

Re-Modelling NLP: Part Twelve: Part A

Re-Modelling Hypnotic Inductions and Hypnotherapy

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“The achievement of the goal, while primary, is not the only consideration. Also worthy of evaluation, planning, and thought by the therapist are the matters of time spent, of effective utilisation of effort, and above all of the fullest possible utilisation of the functional capacities and abilities and the experiential and acquisitional learnings of the patient. These should take precedence over the teaching of new ways of living which are developed from the therapist’s possible incomplete understandings of what may be right and serviceable to the individual concerned”.

Milton H. Erickson M.D.

Why Use Hypnosis in Therapy?

Hypnosis is used to access unconscious skills and abilities, ultimately to facilitate new learning. When useful this learning will overcome difficulties, solve problems and dissolve limitations [see articles seven and nine for different types of change]. Many resources are easier to access using hypnosis, new learnings are integrated quicker, influence of biological levels is possible [see article ten]. In addition to these great benefits hypnosis offers an intimate experience for the client to experience for himself or herself, their depth, complexity and resourcefulness first hand.

The Development of Trance Inductions

For over a hundred years there have been numerous techniques for trance induction. Before this formalising of techniques there was thousands of years of trance induction through rituals and drug use. Many of the early users of trance were very experimental and open to all sorts of weird and wonderful ideas and equipment. From the work of Mesmer (1773) through to Esdaile and Braid (1840’s) there was a trend away from formal apparatus and toward the communication process between the hypnotist and the subject. Indeed the early experience of Braid led him to name the phenomena “hypnosis” from “hypnos” a Greek word meaning to sleep. As he continued to explore the phenomena he soon realised that it was very different from sleep. He tried to change the name but it had quickly become popular and so we have it to this day.

Milton H. Erickson MD is recognised as having been one of the worlds leading therapeutic hypnotists and psychotherapists. Throughout his long career he experimented with hypnosis. Beginning with formal ritualistic inductions he gradually developed a new approach that was naturalistic and included utilising hypnosis and hypnotic phenomena without formal inductions.

As early as 1944 Erickson was moving away from formalised techniques towards the dynamics of the relationship between hypnotist and subject.

“The technique of inducing hypnosis, contrary to long-established and traditional superstitious ideas of eye fixation, crystal balls, and passes of the hand, is primarily a function of the interpersonal relationship existing between the subject and the hypnotist.” Erickson, Collected Works, Volume IV, p.17

I had studied hypnosis and Erickson’s work before I came across NLP in the late 70’s. I was curious how hypnosis related to other processes such as meditation and happily experimented with anyone willing to explore. This was very interesting and exciting. However when I began to teach others I became dissatisfied with the general lack of precision and understanding in the area of hypnosis and trance induction.

From an in-depth study of the creativity and variety of Erickson’s work it is clear that he had an understanding of the deeper processes that the hypnotic techniques and rituals activated. As a modeller and as a therapist committed to constantly improving my practice and as a trainer committed to teaching my students how and why things work it became obvious that I needed to model these processes in more depth. I dropped my formal teaching of hypnosis for a few years while I worked on this. In that time I continued to build Developmental Behavioural Modelling and it was with DBM that I modelled and re-modelled inductions and hypnosis. It is only in the last few years that I have again formally taught hypnosis; now re-modelled. In this article I will outline some of the deeper processes evident in traditional inductions and in the work of Milton Erickson and how these can be integrated with his therapeutic work.

What Level of Skill to Model?

When modelling you can keep it simple or go into a lot of depth. Simple tends to result in simplistic and not so useful applications, in-depth can easily become too complicated. I have always sought to model in as much depth as is practical. As I have gained more skill I have been able to increase the depth of investigation. Learning patterns takes a bit longer but offers much more adaptability. This is more consistent with Erickson’s approach.

Bandler and Grinder with NLP chose to model some of Erickson’s language use (Patterns I) and some patterns for trance induction (Patterns II and Trance-formations). Many other ‘modellers’ of Erickson have chosen different elements. O’Hanlon gives a very useful summary of a number of these ‘modellers’ in the book Ericksonian Hypnotherapy, Zeig (ed) (1985).

