

nlp master practitioner • modelling project

keeping the attention of your audience • ana sánchez • january 2003

# contents

what the project is about and how it was carried out  
the exemplars  
the visits  
experiential arrays  
lab profiles' results (comparative)  
elicited strategies (vakog)  
unified strategy  
tote (based on main strategy)  
the difference that makes the difference  
trying it on

## what the project is about and how it was carried out

The inspiration for this project came to me when I volunteered for a demonstration during the Judith DeLozier weekend.

During her demonstration it became clear to me that, in order to increase my potential as a trainer/teacher/artist etc, it would be beneficial for me to improve my presentation skills. Now, this was a big chunk, too general, so I looked at it more closely and decided that the part of presentation skills that would make me more efficient is the bit about keeping the attention of the listeners (specially when dealing with the drier parts of the subject - I was thinking specifically the teaching of Spanish, but this can be applied to any teaching/training context).

I then thought about the exemplars. People who I know who are particularly good at holding their listeners' attention. I have changed some of their names for confidentiality reasons. They all have very different styles of presentation. I have chosen it this way for a purpose: the better the contrast between them, the easier it is to find the things they have in common, the difference that makes the difference. Also in this way I won't just interview the people whose styles are more similar to mine (so my mind proves itself right) and go for agreement. I think there is more learning possibilities where there is variety and options, more ways of enriching one's map of the world.

I spoke a little bit about my exemplars in the Modelling Project Proposal but one of the exemplars has changed, partly due to the difficulty I was getting trying to fix a time to see Andrea and also because I noticed that all the exemplars came from the same background (some of them had been friends for about 20 years) so again, looking for differences I decided to interview Stephen, who I recently met and has a very particular way of presenting. ... And here comes a more detailed description of their individual styles:

## the exemplars

**Stuart:** I chose Stuart because, although I have seen him presenting in very few occasions, I am aware of his excellent track record. I work with him and regularly look through and file the evaluation questionnaires that trainees fill in after his courses. He is described as an interesting, relaxed and friendly presenter. When I have seen him in a work context, leading meetings etc (all forms of presenting he is a reflective speaker who thinks about what he is about to say and how he says it. He has a good posture, balanced, without distracting movements and gestures are kept to a minimum, and only used to emphasise certain points. He keeps good eye contact with the persons he is talking to. His voice is clear with a good volume throughout the sentence.

**Donna:** I have attended some of Donna's training modules a few years ago, when we used to work for the same company. She is an accomplished and successful training consultant. Her style I would describe as holistic. She engages her whole body, mind and soul when presenting. This shows in deep breathing, 'velvety' deep tone of voice,

medium to slow pace, with frequent pauses to allow people the time to think. (Although the pitch can get higher and the pacing faster when she gets excited about something - I have noticed this specially when socialising as a friend). Her gestures are studied and used to complement her words. She makes good eye contact when she presents, making everyone feel special and individual. There is an almost hypnotic quality to her voice that makes her very effective in her communication. (She also has a rather posh accent!)

**Martin:** He was the person who initially trained me when I joined my last company (Programmes) over 12 years ago. We have also been friends almost since then. His induction training was very memorable and caused a good and lasting impression on me. He is also a very successful training consultant. His voice is loud and clear and can rapport many levels of people due to his ability to vary his accent, choice of words and intonation to match everybody, from the CEP of a large organisation to the phone-room lads on the bar after the training. His style is lively, expressive, open, very participative. He likes to invite people to disclose their thoughts and opinions. He thrives in challenging situations, likes the liveliness that disagreements and discussions create as generators of different ideas and patterns of thinking. I would describe him as a catalyst for change.

