

## *Nota editorial*

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***EFFECTS OF THE SUGGESTOPEDIA METHOD ON ATTITUDES  
AND LANGUAGE ACHIEVEMENT IN ENGLISH AMONG  
NINTH GRADE PUERTO RICAN STUDENTS***

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The Suggestopedia Method is a humanistic foreign/second language teaching method that places primary importance on the affective dimension of second language learning. Since affective variables have been established as crucial in the second language situation of Puerto Rico, this method seems especially suitable for second language learning in the local public schools. The method uses a combination of techniques, such as physical relaxation and visualization exercises, affirmations and relaxing music, based on suggestive principles, to strengthen self-esteem and expand the learner's memory capabilities, enabling students to learn with greater speed, little conscious effort and considerable enjoyment.

This study explores the effect of the Suggestopedia Method on communicative language achievement and attitudes toward learning English among intermediate school students. It also examines the viability of using this method in a typical public school setting in Puerto Rico. A quasi-experimental research study was carried out with a pretest-posttest non-equivalent control group design. The study was conducted at the Andrés Valcarcel Junior High School of the Trujillo Alto School District, San Juan Educational Region, of the Puerto Rico Public School System with a sample of sixty four (64) ninth grade students. Four intact ninth grade English classes participated in the study as did their three (3) English teachers.

Study results yielded evidence that students who received instruction by way of the Suggestopedia Method exhibited significantly better communicative language achievement and more positive attitudes toward English than those who received instruction by the traditional method (ESL). It was also evident that Suggestopedia is a viable method for use in the Puerto Rican public school setting. Both students and teachers responded favorably to this method and preferred it over traditional methods of English instruction.

Even though second language learning, specifically English, is generally seen as necessary and important, most Puerto Ricans are not fluent speakers of the language. According to the 1990 census, only 20% of the Puerto Ricans living in Puerto Rico consider themselves fluent in English. Most Puerto Ricans are literate in Spanish (89.6% according to the 1990 census) and have formal education. Their education also includes an English as a second language class. In spite of the fact that English has been taught in Puerto Rico since first grade, the general perception is that most students lack

communicative skills in the language and several studies about the teaching of English in Puerto Rico have indicated that poor language achievement is the overwhelming reality in public schools (Aloise, 1992; Medina, 1991; Quintero et al., 1987).

Ambivalent attitudes about learning English seem to be omnipresent in many Puerto Rican students. These attitudes and what appears to be an unconscious resistance to learning English seems to be related to the sociopolitical dimensions of learning English in Puerto Rico. The fact that English is an imposed language and part of a colonial legacy apparently impacts the collective consciousness of Puerto Ricans in their ability to acquire the language (Harris, 1993).

After working with students and teachers in English as a second language education for several years in Puerto Rico, it is this researcher's assumption that some of the most crucial factors in the acquisition of English in Puerto Rico involve the affective domain. This domain involves attitudes, motivation, self-esteem, emotional states, and language learning anxiety (Dulay, Burt, Krashen, 1987).

### *The Problem*

The important role of attitudes and motivation in second language acquisition has been established by the sociolinguists, Gardner and Lambert (1972) through extensive research. Since that early work many other second language researchers have continued to confirm their findings (Brown, 1987; Cooper and Fishman, 1977; Chastain, 1975; Gardner, 1980; Gardner and Lalonde, 1985; Krashen, 1981, 1987; Oller, 1977; Titone, 1982).

Most notably, Krashen (1981, 1987) has given attitudes, motivation and all the affective variables an important role in his second language acquisition theory. Krashen's affective filter hypothesis states that affective variables have a relationship to second language acquisition. Those who have a high or strong affective filter will tend to seek less input and those who do get input, their language acquisition device will not process it.

The affective dimension plays a particularly prominent role in language acquisition in Puerto Rico (Aloise, 1992; Lladó, 1984). There seems to be a general concern in Puerto Rico about this dimension of language learning. It is substantiated by the great number of studies that have been conducted on attitudes or affective factors and its impact on second language learning, in the TESL program of the Graduate School of Education at the University of Puerto Rico (Arus, 1970; Báez, 1993; Bonilla, 1972; Cintrón, 1984; Huertas, 1993; Lugo,

1990; Medina, 1991; Rivera, 1993; Plata, 1985; Pomales, 1982; Príncipe, 1973) and other researchers in this field in Puerto Rico (Carrasquillo, 1986; Del Valle, 1991; Lladó, 1984; Livoti, 1977; Van Trieste, 1985). The findings of these studies about language attitudes have been contradictory, yet the overwhelming perception is that there is a need to address the affective dimension of language learning which includes attitudes.

One of the most effective ways to address this important issue is through the methodology used to teach English in Puerto Rico. Titone (1982) indicates that the empirical data points to the socio-genetic character of attitudes and the importance of using psycho-educational strategies that aim at developing appropriate attitudes towards the target language.

Moskowitz (1978, 1981) also indicates the importance of addressing the socio-emotional development of young people in the foreign language program. She states that conditions should be provided that “help students enhance their self-image, achieve their potential, develop healthy relationships and become mature, adjusted beings” (1981, p. 155).

In fact, several recent studies in Puerto Rico make clear recommendations about the use of methods that address the affective dimension of language learning. In her recent study about the attitudes of Puerto Rican high school towards English Rivera (1993) states that curricula that promotes self awareness and positive attitudes and a humanistic approach that will raise students’ egos should be used. Báez (1993) recommends that “ESL teachers use humanistic education strategies, nondirective teaching, communicative language teaching, whole language and similar approaches to enhance students self-esteem and reduce levels of apprehension.” (p. 4)

One of the findings in the Lladó (1984) study was that students were especially dissatisfied with the methods and materials used to teach English. Traditional methodology, such as the Grammar-Translation and the Audiolingual methods, predominates in the ESL classrooms of the schools of Puerto Rico. Pulliza (1987) vividly describes these classrooms.

They attempt to apply grammatical rules to language performance in a controlled, formal and instructional environment... Furthermore, the environment that characterizes language learning, the one found in many schools, usually involves a teaching situation where the linguistic terms are presented to students in a systematic manner based

on grammatically sequenced patterns... thus producing a pressured and strained atmosphere. An imposed rate of language assimilation measured by tests or other forms of required performance, such as oral classroom participation, may contribute to lowering student's motivation, making them feel insecure and creating a high anxiety environment. (p. 68)

The traditional methods have generally not addressed the affective dimension which is so crucial to second language learning in Puerto Rico. In the past decade there has been an attempt to experiment with other methods, such as the Communicative Approach, Total Physical Response, the Natural Approach, and more recently Whole Language (Aponte Roque, 1988; Van Trieste, 1991).

New and innovative methods for teaching a second language have been experimented with during the past two decades world wide. These have all been based on current second language acquisition theories (Celce-Murcia and McIntosh, 1979; Richards and Rogers, 1989).

One of these methods is Suggestopedia, developed by Lozanov in the 1960's and mostly used in Eastern Europe. Although this unconventional method is not well known nor widely used in the West, the researchers who have investigated it have generally reported positive results (Lehr, 1987; Shuster and Gritton, 1989). They have found that this method provides for the affective and humanistic factors necessary for second language acquisition.

Even though Suggestopedia has been primarily used for foreign language teaching, it can be used to teach any subject. It is known in the Western world as Super-Learning or Suggestive-Accelerative Learning. The original Bulgarian version has been modified in the West. According to Lozanov (1992), the capacity of the human mind is limitless if the right conditions exist. Being in a relaxed state, having high self-esteem, a comfortable and positive environment are some of those essential conditions for learning. The Suggestopedia Method is a comprehensive method that addresses these conditions of learning.

### *Purpose of the Study*

This study explored the use of the Suggestopedia Method, which is a humanistic and highly affectively oriented method, for teaching English as a second language (ESL) in a public secondary school in Puerto Rico and see its effect on communicative competence and students' attitudes towards English. As discussed previously, attitude

towards language appears to be a crucial variable in second language acquisition in Puerto Rico.

Even though this method was developed for use in adult foreign language learning and has been mainly used with this type of population under very special conditions the researcher was interested in exploring the feasibility of using it with a school age population in a conventional public school setting in Puerto Rico.

#### *Research Questions*

1. Will English communicative language achievement improve significantly among ninth grade students who are taught English with the Suggestopedia Method as opposed to those who are taught English with the Department of Education's traditional methods?
2. Will a more positive attitude be exhibited by ninth grade students who are taught English with the Suggestopedia Method as opposed to those who are taught English with the Department of Education's traditional methods?
3. Is it feasible to use the Suggestopedia Method with a school age population in a conventional public school setting in Puerto Rico.
4. Will secondary public school students and ESL teachers be receptive and have positive attitudes towards the Suggestopedia Method?

#### *Justification*

There are several reasons why the Suggestopedia Method should be studied in Puerto Rico. It is a method that has had impressive results in foreign and second language learning worldwide. It is a humanistic approach, giving primary importance to affective dimension of second language learning. Given the fact that affective variables have been established as crucial in the in second language situation of Puerto Rico, it seems quite suitable for second language learning here.

To this researcher's knowledge, there is only one study done in Puerto Rico with this method using a university student population, and the results indicated significant difference in favor of the experimental group (Moreno, 1987). This study explored the use of Suggestopedia with another population, public secondary students. Besides its contribution to ESL teaching in Puerto Rico, this study will contribute to the much needed empirical data about this method in the

Western World. In addition, this study will contribute to the growing body of knowledge about classroom language learning that is so essential for the task of building a theory of instructed second language acquisition (Ellis, 1990).

Given the general dissatisfaction with second language teaching in Puerto Rico (Báez, 1993), it is imperative that methodological alternatives for teaching English in Puerto Rico are explored and empirically verified. Various new methods have been tried but their success or failure has not been widely documented or evaluated. This study will provide documentation and evaluation of a method that should be earnestly considered by the public school system of Puerto Rico.

### *Hypotheses*

This study was based on the following hypotheses:

- H<sub>1</sub> Ninth grade students who receive English instruction using the Suggestopedia Method will show significantly higher English communicative language achievement than those students taught through a traditional method.
- H<sub>2</sub> Ninth grade students who receive English instruction using the Suggestopedia Method will show a significantly more positive attitude towards English than those taught through a traditional method.

### *Conceptual Definitions*

The most important terms used in this study are defined below. These terms have been defined according to their use in the field of second language research.

*Affective domain:* all factors referring to the feelings and needs, emotional or psychological, of a person which are related to the learning process. It includes attitudes, motivation, Self-esteem, emotional states and anxiety.

*Attitudes towards language:* a specific mental predisposition toward a language or a language experience which denotes a positive or negative value.

