

Professor Learns New Education Technique

by Rebecca Stone

Dr. Katherine McCoy, associate professor of the Department of Modern Foreign Languages at Mars Hill College, recently attended a six-week training course dealing with a new concept in foreign language education. This novel technique, the Lazanov method, was taught at the Mankind Research Unlimited institute in Washington, D. C.

The Lazanov method was developed by Gerogi Lazanov, a psychologist, psychiatrist, and medical doctor, in Bulgaria in 1956. He was involved in the study of hyperamnesiacs, people with greater than average memories in an attempt to determine why they had such unusual memory faculties. In his experiments, foreign languages are used because the great amount of material that has to be assimilated and retained can be measured with little difficulty. Dr. Lazanov founded the Institute of Suggestology, funded by the Bulgarian government to continue his studies. His method is used extensively behind the Iron Curtain, but very little is known of his findings in non-Soviet bloc countries.

The basic premises of the Lazanov method deal with the fact that the brain measures an enormous amount of impressions, but much of this information is filtered so that it cannot be brought back into the conscious mind. Since we only use 6-10% of our brain, Dr. Lazanov's experiment have centered around finding ways to activate a greater percentage of our mental capacity and reactivate the experiences to which we have been exposed. Another hypothesis of this method is the double-planess factor; the mind sets up anti-suggestive barriers which make the assimilation of learning and knowledge more difficult. With the Lazanov method, the peripheral barrier is penetrated and learning is taken into the center of attention.

For this learning process to take place an alert, but relaxed and pleasant state of mind is essential. The method must be carried out in comfortable, peaceful, and aesthetically-pleasing surroundings. In this atmosphere, a class of no more than 12 students learns from 1,800 to 2,000 words in a 5-week course in a very painless and enjoyable manner. In experi-

ments with students who have gone through the Lazanov course, an average of 95% of the material covered is assimilated. After a one-year period, with little review, students have been able to recall from 70-90% of the material.

The sequence of events in the course are as follows: In the first session, the instructor reads and acts out a dialog consisting of 200-300 new words. The students then do breathing exercises and are told to relax, listen to the music being played, and to pay no attention as the instructor rereads the dialog. While in a meditative or pseudo-passive state of mind, they listen to Baroque and Romantic music (Hayden, Mozart, Bach, Handel). In the second session, the students reactivate the material from the dialog by acting out short skits between two or three people dealing with conflict situations in which role playing, games, songs, and visual materials are used. In the next session, the skits and conflict situations are expanded to include the total group. When the students receive the written material during the third day of class, they are told

that it is not necessary for them to review or study it. Grammatical explanations and memory work are not stressed in the Lazanov method.

Some of the results of this method are that people can learn large amounts of material in a short time and enjoy doing it. Other advantages, aside from those in education, is that this mind-expanding and developmental technique helps people to feel better and more relaxed after attending the daily four-hour class session. Some participants that were experiencing mild neurotic symptoms (nervous headaches, backaches) or states of anxiety found relief during and at the conclusion of the course. Modifications of the Lazanov method have been used to assist grade school children with reading problems and high school students with adjustment problems.

Dr. McCoy was present at the first Lazanov training course offered in the United States and was instructed by two of the five Americans who were selected to attend Dr. Lazanov's Institute of Suggestology in Bulgaria. During the first week of training, she was



DR. KATHERINE MACOY

an observer and attended various lectures dealing with the Lazanov method. The following five weeks, she was an instructor-trainee and taught Spanish to a group of psychologists, doctors, teachers, writers, and educators. They were all able to get into a relaxed state of mind and to absorb the material very quickly. Dr. McCoy will be including portions of the Lazanov method in her courses at Mars Hill and will be holding workshops and conferences in the near future.

Teaching

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Honors Day

Medals, prizes, scholarships, and individual recognitions were awarded to a number of students and faculty at Mars Hill College during the school's honors day program on Wednesday, May 5, 1976.

Faculty promotions were announced during the program which was held in Moore Auditorium. They included: to associate professor, Winona Bierbaum, Worth Booth, Betty Jolley, Betty Hughes, Bob Kramer, Jim Lenburg, Frank Quick, and Joel Stegall, to full professor;

Freddy Holtkamp, Earl Leininger, and Nancy Medford, to assistant professor; Jon Crawford.

Chief scholarship winners were: Brenda Ennis, recipient of the Ella Janet Pierce English Scholarship of \$700 established by Dr. Pierce, a long-time Mars Hill faculty member; Patti Mills and Jon Riddle, recipients of the Truesdale Scholarship of \$500 each, established by Dr. & Mrs. Leonard Truesdale of Ocala, Fla.; James Walter Heine, recipient of the Brazil Pre-Medi-

cal Scholarship of \$500, established by Dr. & Mrs. W.O. Brazil of Asheville; Phil Crane, recipient of the Taylor Debating Award of \$250, established by 11th District Congressman Roy A. Taylor of Black Mountain; Gary Bridgman, recipient of the \$200 Ralph M. Lee Scholarship, established by the former professor of Economics and Dean Emeritus of the college; and William Leland Fowler, Rostand Smith III, and Karen Christianson, winners of the Mildred L. Bingham Scholarship, awarded by the Busi-

ness Club Alumni As-

sociation, of \$650 each. the HILLTOP award for outstanding athletes of the year went to Debbie Wykle and Jimmy Graves.

Over 250 students were singled out for recognition. This included 79 recipients of the President's and Dean's Scholarships, 30 students named to "Who's Who Among Students in American Colleges and Universities", 16 college marshalls, 37 Alpha Chi National Honor Scholarship Society and winners of various medals, awards, and certificates.