Neuro-linguistic Programming

From: Wikipedia contributors. "Neuro-linguistic programming." *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia, 16 Apr. 2010. Web. 17 Apr. 2010.

Neuro-linguistic programming (NLP) is a controversial approach to psychotherapy and organizational change based on "a model of interpersonal communication chiefly concerned with the relationship between successful patterns of behavior and the subjective experiences (esp. patterns of thought) underlying them" and "a system of alternative therapy based on this which seeks to educate people in self-awareness and effective communication, and to change their patterns of mental and emotional behavior" (as defined in the Oxford English Dictionary).

The co-founders, Richard Bandler and linguist John Grinder, claimed it would be instrumental in "finding ways to help people have better, fuller and richer lives". They coined the title to denote their belief in a connection between neurological processes ('neuro'), language ('linguistic') and behavioral patterns that have been learned through experience ('programming') and that can be organized to achieve specific goals in life.

NLP was originally promoted by its co-founders in the 1970s as an effective and rapid form of psychological therapy, capable of addressing the full range of problems which psychologists are likely to encounter, such as phobias, depression, habit disorder, psychosomatic illnesses, learning disorders.

It also espoused the potential for self-determination through overcoming learned limitations and emphasized well-being and healthy functioning. Later, it was promoted as a 'science of excellence', derived from the study or 'modeling' of how successful or outstanding people in different fields obtain their results. It was claimed that skills for success can be learned by anyone to improve their effectiveness both personally and professionally.

NLP appears to have little impact on academic psychology, and limited impact on mainstream psychotherapy and counseling. NLP had greater influence in management training, life coaching, and the self-help industry.

HISTORY AND FOUNDING
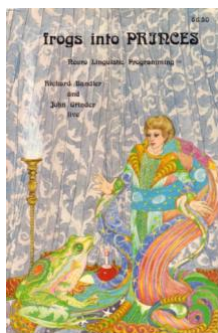
The first popular book on NLP, *Frogs into Princes*, first published in 1979, was based on transcripts of its co-founders, Bandler and Grinder, presenting at seminars.

NLP originated when Richard Bandler, a student at University of California, Santa Cruz, was transcribing taped therapy sessions of the Gestalt therapist Fritz Perls.

Bandler believed he recognized particular word and sentence structures which facilitated the acceptance of Perls' positive suggestions.

Bandler took this idea to one of his university lecturers, John Grinder, a linguist. Together they studied Perls and observed Virginia Satir, mother of modern day family therapy, to produce what they termed the meta model, a model for gathering information and challenging a client's language and underlying thinking.

The meta model was presented in 1975 in *The Structure of Magic Volumes I & II,* in which they expressed their belief that the therapeutic "magic" as performed by Perls and Satir, and in complex human activity in general, had structure and could therefore be learned by others given the appropriate resources. They believed that implicit in Perls' and Satir's behavior when affecting therapeutic changes, was the ability to challenge distortion, generalization and deletion in a client's language. For example:

For example:

Client:	"I just feel terrible."
Therapist:	"What specifically do you 'feel terrible' about?"
Client:	"... my performance yesterday."
Therapist:	"What performance, specifically?"
	"..."

The linguistic aspects of the book were based in part on previous work by Grinder using Noam Chomsky's transformational grammar. Challenging linguistic distortions, specifying generalizations, and recovering of deleted information in the client utterances, the surface structures, was supposed to yield a more complete representation of the underlying deep structure, and was believed to have therapeutic benefit. They also drew from the ideas Gregory Bateson and Alfred Korzybski, particularly their ideas about human modeling and ideas captured by the oft-quoted expression 'the map is not the territory'[*].

Virginia Satir and Gregory Bateson each agreed to write a preface to Bandler and Grinder's *Structure of Magic Volumes I & II*. Bateson later introduced Bandler and Grinder to Milton Erickson, father of hypnotherapy, who they selected as their third model, the Milton model. Erickson also wrote a preface to Bandler and Grinder's book based their observations of Erickson working with clients, *Patterns of the Hypnotic Techniques of Milton H. Erickson Volumes I & II*.

These volumes also focused on the language patterns and some non-verbal patterns that Bandler and Grinder believed they observed in Erickson. While the meta model is intentionally specific, the Milton model is described as "artfully vague" and metaphoric; the inverse of the meta model. It is often used in combination with the meta model as a softener, to induce trance, and to deliver indirect therapeutic suggestion.

At this time the Californian human potential movement was developing into an industry. Bandler and Grinder claimed that in addition to being a therapeutic method, NLP was also a study of communication, and by the 1970s Grinder and Bandler were marketing it as a business tool, claiming that **'if any human being can do anything, so can you'**.

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[*] Good communicators realize that the representations they use to organize their experience of the world ('map') are not the world ('territory'). NLP techniques involve changing your representation of the world to make it more useful and to bring it more into line with the way the world actually is. Smith, Robert. "Neuro-linguistic programming." Businessballs Free Online Learning. 29 October 2009. Accessed 1 March 2010. <http://www.businessballs.com/nlpneuro-linguisticprogramming.htm>.