*Communicative language achievement:* ability to recognize and produce authentic and appropriate language correctly in social situations as a result of formal language instruction.

*Second language and foreign language:* used interchangeably throughout this proposal since both terms describe a language other than one's native language.

*Suggestopedia method:* a humanistic foreign teaching method that uses a combination of techniques, such as physical relaxation and visualization exercises, affirmations and relaxing music, based on suggestive principles to strengthen self-esteem and expand the learner's memory capabilities, enabling students to learn with greater speed, little conscious effort and a great amount of pleasure.

*Traditional method:* the method currently used in the public secondary schools. This consists of an eclectic combination of methods and approaches, which includes Audiolingual Structural Approach, Functional Notional Approach and Grammar Translation.

### *Operational Definitions*

The variables of this study are defined below in terms of their observable characteristics as determined for the purposes of this study.

*Communicative language achievement:* oral task, prepared by the researcher, based on the content of the unit taught for this study.

*Language attitude:* a score on Livoti ESL Attitude Inventory (1977).

*Suggestopedia method:* affirmations, physical relaxation, visualization exercises, relaxing music, concert sessions, dramatization and pair work.

### *Limitations of the Study*

Discretion is warranted in generalizing the results of this study since the sample nor the school were randomly selected. The subjects that participated in this study were intact classes of ninth grade students of a secondary school of the Trujillo Alto District. The results can only be generalized to other secondary schools in this district or to other ninth graders in Puerto Rico who have similar characteristics as those of this sample. The majority of the students in the sample are considered limited English proficient and had average or below

average achievement in English. They come from urban and rural areas of a metropolitan area school district.

### *Review of the Literature*

Suggestopedia is a method developed in the 1960's by Dr. George Lozanov, a physician and psychiatrist in Sofia, Bulgaria. He became interested in hypnosis and hypermnesia, abnormal memory capacity, in his medical practice. This led him to research the religious practices of the yogis and gurus of India, who exhibited great mental capacity through extraordinary mental feats (Ostrander and Schroeder, 1982). The nature of the yoga hypermnesia mechanism was of special concern to him. His research led him to conclude that hypermnesia is the result of a suggestive or auto suggestive process directed to the memory potential. According to him, this can be achieved in a state of hypnosis or in a normal waking state. He termed this waking state, suggestion and this branch of science suggestology (Lozanov, 1992).

### *Suggestology*

Suggestology involves suggestion and desuggestion. According to Lozanov (1992). "Suggestion is a constant communicative factor which chiefly through paraconscious mental activity can create conditions for tapping the functional reserve capacities of personality" (p. 59). His position is that suggestion mainly operates at a subconscious level and it is an important factor in all communicative interchange. But it can be tapped to help students achieve their full learning potential.

Just as important in suggestology is desuggestion. It consists of the elimination of all antisuggestive barriers. The three general suggestive barriers are the conscious critical-logical, the subconscious intuitive-affective, and the ethical (Dhority, 1991). The critical logical barrier rejects those things which do not have consciously well intended logical motivations. The subconscious intuitive-affective barrier rejects anything that fails to provide security and confidence at a subconscious level. The ethical barrier rejects that which is against the moral principals of the individual. These barriers prevent the learner from using his full mental capacities and achieving his full learning potential.

Suggestology is based on the premise that the individual is a product of his or her natural and social environment. The latter plays a critical role in the dynamics of the suggestive-desuggestive process. Lozanov (1992) clarifies this role:

“The social environment exercises a suggestive influence on the individual in an unconscious manner not only through the fear of the collective power or through blind subordination, but often the individual accepts suggestion in the absence of any fear or subordination- suggestion which are in harmony with the general accepted social norms and views. Since the very beginnings of man’s existence, society has exercised a powerful and some times insurmountable influence over the individual.” (p. 39)

From childhood, individuals are constantly exposed to negative suggestions about their ability to learn and learning is portrayed as arduous and painful. They are programmed to feel insecure about their ability to learn and lack awareness of their true capacity to learn.

### *Suggestopedia*

Suggestopedia was coined by Lozanov to mean the application of suggestology to education and learning. It started purely as psychological experiments aimed at increasing memory ability in the learning process. This work led him to explore the extraordinary innate human potential or “man’s reserve capacities.” He indicates that humans only use 4% of their brain capacities and the other 96% is unactivated (Lozanov, 1992). This work led him to develop the theoretical principles of Suggestopedia and most importantly, its practical application to the teaching-learning process, specifically foreign language learning. He chose to apply his theories to the teaching of foreign languages because he believed this was a slow, frustrating and intimidating learning process.

The goal of Suggestopedia is to create learning conditions that will eliminate previous conditioning. At the same time, new conditioning will occur fomenting a desuggestive-suggestive process in which the true cognitive abilities of the student will flourish.

### *Principles of Suggestopedia*

The basic premise of Suggestopedia is that humans have unlimited potential for learning and their potential is underutilized. There are three general principles (Schuster and Gritton, 1989):

1. Learning should be characterized by the joy and the absence of tension.
2. Humans operate on a conscious and paraconscious level.
3. Suggestion is the means to use the normally unused mental reserves for learning.

Lozanov (1992) states that Suggestopedia attempts to eliminate previous conditioning and replace it with new positive conditioning, creating a desuggestive-suggestive situation. Lozanov (1992) emphasizes several key suggestive factors available in the teaching situation: Authority, infantilization, double-planeness, intonation, rhythm, and pseudopassivity.

Authority refers to the role of the teacher and the image she projects to the students. The teacher should not assume an authoritarian position, but she should project self confidence, prestige, command of the subject, credibility, and trustworthiness. The teacher, as role model for the students, has the capacity to exert a positive influence over them.

Infantilization refers to the fact that learning is a natural and unconscious process in children. The classroom should be a place to interact with knowledge or material in a playful, relaxed, spontaneous, and nonthreatening situation. Learning should be pleasant and joyful and the teacher should transmit that.

Double-planeness refers to communication at the conscious and unconscious levels simultaneously. The unity of the conscious and unconscious is fundamental to suggestive teaching. Above all the unconscious influence is emphasized through nonverbal behavior which is generally communicated through facial expression, gestures, attire, manner of speaking, and the total environment in the classroom.

Intonation is the essential element for being influential on both the conscious and unconscious plane. Voice dynamics, which includes voice locus, change of pace, building suspense, and excitement, cause students to change their mind set. It apparently increases memory by strengthening the authority of the information source.

Rhythm plays an important role in suggestion. Statements repeated rhythmically are supposed to have a greater suggestive effect than non-rhythmic. Rhythmically correct presentations increase memory capabilities, according to Lozanov (1992).

Pseudopassivity refers to passive behavior of the student during the concert phase with baroque music which promotes relaxation. The classical music in connection with authority, infantilization, intonation,

and rhythm will transform the students into a state of creative pseudopassivity or in a state of relaxed attentiveness. This state triggers release of the reserve mental capabilities.

Lozanov (1992) indicates that there are three major types of Suggestopedic means psychological, didactic, and artistic. The psychological means focus on the teacher's ability to maintain the appropriate suggestive atmosphere in the classroom. "The teacher needs to be familiar with the numerous variants of unconscious perceptual and thinking processes and use emotional stimulus and peripheral perceptions" (Lozanov, 1992, p. 261). The didactic refers to the structural design and integration of courses elements. The material is presented in a global manner in meaningful context. Students are not drilled in fragmented skills, instead the material is presented in a holistic manner at the paraconscious level.

Finally, the artistic means which is the most notable aspect of Suggestopedia refers to the use of artistic forms such as music, literature, and acting in the teaching learning process. Lozanov (1992) indicates that:

"These (artistic means) are not illustrative stages in the process of learning but are built into the content of the lesson. The artistic means are used not only to create a pleasant atmosphere during the process of receiving, memorizing and understanding the information in the lesson, but also to enhance the emotional impetus, the suggestive setup, attitude, motivation and expectancies." (p. 262)

The most important artistic means used in Suggestopedia are music and dramatization.

### *The Suggestopedia Method*

Based on this theoretical framework, Lozanov and pedagogues at the Suggestology Research Center in Bulgaria devised a method for teaching, especially foreign language teaching, that creates what they believe are the ideal conditions for learning. This method is completely oriented to communicative competence. From the beginning stages students are engaged in communicative interaction. The language is presented in meaningful contexts for memorization and vocabulary acquisition. The focus is on meaning rather than form. The method attempts to break down the inhibiting fears of learners

and increase their self-esteem so that the mind and body work efficiently together at their maximum level. This will trigger hypermnesia and maximum use of brain reserves.

The Suggestopedia method is a complex method that involves many aspects of the entire teaching-learning process. It stipulates not only the goals and techniques but also a particular learning environment.

### *Characteristics of the Suggestopedia Method*

According to Lozanov (1988) “Teachers exert an influence on the student not only with what they say, but also with the intonation of their voices, their smiles, gestures, clothes, movement and their whole attitude toward the pupil”; therefore you need a “totally positive teacher” (p.2). The teacher should not only provide positive verbal communication, but she/he should also transmit positive meta-communication. A non-critical attitude has to prevail. Negative language like your wrong or you can't, sarcasm or put-downs are not allowed. The teacher must have high expectations for all students and believe all students have the ability to learn under the right conditions. She/he projects prestige, self-confidence and credibility. Being relaxed, patient and supportive are also important.

The ideal Suggestopedia classroom is commodious and vibrates a positive environment. It resembles more a family room than a typical classroom. Chairs should be comfortable, cushioned arm chairs arranged in semi-circle. The room should be spacious, well ventilated, clean nicely decorated, and have plants or flowers. It should be sound proof with good acoustics and have a stereo system. The idea is to create a totally comfortable and pleasant atmosphere. This contributes to promoting psychological relaxation and positive suggestion.

Students assume new identities with the Suggestopedia Method. Students choose or are assigned a new name, address, and occupation in the target language. These can be famous personalities or fictional characters who come from a country where the target language is spoken. At the beginning of the course after the student get their new identity they spend some time getting to know about each other in their new role. From the beginning of the course, this activity provides for communicative activities. The new identities are a suggestopedic device to help the students relieve tension and fears. It is a psychological shield which protects the student from being exposed to

his peers. When the learner makes an error it is not her/him who is making the error but the new identity. It promotes a playful and non-threatening environment.

The teacher also assumes a new identity from the target language. This is done as a suggestive device. This encourages students to take on their identities more seriously since the teacher serves as a role model. They will also tend to associate the teacher as a representative of the target language and justify the fact that she will always interact with them in the target language.

