

Re-modelling NLP: Part Fourteen: *Re-Modelling Modelling*

There has been a change in policy for Rapport toward stand-alone articles so this will be last article in the 'Re-modelling NLP' series. This means that other articles that I promised in earlier articles, for example Re-modelling Meta Programmes and Re-Modelling Techniques, will not now be included. If you would like to receive details of these please contact me at the address at the end of the article.

In this article I will describe some of the developments I have made in modelling the process of modelling. To develop my skills and knowledge of modelling I decided to learn all I could about the modelling methodology that produced NLP. This turned out to be very difficult, as I could not find it anywhere. In the years of searching, as a stopgap, I created the modelling methodology of Developmental Behavioural Modelling (DBM). As I made further improvements in DBM I realised that our natural modelling skills, the skills we all use to create our own individual models of the world, was an unexplored territory. This led to major advances in DBM. DBM is the first field to systematically study our natural modelling skills. DBM is the first field to model modelling.

Natural Modelling.

We all build our own understanding of the world in the first years of our life and then continue to build on it. We build our understanding through what I call 'natural modelling' skills.

*“Man masters nature not by force but by understanding.
This is why science has succeeded where magic failed:
because it has looked for no spell to cast on nature”.*

Jacob Bronowski

We all learn to model without formal teaching, we create our own understanding of the world, our own model of the world. Some people through their natural modelling skills develop more effective ways of doing things than others. Therapists like Milton Erickson, Fritz Perls and Virginia Satir are examples of this. Many people once they have one way of doing something will stop 'modelling' and continue to use it, even if the results are average or poor.

One of the reasons people don't model more is that their natural modelling skills are unconscious. Indeed the vast majority of people don't realise that they are modellers and have modelled their world. They assume the world just is as it is. In our culture we are not used to or equipped to think about this area. Traditionally our schooling trains us in repetition and conformity, to strive for the pre-established 'right answer'. We are rewarded for what we regurgitate, how well we have learnt, not how well we engage in learning. Only our universities offered training in thinking but now they are increasingly involved in career training. Where can we learn to think? Where can we improve our natural modelling skills? One way is to improve is to learn formal

models. This requires that formal models for modelling are available. But which models will be useful for modelling. Only by modelling effective natural modelling skills and by modelling the process of modelling can we make such models available.

Modelling Skills

Within NLP modelling has been the means of copying skills and making them available for others to learn. The central role of natural modelling was overlooked. Even with extensive experience of models and a commitment to modelling it was many years before I came to fully appreciate the central life skill of natural modelling. It is one of those experiences where afterwards you wonder, “why did I not notice that before?”

This realisation and the creation of a modelling methodology to model modelling was a major step in my remodelling of my own modelling. A major contribution in this process was NLP and my re-modelling of NLP.

Different Levels of Natural Modelling.

One of the important natural modelling skills is to copy from another person; to copy and experiment with different ways of doing things and different ways of being. As children we naturally engage in modelling the people around us and later imagined ‘hero’s and princesses’. These can be temporary games and pleasures. If we want to be like them these ‘games’ can lead to lasting changes.

In modelling I find it useful to distinguish between three levels of Modelling.

1. Mimic/ Impersonate / Act Up:

At this level of modelling basic details are identified and, usually with some exaggeration, repeated. The first one can be problematic for training and practical application. Sounding like a person does not make you skilled like them. Impersonators do not acquire the skills of the people they impersonate, though for entertainment they can seem like the person, though often with an exaggeration of particular attributes, a caricature.

The key skills required are posture and vocal skills, attention on key attributes.

2. Copy / Act Like:

This extends the scope of the modelling to repetition. This is much more convincing than the first level. It would be useful for a character actor who wants to come across well but not for a method actor. The next level would be required for them.

The key skills required are detailed acuity, attention extended from attributes to the whole performance.

3. Replicate / Act As:

This level is more than a copy it produces the same behaviours from the underlying processes and patterns. This level is the only one to create new behaviour. The method actor would know that they are living the part when they can produce novel behaviour from the character.

The key skills required are patterning and processing, attention is further extended out to appropriate responding to the world.

"Develop your own technique. Don't try to use somebody else's technique....Don't try to imitate my voice or my cadence. Just discover your own. Be your own natural self. It's the individual responding to the individual."

