

Communication in shared altered states using the hypnotic and Ganzfeld induction of lucid dreams

Results:

Objectives: The project had its starting point in the paper in Science 1976, on State Specific Sciences by Charles Tart and the work on shared dreams by Robert Waggoner. Its objective is to document the frequency of lucid and shared dreams and to find ways of producing potentially shared states of consciousness in the laboratory.

Method 1: involved surveys of the student population to establish the frequency of the lucid and shared dreams and select suitable participants.

Results: The major survey found that about 80% of students reported experiencing a least one lucid dream with 24% of them reporting one or more per month. The frequent lucid dreamers were more likely to report more content and communication with dream figures. Shared or mutual dreams were reported by 13% of the respondents and occurred most often amongst those having one or more lucid dreams per month. A survey of students sleep habits indicated that so-called “power naps” are used purposively by 60% of students with 21% of students using them regularly.

Method 2: The use of a special form of stroboscopic stimulation has been reported by Winkler and Proeck to facilitate the occurrence of lucid dream-like states. Volunteers reporting lucid dreams and related experiences were located in separate laboratory and each was given a half hour of stroboscopic stimulation. A randomly selected melody was played to one of the participants during each session. The task for the other participant was to try to successively identify it from a sample of 4 control decoys.

Results: were exactly at chance expectancy. All the hits came from the sessions in which one of the experimenters was a participant.

Method 3: The third study worked with participants selected on a volunteer basis via this survey for their potential at experiencing lucidity during dreaming. Pairs of participants took part in a telepathy type experiment with one of them taking on the role of sender and the other receiver. Both of the participants were encouraged to have “power naps” during the session, which lasted 45 min. To facilitate the induction of power naps, participants listened to seashore noise supplied to them through earphones. The participant in the role of the sender received at regular intermittent periods the sound from music clips relating to specific environmental scenes. The participants in the role of sender received only seashore noise. REM monitoring masks (the REM Dreamer) were placed over the eyes of both participants located in separate rooms at 30 metres distance. The purpose of the masks was to reduce visual stimulation as well as to facilitate lucidity during any REM periods that might occur. (According to previous research power naps usually contain short REM periods.) The target music clips were randomly selected, 3 - 4 minute extracts from music videos with a positive and visually striking content and exposed only to the sender so as to give the receiver the task afterwards to identify the target film from a set of four films. The film clips were shown to the sender before relaxation and then played at a semi-subliminal level to the sender during the relaxation period.

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Results: Most participants reported having "dreamlets" (short dream-like experiences) but only one reported having a lucid dream during the experiment and this did not relate to the sender's imagery. The results of this, the power nap study, were close to chance expectancy. There were 5 hits in 17 sessions (Exact binomial $P = .43$).

Conclusions: None of the techniques seem to work with a wide range of participants. A suggestion for further work would involve modification of the Real Time Digital Ganzfeld using auditory feedback from the lucid dreams of the receiver. We may need also to work with more highly selected individuals in a home environment and, given their frequency in the population, this is feasible.

Areas of interest:

Lucid dreams; Shared dreams; Mutual dreams

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