The curriculum should be focused on communicative competence geared to the needs of the participants. Textbooks should be geared to the specific needs of the students. In the Lozanov Institute the texts are produced by them. The ideal situation is that the books and materials are developed by the teachers. All the material is presented in dialogue format. The dialogues contain humorous, interesting and pleasant situations that are authentic to the students. A dialogue can be thirteen pages long where about 150 new words are presented. One or two grammar points are presented in the dialogue. The dialogues are presented in the target language and the students' native language. At the end of these there is a reference section which contains the grammatical information.

The teacher also needs all of the audiocassettes with the music that is used with the method.

The native language of the students is allowed and used with this method but in a limited manner. It is mainly used as a psychologically reassuring tool. The dialogues are presented in the target language with a translation in the native language. Grammatical points can be explained in the native language if absolutely necessary. The teacher is required to use the target language most of the time from the very first day and according to Lozanov (1988, p. 57) and only see the native language as the "emergency language."

The Suggestopedia Method does not put much emphasis on grammar instruction. Meaningless grammar drills are avoided. Grammar is presented passively in the context of the dialogues where one or two structures are presented. Charts are also displayed with the structures and paradigms that are presented in the dialogue days before it is introduced. Grammar points are discussed at the end of practice or presentation phases when necessary.

The suggestopedic teacher is mainly interested in getting students engaged in communication in the target language. In order to achieve

this goal, correction must only be carried out when absolutely necessary in a tactful, indirect and relaxed way. If students are constantly corrected they will be discouraged and lose confidence in their ability to use the target language. Pronunciation corrections are discouraged unless the communication is unintelligible.

This method employs the following techniques: relaxation exercises, affirmations, rhythmic breathing, music therapy, visualization techniques, dramatization, songs, and games.

Relaxation exercises are carried out to physically relax the student. These consist of simple physical exercises like: stretching, bendovers, sidebends, wave of tension and relaxation, head flops, throat tension/relaxation, twists, shoulder flexing, walking in place, choked breathing, eye rotation, and whole body relaxation.

Visualization exercises are mentally relaxing exercises done to get students mind off any preoccupations outside the classroom. Several suggested visualization exercises are guided imagery a walk along the beach, a mountain sunrise, a flower opening, a white cloud, and a flying a plane. With the relaxation and the mental exercises the body mind connection is developed.

Affirmations are also used as part of the suggestive set to induce students to believe that learning is fun, easy and possible. The idea is to develop in them high self-esteem, a positive attitude towards learning and a feeling that they can learn. The teacher makes affirmations such as "You are going to learn a lot today," or "I know everyone will achieve today's objectives, or "Today we are going to have fun and enjoy the class." Students can repeat these affirmations or make their own.

Dramatization in the form of dialogue reading, role playing, and skits is employed for practicing the material. This type of actively requires the students to engage in interactive oral production. This is done to activate what they have learned. The emphasis is on actively involving the student in the learning process and applying what they have learned.

The use of music is one of the most important components of this method. Music has played a powerful role since the beginning of human culture, and it continues to be a great influential force in today's society (Amend, 1989). It is a carrier of suggestion, and as such it is a powerful vehicle of conditioning especially among young people. Classical music particularly permeates our culture in movie scores, popular music, religious music, and jazz.

One of the most important contributions of Lozanov is his use of music in the Suggestopedia Method (Dhority, 1991). He uses it as a suggestopedic device. Lozanov found certain kinds of music ideal for creating a mentally relaxed state and as vehicle that can enhance the cognitive process. He postulates that the music activates the right hemisphere of the brain and the verbal activates the left hemisphere thus providing a whole brain learning experience. The music also helps create a pleasant suggestive atmosphere which counteracts antisuggestive psychological barriers.

The music used with the Suggestopedia Method in the presentation of material is classical music. The term classical music is commonly used to refer to any music other than popular music or jazz. Yet technically, classical music is music of the classical period. Amend (1989) indicates that this music should be called classical period music. Classical music has developed in the context of the different epoches in history. The music mirrors the values and affect of its corresponding historical period (Amend, 1989). Baroque period music corresponds to the baroque period from 1600 to 1750, classical period music from the 1750 to 1825, and romantic period music from 1825 to 1900.

Lozanov recommends the use of baroque period music and classical period music with the Suggestopedia Method. Baroque music is used with the passive concert for the presentation of new material. Classical period music is used for the active concert. The student is asked to calmly and intuitively listen to the music with the dialogue while allowing the complex process of the superior nervous system to take place.

Baroque period music is known for excitement, exuberance, decoration, and exaggeration, yet it has a uniformity of texture and message. There is a consistent pattern in each movement creating one dominant mood. The major composers of this era are Johann Sebastian Bach, Frideric Handel, Geroge Phillipp Telemann, and Antonio Vivaldi.

Classical period music has simplicity and symmetry. It has clearly defined internal compositional structures and simplicity in melody and harmony. There are emotional contrast in each movement. The major composers of this era are Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Ludwig Van Beethoven, Franz Joseph Hayden, and Gioachino Rossini.

Music is also used for the relaxation exercises. In the West, mood music or New Age music has been used instead of classical music. This instrumental music is characterized by a very slow rhythm. It is

introspective, flighty or dreamy, and often using synthesizers. Sometimes sounds of the natural environment are used in this music. Some of its most important artists are Kitaro, George Winston, Steve Halpern, and Andreas Vollenweider.

Music is not only used in the presentation of new material and relaxation exercises but it is also used in the practice phase. People generally like music and they associate it with leisure. Music is an ideal relaxing agent and it is enjoyed by most children and adults. Use of songs for second language learning especially with children is an effective technique that is widely used. It provides a feel for sentence construction, vocabulary, pronunciation and cultural learning.

Students are also engaged in games for practice of material. Just like the use of song, these are enjoyable and tension releasers. Games are enjoyable and they distract the language learners' attention from the study of linguistic form. Students use vocabulary and language structures without realizing it. The student views this activity as play not work, yet the learning goals can be achieved. Games promote a pleasant, informal, and relaxed atmosphere in the classroom.

### *The Suggestopedia Lesson*

The Suggestopedia lesson has three phases: preliminary, presentation and practice. The lesson begins with the preliminary activities. The purpose of this phase is to relax the students physically and mentally. This prepares them psychologically for the lesson. First the physical relaxation exercises are performed to calm their body. Then the mental relaxation exercises are done to prepare their minds to concentrate on the learning experience in the classroom. Finally, affirmations are used to build their confidence about their ability to learn and their self-esteem.

The presentation phase begins with a review /preview. The teacher reviews what was presented or accomplished in the previous lesson and then discusses what will be learned that day. Then the dialogues are presented by the teacher. These are read to the students, in a variation of normal-loud-soft intonation to the background of relaxing classical music.

Lozanov (1988) names this activity concert. There are two types of concerts. First there is the active concert, where classical period music is played and students are listening and looking at the written dialogue in the target language and the native language. They are also

asked to make mental images or the teacher can provide them with the images of the words and situations in the dialogue. Then they receive a passive concert, where students relax, close their eyes and just listen to the dialogue set to a background of baroque music.

The practice phase is where the students apply what they have learned. The focus of this phase is to get the students actively involved in the learning process through activities that are interesting, enjoyable, and meaningful. The lesson is then concluded with some relaxation activity. It can be a physical or mental relaxation exercise. The purpose of this activity is to finalize the learning experience in the classroom in a positive and enjoyable tone.

### *Second Language Acquisition Theory and Suggestopedia*

The late 1970's through the present has been a revolutionary epoch for the field of second language acquisition (Brown, 1987). A paradigm shift from behaviorism to cognitivism has been clearly reflected in second language acquisition theory and second language teaching in the past thirty years. Humanistic psychology has also had a great impact on the field. This can be observed in the shift towards the affective dimension of language acquisition and the learner centered curriculum and teaching.

Krashen's second language theory has been the most prominent and comprehensive theory to emerge in the paradigm shift to cognitivism. Its impact on the second language field has not only been theoretical, but it has had a significant impact on second language teaching. Krashen (1981) posits that language learning is a subconscious process and that conscious learning does little to promote language fluency. Affective factors are therefore, crucial in second language acquisition. These are fundamental theoretical principles on which Suggestopedia is based. Krashen (1981) states that in order for second language acquisition to occur there must be communicative situations, in low risk non corrective environments. Positive attitudes, low anxiety and high self esteem are also necessary. The Suggestopedia Method focuses on these very same conditions. Its success can be attributed to its highly affective orientation.

The important theoretical contributions of Krashen to second language acquisition theory and its impact on second language praxis in the West is indisputable (Ellis, 1990). The seven components of Krashen's theory, the acquisition learning distinction, the monitor

model, the natural order, the role of input, the affective filter and first language are in considerable agreement with the premises, principles and means of Lozanov's Suggestopedia Method (Botha and Puhl, 1988). The work of both theoreticians affirms the shift towards a concern for the affective dimensions of second language learning and the natural capacity of humans for language acquisition.

### *Language Attitudes*

Language attitudes may include beliefs, values, opinions, prejudices, and emotions regarding language and a language experience. This broad spectrum of component varies in intensity from positive to neutral to negative. Attitudes develop early in life and are considered to be part of the socialization process (Oller, 1977). Attitudes predispose the individual to certain behaviors, yet it is subject to change. While a positive attitude towards a language may influence a person to learn a language, likewise having a successful educational language experience can contribute to developing a positive attitude toward that language. Colins (1988) indicates that cognitive outcomes to language education may be short lived yet attitudes may be more enduring.

The formation of language attitudes in children appears to be part of the socialization process. When people are learning a second language, the way they, and the society in which they live, feel about the language and its speakers may affect their language proficiency. The affective factor, which includes attitudes and emotions, may enhance or hinder the process of second language acquisition.

There has been much interest and research regarding language attitudes, even though it is difficult to qualify and quantify this variable. This is so because attitude is a hypothetical psychological construct that can not be directly observed (Allport, 1967). It can only be inferred from the behaviors or statements of a person. The most common procedure for measuring this variable is through self-report on an attitude scale or inventory (Summers, 1970; Allport, 1967).

Although there are problems with this procedure because people may not be truthful, it is considered a feasible, relatively valid and reliable instrument (Thurstone, 1967).

Several studies point out that attitudes are positively related to foreign language learning (Brown, 1987; Cooper and Fishman, 1977; Chastain, 1975; Gardner, 1980; Gardner and Lalonde, 1985; Krashen,

1981, 1987; Oller, 1977; Titone, 1982). If positive attitudes aid in language acquisition, as the research suggests, then these should be developed and maintained and negative attitudes must be changed. According to Gardner (1980), the language experience in formal and informal context plays an important role in the development of language attitudes. In a foreign language context like Puerto Rico the formal context, the classroom, is almost the exclusive experience with the target language. Therefore, the classroom experience is crucial in the development of attitudes towards that language. Methods for teaching foreign language that are affectively oriented like Suggestopedia may therefore be influential in attitude development and change.