Milton Erickson

Erickson would clearly not be happy with hollow mimicry of his work or his voice.

How can we therefore benefit from modelling Erickson's skills if we are to make our own technique?

If we replicate the underlying skills and processes (level three) and use them in our own style we are not just mimicking or copying him. I have found that following Erickson's advice has encouraged me to identify deeper processes and skills than I would have if I had only aimed to copy behaviour. I have also found that in expressing them my own style, and teaching my students to do the same, that more authentic interactions take place, the genuineness that Erickson valued so highly, and that the interactions operate with a more profound level of rapport.

I have found this advice of Erickson's to be very practical for effectively teaching the results of my modelling important skills in communication and change. To be most effective the learner needs to make them their own, part of who they are and what they do.

Richard Bandler's Natural Modelling Skills

Richard Bandler is a very skilled natural modeller and could copy at all three of these levels. For entertainment he can use a 'Milton voice' that was an impersonation of Milton Erickson, not an exact copy. He could also copy language patterns and more importantly (for me) replicate some of the hypnotic flexibility and creativity so wonderfully demonstrated by Milton Erickson.

If Richard had only copied behaviour he would have become a skilled therapist, or whatever else he took the time and effort to study, but there would have been no NLP.

For Richard's natural modelling to be made available to others it needed to be formalised. It was at this stage that John Grinder approached and in collaboration, using Grinder's skills in Chomsky's Transformational Grammar, they identified

specific language patterns (see Article 2), creating the core NLP Model, the Meta Model.

Formal Models and Formal Modelling

It seems to me that as well as adding their own natural modelling skills John Grinder brought formal model of transformational grammar and between them they continued to combine very high quality natural modelling and formal models to organise them. This combination of applying Formal Models from psychology, linguistics, and mathematics, to the natural modelling of Bandler and subsequently to Grinder, would continue in the creation of NLP. For example Bandler would make use of the work of mathematician Polya and his 'Polya Patterns' for modelling belief changes. The work of Miller and his 'magic number Seven, plus or minus two' was used to organise techniques in seven (plus or minus two) steps.

Other contributors to the formation of NLP also brought in formal models from elsewhere. Notably the extensive work of Robert Dilts with the TOTE of Millar, Prebram and Gallanteer, the work of Pavlov for anchoring, the work of Gregory Bateson for logical levels, the Mill's method for inquiry and organising information. Leslie Cameron Bandler used the excellent work of the anthropologist Edward T. Hall. Todd Epstein used his knowledge of formal musical structures.

Product Modelling

The result of all this modelling was a range of 'products', models, skills and techniques that if followed should produce a specific result. As such the process of modelling itself came to be thought of as a technique, a product like all the others, a linear series of steps to be taken to produce a behavioural result, for example strategy or state elicitation.

Traditionally Product Modelling was used to replicate specific examples of excellence. It does not create new behaviours. Clearly Erickson, Perls and Satir were not replicating the behaviour of others but creating new behaviours. This is a different level of skill and one that I particularly wanted to model. What were the natural modelling skills that they used to create new approaches to therapy? The resulting answers could not be packaged as techniques as the product in this case was a process. A methodology rather than a technique is required.

As NLP became popular the skills that were used to create it receded into the background. What wasn't explicitly formalised was how to formally model. So although Bandler and Grinder (and the many other people who contributed) were very good at formalising their natural modelling through the use of formal models they did not model their modelling.

Modelling Modelling

I first came across references to NLP between 1979 and 1980 in three contexts. They were a Gestalt therapy workshop, a family therapy workshop, and from a colleague who knew of my interest in the work of Milton Erickson. I had been exploring many

different therapies in search of practical skills for helping people to change and was overjoyed to hear that NLP was integrating the very fields that I found useful.

The references to modelling and the vast potential for identifying skills immediately appealed to me and I set about learning all that I could about this NLP modelling. For the next ten years I read all the books, completed a couple of Practitioner and Master Practitioner courses, assisted on Practitioner and Masters, attended various specialist short courses, but was not taught the ‘modelling methodology’ that produced NLP. There was the strategies model but that was a particular model for organising information about a small fraction of human behaviour and while very useful it is not a methodology for modelling (as Richard Bandler takes great pains to point out to those who mistakenly believe, or have been told, that it is modelling).

