Research Article

Harnessing the Power of a Student's Mind by Practicing NLP Techniques in Classrooms

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ABSTRACT

Harnessing the power of the mind has led to the popularity of alternative approaches to personal development and communication. One of these methods is Neuro-Linguistic Programming, which was initiated as a self-help process. In a dynamic teacher-learner relationship, meaning is achieved through mutual feedback. All communication potentially influences learning. Teachers' language and behavior crucially influence learners on at least two levels: Their understanding of the topic in question and their beliefs about the world, including about learning. Teachers' awareness of their behavior and choice of words, and how sensitive they are to the influence of such words and behavior on learners, are vital to making the teaching and learning processes effective. Thus, the advocates of Neuro-linguistic programming are attempting to bridge the gap between neuro-linguistic programming and the academic community. This paper discusses NLP not as a business, but as phenomenology, or what happens subjectively inside the learning mind, various techniques to bind the power of mind, hoping the NLP ideas here will find their way into more and more classrooms.

Keywords: *NLP, Effective Teaching, Effective Learning, Neuro Linguistic Programming*

Neuro-linguistic Programming (NLP) was developed as a tool/technique in the USA in the 1970's.Its founders and principal authors were Richard Bandler, a student of (initially) mathematics and computer science, and John Grinder, a professor of linguistics. NLP is concerned with how a person's mind interacts with the world its effect on the behavior of the person and outcome.

The easiest way to explain NLP at its very core is to break down each word:
Neuro: the interaction between body and mind.
Linguistic: the clues which can be gained to the way an individual thinks by his/her chosen use of language

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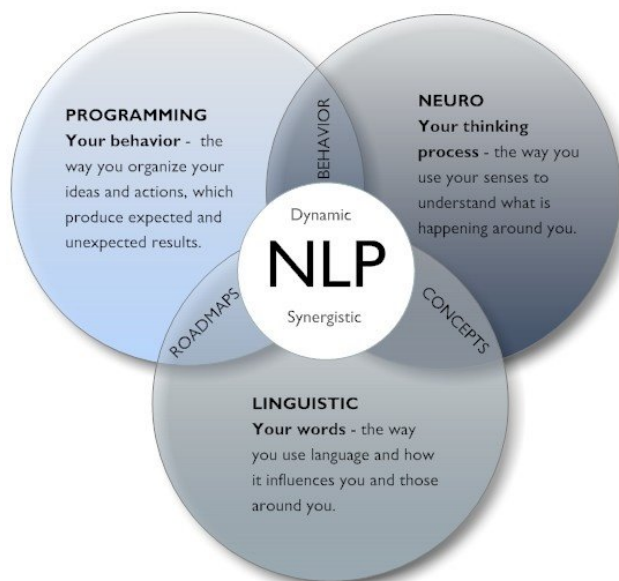[1] B.A Applied Psychology (Final Year), Gargi College, Delhi University, India
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Programming: the study of the 'programming' or patterns of speaking and behaviour that are adopted in everyday life.

There are two major foundational presuppositions that neuro-linguistic programming is based on. The first one, *the map is not the territory*, presupposes that human beings only have perceptions of reality, not reality per se. It means that the way we behave is based on our individual understanding of the world, and what gives those behaviors meaning is our neuro-linguistic map or repository of life experiences. The second presupposition is that, NLP subscribes to the age-old principle that *we don't see the world as it is, but as we are*. Therefore, understanding your own subjective experience gives significant advantages in understanding the world.

In crux NLP is a form of modelling that offers potential for systematic and detailed understanding of people's subjective experience.Through a combination of thought, linguistic 're-coding' and systematic 'modeling techniques' it is argued, people can change the way they see the world.

NLP is creative, non-judgmental, and its value lies in its ability to conceptualize and work through a range of behavioral patterns and learning strategies.