#### *Review of Research on Suggestopedia*

In Bulgaria and in the Soviet Union researchers have reported amazing success in foreign language acquisition with the Suggestopedia Method (McCoy, 1977). They claim that it speeds learning from five to fifty times, increases retention and requires almost no effort on the part of the learner (Ostrander and Schroder, 1982). Despite this, western scientists look upon these results with suspicion, mainly because of lack of information regarding scientific studies in the former communist block countries (Marcum, 1987).

The first group experiments with Suggestopedia were informally conducted by Lozanov in the Department of Psychiatry of the Postgraduate Medical Institute in 1964. The Pedagogy Research Institute became interested in the excellent results obtained and a research group was formed to study this language teaching methodology. In 1965 this first study was conducted using French and English courses. They used a sample of 75 working adult students divided into six groups, three experimental and three control groups. Each teacher had an experimental and control group. The courses were beginning level courses. The experimental and control groups showed a mean difference of 21.5 per cent in vocabulary learned. This was a statistically significant difference in favor of the experimental group. In addition, qualitative data obtained indicated that those who suffered from nervous complaints (headaches, insomnia, depression, irritability) no longer suffered from these ailments. After this major study and the impressive results, the Ministry of National Education of Bulgaria took much interest in this method and set up a Suggestopedia

Research Section to continue research in the field, explore its use with other subject areas and train teachers to use the method and supervise its use in the schools. This methodology began to be used widely in the Bulgarian school system (Lozanov, 1992). Other countries in the former Soviet Block became interested in the Suggestopedia method and began to conduct experimental studies.

In 1968 Germany became the first country to experiment with Suggestopedia at the Mnemonic Center of Leipzig, part of Karl-Marx University. They used it in their courses for teaching Russian, English, Spanish, and French. The results are not available in English. The former Soviet Union began to use it in 1969 at the Maurice-Thoez Institute in Moscow to teach French. In Hungary it was implemented in 1972 and 1973 for teaching several foreign languages in Budapest (Ostrander and Schroeder, 1982).

The methodology was first used in Western Europe in France in 1977 and its practitioners there formed the French School of Suggestopedia as an association whose purpose was to develop and disseminate the Suggestopedia Method in France. Austria established an agreement with Bulgaria to explore and experiment with the Suggestopedia method. The Federal Academy of Pedagogy had a pilot school where Suggestopedia was implemented under the supervision of Lozanov. It was then used in other schools for language teaching (Kitaigordskaya, 1992).

As can be observed, there has been wide interest in this method in the former Soviet Block countries and in Europe. No other language teaching methodology has captivated so much interest and research inquiry. It seems evident that this methodology holds much promise and deserves attention in the Western Hemisphere where language learning is becoming a greater concern, as we become conscious of our global society.

The first experience with Suggestopedia in North America was in Canada in 1973. A team of the Public Service Commission headed by Dr. Gabriel Racle went to Bulgaria to investigate the work with the Suggestopedia Method and receive training. The first experiments with the method in Canada were at the Language Bureau in Ottawa to teach French to public service employees (Racle, 1977).

According to Schuster and Gritton (1989), the first study using Suggestopedia in the United States was conducted by Marina Kurkov in 1971. She used it to teach Russian at Cleveland State University. It was an experimental study with a sample of 33 students, 14 in the

experimental group and 19 in the control group. The groups were randomly assigned to the experimental and control groups. The researcher wanted to determine the effect of this method on language achievement and speed of material covered. At the conclusions of the study it was found that the experimental group had an average grade point of 3.0 as compared with the control group which had an average course grade of 2.5. The difference was statistically significant. The experimental group also covered twice as much material as the control group.

Another early study was conducted by one of the United States experts on Suggestopedia, Schuster (1976). He used it to teach Spanish at the college level with a sample of 51 students, 16 in each of the two control groups and 19 in the experimental group. The dependent variable was achievement as measured by a final exam of written and oral Spanish. The experimental group had a 18.4 mean difference over the control groups which was statistically significantly at a.05 alpha level. In this study as well there was more work covered by the experimental group with a 3 to 1 saving of time over the control group.

Most of the studies conducted in the United States have been with adult or college students, but in 1982 Ramírez did a study with a sample of third grade Spanish dominant Chicano children to teach English vocabulary. This study has particular applicability to Puerto Rico because it involved teaching English as a second language to Spanish speakers. The control group used traditional methods and the experimental group used Suggestopedia. There were 2 experimental groups with 24 and 27 students respectively and the control group had 24 students. The mean scores of the experimental groups were 22.83 and 19.78, whereas the control group's mean was 12.79. The results showed that the experimental group learned significantly more vocabulary words than the control group at a.05 alpha level. In this study apparently some Suggestopedia techniques were used and not the complete method.

Another study with elementary school students was done by Schuster (1979) but the method was used to only teach a very limited language skill, spelling. This was a year long study with third grade students, 19 in the experimental group and 23 in the control group. Spelling achievement was significantly higher for the experimental group than the control group with a mean difference of 10.65.

The most widely cited study by the critics of Suggestopedia is an investigation conducted by Wagner and Tilney (1983). The subjects for

this study were 61 college student. They were taught German vocabulary. There were two experimental groups and one control group. The results were in favor of the control group, thus indicating that Suggestopedia was not an effective method. The results of this study are quite misleading because the Suggestopedia method was not actually evaluated, but rather one of the techniques used in the method; the concert session with baroque music, was employed in a non classroom environment. One of the most important variables of the method, the teacher was not part of the treatment. This study glaringly demonstrates one of the problems in evaluating research on Suggestopedia. Often, what is being evaluated are adaptations of the Lozanov method (Ostrander and Schroeder, 1979).

Another college level study was conducted by Gassner-Roberts and Brislan (1984) to teach first year German. The study consisted of 32 subjects divided into two control groups and one experimental group. There were 10 in the experimental group and 12 and 10 in each of the control groups. Students were randomly assigned to experimental and control groups. The dependent variable, proficiency was measured with a written midyear final and an oral test. The treatment was given over a period of a year, which is unusually long compared to other studies evaluating Suggestopedia. The mean scores on the dependent measures were 77.6 for the experimental group and 66.2 and 69.3 for the control groups. The experimental group showed significantly better proficiency than the control group.

The United States Armed Forces have been quite interested in the Suggestopedia method because of its quick results with language learning (Bush, 1987). Therefore, several studies have been conducted with military personnel. In 1984, Dhority conducted a study with Army groups, at the Fort Devan Base in Massachusetts, learning German. The achievement scores were significantly better for the experimental groups in reading and in listening. This was achieved in one third of the class time provided to the control groups. Yet in another study conducted later with army personnel with Russian, the results were not favorable. In this study there were 40 subjects divided into two control groups and one experimental group. The control groups scored significantly higher on an oral and listening test.

Many of the studies for which information was obtained were with languages other than English, but there is a study conducted by Zeiss in 1984 evaluating Suggestopedia with ESL with Saudi Arabian subjects. The problem with this study was that it was over a very short

period of time, three weeks, and the complete method was not used. Yet, the experimental group scored significantly higher on language achievement than the experimental group.

In 1986, Moon and his associates conducted the first meta-analysis of research on Suggestopedia. They included 40 studies of all research that included any component of the Suggestopedia Method. They found that the Suggestopedia Method was more effective than other foreign language methods studied.

Another study evaluating Suggestopedia in the teaching of ESL, and the most important study for purposes of this researcher, because it is the only one to the researchers knowledge conducted in Puerto Rico, is Moreno's study (1988).

The subjects of this study were college students of the University of Puerto Rico in the Mayaguez Campus. The sample consisted of 59 first year college students that were randomly assigned to one control group and one experimental group. The control group received instruction using an eclectic approach with features of the audiolingual and cognitive methods. The treatment lasted one full academic semester session. The dependent variable was communicative competence as measured by several tests, including an oral interview. Mean scores were 91.28 for the experimental group and 84.29 for the control group.

The mean difference in the scores between the groups was statistically significant in favor of the experimental group. Moreno's study indicates that oral communication skills can be more effectively developed with Suggestopedia than with the conventional methods commonly used in Puerto Rico. Moreno was also interested in finding out the feasibility of using this method in a regular college classroom since the Suggestopedia Method requires a special environment and conditions. She concluded that the method was adaptable to the ESL college environment in Puerto Rico and that students had a very positive attitude toward the method.

Communicative competence is in fact the focus of Puerto Rico's Department of Education's new English curriculum (Aponte Roque, 1988). Yet, it is questionable whether the methods used are the appropriate ones. In Puerto Rico there is an urgent need to explore methods that are geared to the sociolinguistic and psycholinguistic characteristics of its student population and that are congruous with the goals of its English language program. This study provides empirical evidence for an innovative method that may be more

suitable to the needs and idiosyncratic nature of second language acquisition in Puerto Rico.

### *Methodology*

This study was intended to find the effect of the Suggestopedia method on communicative language achievement and attitudes towards English of ninth grade students of the Andrés Valcárcel Junior High School of the Trujillo Alto School District in the San Juan Educational Region.

### *Design*

A quasi-experimental research study was performed using a pretest-posttest nonequivalent control group design (Campbell and Stanley, 1963). This research design was chosen because the researcher was not allowed to assign individual students to the experimental or control groups through random assignment. Consequently, intact English classes were randomly assigned to the experimental and control groups. This is the most widely used quasi-experimental design in educational research (Campbell and Stanley, 1963; Borg and Gall, 1983).

When random assignment of subjects is not feasible in an educational setting of the study, a pretest is recommended to determine if the groups are equivalent. (Borg and Gall, 1983; Gay, 1987). If it is found that the groups are not equivalent, then pretest scores are used as covariates in an analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) to make the compensating adjustments to the posttest means of the two groups. The initial difference on the pretest are systematically eliminated with this procedure.

### *Variables*

The independent variable was the English teaching method with two categories: the Suggestopedia Method and Traditional Method. The two dependent variables were:

- a. Attitude and communicative language achievement
- b. Description and selection of the sample

### *Description of the School Environment*

The population from which the sample was chosen was ninth grade students of the Andrés Balcárcel Junior High School. This school is part of the Trujillo Alto School District of the San Juan Educational Region. There are two other public junior high schools in Trujillo Alto. The school is in the middle of this small town. The students who attend the school come from the town, sectors surrounding the town (barrios) one of the housing projects near the town, three nearby urbanizations and some of its rural areas.

At the time of this study the school had a student population of 664 of which 98% are native speakers of Spanish and could be considered limited English proficient (LEP's). Two hundred and thirty nine students were in the seventh grade, 249 were in the eighth grade and 176 were in the ninth grade. This junior high school has the largest student population in the district and is considered overcrowded.