Stopgap Methodology

In the meantime in order to pursue modelling I had constructed my own modelling methodology of Developmental Behavioural Modelling (DBM) (See Article 1). I was in the lucky position of having to learn HOW the NLP techniques worked so that I could adapt the middle-class American into working class Glaswegian concepts and language. I was reluctant though to commit too much time and effort to it as I still had aspirations of one day learning the methodology behind NLP.

I then completed NLP Trainer training and then to my great pleasure Richard Bandler asked me to assist him and then to train for him, which I did in U.K., Switzerland, Australia and U.S.A. and still there was no methodology. I did get to talk to Richard but he did not give very much away about how he modelled, which was in contrast to his generously sharing with me what he had modelled. I was personally certified as an NLP Trainer and then as an NLP Master Trainer in 1990 (together with Willie Monteiro, the second in Europe, the first being Eric Robbie). I had gone as far as was possible and still no holy grail of the modelling methodology. I had collected many very useful models and skills but felt unfulfilled in my quest for modelling.

It was at this stage that I decided to commit to my stopgap methodology and to develop it fully. One of my first tasks was to apply it to NLP. This led to my re-modelling the complete syllabus for Practitioner and then Master Practitioner levels. My aim was to create a complete approach to modelling. Any complete field has three main levels, the technological level, the methodological level, and the Epistemological level (see Article 1). I introduced these into my NLP training over ten years ago (they were taken up in recent years by Steve Andreas and Robert Dilts (probably independently)).

A natural extension of my re-modelling NLP was to begin to model more deeply the process of modelling itself, modelling modelling.

Modelling Modelling and Meta Modelling

It would have been tempting to call what I was doing “Meta Modelling” or Meta-Meta-Modelling” if NLP was Meta Modelling but I had become wary of the use of the term ‘Meta’. One of the interesting challenges in re-modelling NLP had been

covering the wide diversity, and often contrary, uses of many of the terms and concepts involved.

The result was that I did not often use the term 'Meta' within DBM. Over the years this term has been used for so many different things that it is no longer a useful term of reference. It does offer a good example for modelling to be used to at least clarify some of the potential confusions.

What is it for a model to be a 'meta model' or to be in a meta relationship with something else? As part of my modelling and re-modelling of NLP I have come across numerous uses of the term 'meta'. This can lead to confusion, the elation of simple relationships to seemingly more profound ones.

Example of Re:Modelling: Use of 'Meta'

A common difficulty in any field is the use of the same terms for different things. A good example of this is the use of the word 'meta' in NLP. Meta is a common term in NLP. The meta-model, going meta, meta position, meta programmes, meta states, are some of the main uses of 'meta'. What exactly does it mean? Does it mean only one thing?

The philosopher Aristotle wrote his first work on physics and a later one on a different area of what he still thought of as physics. With the Greek word for after he called the second work his 'Meta' Physics. This became the name for a whole area of Philosophy.

Gregory Bateson uses 'meta' in quite a different way. For him a 'meta' relationship is an organisation arrangement. A meta relationship doesn't just rise above the first level it organises the level below it. This is very different from the "going Meta" to comment on the whole situation that is used in NLP and some types of Family Therapy. In mathematics the use of meta as in 'meta-mathematics' is similar to Bateson's.

Bandler and Grinder used the term for their "Meta Model" which is a collection of language distinctions grouped under three separate distinctions together with a set of "well-formed in therapy" conditions (see article 2).

Michael Hall in his very useful work based on the work of Virginia Satir's type of question "how do you feel about feeling angry with your daughter?" uses the term "Meta States" for the type of state that these types of questions elicit. As you can see from the table below these types of questions are mainly reflexive judgements. They are not 'Meta' in Bateson's sense, although a few can be. Also in responding the subject could "go meta", say something different or add on the next feeling they were moving onto anyway. All of these (and more) are somewhere referred to using the term 'Meta'.