**Stephen:** He is an art teacher for adult education at Stantonbury Campus (where I teach Spanish), I am one of his students so I get plenty of opportunity to observe his style. He is a very lively presenter, using examples, story-telling and humour to illustrate points of learning. He also encourages participation by asking a variety of open and closed questions while presenting. Again very good eye contact with each individual and comments tailored to each person's personal circumstances contribute to maintain the attention of his listeners. Wide open gestures, movement and a good variation of facial expressions to emphasise the different points he makes. His pace varies, with a slight tendency to medium/fast, although he uses pauses to make eye contact and check for understanding. The voice is generally of average pitch, with a musical quality to it due to his mild Scottish accent.

I met with my exemplars for a longish interview once. I videoed them so I have been able to revisit the interview to check up things several times. Stephen's visit was not recorded as it did not take place at my house/office, but I have seen him since the interview to clarify a couple of points.

After the interviews (based on David Gordon's Experiential Array) I also conducted with my exemplars a short interview/questionnaire to determine their LAB Profile (as in the book *Words that Change Minds* by Shelle Rose Charvet). I did attend her four-day seminar last November and I have found it extremely valuable in determining the meta-programmes of my exemplars (and other people I have been coming across during these past few months).

## the visits

### Visit sheet

**Model:** Stuart      **Location:** My office/studio - Milton Keynes

**Date of visit:** 12.12.02      **Length of visit:** 1 hour 30 min      **Visit N°:** 1 (video recorded the main part of the interview - this explains the short length of the visit and the fact that is the only one - however I did go back to the exemplar with questions and comments to be clarified afterwards)

**Purpose of visit:** To elicit information for Experiential Array, strategies and LAB Profile worksheet. Also to have the opportunity to observe the exemplar.

### Behavioural patterns

#### physiology

Sits back on his chair, still and balanced in an upright posture. Some leaning forward when explaining about a past situation which caused him a bit of trouble. Good eye contact maintained throughout the interview. His voice is evenly paced with a medium to low pitch. Not many up and downs.

#### gestures

Measured, gentle, few and definite hand movements. Some eyebrow raising and smiling, some facial tension but otherwise not too many facial expressions. His gestures, variation in voice pitch and volume, and facial expression become more animated when quoting himself telling something to someone.

#### eye accessing cues

Mainly auditory, both Ar and Ac

#### predicates

Mainly auditory, with a few visual references.

## Cognitive patterns

### strategy

Ve, Ae → Ve,K → Ad, K+

### critical submodalities

Ve = looks at delegates

Ae = welcomes trainees/talks to them (upbeat voice)/presents

Ve = signs of attention, nods, head movements, facial expressions

K = warm feeling in stomach area means to him there is congruence

Ad = 'great! they are getting all I am saying!'

K+ = centeredness in the stomach area

### criteria and beliefs

That they (the trainees) get value.

Trainees need to have objectives and 'I need' to know them. There has to be an alignment of objectives.

'Losing people reflects on my ability as a trainer.'

### metaprogrammes

level: reactive

criteria: for them to listen, interact & have new insights

direction: mainly away from

source: 50/50 internal/external

reason: options

decision factors: sameness with exception and difference

scope: specific

attention direction: other

stress response: choice

style: proximity

organisation: person

rule structure: my/my

convincer strategy: see/hear/read • N° examples 1

## Macro-modelling

### neurological levels

Mainly behaviours, followed by capability and some beliefs. A couple of instances of identity.

### timeframes

present

### perceptual positions

mainly second, some first and third

### meta-model

a few deletions, frequent use of nominalisations, some mind-reading and presuppositions (made softer through the use of 'might' e.g. 'they (the listeners) might have concerns outside the training room', 'they might not want to do roleplays' etc. A few complex equivalents, cause-effect and unspecified verbs and nouns. Two cases of lost performatives and modal operators of necessity. No universal quantifiers or modal operators of impossibility were used.

## the visits

### Visit sheet

**Model:** Donna      **Location:** My office/studio - Milton Keynes

**Date of visit:** 12.12.02      **Length of visit:** just over 1 hour      **Visit N°:** 1 (video recorded the main part of the interview - this explains the short length of the visit and the fact that is the only one - however I did go back to the exemplar with questions and comments to be clarified afterwards)

**Purpose of visit:** To elicit information for Experiential Array, strategies and LAB Profile worksheet. Also to have the opportunity to observe the exemplar.