The school was 19 years old. The building was quite deteriorated and the architectural design of this four story building, with closed in and cramped quarters is not a very appropriate environment for an adolescent educational community. The faculty consisted of 39 teachers, (nine were Title I teachers) two social workers, a counselor, a principal and a secretary. The English faculty consisted of 9 teachers (3 under Title I). Most of the faculty were highly experienced teachers with many years in the public school system and most of their years of service in this school.

### *Description of the Sample*

The sample for this study consisted of four intact ninth grade English classes. The initial sample included all 113 registered students. There were 54 assigned to experimental groups and 59 to the control groups. Due to a severe truancy problem in the school, the sample had to be drastically reduced from 113 to 68 students.

Information regarding gender, age, address and previous grade in English for the 68 subjects that made up the final sample was obtained from school records and from the students personally.

The majority of the students in our sample were males, comprising 59%; females comprised the remaining 41%. By coincidence, both the experimental and control groups had the same number of males and females, 59% and 41%, respectively.

Ages ranged from 13 to 15. Most of the sample consisted of 14 year olds making up 62%. The 13 years olds comprised 26% of the sample while 15 years olds came to 12%.

The participants were representative of all the different types of residential areas of Trujillo Alto. They were evenly divided between urban and rural dwellers; 50% came from urban areas and 50% from rural areas.

The majority of the students in the sample were considered average or below average in English achievement by their teachers. Their English grades in the previous grade (8th) reflected that estimate: None of the students had A's, 26% had B's, 32% had C's, 29% had D's, and 3% earned F's. Information about previous grades was not available for 10% of the sample.

#### *Selection of the Sample*

The Andrés Valcárcel Junior High School was chosen for this study because the English supervisor of this district was interested in having a school in her district experiment with the Suggestopedia Method. After meeting with school directors and English teachers of several schools in the district, this school was chosen because the school director was receptive and some of the English teachers were interested. It was also relatively accessible to this researcher because of its location in the metropolitan area.

There were six ninth grade classes in the school. Two groups 9-1 and 9-2 were not included in the study because they were higher achieving students, therefore different from the other four groups. All the other ninth grade groups (9-3, 9-4, 9-5 and 9-6) participated in the study. The experimental groups (9-3 and 9-6) and the control groups (9-4 and 9-5) were chosen randomly from among these four groups.

#### *Descriptions of the Teachers*

The three English teachers of the ninth grade participated in the study. One of the teachers was a Title I teacher that worked as an assistant teacher with all ninth grade classes of English. Background information about the teachers was obtained by having them fill out a form. All the three teachers were females over the age of forty. They were all experienced English teachers with 27, 21, and 10 years of service. The two more experienced teachers had taught the majority of those years in this school. The other teacher had only been at this school only two years. Her previous experience was in private schools.

The three teachers have a bachelor's degree in secondary English education and one of them also has a master's degree in translation. They are all licensed by the Department of Education of Puerto Rico as Secondary School English Teachers. Two of these teachers have lived in the United States and have native English pronunciation.

None of the teachers were familiar with the Suggestopedia Method before it was presented to them by the researcher. Yet, they became interested because according to one of them they were "open to trying new learning strategies and looking for new ways of getting students involved in more productive and effective ways". The use of such nontraditional techniques involving classical music and relaxation exercises, also stimulated their curiosity and interest.

### *Instruments*

For the purposes of this study the following measuring instruments were used to test the researcher's hypotheses:

1. A Cloze Test and an Oral Test, to measure the dependent variable communicative language achievement.
2. The Livoti Attitude Inventory, to measure the dependent variable, attitude.
3. A questionnaire was administered to the experimental group to obtain information about their reaction to their experience with the Suggestopedia Method.

### *Cloze Test*

Communicative language achievement was measured with two tests constructed by the researcher. Both tests followed a syllabus content approach. One was an indirect test consisting of a cloze procedure using a dialogue format and a short matching exercise. The entire test had 51 items and each item had a value of one. The score range was therefore 0 to 51. The cloze is a testing procedure in which the examinee is required to insert words that have been systematically deleted from a continuous text. It is an integrative language task that is considered to have validity for evaluating communicative language (Cohen, 1980; Jones and Spolsky, 1975). Several studies have established correlations between an established test of oral proficiency, the Foreign Service Institute Oral Interview (FSI) and the cloze test. In a study with ESL students the FSI correlated  $r = .63$  with the cloze test (Hinofotis, 1976 in Cohen, 1980). In another study with Hebrew the FSI

correlated  $r = .81$  to  $.84$  (three judges) with a cloze test (Shohamy, 1978 in Cohen, 1980).

A table of specification of skills and content was constructed before development of the tests. It defines the content domain of the test. A content validation was performed to determine whether the items constituted a representative sample of the specified domain. It was performed by a panel of five ESL educators, consisting of two ESL secondary teachers, an ESL supervisor who has taught that curricular content and two ESL professors. Spolsky and Jones (1975) indicate that in the ESL field, language achievement tests can have high content validity if the entire course content is made available so it can be examined by experienced language educators. They should be able to readily identify the elements that are reliable indicators of language achievement.

The panel was given the content and skills of the course in a table of specifications and the test. They were asked to evaluate the instruments using the following guide questions: Does the test reflect course contents? Are the items of the test relevant indicators of communicative language achievement for the course content to be covered during the experiment? A content validity index for each item and the total test was determined following Humbleton et al. (1975) as cited in Martuza (1977). The index of clarity of each item and the total test was determined using the Collazo and Rodríguez (1993) procedure.

The Cloze Test was piloted with a sample of 30 tenth grade students at Facundo Bueso High School in Santurce. It was used with tenth grade students because the researcher needed a population that had already been exposed to the curricular content of the ninth grade unit that was used in this study. The reliability for the cloze component of the test was estimated with coefficient alpha using the *reliability* procedure of SPSSx. This coefficient estimates the internal consistency of a test. The alpha reliability coefficient was  $.81$ .

The item discrimination index ranged from  $.65$  to  $-.26$ . To improve the reliability of the test, the items that had a negative item correlation or a low correlation below  $.10$  were eliminated unless the item was not indispensable to maintaining the content in the table of specifications. The alpha reliability coefficient was increased to  $.83$  by eliminating 8 items from the test. The reliability of the cloze test was also determined with the test scores of the 68 students of the sample. The reliability

with the sample was substantially better with the actual sample. The alpha reliability coefficient was .98.

### *Oral Test*

The direct test consisted of an oral performance task. This type of test is preferable as a summative communicative language achievement test (Hughes, 1990). The oral task like the cloze procedure was constructed using the table of specifications.

The oral performance task involved a social context, the linguistic function was asking and recounting about a past event and the topic was a car accident. It consisted of an interaction of two students playing the role of a police officer and a witness, who had seen a car accident.

For the oral task the performance criteria was established and a rating scale was developed. The dimensions of performance criteria and the of performance levels are based on those developed by Interagency Language Roundtable Proficiency Scale (ILA) (Pardee, 1986). The performance criteria included the following dimensions of communicative language competence: pronunciation, fluency, sociolinguistics, grammar, vocabulary and task. It included definitions of performance at various levels from no functional ability to poor, satisfactory, good, and excellent ability. A number was assigned to each level from 0 to 4 and a total score was determined by adding up the points. The minimum score was 0 and the maximum was 28. The raters were given a rating sheet for the scoring procedure.

A validation of the oral task for this test involved assessing if the task, the instructions, and the prompt elicited a suited performance of the content as specified in the table of specifications. and establishing the degree of difficulty. This validation procedure was performed by the same panel of of five ESL educators that examined the Cloze Test. Baker (1989) states that item analysis nor any statistical analysis other than inter-rater reliability procedures are appropriate for direct tests of language performance because they are not divided into sub tasks.

The reliability for the Oral Test was estimated using inter-rater reliability. Experts in second language testing indicate that reliability of oral tests are closely related to the scoring procedure, therefore inter-rater reliability is the most appropriate procedure for an oral task (Madsen and Jones, 1981; Shohamy, 1981; Baker, 1989). Clark (1980)

indicates that inter-rater reliability of .60 and above is psychometrically acceptable for direct tests of oral ability.

The researcher trained four independent raters in the scoring procedure for the oral task. Each team consisting of two raters assessed the performance of a pilot sample of 24 students, 12 by each team, from the Facundo Bueso School. The raters went to the school and rated the students during the actual performance of the task. The researcher administered the oral task and the raters observed and rated the students. With the student sample of the study, the researcher administered the oral task and video taped the sessions for the pre and post test. The videotapes of the sessions were then given to the team of raters individually to observe and rate independently. The scores of each team of raters were statistically analyzed using the Pearson product moment correlation coefficient. This coefficient was determined using the CROSS-TAB sub-program of SPSSx. The inter-rater reliability coefficient ranged from .80 to .94, which indicates an acceptable reliability (above.60) in the scoring procedure.

#### *Livoti Attitude Inventory*

Attitude towards English was measured with Livoti's (1978) ESL Attitude Inventory developed and used by him in his attitudinal study of fifth and eighth grade students of southern Puerto Rico's public schools. Dr. Livoti granted the researcher permission to use and revise this instrument for her study. This instrument was also used by Aloise (1992) in her study of the Immersion Method, to measure her dependent variable, attitudes toward English. The inventory measures a student's attitudes toward English. The questionnaire contains 32 items in Spanish using a three point Likert Scale, with the following set of responses: agree, undecided, disagree (Wiersma, 1986). The statements were presented in both affirmative and negative form.

Affirmative items received a value of three, for agree and a one, for disagree on the Likert Scale. The negative items receive the inverse order, three for disagree and one for agree. The possible scores ranged from 32 to 96. The greater the score the more positive the attitude.

The items for this scale were obtained by Livoti (1978) from previously developed foreign language attitude inventories, some of which were modified and others were suggested by ESL educators in Puerto Rico. The validation procedure used by the developer of this instrument consisted of the following activities. The items were

reviewed by a panel of ESL educators who chose 64 items. These were field tested with 100 students with similar characteristics as those to be in his study. Items which discriminated between students scoring in the upper and lower half of the group were determined by computing the contingency coefficient of each item. The 32 items that were most discriminating and not repetitious in content were finally selected for the scale by the panel of ESL educators, consisting of Livoti and two university professors. All items that were retained had a discriminating power of .349 or higher.

The reliability of the instrument was estimated using a split-half procedure. The corresponding (internal consistency) coefficient was .83 with a group of eighth graders.

The Attitude Inventory reliability was determined again by this researcher with a sample of 30 eighth grade students from Bacaner Junior High School in Santurce. Some minor modifications were made in the wording of a few of negative statements so as to eliminate double negatives. Two items were changed to reflect current student activities. Internal consistency was estimated with coefficient alpha using the Reliability procedure of the SPSS-X statistical package.