Neuro-linguistic programming (NLP) is the art and science of personal excellence. Art because everyone brings their unique personality and style to what they do, and this can never be captured in words or techniques. Science because there is a method and process for discovering the patterns used by outstanding individuals in any field to achieve outstanding results. This process is called modeling, and the patterns, skills and techniques so discovered are being used increasingly in school set up as well for accelerated learning. NLP is a practical skill that creates the results we truly want in the world while creating value for others in the process.

What is NLP For?

NLP is a toolbox of attitudes, thoughts and skills. Its models become patterns by which your original negative habits will be redefined and changed. You are basically aiming for personal development and success if you're thinking of using NLP. Here are some ideas of what NLP is for.

1. **NLP gives you success**. Whether you are having problems in your family, work or leisure, NLP enables you to change your outlook and vision toward the world as a whole. You will be able to see the deeper meaning and priorities in your life. Once you realize your strong and weak areas, you can then concentrate on the things that can make you a more efficient family member, worker and person, thus producing success in the long run.

2. **NLP improves communication.** You can convert your positive way of thinking into words. When you redefine your thoughts and emotions and effectively communicate and share your perspective with others, then you become more competent verbally. Communication is a powerful means of providing you with a vast network of people, stronger influence, and a more dynamic way of expressing yourself.

3. **NLP unifies your mind, body and feelings.** You may be having a lot of trouble putting your plans into action, or learning from your experience. This only means that your mind, body and feelings are not in sync. NLP allows you to create a connection so that all aspects of your existence as a human being coincide and work together towards achieving personal success.

Applications and Techniques of NLP

Education is no longer provided in the unyielding formula used many decades ago, but is seen as an interactive experience with both the teacher and the student taking adynamic role.

NLP is highly congruent to Howard Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences, two neuro-linguistic programming techniques, *perceptual positioning and presupposition*, are believedto be useful in solving problems encountered in teaching.

Perceptual positioning
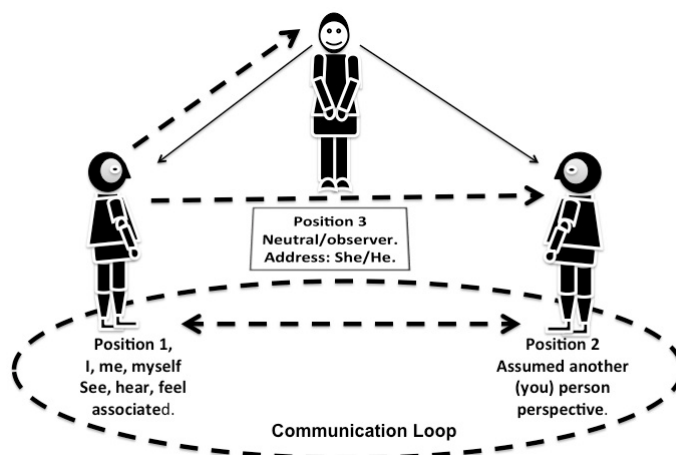
It is the ability to see things from the point of view of another, a way to understand people better. This process can be used in negotiation and interviewing, as well as to promote healthy boundaries and self-concept. It encourages "putting oneself in another's shoes", and thus can be applied to help with bullying and behavioral problems.

Bullying for example is a type of challenging behaviour which often arises in schools and can be difficult to tackle effectively. Perceptual positioning is an approach which can help with both bullying and other kinds of behaviour where the individual needs to quite literally step into the other person's shoes. In NLP, perceptual positioning means assessing the situation through first your own eyes, then the other person's and then finally a disassociated bystander.

It can be difficult sometimes for individuals to truly put themselves in another person's position so a teacher can set up three chairs, each tagged with a certain 'position'. The student can then move between these chairs and in doing so, adopts a different view of the situation. The physical movement can help to trigger a shift in thinking patterns which is difficult to access when static. A very simple technique but one which is dynamic and can have very profound effects. By getting students actively involved and helping them to quite literally shift their thinking, the outcome can be very different than more traditional approaches.