My aims have been to model the integrated range of Erickson’s work from his technical brilliance through to his therapeutic creativity and effectiveness. I didn’t expect to get anywhere near a complete model but as is often the case with a grand goal my falling short was highly rewarded and rewarding.

Aims of my modelling included:

1. To develop an integrated, holistic therapeutic approach to trance work.

2. To apply DBM Fractal Modelling to trance induction and therapeutic change to develop greater accuracy and precision as a basis for increased effectiveness, creativity and flexibility.
3. To connect the micro and macro levels of Erickson’s work.
4. To apply the benefits of hypnosis to the client’s naturalistic modelling as a basis for ecological, developmental and life learning change.
5. To apply the benefits of hypnosis to the modelling process.

I will outline a few of the products of my modelling and re-modelling below.

Modelling the Logic of Trance Induction

There are many examples of traditional techniques. A few of the ones that are still popular today include “Eye Fixation”, “Progressive Relaxation”, and the “Hand Clasp” inductions.

In these traditional techniques I identified a pattern, that could be described as a ‘trick’ or ‘lie,’ that is pivotal for their success. These” tricks” can be demonstrated using a few models. Using the IRCO model that I introduced in a previous article (number four) we can identify that there is a use of the 4-F’s that can operate at each of the four stages of Input, Relate, Compute, and Output. These are Fictions, False Facts, Fallacies and Faults. While these are generally better avoided in a communication process they are all of value sometimes.

Processing Stage	Input	Relate	Compute	Output
Potential Errors	Fictions	False Facts	Fallacies	Faults

Useful Lies

Fictions and False Facts build credibility for the fallacies involved in the trance induction. The Fractal Language Model is useful for modelling how these Fictions, False fact and Fallacies are introduced to the subject through connection patterns of Judgement-equating-inferring and directing-concurrence-causation.

Traditional inductions have made use of all four F’s.

Fictions:

Sensory apparatus was used, sensory deprivation and disorientation (used by stage hypnotists in rapid inductions).

False facts:

Connecting the unconnected! False facts are created using “equating” and “concurrence.” Connections between the subjects ongoing experience and going into a trance are made by the hypnotist. It is the accepting of these “suggested connection” that actually leads to the trance induction. So although it seems that the hypnotist does the hypnotizing they don’t! The hypnotist creates the conditions whereby the subject changes their own state. The hypnotist though gains a leading role and the subject a following role through this process. It is this powerful position of influence that makes hypnosis useful for change work.

Erickson was very aware of this and emphasised the need to give lots of varied suggestions. Through this the hypnotist is “trained” by the subject in how to continue with them.

“When I first started using hypnosis I worked out very, very elaborate and extensive techniques of suggestions of every sort. But the more experience I’ve had, the more I have cut down on the number of those suggestions”.

Erickson, Life Reframing in Hypnosis, Page 145

Fallacies:

A very powerful way to sequence suggestions is to build plausible arguments. These arguments can be built through false facts to increase the credibility that relaxing for instance means you are going into a trance. They can also be based on faulty logic, logical fallacies. The main pattern in the FLM is inference.

Faults:

Any behaviour that the subject makes can be legitimized and utilised as being “what the hypnotist wants.” Erickson would often say “that’s right” to an unexpected behaviour and so the ‘fault’ becomes part of the process. Another use of faults is to cover what you want to happen with the possibility that it won’t happen, for example, “*you will notice your hand beginning to rise or stay comfortably on your lap*” avoids a ‘fault’ arising in the mind of the subject.

All of the four F’s are utilised in the overall pattern of increasing the level of control of the hypnotist. In traditional styles this control was very authoritarian. In modern, especially Ericksonian styles, it is more permissive and indirect.

The common pattern in most traditional inductions is the utilisation of natural phenomena that has nothing to do with hypnosis and trance (tiredness, muscle movement, peripheral vision blurring) but is connected to trance through plausible connections.

These connections increase the credibility further the influence of the hypnotist and increase the responsiveness of the subject.

Breathing and Relaxation Inductions

For example in an induction using awareness of breathing attention is first placed on the breathing. Then the relaxation that naturally accompanies gentle breathing is

“equated” as evidence of going into a trance or it can be implied as causal by listing it in concurrence with going into a trance. (See language sequences below).