The coefficient obtained was .76. Even though a reliability coefficient of this magnitude is considered acceptable for an instrument measuring a hypothetical construct like attitude, it was lower than that obtained in Livoti's study (1977).

An item analysis was done in order to identify those items that were not properly discriminating either towards the positive or negative dimension of the attitude variable. This was done by calculating the correlation of each item with the total score. The item-total discrimination index for all items ranged from .5590 to -.5056. Items with negative or low indexes were discarded; items with index values of .25 or higher were retained (Ary, 1985). Six items with indexes below .25 were eliminated, leaving an inventory with 26 items. The alpha coefficient was then calculated and resulted in a reliability coefficient of .82.

Scores ranged from a low of 26 to a high of 78. A score of 78 would reflect the highest positive attitude toward English and a score of 26 the most negative. The reliability of the Livoti Attitude Inventory was also determined using the posttest scores of the sample of the study ( $N = 68$ ). Here, the alpha reliability coefficient obtained was .78.

### *Other Instruments*

In obtaining information about the reactions and opinions of students and teachers once exposed to the Suggestopedia Method, quantitative and qualitative data was obtained using questionnaires, interviews, feedback sessions, video taping and direct observation. A Student Opinion Questionnaire and a Teacher Feedback Form were also constructed for this purpose. The Student Opinion Questionnaire consists of 13 items with a scale of three possible responses Yes, No, Undecided or A lot, A little, not at all.

An open-ended questionnaire was administered to the experimental groups only, at the end of treatment. A Teacher Feedback Form consisting of 9 questions, most of which are open ended, was also administered to at the end of the study.

Classes assigned to the experimental groups received instruction using the Suggestopedia Method covering the material of one unit in their curriculum during 11 weeks. The Suggestopedia method used was the version adapted in the United States by Schuster and Gritton (1986), commonly known by the name *Suggestive Accelerative Learning Techniques* (SALT). The ninth grade curriculum, based on the book *Turning Points* was redesigned to include Suggestopedia principles, techniques, and course of study organization.

Classes in the control groups received instruction using the same content as the experimental groups under traditional ESL methods currently used in the public secondary schools of Puerto Rico. These included the Audiolingual Structural Approach, Functional Notional Approach and Grammar Translation methods.

### *Curriculum*

The unit covered during this study was Unit 10, *What Happened?*, of the regular English curriculum textbook, *Turning Points No.2* published by Addison Wesley Publishing Company. The objectives of this unit are:

1. To narrate past events using the past and past progressive (was, were + ing verb).
2. To correctly use the following verbs in the past: caught, drove, forgot, had, hit, went.
3. To ask and write about a past event using WH questions- who, what, where, when, how.

4. To find out consequences asking *did you*, questions and answering questions using *Yes, No* with the consequence.
5. To identify and use the following vocabulary correctly in dialogues:

anybody	anything
door	else
explain	fast
list	findgarage
garage	happen
grandmother	helpful
hurry	hurt
lock	rain
slowly	turned
turn off	understand
van	No kidding!
go out	all of a sudden
traffic	yesterday
witness	hurt
play	traffic light
lunch	gym
money	open
key	movie
sports car	accident
lights	night

The review objectives were the following:

1. To Identify parts of the body
2. To ask and tell about health

Most of this unit was based on the theme: *What happened?* regarding a traffic accident. The researcher redesigned and developed a unit plan consisting of 22 lessons. The textbook and workbook were used as supplementary materials.

### *The Suggestopedic Lesson*

The daily lesson generally consisted of the three phases of the Suggestopedia lesson. This consisted of the preliminary phase, the presentation phase and the practice phase. All three phases were not always done in one lesson, since class periods lasted only 50 minutes and sometimes 40 or 30 minutes.

In the preliminary phase the students were first greeted by the teacher. Then the relaxation and visualization exercises and an affirmation were done.

There were three different relaxation exercises and three different visualization exercises and two affirmations were used with the students. There was a visualization of the beach, forest and flower. The visualizations were varied from day to day. The teacher and the students decided which one would be done each day. The students seemed to prefer the beach visualization so that one was done most often. One teacher did the relaxation and the assistant teacher did the visualization or *visa versa*. These were done in Spanish, except for the affirmation which was done in English. At the beginning the teacher led the affirmation but in the second week the students wanted to lead it; therefore, a different student led it each day.

The presentation consisted of a review of the previous lesson and then the active concert and pseudopassive concert session. The active concert was given with classical period music and the pseudopassive concerts with baroque period music. One of the dialogues was presented in each concert. The concerts were given in the first two lessons of each new dialogue. A total of four dialogues were presented in this unit.

During the the practice phase of the lesson the students worked in pairs reading the dialogues, doing role playing, dramatizations, playing games or doing activities from the textbook and workbook. The students seemed to especially enjoy and be enthusiastic about the games.

At the end of each lesson a final five minute relaxation exercise was done with the students. This was the closure of the lesson each day.

### *Materials*

The materials consisted of the music recorded on audio tapes for each activity, charts with visual illustration of vocabulary, grammar paradigms and affirmations, props for skits, realia, manipulatives and copies of the dialogues. Also all the materials for the games were made and provided by the researcher. The textbook and the workbook were used as supplementary materials. The researcher also provided the teachers with a portable cassette stereo system and a karaoke machine with a microphone.

### *The Classroom Environment*

The ideal Suggestopedia classroom is commodious and vibrates a positive environment. In this study the environment was not the ideal since the treatment was conducted in a regular public school classroom. The chairs were not comfortable, cushioned arm chairs but rather deteriorated desk chairs. Yet, the classrooms were painted and redecorated as nicely as possible before the treatment began. The furniture was rearranged from the traditional straight rows to semi-circle. The rooms were well ventilated with fans and there was adequate space. The room was not sound proof; in fact, it was a completely noisy environment most of the time.

### *The Music*

The music used for the Suggestopedia Method is very important. Baroque period music was used for the passive concert in the presentation of new material and classical period music was used for the active concert. For the relaxation activities, New Age music was used.

As mentioned previously, the students and teachers assumed a new identity with the Suggestopedia Method. These can be famous personalities or fictional characters who come from a country where the target language is spoken. The new identities are a suggestopedic device to help the students relieve tension and fears and create a jovial atmosphere in the classroom.

The first day the Suggestopedia method was presented, the teachers introduced themselves with their new names and they gave information about these personalities They choose to be Clara Barton, Julie Andrews, and Farah Facett. The students were informed that they should also choose new identities. Possible characters were discussed in a brainstorming session. The students mainly chose sports stars, actors, singers and some chose polititians. Some of the names they chose were Michael Jordan, Arnold Schwarzenegger, Janet Jackson, Hilary Clinton, George Bush, Reggie Miller, Charles Barkley, Julia Roberts, and Demi Moore. Once the students decided on a new identity they spent some time getting to know about each other in their new roles, at the beginning of the unit. This activity provided for a great amount of communicative interaction. Name tags were made for each student to wear in class each day.

### *Procedure*

The first phase consisted in obtaining the teachers, school, and students that would participate in this study. The researcher met with the English supervisors of the San Juan Educational Region to obtain suggestions of possible schools and teachers. Meetings were held with school directors and teachers in five different schools in the region.

The Andrés Valcárcel Junior High School was finally selected for two major reasons. The first reason was that the school had six or seven groups in each grade. Four groups of students of similar language abilities were needed for the study. In the ninth grade there were two advanced ability groups and the other four were of average and below average, grouped heterogeneously. These four heterogeneous groups were used for the study. The second reason was that the English supervisor, school director and the teachers were highly interested in participating in the study. The teachers of the ninth grade were the most interested and that is why this grade was chosen over the the seventh or eighth grade.

The control groups and the experimental groups were chosen at random from among these four groups.

Circular Letter 14-93-94 issued in 1994 by the Department of Education of Puerto Rico, indicates the procedures to be followed in conducting research in the public schools. The required application forms were submitted together with all other required documentation.

The researcher redesigned one unit from the ninth grade English curriculum in oral communication using the Suggestopedia Method and the table of specifications for construction of the instruments that would measure communicative language achievement. The written test and the oral test were designed and validated, and their reliability determined as previously described. The researcher invited several language educators at the university and high school levels to be raters for the oral performance task. These raters were trained by the researcher in a four hour session at the university.

The researcher then prepared the training module. The time and place of training was determined in consultation with the English supervisor and the school principal. They also agreed to provide two full days release time for the teachers. The training was conducted during that time and for two additional weeks during the teacher's preparation periods, for a total of 18 training hours.

The oral test took approximately two weeks to administer since the student sample had to be tested in dyads. Each dyad took approximately 10 to 15 minutes to receive instructions and perform the oral task.

Experimental treatment was initiated at the beginning of unit 10 of the curriculum and went on for 11 weeks. All pretesting was concluded beforehand. The researcher observed the English classes of the experimental group every day and that of the control groups approximately once a week. She met with the teachers almost every day to provide coaching, carry out debriefing sessions and plan the next day's activities. Since the teachers taught both the experimental and control groups, caution was taken to ensure no contamination of experimental conditions in the control groups. Teachers were instructed not to use any of the techniques of the Suggestopedia Method with control group students. Their perception about the importance of this study requirement seemed very clear. The researcher's observation of the control group verified this.

The dependent variable measures were administered to both groups upon completion of Unit 10. The experimental group was administered a questionnaire to obtain their reaction and opinions about their experience with the Suggestopedia Method. Teachers also filled out a questionnaire for this purpose at the conclusion of the experiment.

### *Statistical Analysis*

This study was designed to measure any improvements in the communicative language achievement of secondary school students as well as changes in their attitudes toward English as a result of instruction based on the Suggestopedia Method when compared to students in traditional ESL programs.

The following hypotheses were established:

*Null hypotheses No. 1:* There will be no statistically significant difference between the experimental (Suggestopedia) and the control (traditional ESL) groups in their mean scores in English communicative language achievement.

*Null hypothesis No. 2:* Ninth grade students who receive English instruction using the Suggestopedia Method will not exhibit significantly higher mean scores on an instrument measuring attitude toward English than those taught by the traditional method.

An analysis of variance (ANOVA) was performed to determine if the control group and the experimental group were initially equivalent in language achievement and attitude towards English. The pretest scores on the Oral Test, Cloze Test and the Livoti Attitude Inventory were used for this statistical analysis. The hypotheses were tested using an analysis of covariance (ANCOVA). This statistical analysis adjusts the scores of the groups so that there is statistical control over the variation found in the dependent variables. The alpha significance level was established at .05. According to Borg and Gall (1983), the preferred statistical method of analysis for the pretest-posttest control group design is analysis of covariance.