Summary of types of Meta

Development of Type of use of	Examples related to NLP
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'META'	
1. After:	Original use: Not in official use in NLP: It could be used for identify as use of conjunction and sequence e.g. "You are feeling anxious and now can beginning to relax". Some types of 'Meta States'
2. Beyond	Another older usage: Not in official use: It could be used for things like non-sequitor e .g. "You are getting angry at him and you have toget the food ready for the children tonight". Some types of 'Meta States'
3. Above	"Go Meta" " Now float up and look down and see how you and your wife are relating". Some types of 'Meta States'
4. Contain	Models that contain other models or parts of models. "NLP Meta Model" "NLP Milton Model" Some types of 'Meta Theories' Some types of 'Meta States' e.g.
5. Reflexive / Evaluate	Evaluations require changing perceptual position to complete them (See article 13) Work of Satir leading to Meta States e.g. "What do you feel about feeling that?" Also potentially useful are: "What do you think about feeling that?" "What do you want to do about feeling that?" "What do you feel about thinking that?" "What do you think about thinking that?" "What do you want to do about thinking that?" "What do you feel about doing that?" "What do you think about doing that?" "What do you want to do about doing that?"
6. Organise	"Meta Programmes: organise sensory and language 'programmes'" "Batesonian Meta Learning and Meta Theories" Some 'Meta' States, e.g. depression, joyfulness The DBM Levels of Modelling NLP (See Article 1)

One of the benefits of modelling is to identify the different ways that both the speaker and listener in any communication use words. For example Virginia Satir's reflexive question could elicit all six of the uses of 'meta' (and probably more). These distinctions could improve the effectiveness of the whole "Meta State" approach by identifying which of the six (or more) possibilities the "Meta State" question was intended to create and what was actually created.

Modelling as a Methodology for Change

Modelling can be used for much more than creating and improving models. It can also be used as the total approach to change work.

NLP was never designed to be psychotherapy. The products, the skills and techniques, were designed to be used within existing therapy structures. As more people trained in NLP increasing numbers wanted to use it as their sole approach. There are a number of serious problems in this. Firstly, NLP is not a complete approach. It is a technology. There was no methodology and epistemology. Another difficulty in using NLP alone is that although the techniques are very effective they are not effective with all cases. The number of techniques is also limited and by no means covers anywhere like the range that would be required in order to work with all the problems clients could be experiencing.

One solution has been to add things on to NLP in order to make it more extensive (and for example to meet European psychotherapy recognition). While this meets a bureaucratic need it is an eclectic compromise and does nothing to make NLP suitable for a stand-alone approach to therapy.

Another solution and the direction I took in the early 90's was to extend the NLP model into a complete approach using the methodology and epistemology and additional technology of DBM creating a complete modelling methodology for change. The resulting application of DBM is now called 'Systemic Therapy and Consultancy' and continues to develop (with certification training in U.K., Spain and Denmark). In this approach modelling is used, not product modelling, as the total approach. The client is worked with as a natural modeller and their modelling skills and the current performances of their model and changed through the joint venture of "Re-Modelling".

Transcript: Re-modelling limitations: 1994:

Subject: Male, Issue: Coffee

I would like to thank the subject for his kind permission to use this transcript.

This example is an interesting contrast to traditional NLP responses to compulsions, for example 'blowing them out'. In the session no 'techniques' are used. Instead a modelling methodology is used to work with the client to "add choice" by improving how their model works and to improve their skills in choosing by improving their natural modelling skills.

Since this work in 1994 I have made significant new developments in the modelling and change and in different types of change, especially life learning change (see Articles 6,7,8,9).

Subject: I got one, where it was the control of the need for stimulation, to be able to access a feel good buzz that was natural to the body. Now what I was moving away from was compulsion to control, so it's like getting up in the morning, I'm either drinking coffee or I'm not drinking coffee, there's no, I can never find the balance between just having an occasional coffee, because I know that too much coffee isn't good for me, so what happens is that I'll buy a jar of coffee and I'll just keep drinking it until it's finished, then I won't drink it for about six months I won't drink any coffee

again, then as soon as I buy some more coffee, there's this compulsion, I can't leave it alone until it's finished sort of thing, so it's being able to find a balance between the two extremes.

John: So what happens in terms of compulsion? The jars sitting there, is it all in a big pot at once, or, one spoonful at a time. Do you eat it dry? That's when it's really bad. (Laughter).

Subject: I tried that, coffee beans and crunch coffee beans.