Eye Closure based Inductions

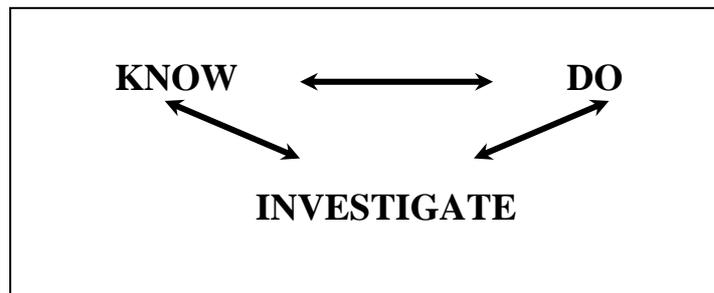
Similar false facts are constructed. There are a number of possibilities to utilize with eye closure. Of the natural phenomena that will occur natural tiredness and heaviness will occur. So will the tendency of peripheral vision to “cloud” while string at a fixed point, especially where there is little movement at the periphery and the central point fixed upon is light.

Arm Levitation based inductions

Natural phenomena to link with in this induction is the natural ‘lightening’ or perceived raising of the limbs that occur when we breath in (and perceived heaviness when we breath out)

Modelling Ericksonian Inductions

A model I have found to be particularly fruitful in modelling the work of Erickson is the “Investigate-Know-Do” that I introduced in article nine.



These are three general patterns. They correspond to the three main language functions of question, statement and command.

Investigate	Question
Know	Statement
Do	Command

This model is useful for connecting different levels of organising therapy, learning, trance induction and utilisation as well as specific language and behaviour skills.

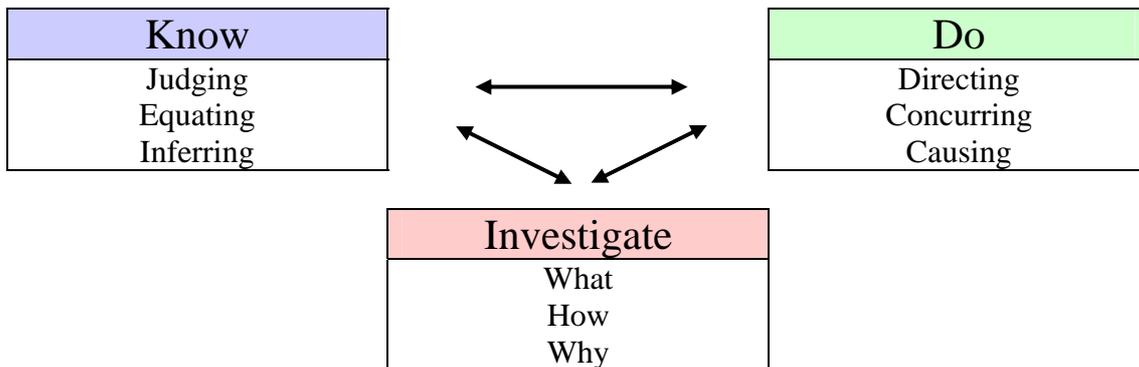
Application of Fractal Language Model for Trance Induction

The Fractal Language is a functional model and can therefore be used to model how language functions. The functions can also be used for sensory functions of the same

kind. For example the language structure of “equating” is a function of linkage. It can also be a distinction of sensory functioning.

All the specific language patterns of the Milton Model are contained within the FLM. The FLM organises these patterns dynamically in relation to each other creating a model of language and thinking functions.

Fractal Language Model: Connections Level II



Language: Investigating

Erickson used investigation at all stages of his hypnosis and therapy work. In the following transcript he interweaves what?, How?, and Why? “investigating” questions to facilitate new “knowing” and “Doing”.

“You’ve said that your conscious mind is uncertain and confused. And that’s because the conscious mind does forget. And yet we know the unconscious does have access to so many memories and images and experiences that it can make available to the conscious mind so you can solve that problem. And when will the unconscious make all those valuable learnings available to your conscious mind? Will it be in a dream? During the day? Will it come quickly or slowly? Today? Tomorrow? As you continue resting in trance, does that pain (or whatever symptom) grow stronger or does it tend to fade in and out? Does it slowly change its location?”