Presupposition
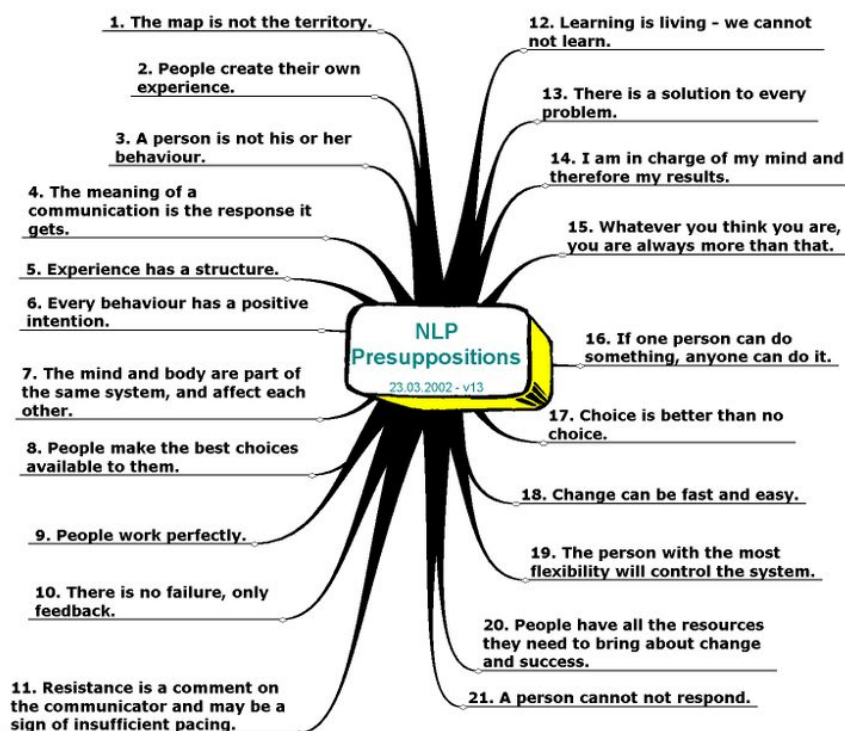
It relates to unspoken meanings in conversation. For example, when a teacher offers the learner a choice between taking a quiz now or finishing the lecture first, the message that both tasks must be done is clear although not directly uttered that way. Giving the learner this

ability to make a choice allows them to focus on their decision "rather than challenging the teacher's instructions". Another example, a teacher might say, Would you like to draw the graph now or complete the maths questions first?. This conveys without question that both tasks need to be completed and that the individual will be starting straight away. However, by using language in this way, the suggestion is more likely to be accepted without a challenge from the student who will instead focus on making the decision about which to do first.

Visual Squash

Visual squash is an NLP technique that aids in acknowledging each part to reconstitute a whole. Each part is integrated to a higher level than what was formerly set by the limits until a state of unity and entirety is achieved. The process chunks up as each unconscious logical level is reached. Each part is identified and defined according to its function and relative effect on other parts. Visual squash is very effective in resolving the conflict between parts so that everything will be able to work systematically to produce success.

The idea of visual squash is to recondition your former thought or feeling into a more positive one. The old pattern is very likely to be negative or a hindrance to your success, which is why you should learn how to decondition then recondition. Decondition means to remove your old perspective while recondition means replacing the old perspective with a new and beneficial one. You can easily redirect negative thoughts and feelings into positive ones when you learn the process of deconditioning and reconditioning.

Visualize the negative pattern

Visual squash literally means squashing what you see in your mind. You first have to think of the negative thought then put it into an animated scenario. For example, think that you're not a leader. Picture your friends not wanting to follow your simplest invitations. Exaggerate to really emphasize the negative idea.

Accessing Positive Intent

Disagreement and disappointment are a part of life, but this NLP pattern presupposes that we all do things for some positive reason. Teachers and students who frame disagreement and disappointment in a positive light can avoid being critical, while they keep the dialogue moving ahead. This patterns involves a line of questioning that will ask for the positive intent, and then look for a better way to achieve it.