John: What happens then? Yeah, when coffee's there, how do you do it? So, you've got a jar of coffee, what feelings are involved. So you might be say in another room, do you get little cries of, "I'm in here, come and dissolve me"? (Laughter). Things like that? How does it happen?

Subject: I just think about it, and I think of the effect, the taste.

John: So the effect, not just the taste.

Subject: There's both of them, there's the taste as well. there's also the enjoyment of making it in the percolator, the ritual, nice to make it. So, the first thing will be like the thought of coffee, the taste, the enjoyment of making it, the effect that it gives, the buzz. So for example if I'm working, I only get Nescafe, I don't like Nescafe, it has the same effect, but I won't drink it, because it doesn't have the same taste, it's not good quality coffee, so I'll look for places that serve good quality coffee, go for a coffee, and again there's the enjoyment of the warmth of the atmosphere, the coffee, and the effect that the coffee gives, so what I'm looking for here is a balance, to having to do that every day, to either, not doing that at all, but what I'd like to find is a balance so I can enjoy it once in a while.

John: How much coffee, do you want to enjoy?

Subject: I wouldn't want to have it every day, that's not good because I get eczema sometimes, it's a stimulant, physiologically unhealthy for me.

John: Is that the caffeine, or other things in it?

Subject: I'm not sure.

John: There's decaffeinated, tastes much the same. You can get the beans.

Subject: But you don't get the buzz with decaffeinated, you see.

John: Yeah. Just checking. You could get the ritual and the flavour, just not the buzz.

Subject: I think it's the buzz, the buzz for me.

John: How much of the buzz then, is required, for you to go, 'yeah, I've got it.?'

Subject: Well, one cappuccino.

John: One cappuccino a day, and you'd like to have less than that a day?

Subject: Yeah, one a week would be quite good.

John: Just checking, because most folk, one would not be a problem, if it was six or seven a day, it's too much, the scale of things. Now, one a day then, you go through the planning stage, thinking about it, getting some of the feeling, the quality of the taste, the buzz, what's the time scale between that and actually getting the coffee? Does it have to be immediate, or do you enjoy the looking forward to it?

Subject: It's both, if I'm at home, I just get up and go make it. If I'm nowhere near one of my favourite coffee shops, it's nearly an hour or two before I get there. Once the idea pops into my head, it can go and nag me until I actually go and do it, so even if it's not until six hours later, it will still be something that's kind of worked its way into my schedule, that I'm going to arrange things so I'm going to stop off at little Italy and have a quick espresso on the way home. I've just noticed that, a kind of compulsion.

John: Do you feel drawn to it, or do you feel it's something you're moving towards, or is it like the coffee is pulling you towards it?

Subject: It pulls me towards it.

John: Because there's a difference between something pulling you towards it, and you actually stretching out and pulling it towards yourself, it's to do with the feeling, whether you're being dragged, or whether you're the one that's actively moving, the compulsion tends to be something that's actually drawing you towards it, hence the lack of control, not actively choosing to, at one level. Some of the things we can play around with. The coffee now. Go back to the last example of when this came up.

Subject: The thought came this morning, but there's too much to be done, there's not room for it yet. This morning I looked at it, and I thought, 'shall I have a coffee now?' and I thought, no, it's too much.' So I know that at some point today, and then I was already thinking, lunchtime, where can I go for lunch? Do they serve good coffee? that's the thought process that was kind of running by me this morning.

John: One of the things to note here, when the thought comes up, the coffee's in the future, most needs are future orientated, it's something you want to actually consume, it pops up there, and it's there. OK, think in terms of coffee just now, and when you get the notion of it, reflect back on, over the last month, the good coffees you've had. Remember the buzz, and the taste. Give yourself a quality of enjoyment, that you've had those. Now when you do that, what happens?

Subject: Feels good.

John: Now how many have you had over the last week?

Subject: Over the last seven days, six or seven.

John: Six or seven good ones.

Subject: Yesterday I didn't have a coffee. I didn't have time yesterday.

John: So, six, five six.

Subject: Maybe I did have coffee yesterday. (Laughter).

(Friend of Subject): I wasn't going to say anything.

John: So you can think back, having enjoyed those. Now, thinking of those you've had, how much longer to do want free till you have another one? Keep thinking of the six you've had though, and then think, what enjoyment do you want in the future? When in the future would you like to have had the seventh?