### *Results*

Several measuring instruments were used to test the researcher's hypotheses:

The dependent variable *communicative language achievement* was measured with two instruments, the Cloze Test and the Oral Test. The other dependent variable, attitude toward English was measured with the Livoti Attitude Inventory.

A Student Opinion and a Teacher Feedback Questionnaire were also used to assess student and teacher perceptions and opinions regarding their experiences with the Suggestopedia Method. The alpha level of statistical significance to test the hypotheses of this study was established at .05.

Since intact groups were used for this study it was necessary to determine if the control groups and the experimental groups were equivalent at the beginning of the experiment on the dependent variables. The sample was pretested on the dependent variables, communicative language achievement

and attitude to make this determination. The analysis of variance (ANOVA) performed on the scores of the pretests that measures these variables revealed statistically significant F values on each of the two dependent measures of communicative language achievement. The hypotheses were then tested analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) to parcel out any differences in means between groups prior to experimental treatment.

### *Hypothesis 1: Communicative Language Achievement*

The null and research hypotheses for this variable were the following:

*Null Hypothesis:* Ninth grade students who receive instruction using the Suggestopedia Method will show no significant difference in the mean scores in English communicative language achievement when compared to those instructed by traditional methods.

*Research Hypothesis:* Ninth grade students who receive English instruction using the Suggestopedia Method will show significantly higher English communicative language achievement than students taught by traditional ESL methods.

Hypothesis No.1 was tested applying an analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) procedure to the scores of the two dependent measures, the Cloze Test and the Oral Test. After adjusting for pre-existing differences in communicative language achievement as measured by the pretest, the mean difference between the experimental group and the control group was found to be statistically significant ( $F = 177.63$ ,  $p = .00$ ). The actual probability level was considerably more stringent than that set by the researcher ( $p = .05$ ). These results very strongly suggest that the experimental group's communicative language achievement was significantly better than the control group due to the experimental study treatment.

The communicative language achievement variable was also measured with an Oral Test. After adjusting the pre-existing differences as measured by the Oral pretest, the result was an  $F(2, 65) = 15.53$ ,  $p = .00$ . These results also strongly indicate a statistically significant difference between group means.

Experimental group students consistently obtained higher mean scores than the control group on both the Cloze Test and the Oral Test. The observed differences between the two groups were significant statistically. Based on these results, the null hypothesis was rejected and the research hypothesis was strongly confirmed. Students who received instruction using the Suggestopedia Method showed significantly higher English communicative language achievement than peers taught by way of traditional methods.

The oral test also an integrative testing procedure but of a direct type evaluates samples of oral behavior. The researcher in the administration of this test observed a clear difference in performance between the experimental

and the control groups. More students in the experimental groups showed better motivation to perform the task, demonstrated more fluency, self confidence and better communicative strategies. The quantitative data substantiates these observations as can be observed in Table 9 the experimental group performed significantly better than the control group. There was a mean difference of 6.01 between the groups. This can be considered a substantial difference given the fact that the test has a maximum possible score of 28 points. Another important factor is that the performance levels of communicative language for this test could classify a student by composite scores of all the performance criteria into one of five categories of communicative ability: Non-functional, poor, satisfactory, good and excellent. A straight composite score of 0 would represent ability nil, 7 poor ability, 14 satisfactory ability, 21 good ability, and 28 excellent ability. The experimental group as a whole, with a mean score of 15.21 would be classified as having satisfactory communicative ability, whereas the control group would be classified at a level of ability marginally better than poor. Thus, the mean score of the experimental group reflects a marked difference in performance as compared to the control group.

### *Hypothesis 2: Attitude Toward English*

The null and research hypothesis with respect to student attitudes were as follows:

*Null hypothesis:* Ninth grade students who receive English instruction using the Suggestopedia Method will not show a significantly more positive attitude towards English than those taught by the traditional methods.

*Research Hypothesis:* Ninth grade students who receive English instruction using the Suggestopedia Method will show significantly more positive attitudes toward English than those taught by traditional methods.

The mean score of the experimental group in the Livoti Attitude Inventory was 61.62 (SD = 6.81) while the mean score of the control group was 66.97 (SD = 7.65). These mean scores were used to test hypothesis No. 2. The F ratio obtained after adjusting the pre-existing differences in attitude as measured by the pretest was  $F(2, 65) = 6.62, p = .01$ . This indicates that the mean difference between the experimental group and the control group is strongly significant statistically. Based on these results, null hypothesis No. 2 was rejected and the research hypothesis was sustained, inasmuch as the experimental group's attitude towards English, as result of the experimental treatment, was significantly better than that of the control group.

Even though it was not within the scope of our study design to consider the gain obtained by each group in the Cloze Test, the Oral Test or the Livoti Attitude Inventory post-treatment, the strength of our experimental results suggest that further study should prove valuable. The experimental group

exhibited substantial gains in the Cloze Test and the Oral Test. The control group also showed gains but these were very small. In the Livoti Attitude Inventory the experimental group experienced modest gains, while the control group actually lost ground. This suggests that while the experimental group's attitudes towards English improved, those of the control group worsened as a result of the standard ESL experience.

#### *Student's and Teacher's Reactions to the Suggestopedia Method*

In addition to the quantitative data presented to find out if the the Suggestopedia method had a significant effect on communicative language competence and attitudes toward English, the researcher was interested in the affective outcomes of this method. Students in the experimental group generally exhibited positive reactions to the method and its techniques. In general, students were able to relax, loose their fear of learning English and enjoy the class. The students were also asked how they liked the English class under this Suggestopedia Method as opposed to traditional practice. Fully 82% favored the former. In addition, 79% indicated they would like to continue studying English through the Suggestopedia Method.

#### *Student Reactions*

The above data was consistent with the researcher's observations of the behavior and reactions of experiment group students in the classroom, who participated enthusiastically in all instructional activities. From their gestures, facial expressions, disposition and comments, it was clear that students enjoyed the method. A progressive development of oral participation and interaction took place during the course of the experimental treatment.

#### *Teacher Reactions*

The teachers, like their students, generally reacted positively to using the Suggestopedia Method. However, they felt that the entire method would be difficult to apply unless the goals of the English program were changed by placing more emphasis on oral communication. They also felt that the method required too much time and energy on the part of the teacher.

The relaxation exercises, affirmations, concerts and pair work were the most favored techniques. Both students and teachers favored least the changing of identities. The perception of teachers was that students benefited from the method and it helped them lose their fear of English. One teacher stated: "it is a miracle how these students have changed. Student who were shy, low achievers and had negative attitudes in English class are now participating actively and performing much better." When questioned if they would continue using the method, they all stated that they would, sometimes or in conjunction with their own methods. General opinion was that they

enjoyed using the method and had been enriched by the experience. In terms of the training, they would have preferred to attend more demonstration classes. They also indicated that coaching by the researcher was crucial to the successful implementation of the Suggestopedia Method.

It seems clear that both teachers and students were favorably impressed by the Suggestopedia Method. However, some hesitation did arise among teachers insofar as continuing to use the entire method on a regular basis.

### *Conclusions and Recommendations*

The results of this study suggest that students who receive instruction by way of the Suggestopedia Method exhibit significantly better communicative language achievement as opposed to those who receive instruction through the traditional ESL methods currently in use among English teachers in the public schools of Puerto Rico. These results are generally consistent with results in the literature about use of the Suggestopedia Method in foreign and second language learning. Ostrander and Schoeder (1982) state that better than average achievement may well be expected when using the Suggestopedia Method.

In this investigation the experimental group exhibited a significant and substantial positive difference in communicative language achievement in comparison to the control group. Other researchers, most notably Schuster (1976) have reported similar results. In his study using the Suggestopedia Method to teach Spanish as a foreign language among college students, found substantial and significant results in favor of the experimental group on language achievement using two dependent measures, an oral and a written test. He considered them so substantial that he states, "further research is definitely in order to verify the experimental results and elaborate on them." (p.12)

In a similar study with German college students, Gassner-Roberts and Brislan (1984) focused on language achievement and used two dependent measures, a written and an oral test. The experimental groups scored significantly higher than the control groups. The Moreno (1988) study with ESL college students in Puerto Rico focused on communicative language achievement and found significantly higher mean differences between control and experimental groups in language achievement in favor of the latter. Again, Two dependent measures were used, a written and an oral test. However, the written tests used in those studies were discrete point instruments and not an integrative test, such as the Cloze test used in this study, considered a more extensive and effective instrument for assessing communicative language (Cohen, 1980; Jones and Spolsky, 1975).

Other studies of Suggestopedia Method, unlike this study, have focused on vocabulary acquisition, because the original Lozanov studies focused on this language skill exclusively. In the Lozanov (1992) studies with English

and French, the experimental groups exhibited substantially higher vocabulary achievement over the control groups. The Ramírez (1982) study was also oriented toward vocabulary achievement and results were also significantly in favor of the experimental group. Its sample selection procedures and general study conditions were similar to those of the present study in several respects. Though performed at the elementary level, Ramírez's subjects were native speakers of Spanish learning English as a second language.

The Wagner and Tilney (1983) study among college students also focused on vocabulary achievement. Contrary to all the other studies examined by this researcher, the control group of this study exhibited significantly higher achievement than the experimental group. But only limited elements of the method were used in a language laboratory setting, not a classroom situation with a teacher. It must be recalled that according to Lozanov, the teacher is a key variable in the Suggestopedia Method.

Wagner and Tilney (1983) expressed the opinion that given the complexity of this method "practical application to the average American classroom seems remote." This study was conceived to challenge that opinion. Our findings strongly support the value and worth of applying the Suggestopedia Method in the Puerto Rican classroom. A few limiting circumstances notwithstanding (which may be easily eliminated in most public school environments), the Suggestopedea Method has been proven effective.

Lozanov (1992) has made it clear that the effectiveness of his method largely depends on the participation of well trained, committed teachers. The teachers in our study were volunteers, and that is the essence of commitment. Great effort was expended in providing the teachers with thorough training, continuous coaching, structured, well detailed lessons and all necessary materials. These aspects are crucial to the successful implementation of any new teaching methodology (Richards and Rodgers 1990). The mechanics of implementation could easily account for the success or failure of any new instructional methodologies applied to the teaching of English in Puerto Rico.

It is important to note that the Cloze Test was a difficult exam for the students of both groups due to its integrative nature. Puerto Rican ESL students have traditionally been exposed to evaluation rooted in the grammar-translation paradigm. Typically, they have been evaluated with discrete-point testing where individual grammatical points are presented apart from any communicative context or they are asked to provide translation in the native language. Throughout the treatment process, both experimental and control groups were exposed to integrative testing by means of quizzes. The experimental group was exclusively exposed to this type of testing throughout the treatment period, whereas the control group used a combination of discrete point and integrative testing.