Visualize the replacement pattern

It is advisable that you picture the exact opposite of the initial image you had in mind. Instead of thinking that you're not a leader, tell yourself that you're a great leader. Again create a visual scenario in your mind. Draw senators following your every command and people loving your every order. Exaggerate the scenario as you please.

Chain the two states
Put your initial negative thought pattern at the start and your final positive thought pattern at the end. Now, it is up to you to provide the middle scenario that will link the two states together. Visualize and create your very own story of how the first awkward scenario can lead to the great ending. Express with your own imagination.

Decondition
Let go of the initial negative thought pattern. You may visually squash it in your head, entirely removing all the details and dwelling only on the final piece of positive thought. You can mentally picture a huge hand pounding the whole scenario into dust.

Recondition
As you dwell on your new positive thought pattern, you'll realize that your new mindset and attitude have beneficial effects on you as an individual. You'll be more inclined to relate to, communicate with and lead people. Even when you think of the former negative thought, your mind will immediately link it to your reconditioned positive state.

Collapsing Anchors
Anchors can be positive, negative, or both. To maintain a positive outlook in life you also have to learn how to collapse or break your negative anchors. Anchors are created by linking to a state. The anchor or trigger automatically brings forth the state of mind you wish to harness at the moment you're trying to achieve something. However, negative anchors also immediately put you into a state of doubt or uncertainty if you have initially associated them with a negative experience. You have to know how to collapse these anchors to remove the association with its negative thought and feeling.
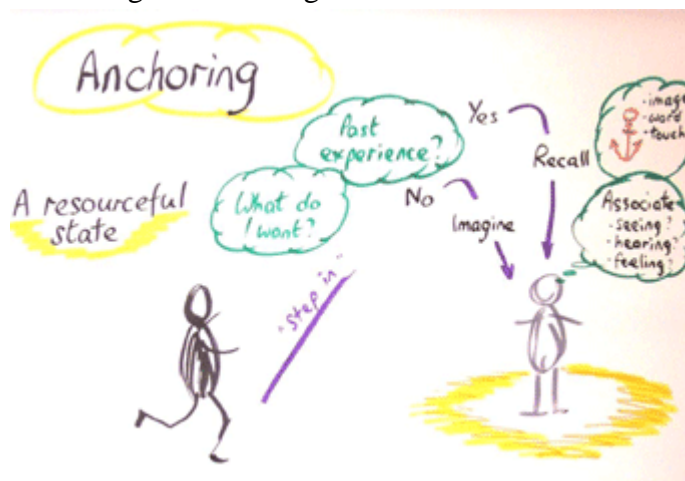
This NLP pattern installs a link between positive emotions and positive behaviors or strategies at the peak of a positive emotional state. Using sensory acuity, teachers can be alert to those peaks as they happen, and reinforce them with "yes!", "you got it!", "boom!", "wow!" or some other kind of distinct cue. Soon, the emotion and the behaviors become integrated. Students can also be taught that negative anchors can be undone and replaced with positive anchors. Knowing this gives great strategies for school, home, work and life.

Change Personal History

Some events and experiences you had in the past may be compelling you to make decisions that are not truly beneficial for you in the future. You may have lacked information or had hurt feelings, which created a faulty foundation in your overall behavior and way of thinking as a human being. In NLP, you can relearn and change your personal history so that your frame of mind is more inclined to adaptation and success. Most of the attitudes and thoughts you have now may have been created long before you mastered your state of consciousness. You may be merely adapting the characteristics or traits of someone close to you in the past, which limits your potential now. Change Personal History or CPH is an effective NLP change technique that allows you to draw out the negative influences that have haunted you in the past. By identifying these impacts, you can then face old adversaries and situations with renewed vigor and hope to succeed in the end. When you talk about the past, you base information from memory in your unconscious mind. When you talk about the present, you only draw information from what you see, hear, smell, taste or touch. These are called past and present experiences. The drawback from experience is that most people feel that they cannot change what has been done. Memories from past experiences haunt them until the present while present experiences continue to be wrongly interpreted, as they only relive the same traumatic situation over and over. What you should know is that by changing your personal history, you can relive the same situation without having to have the same unfavorable results. It works on four bases:

1. Recall the experience
2. Change the meaning
3. Hold on to the new meaning
4. Let go of the old meaning

Belief Change

A belief is your own understanding about the world. You may believe something that doesn't truly exist or vice - versa. Your beliefs help you in responding to a certain situation. These are the very principles that make you decide. Your beliefs are formed from experiences, observations and generalizations. Your behavior is dictated by your beliefs, and this can be either beneficial or detrimental. In order to eliminate bad behavior triggered by unhelpful generalizations, you have to learn how to change your beliefs.

1. **Visual Technique 1:** Draw a picture in your mind of your belief and another picture which is the exact opposite of your belief. Clearly visualize and describe the two images and put them in separate frames. All of these are in your imagination. Disturb the picture of your belief by intensifying the exact opposite picture and destroying the scene altogether. Think of the new belief you want to incorporate and picture it. Put the new belief in the very same spot where your old belief used to be.

2. **Visual Technique 2:** Draw a picture in your mind of your present negative belief and another picture of a positive belief. Clearly visualize and describe the two images and put them in separate frames. Think of the picture with your negative belief then calibrate. Take one sub modality away at a time if the effect is negative until you have a new belief. You should be able to go through all the sub modalities.

3. **Future Pacing:** Picture yourself in the future where you can apply your new belief. Evaluate the positive and negative effects of the belief on your behavior. You should be able to identify and install anchors to access the mood you want to been under different circumstances. Future pacing and ecology checks are ways to test and debug mental strategies in our heads before going into real life with them. If school is a kind of laboratory, then it is the perfect venue for this kind of testing. Students and teachers can gauge the impact of every decision, action, project and learning on their futures, their families and communities, and the environment. Checking ecology is highly subjective, but exercises critical mental muscle, and is less slippery values-based approaches.

4. **Time Distortion:** Picture yourself in different time frames in the future. Forward yourself five, ten, fifteen, twenty, twenty five and fifty years into the future, then look back. Reflect on the changes that your new belief has made during these years. Evaluate the effects and whether you feel that the changes have been beneficial. From this, you can decide whether or not you wish to go ahead and change your belief.

5. **Time Line:** Put you in the past, present, future, meta-position in the past and meta-position in the future. Envision the effects of your new belief in these five states. In the meta-positions, you have to view the situation from a third-person point of view to see its relative effects.

VAK Dissociation

Our eye movements (known as eye accessing cues) can hint at which channel we are currently using to access information. These may be very quick movements. You may also notice someone looking in a particular direction for a longer period of time.

Visual accessing
1. looking up to your left – remembering an image or words
2. looking up to your right – constructing or imagining an image or words
3. Auditory accessing
4. looking to your left – remembering a sound or words
5. looking up to your right – constructing or imagining a sound or words
6. looking down to your left – listening to an internal dialogue

7. Kinaesthetic accessing
8. looking down to your right – remembering or experiencing something you have done or felt

Calibration

Calibration is a communication skill which uses intuition. Without other people having to tell you, you develop a feeling of their intentions, beliefs and understanding. Knowing this will enable you to react appropriately to the situation. It is highly effective when relating with other people and deciding on what to do during a critical moment. For example, if a friend of yours is having a bad day, you don't have to directly hear from him his frustrated feelings. Through the words he says, his manner of speaking, his body language, his facial expression and his manner of interacting with you, he will show his frustration. It only means that unconsciously, you are still reacting to your surroundings. You are involved in everything that happens around you which makes you human in the process.