Subject: I'm not sure. Interesting. What just comes, it could actually be at any time in the future, surprisingly.

John: OK, we'll compare it, we'll go back to the way that you were doing it again, so in your mind, just look round the room, then just think, 'coffee, could have one, what does that do?

Subject: I could see myself having one at lunch, I could see myself having one in the evening, yeah, it will be the evening, I can see myself really enjoying it. What's happening in the evening is that we're going out to dinner, so, I know I'm going to enjoy a coffee.

John: OK then, flip it to think about the six, five or six you've had already, this week, think of all the enjoyment there, and the time in-between, so think of them stretching out, you can remember the buzz, get some of it, the memory of it, and then think of this evening. Keep those in mind though, hold the memory of that there and think of this evening.

Subject: I can have the same feeling, without the coffee.

John: OK, we'll add another little refinement, when you think of this evening, do you think of yourself drinking? You could have a coffee if you wanted. Do you have to

drink the whole cup? Would that be useful to you? Would just the smell of it be enough to remind you of the buzz?

Subject: *I think just the atmosphere would be enough to remind me.*

John: *Right, so you now have more choice, you could go there, have a coffee, not have a coffee, get the buzz if you want, not have the buzz.*

Subject: *It's amazing.*

John: *The thing is, one of the things that happens if you get, particularly with coffee if it's a quick buzz, probably the smell of it would get it, it's associated anyway, particularly if you concentrate on remembering previous ones, you'll be able to get some of the buzz without the drug actually.*

Subject: *It's always just the thought of the smell, you can trigger off a kind of knock on effect that can result in you drinking a full cup of coffee.*

John: *One of the things that happens, particularly if it's future orientated, once that's triggered off, there's an inevitable path, that ends up with a cup of coffee at the end of it, whereas what we've done now is gone back, we started it from six cups. It's a very different starting point to go into something*

It's making use of the experience base you carry with you, rather than the addiction. Habit type patterns are very present focused, you get caught up totally in future orientated 'to do' things. Mainly present, centred, in the moment, the need, then you start going into the future to meet the need. Very seldom do people go into the past, and check the memory of the need. That is a very different use of the skills, to achieve it some other way.

Subject: *Your using the resource itself.... it's actual.*

John: *You can get into it.....Something to play around with.*

Implications for NLP Training

In the late 1980's I changed my approach from one of teaching in the traditional NLP training format to training NLP as modelling. This required a very different approach to training.

Traditional NLP Training

The traditional approach in NLP training, especially for rapport, sensory acuity, and techniques uses the following sequence:

1. Trainer introduces topic
2. Trainer Tells: Outlines the steps in the protocol
3. Trainer Shows: Demonstration
4. Participants Do: Protocol
5. Trainer Tells: Where went wrong / Where went right

This is a very good pattern for rote learning and for mechanical skills training. Although it is sometimes called experiential learning it is more accurately called didactic learning with an experiential reinforcement as the learning is made firstly through being told, reinforced through seeing and hearing the demonstration before the experience of doing it yourself. When you do get your turn to do it you know what is expected and there is therefore little room for further learning.

The limits and benefits of this pattern:

One of the major benefits is that it is familiar; it is the old style school way of learning. It gives a sense of security because through the techniques you always know what should be happening. This is also one of its major weaknesses. In extreme cases it continues a dependant, repetitive, unquestioning style of learning and places the attention on the steps of the technique rather than what is different or unknown about the client.

Another potentially major limitation in the ‘techniques’ approach is that “one product does not fit all”. Human beings are very creative. They will create new situations and problems or variations on known ones for which we have no ready-made products. This is the reality that therapists and consultants face when they leave the NLP classroom where everything is packaged to fit the technique being taught.

The ‘techniques’ approach is also prone to an overlooked danger, that of theoretical or model Transference. Although transference has been traditionally a major issue for the analytical schools of therapy (e.g. Freudian) where the client may transfer a problematic relationship with, for example their father, to the relationship with the therapist. An overlooked, at least I have not yet found anything written in detail about it, example of transference and one that should have been of prime importance to a theoretically based therapy that detailed client and therapist relationship transferences, is that of Theory/ Model transference. This is where the therapist transfers their relationship with their theory / model onto the client. The more dependent that a therapist (or manager, etc.) is on their models and techniques the more susceptible they are likely to be to this type of transference.