## Behavioural patterns

### physiology

Sits forward most of the time. Some leaning back when taking time to think of an answer. Good eye contact maintained throughout the interview. Her voice is evenly paced with a medium to low pitch. Both her voice and gestures become more animated as the interview progresses or when she is talking about a specific past situation.

### gestures

Lively and ample hand movements, very clear and congruent to the words she is expressing, directing her hands towards her body when talking 'kinesthetic' (often). Facially expressive, mainly around eyebrows and eyes, also smiling. An overall impression of internal calm and balance. Feeling of peace.

### eye accessing cues

Mainly of visual nature (upwards), both Vr and Vc. I did notice that she tended to look to her right (my left) when remembering (or accessing) past pictures or events. I checked her by asking her to remember details about a specific situation - what did the people's faces look like? what did they say? how did that felt?

### predicates

Curiously mainly kinesthetic words were used, like: living it, being, being in touch, touching, feelings, flowing feeling, sense it in your body, accompanied by gestures pointing to her chest, solar plexus and/or stomach area.

## Cognitive patterns

### strategy



### critical submodalities

Ve = looks at delegates' open expressions, nodding, alive and present (making eye contact, being 'behind their eyes') sees their body language, sitting forward, alert.

Ae = hears comments, generally noises of agreement.

K = relaxed feeling in stomach area, sense of energy flowing

Ad = 'this is going well' or 'they seem to be a bit bored/tired'

K+ = energy flowing freely through her body. Strong feeling 'mainly around the three top chakras' (she gestured towards her solar plexus, heart and throat with an upwards movement of her hand).

### criteria and beliefs

It is important to have full engagement between presenter and listeners.

The speed with which things are picked up is an indicator of their level of engagement. Another indicators are leaning forward posture and head movement and facial expressions.

Facilitators don't need to 'put up a show' in front of the room, they involve people in the process. Participation is very important.

### metaprogrammes

level: proactive

criteria: to have the listeners' presence of mind, body and spirit

direction: away from

source: mainly external

reason: options

decision factors: sameness with exception

scope: general

attention direction: other

stress response: choice

style: independent with proximity (50/50)

organisation: person

rule structure: my/my

convincer strategy: see/hear/read • N° examples 1

## Macro-modelling

### neurological levels

Mainly beliefs. A couple of instances of identity.

### timeframes

present, some past

### perceptual positions

mainly second and some first.

### meta-model

Some deletions and unspecified nouns, 'them', 'something different'; unspecified verbs: 'engaging', 'flowing', 'weaving'; some nominalisations: 'flow', 'energy', 'synergy', 'values', 'creativity'; one lost performative: 'one has to do some theory', cause-effect 'when they are fully engaged they pick things up quickly'; complex equivalents: 'questions are a sign of attention and interest', 'posture is an indicative of their level of engagement', 'speed in picking up things means they are fully with me'; mind reading: 'roleplays are boring to some people', presuppositions: 'people less and less want to do lots of theory and boring roleplays'. No universal quantifiers, modal operators (necessity/impossibility) were spotted.

## the visits

### Visit sheet

**Model:** Martin      **Location:** My office/studio - Milton Keynes

**Date of visit:** 11.1.03      **Length of visit:** just over 1 hour      **Visit N°:** 1 (video recorded the main part of the interview - this explains the short length of the visit and the fact that is the only one. He was very clear in his answers and I did not feel the need for further visits or phone calls, although we have met often socially and had a good chance to observe the theory in action.)

**Purpose of visit:** To elicit information for Experiential Array, strategies and LAB Profile worksheet. Also to have the opportunity to observe the exemplar.