NLP advocates using sensory acuity to observe the person in front of you for clues about their current state. Teachers who learn to read body language have at their disposal a real-time meter which tells them whether their teaching is getting through. Signals are given off via postures, gestures, breathing and eye movement patterns, and skin tones and color, which do not hint at whether the teaching is momentarily "hot or cold". Adjust accordingly. Students who learn body language can also gain emotional intelligence, and navigate school, work and home life more freely.

There are goals to be met when engaging in conversation. You are either receiving information or influencing another to develop an understanding of your thoughts and emotions. Whatever you say or do affects those around you and you are also greatly affected by other people. You are an integral part of a definitive whole which is the world. Whether you know it or not, you are observing everything that goes on around you and reacting in your own creative way to contribute to the environment. You will certainly receive the same response from the communication you're involved in.

Calibration is also synonymous with measurement. You are simply measuring another person's behavior and thoughts. You have to develop some form of mind- reading so that you can effectively communicate with the person. Without proper calibration, it is almost impossible to have quality communication. There has to be some form of understanding and compatibility between the persons involved and only by calibrating can you achieve this. You should calibrate a person's state of mind in different time frames. This means that calibration can effectively tell how a person feels or what a person thinks at the time but it doesn't necessarily mean that's how the person feels or thinks constantly. Behavior and state of mind are ever-changing and you should learn how to adapt and calibrate accordingly to garner a positive response. If you don't calibrate well, you will only be assuming and assumptions have the possibility of being wrong.

You can develop your visual calibrating skills by observing facial expressions, body language and lips. Watch how emotions are triggered by language and nonverbal cues. Be good with your eyes and try to see things without using sound. Using your eyes in acquiring objective data will intensify the sense of sight and will make you a much more effective intuitive communicator. Remember that the most felt and meant expressions are those which are unspoken. You have to rely on what you see rather than on what you hear to be very effective in communication. This will help you seize opportunities and give people the impression that you are more sensitive than the average person.

Flexibility of Response

Rigid teaching styles only reach a portion of their students, part of the time. Behavioral calisthenics allow the teacher to draw on a fuller range of emotional states, verbal delivery patterns, to reach more students more of the time. Students can also learn that if something is not working, try something else. Flexibility that is openly rewarded teaches that there is no such thing as failure... only feedback. The queen rules the chessboard, because she has the most available moves.

State Elicitation

In NLP, a state involves thoughts, feelings and physiology, and covers the spectrum from deep relaxation to high excitement. A great teacher needs to be able to "light up" the neurology, in order to associate the right state with the new learning. Memorable learning does not happen through intellectual discussions, but through emotionalized discussions, such as fear, anger, disgust, confusion, shock, peace, joy, forgiveness, focus, fun, going for it. Emotions are energy in motion, and should not be suppressed, but channeled in productive and ecological ways.

Breaking State

When moving from topic to topic, or between repetitions of a new mental sequence, this NLP pattern teaches the importance of "clearing the screen". Breaking state allows for students to clearly identify the beginning and ending of a mental sequence, and also to generalize the new mental strategy across contexts. Hey! Do you smell popcorn?

CONCLUSION

NLP is a set of techniques which should not be considered in isolation; part of their charm is the fact that they can be put over any existing structure or lesson plans and flawlessly combined. A teacher who is proficient in NLP can identify what a student needs in order to overcome their individual challenges and has the right tools to help them reach their own solution.

A multifaceted subject, it is surprisingly easy to pick up, yet the results when employed are astonishing. In addition to have a rapid effect on academic results, by allowing the students to access the information in a different wayit also helps to improve rapport and personal issues such as confidence, motivation and behaviour.

Appropriate for teachers from nursery classes right up to those delivering adult education, NLP is a set of tools which empowers individuals to not only realize their potential but also to relish the experience, and cultivate patterns of thinking and behaviour which will be useful not just inside, but also outside of the classroom too.

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