Erickson, Nature of Hypnosis, Page 461

Language: Changing “Knowledge” Example and Exercise:

The following sequence is useful for weaving suggestions for orientating to trance and building new learning. Make your own up to match the sequence.

Step One: Pacing Judgement

Identify a verifiable sensory experience and supply as a Judgement, e.g. “*You are sitting quietly.*”

Step Two: Equating

Statement to supply evidence consistent with stage of trance induction eg, “*Sitting quietly means you are ready to continue.*”

Step Three: Inferring

Statement to supply the underlying thinking (inferring) that “sets up” the basis for a connection, e.g. *“Sitting quietly, ready to continue means you are ready to go into a trance and that means you will begin to relax even more”*.

Step Four: New Equating

Statement to supply evidence consistent with stage of trance induction, e.g. *“You are sitting quietly, relaxing and that means you are ready to continue going into a trance.”*

Step Five: New Judgement

Identify a verifiable sensory experience and supply as a Judgement, e.g. *“You are going into a trance slowly and comfortably.”*

Language: Changing “Doing” Example and Exercise:

The following sequence is useful for weaving suggestions. Make your own up to match the sequence.

Step One: Pacing Directive

Identify a behaviour that is easy to do and verify that the subject is doing it.
Deliver as a directive or indirect directive.
e.g. *“It is important to sit comfortably when going into a trance.”*

Step Two: Concurring

Introduce as a concurrent behaviour another aspect of their ongoing behaviour consistent with going into a trance, e.g. *“You are sitting comfortably and breathing slowly.”*

Step Three: Causation

Statement to supply the underlying thinking (inferring) that “sets up” the basis for a connection, e.g. *“Sitting quietly and breathing slowly will make you more comfortable and that will make it easier to go comfortably into a trance”*.

Step Four: New Concurring

Statement to supply evidence consistent with stage of trance induction, e.g. *“You are sitting comfortably and beginning to go into a trance.”*

Step Five: New Directive

Identify a verifiable sensory experience and supply as a
Judgement, e.g. *“You can continue going deeper into the trance..”*

Example from Erickson: EYE Closure

Here Erickson is demonstrating the sequence of Do - Know – Investigate as the basis for learning trance and then the reverse order for new knowledge and behaviour; Investigate – (new) know – (new) Do.

<p><i>“Would you like to find a spot you can look at comfortably? As you continue looking at that spot, do your eyes get tired and have a tendency to blink?</i></p> <p><i>Will they close all at once or flutter a bit first as some parts of your body begin to experience the comfort so characteristic of trance?</i></p> <p><i>Does that comfort deepen as those eyes remain closed so you would rather not even try to open them?</i></p> <p><i>And how soon will you forget about your eyes and begin nodding your head very slowly as you dream a pleasant dream?”</i> (Collected papers Vol. I, page 458)</p>	<p>Doing</p> <p>Doing -> knowing -> Investigate Add detail to Investigate</p> <p>Investigate -> new Know</p> <p>Investigate -> new Know -> new Doing</p>
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Erickson: Arm Levitation

Here is an example of Erickson beginning to orientate a subject toward a new ‘Knowing’ as the basis for a new ‘Doing’.

<p><i>“Shortly your right hand, or it may be your left hand, will begin to lift up, or it may press down, or it may not move at all, but we will want to see just what happens. Maybe the thumb will be first, or you may feel something happening in your little finger, but the really important thing is not whether your hand lifts up or presses down or just remains still; rather, it is your ability to sense fully whatever feelings may develop in your hand”.</i> (Collected papers Vol. I, Page 469)</p>	<p>Begins by predicting and setting up an “Investigating” of the next ‘doing’.</p> <p>“Know” behaviour and “Know” value” of the different “Doing” through links to ‘knowing’ (<i>may feel...</i>) All “doing” covered, Doing or not doing</p> <p>Fully “Know to Do and Do to Know” with the last knowing a new knowing for the client (fully)</p>
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As well as describing this level of language utilisation this model is also useful in understanding Erickson’s overall approach.

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