain two cards, one pink marked with a /d/, and one blue marked with a /t/.  
The students are to:

- Listen as the teacher says a word, and
- Hold up the card indicating the ending of the word.

The teacher treats the drill as a game, joking with the students, continuing until they are able to do it with few mistakes.

**[Ball Toss]**

9. The teacher takes out a ball and explains that she will throw the ball to the students (one at a time) and say the present tense of an irregular past tense verb. The students are to simultaneously catch the ball and repeat the past tense form of the verb. The game begins slowly and builds momentum; the teacher keeps the action lively and continues until energy wanes.

**[Pair Work on the Reading Passage]**

10. The teacher asks the students to work in pairs on the reading passage. One student reads the text aloud and the other acts out the story — as much as is possible to do while they are seated in their seats.

**[Group Interaction]**

11. The teacher asks for a volunteer to act out the story. The student comes to the front of the class and pantomimes the action while the class reads the story aloud to him. This is treated as a bit of theater, and the volunteer student is applauded.

**[Dictation]**

12. The teacher explains that the next activity will be a dictation of sentences using words recombined from the original passage. The students listen and write out the sentences.

### [Homework Assignment]

13. The teacher asks the students to check their written work against the original passage, and to read the passage aloud once before going to bed.

## **TEACHER-TRAINING DISCUSSION QUESTIONS BASED ON THE VIDEO**

1. What did the students learn in this lesson?
  - What was introduced?
  - What points were practiced?
  - What was mastered?
2. How were the four basic language skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing) used in the lesson?
3. What were the contents of the different posters? What functions did they fulfill?
4. Examine the contents of the passage itself. In the contents, what is suggested?
5. What direct suggestions does the teacher make to the students?
6. Examine the teacher's manner: What variations do you see from activity to activity, from beginning to end? What might explain these variations?
7. What forms of indirect suggestion, beyond the teacher's manner, were used?
8. In the initial concert, the teacher asked the students to both watch the actions and listen to the words being read. This is an example of an activity with a dual focus. Which other activities divided the students' attention? Specify the focus for each activity.

## **TEACHER-TRAINING ACTIVITIES BASED ON THE VIDEO**

### [Peer Teaching]

1. Prepare the introduction to a reading passage, then actually present it to your teaching colleagues, as if you were about to carry out the activity.
2. Plan and ask for a critique of your lesson. You might include the following points:
  - Was it a relaxed lesson? Were you able to help the students relax?
  - Were the students encouraged to learn?
  - Was it well organized? etc.
3. Practice reading a specific passage slowly with music, then at normal speed with different music.

4. Read over the narrative used in the lesson and identify additional possible language points which might lend themselves to practice activities.
5. With your colleagues, brainstorm for grammar points that might be practiced with a Ball Toss game. Name three other games that might be used to practice grammar.
6. Create a Discrimination Drill like the one demonstrated using /d/ and /t/, using another set of sounds that are problems for your students.
7. In the video lesson you saw, the dictation was a recombination of vocabulary and tenses used in the original passage. Practice this "Recombination" technique using the same or another reading passage.
8. With other teachers who teach in situations similar to yours, brainstorm for possible ways of lending positive suggestion to your classroom [creating positive attitudes in your students], taking into consideration the constraints in your teaching situation, and also maximizing the resources that are available to you.

## **EXTENSIONS OF THE DEMONSTRATION LESSON: INTERACTIVE/COMMUNICATIVE ACTIVITIES**

### **[Charades]**

This is a good game to help the students learn verb meanings/forms.

1. Depending on the size of the class, have the students work in groups of ten or so, or as one large group.
2. Prepare a list of the verbs (or other items) and write them on slips of paper.
3. One individual student at a time draws a slip and acts out the word. When the action is completed, ask the other students to guess what s/he did; e.g., "You jumped," etc. [See also page 11.]

### **[Concentration]**

This game helps the students practice past tense verb forms.

1. As preparation, give the students small cards or slips of paper on which they create pairs of word cards. On one card they write the present tense, on the other the past of verbs used in the lesson. Once they have prepared 12 to 15 pairs or word cards, they are ready to play the card game Concentration.
2. Have the students form groups of from two to six.
3. In all the groups, the cards are shuffled and placed face-down in rows (6 x 4, or 6 x 5).

4. The students in each group take turns up-turning pairs of cards. The object of the game is to remember the locations of the different cards and to find "matches" (matching cards).

When a student makes a match, those cards are taken out of play, to be counted at the end of the game. The student with a match may then take a second turn. If no match is made, the cards are simply turned back over and the game continues on to the next person. The game is played until all matches are uncovered. At that point, the player with the most cards wins.

### **[Silent Dictation]**

In this activity, students associate and write words to describe the actions involved in the passage.

1. Make a list of sentences from the passage which you can act out.
2. One by one, act out the sentences while the students write out appropriate descriptions of each sentence.
3. Students (in pairs or small groups) can also reverse this activity, and play this game as Sentence Charades. One student acts out a sentence and the others put it into words.

### **[Composition]**

As a follow-up to this lesson, students can use previously and newly learned vocabulary in a composition to express their own experience. Ask them to write paragraphs to describe a scene similar to the video lesson:

- Their first day in a new home
- Their early morning ritual
- A new neighbor, etc..

### **[End of Lesson Materials]**