A TYPICAL INTERACTION

A classic interaction in NLP can be understood in terms of several major stages including **establishing rapport**, **gathering information** about a problem state and desired goals, considering ramifications of those goals (**ecology and congruency**), using specific tools and techniques to make **interventions**, and integrating proposed changes into the client's life ("**future pacing**"). The entire process is guided by the non-verbal responses of the client.

ESTABLISHING RAPPORT
The first is the act of establishing and maintaining rapport between the practitioner and the client which is achieved through pacing and leading the verbal (e.g. sensory predicates and keywords) and non-verbal behavior (e.g. matching and mirroring body posture, head position, gestures and voice tone) of the client.

GATHERING INFORMATION
Once rapport is established, the practitioner may gather information (e.g. using the meta model questions) about the client's present state as well help the client define a desired state or goal for the interaction. The practitioner pays particular attention to the verbal and non-verbal responses as the client defines the present state and desired state and any resources that may be required to bridge the gap.

ECOLOGY AND CONGRUENCY
The client is typically encouraged to consider the consequences of the desired outcome may have on his or her personal or professional life and relationships taking into account any positive intentions of any problems that may arise (i.e. ecological check).

INTERVENTIONS AND TECHNIQUES
Fourth, assisting the client in achieving the desired outcomes by using certain tools and techniques to change internal representations and responses to stimuli in the world. For example, the swish pattern involves visualizing the trigger or 'cue image' that triggered an unwanted pattern of behavior, such as a hand with a cigarette moving towards the mouth. The client is guided such that the cue image instead triggers a resourceful self-image where smoking is no longer an issue. Other tools and techniques include indirect suggestion from the Milton model, reframing, and sub modalities.

"FUTURE PACING"
Finally, the changes are "future paced" by helping the client to mentally rehearse and integrate the changes into his or her life. For example, the client may be asked to "step into the future" and represent (mentally see, hear and feel) what it is like having already achieved the outcome.

APPLICATIONS
In contrast to mainstream psychotherapy, NLP does not concentrate on diagnosis, treatment and assessment of mental and behavioral disorders. Instead, it focuses on helping clients to overcome their own self-perceived, or subjective, problems. It seeks to do this while respecting their own capabilities and wisdom to choose additional goals for the intervention as they learn more about their problems, and to modify and specify those goals further as a result of extended interaction with a therapist.

While the main goals of Neuro-linguistic programming are therapeutic, the patterns have also been adapted for use outside of psychotherapy for interpersonal communications and persuasion including business communication, management training, sales, sports, and interpersonal influence.

NLP & Learning Styles

From: Wikipedia contributors. "Representational systems (NLP)." *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia, 23 Feb. 2010. Web. 17 Apr. 2010. And Wikipedia contributors. "Learning styles." *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia, 15 Apr. 2010. Web. 17 Apr. 2010.

Integral to NLP is how people perceive the world. Bandler and Grinder developed their **representational systems** model to explain how the human mind processes external information. It states that for practical purposes, information can be treated as if processed through the senses. Thus people say one *talks* to oneself (the auditory sense) even if no words are emitted, one *makes pictures in one's head* when thinking or dreaming (the visual sense), and one considers *feelings* in the body and emotions (known as the kinesthetic sense).

NLP holds it as crucial in human cognitive processing to recognize that the subjective character of experience is strongly tied into, and influenced by, how memories and perceptions are processed within each sensory representation in the mind. Within NLP, the various senses in their role as information processors, are known as *representation systems*, or *sensory modalities*. The model itself is known as the *VAKOG* model (from the initial letters of the sensory-specific modalities: visual, auditory, kinesthetic, olfactory, gustatory).

NLP asserts that for most circumstances and most people, three of the five sensory based modes seem to dominate in mental processing:

- **Visual** thoughts - sight, mental imagery, spatial awareness
- **Auditory** (or linguistic) thoughts - sound, speech, dialog, white noise
- **Kinesthetic** (or proprioceptive) sense - somatic feelings in the body, temperature, pressure, and also emotion.

The other two senses, gustatory (taste) and olfactory (smell), which are closely associated, often seem to be less significant in general mental processing, and are often considered jointly as one. For this reason, one often sees the term ***VAK*** in NLP reference texts, to signify these three primary representational systems,

The VAK Model as a Pedagological Tool

The VAKOG/VAK model developed within NLP parallels work and models developed in other fields investigating **learning styles** (for example: David Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory, 1984). One of the most common and widely-used categorizations of the various types of learning styles is Neil Fleming's VARK model (1987) which expanded upon the NLP VAK model:

- **Visual learners** - think in pictures; prefer visual aids such as overhead slides, diagrams, handouts
- **Auditory learners** - learn best through listening to lectures, discussion, tapes

- **Reading/writing learners** - combines the other senses
- **Kinesthetic learners** or **tactile** learners - learn via experience—moving, touching, and doing

The VARK model's use in pedagogy allows teachers to prepare classes that address each of these areas. Students can also use the model to identify their learning style and maximize their educational experience by focusing on what benefits them the most.