## Behavioural patterns

### physiology

Sits forward all the time. Good eye contact maintained throughout the interview, but not all the time, he tends to look down when he's thinking and talks at the same time. He makes good eye contact towards the end of his sentences/statements, then he will gauge your reaction - specially when he's said something shocking, as a joke, with a terribly serious tone of voice and face! His voice is evenly paced with a medium to low pitch. Excellent use of pauses at the end of sentences to let you time to 'digest' the information and to gauge your reaction. 'Colour' and emphasis in certain words - the ones he wants to make stand out.

### gestures

Hands near or touching face (also to support it as he tends to sit forward most of the time). Expressive with his hands but in a meaningful way, to accompany and compliment his words. Keeps serious when talking and then he will give a beaming smile towards the end of the sentence obtaining an effect which is both strong and warm. If he's said something outrageous he'll wait for your reaction to make sure you got it was not serious, really. Then he will look at you slightly sideways and with a slightly lowered face. If you pretend to believe it (as I did, just to see what he'd do), he smiles and assures you it was a bit of a joke. I think this interplay is relevant to describing his technique as it keeps listeners 'on their feet'.

### eye accessing cues

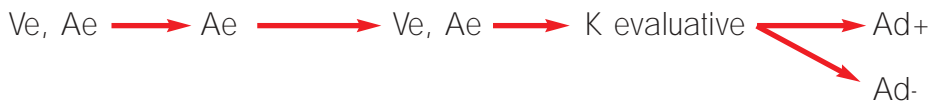
Mainly Ad with some K while he's talking, then eye contact. Some visual and auditory before he starts talking (retrieving information which then he 'absorbs' kinesthetically).

### predicates

Mainly kinesthetic, followed by auditory with some visual.

## Cognitive patterns

### strategy



### critical submodalities

Ve, Ae = makes eye contact, checks for nods of agreement or vocal expressions of disagreement (he is not too concerned about what is the reaction as long as his listeners are 'present').

Ae = Martin asks open questions to invite and encourage participation and debate.

Ve, Ae = checks for reactions, both visual and auditory.

K evaluative = feeling happy 'inside'.

Ad+ = 'good!'

or Ad- = 'I'm not happy, I don't want to do it' and then: 'what can I do instead? shock them?' etc

### criteria and beliefs

To have their full attention.

It is important they feel they can contribute, challenge and express themselves during my presentation - that means they are involved.

### metaprogrammes

level: proactive

criteria: to have the listeners' undivided, 100% attention

direction: toward

source: mainly external

reason: procedures

decision factors: difference

scope: general/specific (50/50)

attention direction: other

stress response: thinking

style: independent

organisation: person

rule structure: no/my (the decision maker on the project dictates rules for him, he then dictates what needs to happen with the trainees to achieve the results and comply with brief)

convincer strategy: see/hear/read • N° examples 1

## Macro-modelling

### neurological levels

Mainly beliefs and behaviours. Some mentions to capability related matters.

### timeframes

present.

### perceptual positions

first and second (sometimes third, when referring to the decision maker's point of view, although perhaps that could be perceived also as a second position, taking the stance of the decision maker).

### meta-model

Some deletions and unspecified nouns, 'them', some nominalisations: 'passion', 'meaning'; universal quantifiers: 'they don't respond to anything!', 'sack all of them!' (said with humour - for shock effect - although he then acknowledged that in some instances had advised the decision maker to get rid of some 'rotten apple'), a couple of lost performatives; cause-effect 'if I entertain them, they will stay with me', 'too much multimedia causes message to get lost'; complex equivalent: 'if they can relate personally to the subject it means that they are listening', 'too much passion is irritating', 'too much emphasis in words makes you sound like Hitler'; mind reading: 'if I don't entertain them they get bored', 'they want to get it off their chest', 'she doesn't like that side of it'; presuppositions: '... you sound like Hitler' presupposes, in this context that he wasn't good at presenting or taking people on board. Unfortunately he was excellent at it, we wouldn't have heard of him otherwise. I didn't spot any clear unspecified verbs, modal operators of necessity or impossibility.