After traditional NLP training sessions therapists often ‘noticed’ that many of their clients for the next weeks needed the techniques introduced on the previous weekends session. I think that this is often an example of transference and not a curious coincidence!

NLP Training in Modelling

The strengths in a techniques approach is a major weakness when it comes to learning to model. For modelling you don’t know and need to build an understanding. This is also what happens in real situations if we don’t impose our models on them.

For teaching modelling a very different sequence is required. The core skills are building a model. It is necessary then to begin with nothing and to be open for all that happens. The traditional approach was disastrous for this.

The new sequence I developed for teaching modelling

1. Trainer Introduces Topic: Open set-up, focus on topic to be explored, enough for the participants to get a feel or the topic.
2. Participants Do: with no fixed idea, just enough to focus the exploring
3. Participants Test: What did they get?
4. Participants Tell: Share the variety of experiences.
5. Trainer Shows / Tells: Introduces the formal model.
7. Participants test against their own experience.
8. Together the variations in results and the limits of model identified.

This is much more of an experiential approach as the pattern begins by creating an experience before structuring it later through discussion, showing and telling.

The limits and benefits of this pattern:

The limits are the initial difficulty because it is new and in the additional effort required to learn in this different way. Also the insecurity in not knowing which, although it is more realistic and useful, can be very uncomfortable. This is also its great strength! In real life you don't know what exactly will happen. Even when using a technique you don't really know all that can happen and the illusion of certainty can lead to overlooking the new and different, the variations exceptions.

It is worth noting another pattern.

1. Trainer does: creates an experience.
2. Trainer tells learner that their unconscious is getting it.

In this pattern NO thinking is encouraged. Indeed little experience is required either. Although this sequence could be an accurate description it is not one that leads to any more learning. It is difficult to use something that you don't know exactly what or where it is (if I told you I had put some food in your house but not where it was or how to get hold of it or what to do with it. Without you being able to find it would you believe me or find it useful?). It is also open to unscrupulous nonsense and sadly I have come across it being used in this way in the wider NLP fields of both training and therapeutic work.

Thankfully a modelling approach opens this to examination; what are we getting? How exactly are we getting it? Where will it show up? If it doesn't whose responsibility is it?

Unconscious learning is just as systematic as conscious learning though different in specifics. If the client cannot possibly test that they have the learning then neither can the trainer. Blind acceptance is not a developmental learning. It is the basis for dogma and ignorance and all the many problems that stem from them. There is already too much of it in the world.

As a result of all of the above issues I have radically changed how I teach NLP Practitioner and Master Practitioner level trainings. I now run them as examples of modelling, where each skill and model is taught and tested using the experiential model. I have been very pleased with the increased depth of learning, the living of the attitude of NLP, curiosity and wonder, and the increased practicality for participants who are more prepared to take NLP into the real world with all its unique challenges and difficulties.

Modelling Modelling as a Life Skill

All of the articles in the series are an opportunity to play around, to experiment and explore, in short to model. All of life is an opportunity to model life and to model our unique human modelling.

Summary

Modelling in NLP has traditionally been what I call Product Modelling.

In addition to Product Modelling there are a number of very useful applications of modelling including Naturalistic Modelling, Formal Modelling, Modelling as a total approach to change work through Modelling and Re-Modelling, Modelling of Modelling, DBM covers the full range of modelling and applications of modelling (see Article 5) and develops Modelling Modelling as a life skill, develop the key thinking processes of the "modeller's mind" and a total modelling approach to life.

One of the aims in creating DBM has been to make available what NLP aspired to in the early years, a methodology to identify the best in human creation, to replicate it, make it available for everyone and to go beyond it.

The sense of wonder, curiosity and joy about life, through life, and in every living moment is the basis for fully enjoying this life of ours. The preciousness that results, if felt by everyone, would radically re-model their modelling of the world.

<p><i>"My aim is to bring about a psychic state in which my patient begins to experiment with his own nature - a state of fluidity, change and growth where nothing is eternally fixed and hopelessly petrified."</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Jung</p>
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Past articles and other related material on: www.sensorysystems.co.uk

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