The assessment process concomitantly leads to a discussion of the problems in comparing methods for language teaching. Palmer (1992) indicates three main problems. One is that the teacher variable is difficult to control, the other is that the experimental program is likely to generate more enthusiasm than the traditional program (the Hawthorn Effect) and finally that the goals of the programs using different teaching methods are likely to have different results. These problems were definitely concerns of this researcher in this study.

The teacher variable was controlled inasmuch as the same teachers taught both the experimental and control groups. Yet, there were some differences between the teachers of the two experimental groups. The researcher observed that one of the teachers was clearly a more effective Suggestopedic teacher than the other. Consequently, that class responded and functioned much better than the other experimental class. This teacher was relaxed, patient not stressed out about the school environment, generally had a positive attitude, had high expectations for her students, and was very satisfied with their response and performance. The other teacher was tense, impatient and had difficulty adjusting to the radical departure from her traditional practice. Nevertheless, she accepted the method in theory and voluntarily agreed to participate in the experiment. It is important to note that she had the more difficult students in her classes. For the purposes of this study the experimental classes were consolidated into one group when determining the language outcomes. Further analysis of the two experimental classes as independent groups could explore whether teacher variables resulted in significant differences in language outcomes.

The "Hawthorn Effect" may have had some impact on this study given that the experimental group students seemed genuinely enthusiastic about trying out a new method. The Suggestopedia Method proved a radical departure from the traditional ESL class and it is quite possible that the Hawthorn Effect itself assumed a suggestopedic function.

As Palmer (1992) has indicated, the goals of each program can be different and this was definitely the most critical problem of this study. The critical question is: Were the goals of the English classes using the Suggestopedia Method different from those of the traditional method? On a theoretical level the goals were not different. Yet, in praxis it appears that they were.

The Department of Education states that a primary goal of the curriculum of the English Program is to develop in all students the skills necessary for communication with native speakers of English throughout the world (Department of Education, 1994). The secondary school curriculum consists of three components: oral communication, reading and writing. The oral component is developed by means of the Turning Points series by Addison-Wesley. The primary goal of this series is the development of communicative competence using an eclectic teaching method consisting of the Natural and

Structural Approach, the Total Physical Response Method and Content-Based Instruction. The materials provided include student textbook, a workbook, audiocassettes and a teacher's guide. The guide includes comprehensive information for the teacher and detailed lesson plans. This is all consistent with the published goals of the Department of Education. Yet, what the researcher observed in the classrooms of the control groups was an application of the Grammar-Translation Method and the Audiolingual Method. The focus of these methods is the acquisition of fragmented grammar, word pronunciation and the development of vocabulary skills, generally detached from the communicative context. Pulliza (1987) aptly describes this type of classrooms environment where,

“they attempt to apply grammatical rules to language performance in a controlled, formal and environment...a teaching situation where linguistic terms are presented to students in a systematic manner based on grammatically sequenced patterns . . . thus producing a pressured and strained atmosphere.” (p. 68)

Teachers used the book unit with the control groups but with a strong focus on book exercises, the workbook and infused grammatical drills. There was very little oral practice of communicative language. Most oral activities took the form of audiolingual drills. Thus, both groups, experimental and control, covered the same material but the goals in each case were different. This situation makes the assessment process a challenging exercise. How to assess the outcomes of language methods that may reflect differences in praxis, although not in theory, is a topic for further study.

To summarize, our findings, students who received instruction by way of the Suggestopedia Method demonstrated significantly better communicative language achievement as opposed to students who received instruction with the traditional ESL methods used by their English teachers. In consistency with prior studies on the subject, It was shown once again that the Suggestopedia Method is effective in the second language classroom and superior to traditional ESL instruction.

### *Attitude Toward English*

Will a more positive attitude be exhibited by ninth grade students who are taught English with the Suggestopedia Method as opposed to those who are taught English with the Department of Education's traditional methods?

The results of this study indicate that students who received instruction with the Suggestopedia Method had significantly better attitudes toward English than those students who received instruction with the traditional method. Attitude towards English was measured with the Livoti Attitude Inventory. Although it was not a substantial difference it was still significant

These results about attitudes seem to confirm what has been found in the literature, that attitudes can be changed and positive attitudes can be promoted (Oller, 1977).

According to Gardner (1980) the language experience in formal and informal context plays an important role in the development of language attitudes. In a foreign language context like that of Puerto Rico the formal context of the classroom is the crucial environment for language acquisition and in most cases almost the only experience with the target language. The classroom experience can have a significant effect on the attitudes towards that language, as the findings of this study suggest.

According to Krashen (1981), students having low affective filters will tend to seek and accept the second language input they receive. The more positive the attitudes of the students the more likely that language achievement will improve. Our experimental group students exhibited a more positive attitude towards English, and had better communicative language achievement than their peers in the control groups. The literature suggests that there may be a reciprocal relationship between these variables, that is, the more positive the attitude, the higher the potential for achievement; as achievement rises, attitudes toward the language thus acquired become increasingly favorable. This interactive effect of mutual reinforcement merits further study.

The Suggestopedia Method, a humanistic method of strong affective orientation for the teaching English, is geared toward developing positive attitudes at the conscious and subconscious levels through its psychodynamic strategies. The recent studies of Rivera (1993) and Báez (1993), both address the affective variables of language learning and both recommend a humanistic approach to language learning in Puerto Rico.

In examining the literature on the Suggestopedia Method the researcher found no studies that empirically verified its effects on attitudes toward language. The present contribution may be the first to address this important factor in language learning. Replication among other teaching situations and student populations would probably prove worthwhile.

The variable *attitude toward the target language* should also be studied under qualitative research methods, since attitude is a psychological construct that cannot be directly assessed. Attitudes are inferred from behavior, verbally or otherwise. In this study, the construct was operationalized by way of an instrument that quantifies attitudes based on personal reactions to statements. Although valid and reliable, it is a limited tool in that it only presents the outlines of a final product. Qualitative data on behavior allows the researcher to sample the richness of the complex processes which take place in the language classroom and make inferences about a complex totality. Qualitative methods may therefore provide richer

insight into the dynamics and elements of the Suggestopedia Method's effect on language attitudes.

### *Teachers and Students Reactions to the Suggestopedia Method*

Both students and teachers reacted positively to the Suggestopedia Method. Lozanov (1992) states that learning should be characterized by joy in the absence of tension. Our student participants generally perceived this method as enjoyable and less prone to generating tension than traditional ESL methods. Other studies have also included data on the opinions of students toward the method and their findings are similar to our own. The Moreno (1988) study among Puerto Rican college students presents descriptive data about reactions toward the method, all very positive.

### *Difficulties*

Though consistent with previous research and the researchers hypotheses, the results of this study are indeed amazing given the multiplicity of adverse conditions encountered. First and foremost we had to face a chronic truancy problem. The researcher was not apprised of this problem in the course of selecting the school. The ninth grade groups that formed a substantial part of the sample had drastically changed their composition by the end of the study due to the problem of truancy.

Another major problem was the frequent interruption of academic class time. Our experimental treatment period took place over the course of 11 weeks and 51 school days. During those 51 days classes were suspended, interrupted or did not take place on 13 days, leaving 38 days of actual academic instruction.

The last major problem was the school environment. The school building and its classrooms were in very poor condition. Cleanliness was a major problem of constant concern to the teachers. The location and design of this four-story building with cramped quarters and only one exit on to a narrow street resulted in a very noisy environment. The two classrooms where the experimental treatment took place face the street next to a point where students loiter when not in class. This situation was a major handicap for the experimental treatment which required a peaceful and comfortable environment as an important condition for application of the Suggestopedia Method.

### *Summary of Conclusions*

1. Our statistical results strongly suggest that students taught by way of the Suggestopedia Method had significantly better communicative language

achievement than those who received instruction under traditional ESL methods.

2. There was also evidence that the Suggestopedia Method had a positive impact on the students' attitudes towards English and learning English.
3. Even though the Suggestopedia method was first applied to adult foreign language instruction and has been mostly used with this type of population, it has now been shown a viable method for use with school age populations in a conventional public school setting in Puerto Rico.
4. Secondary school students in Puerto Rico responded favorably to this method and prefer it to traditional methods currently used in teaching English.
5. The teacher's attitude is a key variable in this method. Teacher opinions about the method and effective training in its use are crucially important.

#### *Recommendations for Further Research*

On the basis of these results, observations and experiences several recommendations for further research are in order.

1. This study should be replicated in a secondary schools with a stable student population and an educational environment featuring a positive and supportive atmosphere. It should be especially worthwhile to include seventh graders or tenth graders who are just beginning intermediate or high school instruction who may prove most receptive to a new method of English instruction.
2. The Suggestopedia Method should be applied as a pilot study in several schools for a full academic year under well controlled empirical analysis.
3. Care should be taken in ensuring properly controlled comparisons with methods that have the same instructional goals in theory as well as in practice.
4. The Suggestopedia Method should also be evaluated on the basis of qualitative research methods able to focus on the richness of the processes and dynamics of second language learning in the classroom.
5. Qualitative classroom research should be conducted to explore how widespread and what the reasons may be for the discrepancy between goals, approaches, and methods presently sponsored in teaching English and actual classroom practice in the public schools of Puerto Rico.
6. There should be more classroom based research on innovative methods for teaching English in Puerto Rico. These should feature strong affective, humanistic components based on current language acquisition theories.

#### *Educational Implications*

Given the general dissatisfaction with second language teaching in Puerto Rico (Báez, 1993) where after 12 or more years of instruction in English most Puerto Ricans lack adequate communicative skills (89.6% according to the

1990 census), it is imperative that methodological alternatives for teaching English in Puerto Rico be explored and empirically verified.

This study provides empirical evidence indicating that the Suggestopedia Method could well become a successful method for teaching English as a second language in Puerto Rico. Its approach is essentially humanistic with a strong emphasis on the affective elements of second language learning. Affective variables have been recognized as crucial in the second language situation of Puerto Rico. There is also evidence to suggest that this method can have a positive impact on student attitudes towards English.

One of the primary goals of the English Program curriculum of the Department of Education is communication with native speakers of English throughout the world. It therefore needs to explore and test methods that support that goal. Traditional methods in current use have not produced the desired results.

Teacher training and program implementation must be addressed with care and adequate attention to detail. No matter what method is used, if teachers are not adequately trained or fail to practice the method thoroughly and correctly, the chances of successful language outcomes will be limited. The Department of Education should pursue and engage in collaborative research with universities and other sources of expert knowledge in setting forth new ways toward effective results in English language education.

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