## the visits

### Visit sheet

**Model:** Stephen **Location:** His home (1<sup>st</sup> visit)/my office/studio (2<sup>nd</sup> visit)- Milton Keynes

**Date of visits:** 20 & 27.1.03 **Length of visits:** about 3 hours **Visit N°:** 1

**Purpose of visit:** To elicit information for Experiential Array, strategies and LAB Profile worksheet. Also to have the opportunity to observe the exemplar.

**Visit N°:** 2

**Purpose of visit:** To clarify points left unasked/unobserved in first visit. (I did not use video recording with this exemplar, however, I have had the opportunity to see him presenting as he is also my art teacher).

## Behavioural patterns

### physiology

Sits forward most of the time. Upright posture. Clear and confident way of speaking. Voice pitch varies according to the level of emotion - rich and colourful. Good eye contact throughout. During presentations he makes eye contact for a few seconds with each person in the group, addressing them almost individually. He will also nod slightly (reminding me vaguely of how Judith Lowe does it).

### gestures

During the lessons his gestures are expressive and congruent with the point he's making at the time. In a one-to-one interview setting he is more restrained in his movements, however he tends to point at things as if they were in front of him or written/painted on the table. He also tends to 'draw' things.

### eye accessing cues

Mainly Ad and K while he's talking, then eye contact. Some visual and auditory before he starts talking (retrieving information which then he 'absorbs' kinesthetically), similarly to Martin.

### predicates

Curiously his predicates were mainly of visual nature, although some kinesthetics crept here and there in the conversation.

## Cognitive patterns

### strategy



### critical submodalities

Ve, Ae = checks for visual signs of attention, i.e. nodding, and spontaneous responses, like comments, facial expressions.

Ae = Stephen asks open questions to invite participation.

Ve, Ae = checks for reactions, both visual and auditory.

K evaluative = if things are going well: physically light, enthusiasm and relief.

Ad = 'I'm losing them, what shall I do' - think of pattern interrupt.

Ae = Introduces an activity to shift focus of attention and direct it back to the subject.

### criteria and beliefs

Confidence.

The future hasn't happened yet and everything in the future is a potentiality for success. Nothing is predestined. The most important thing when presenting is the intention and skills of the presenter.

### metaprogrammes

level: proactive

criteria: humour, participation, understanding, rapport

direction: toward

source: mainly internal

reason: options

decision factors: difference

scope: specific

attention direction: other

stress response: feelings/choice

style: proximity

organisation: person

rule structure: my/my

convincer strategy: see/hear/read • N° examples 1

## Macro-modelling

### neurological levels

Mainly beliefs with some identity.

### timeframes

present.

### perceptual positions

first and some second. (That's what came out in the interview, however, observing him in the class I think it is a lot more second positioning going on, although perhaps this happens more when giving feedback and encouraging students, rather than in the context of the presentation in itself.)

### meta-model

Some deletions and unspecified nouns, 'people', some nominalisations: 'passion', 'humour', 'intuition'; universal quantifiers (softened with 'almost'): 'almost always' 'nearly never', 'almost everyone'; one modal operator of necessity: 'you need to listen to feedback, don't necessarily have to take any notice of it!' said as a bit of a joke and hiding a nice lost performative within it, more lost performatives: 'if you are presenter you have to be the leader, you shouldn't be a follower'; complex equivalent: 'she's a teacher so she's quite flexible and procedural', this one also hides some mind reading, and another one: 'he doesn't want to be disliked'. I didn't spot any clear unspecified verbs, modal operators of impossibility (or any serious one of necessity for that matter), no cause-effects or obvious presuppositions (apart from presupposing that you cannot be a leader and a follower at the same time... we had a discussion about it, and about another comment 'we are all essentially very similar' which we clarified to the point of agreement and understanding of an important NLP presupposition: we all perceive the world through our senses and create our own, varied and personal map of the world).

## the difference that makes the difference

I tried and interviewed four exemplars with very different presenting styles and from that I achieved a clear definition of behaviours and attitudes they have in common.

They all look for what the listener is interested in, and make their presentations relevant to their listeners, by using either personal circumstances, common passions or stated objectives as examples and centre their presentations around them.

They all look and hear for signs of attention on an ongoing basis, i.e. they don't wait until the end of the lecture when everyone has fallen asleep! This leads me nicely to the next point: humour. Entertaining and humour is also used by my exemplars to keep their presentations lively.

The four of them seek participation by asking questions, encouraging debate, challenging the listeners etc. ... and of course, are open to hear what the 'public' has to say. Presenting is a two-way communication.

When it comes to the 'logistics' the approaches and opinions regarding environment, use of presenting aids, multimedia, etc are divided. The common elements are an evenly paced voice, with emphasis and colour. Good use of pauses so that the listeners have time to assimilate the ideas, one at the time. Good and individual eye contact with each person - not 'scanning' the room as a whole, (this could be more difficult in large audiences, but for my personal purpose it is very applicable). Congruent hand gestures and facial expressions, open and alert body posture and variation are also important, specially if no other visual aid is used.

When things don't go according to plan they all have strategies to cope with the challenges, mainly involving some sort of 'pattern interrupt', like saying or doing something unexpected, introducing an activity, or taking a break. When things go seriously wrong they all agreed to acknowledge the situation and confront it (with rapport!). And they all agreed too on the uselessness of continuing with a presentation when all attention has been definitely lost - although none of them actually had experienced this situation.

## trying it on

I have already put into practice, during my evening Spanish lessons, some of the points I mentioned earlier, and it is surprising how well it works.

I am making efforts to speak more clearly and s-l-o-w-l-y (that's hard, still at the conscious incompetence stage!), facial expressions and gestures are second nature to me, so that's easy, and humour is not too difficult either, and achieves great results.

I'm building more rapport with my students by making longer eye-contact with each of them at a time. I also use their first names to emphasise individuality and calling to their identity. I give lots of encouragement and the feedback is done rapportfully always emphasising first something they have done well, i.e.: 'that pronunciation was fantastic Maureen, you (already) sound like a native there **now** try and match the feminine of the noun by using your adjective in the feminine. **You know** how it goes, pronouncing both with an 'a' at the end, don't you?.' (procedures, auditory lady) or 'Great use of the verb David **now** try and see how **you can roll your 'r's** a little bit more, just imagine you have turned into Rab C. Nesbitt, or Sean Connery, the choice is yours!' (he is an options, visual person!) etc.

If the subject is going to be a bit dry, i.e. verb conjugation, or numbers from 1 - 100 I acknowledge it beforehand, with a bit of humour whilst also emphasising the usefulness of it when they find themselves in a Spanish-speaking country (future pacing). I also have introduced fun activities, like a game of Bingo in Spanish to learn the numbers.

Other thing I am doing is to get to swap partners and physically change places in between activities.

Since I have been doing this there seems to be more life in the class, specially in the dark winter evenings, when my last class finishes at 21:45 and most people have had a long working day behind them. (I have found that acknowledging and second positioning in here works very well too.)

I am looking forward to my next class, starting 25 February and I will compare the dropout numbers between the last term and the one starting as well as between my class and that of other Spanish teachers. At the moment we are about the same and I expect I will have considerably less dropout in the Spring term. Let's hope the Head Master notices this too - I will be passing on your details! ; )

**This document is supplied by Dancing Lion Training & Consultancy Limited and is copyright protected. You are free to re-publish this document in its original format providing all content (including this notice) remains intact. You may take extracts from this document providing that full acknowledgement is given to it's author and a hyperlink is placed to the author's website (<http://www.dancinglion.com>).**

**For more information about the products and services dancing lion can provide you or your company, please visit <http://www.dancinglion.com>**

**copyright © dancing lion training and consultancy limited. all rights reserved**